

¶A document which will go down in history—

## WHAT DOES THE JOINT PREPARATORY COMMITTEE'S REPORT MEAN?

THE report of an American-Philippine Joint Commission concerns the very crux of American involvement in the Far East, and, from the long-range viewpoint, might be as important to the United States and to world stability, as the Lima Conference and the refugee problem all rolled into one.

For over a third of a century, the Stars and Stripes has waved over those almost fabulous islands, with their 13,000,000 inhabitants, and their immense resources—mineral and agricultural—and their strategic position a few hundred miles from the Asiatic mainland and directly in the midst of Japan's oceanic sphere of influence. They are a buffer-archipelago between Japan and the East Indian possessions of Britain, the Netherlands, and France. They may soon be the nearest point to beleaguered China where a western power has still an ample foothold. They may be the last door in the East which Japan has not slammed.

On the surface, the report concerns dull economic subjects—trade relations between the United States and the Philip-

pines. Not a word is said directly in the report about re-examining political relations between the two countries. There is no mention of an American naval base. And therefore many observers said: "Purely economic. No interest in this dramatic world."

Nothing could be farther from the fact. Actually, the report contains the most specific recipe for keeping the Islands independent of their mighty neighbor to the north. That remedy is not a military guarantee from the United States, which would be most difficult to deliver. It is internal economic stability, which in turn makes for political stability. In short, the report shows how the Philippines can save themselves by a gradual 20-year adjustment to an independent economy to match the political independence now contemplated.

The insular economy is now solidly knit into the American market. To cut those ties brusquely, in this world of trade barriers and prohibitions almost everywhere else, would clearly mean to throw the Philippines into economic chaos.

Even in 1941, when, under the Independence Act, an import tax of 5 per cent was to have been imposed on all Philippine exports to this country, restrictive effects such as unemployment and suffering would have been felt in the urban region round Manila. In a few years more, agrarian troubles probably would have been felt all over the Islands. And this economic strain would almost certainly have brought political instability along with it.

Such internal disruptions would have been the best possible preparation for the intervention of a powerful neighbor, advancing not only with the possibly specious lure of a compensatory market, but with military power of intervention just as soon as disorders gave the excuse.

It is easy to see that the first contribution to Philippine self-defense should be economic, and if the United States wishes to remain isolated from trouble in the Philippines, perhaps the best way is to take the easy steps now to see that the Islands are able to attain economic, as well as political, independence and stability. Certainly any Japanese intervention in the Philippines would put American public opinion under an unprecedented strain.

But will Congress see things

that way? That is the rub. Congressional opinion has been dominated in the past by American producers, anxious to block Philippine competition. Such competition, of course, is nothing like what it was before 1932. Now domestic sugar producers are well barricaded behind a quota which enables the industry to flourish; cotton-seed and animal fats producers are also protected by an excise tax. But, alas, there is always the possibility that, if the Philippines are under the American flag or enjoy special trade relationships, the present restrictions will be relaxed. So a considerable part of Congress is unqualifiedly for Philippine independence, the sooner the better, economically as well as politically.

This school of thinking does not recognize that the royal road to involvement in the Islands is to hurl them into economic and political instability. To this group, isolation means simply putting your head into the sand and letting the wind blow.

But the Joint Committee has prepared a very able document. It needs friends in Congress. It has White House approval. Yet it may have to wait long for enthusiastic sponsors on Capitol Hill, and violent controversy seems bound to arise. Once again, it will be a battle between

narrow protectionist interests and a broader type of world policy. It is an uphill struggle.

The Committee's recommendations are adroit. They stick substantially to the import tax system for the initial five-year period of 1941-45, and merely propose in essence to keep on

raising tariffs by 5 per cent a year until the full 100 per cent is reached. The scheme sounds reasonable. If enacted, it can be Congress's greatest contribution to a stable Philippines and stable American relations with the entire Orient.—*Erwin D. Canham, condensed from the Christian Science Monitor.*

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## *In a Big Way*

A tourist was enjoying the wonders of California as pointed out by a native.

"What beautiful grapefruit," he said, as they passed through a grove of citrus-trees.

"Oh, those lemons are a bit small owing to a comparatively bad season," explained the Californian.

"What are those enormous blossoms?" questioned the tourist a little bit farther on.

"Just a patch of dandelions," answered the guide.

Presently they reached the Sacramento River.

"Ah," said the tourist, "some one's radiator is leaking."—*Boy's Life.*

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