

Filipinos May Now Become Officers In U. S. Merchant Marine

SUCCESSFUL negotiations have just been concluded by the Philippine Resident Commissioner with the Secretary of the Navy, through the Department of the Interior, to allow qualified Filipinos to become officers in the United States Merchant Marine.

A year ago the Resident Commissioner obtained from the Secretary of the Navy a waiver of the statutory citizenship requirement "to permit citizens or subjects of the Philippine Islands to be employed as unlicensed members of the crew of vessels of the United States, irrespective of the limitation of the statute as to the percentage of aliens who may be so employed."

SOON after the acceptance of the Philippine Independence Act or on June 25, 1936, Congress passed the Merchant Marine Act, which in effect included Filipino seamen among those classified as aliens by not permitting them to serve in American vessels, cargo or passenger, except within the limitation of the 25 per centum quota, allowed to aliens. On June 29, 1936 another Merchant Marine Act was passed under which Filipino seamen were further excluded from serving in subsidized American cargo vessels. Under this act, Filipino seamen were permitted employment only as members of the Stewards' Department in subsidized American passenger vessels if they fell within the limited percentage of aliens allowed for employment.

The pertinent provisions of the Merchant Marine Act of June 29, 1936, are as follows:

"Section 302 (a) All licensed officers of vessels documented under the laws of the United States, as now required by law, shall be citizens of the United States, native-born or completely naturalized; and upon each departure from the United States of a cargo vessel, in respect of which a construction or operation subsidy has been granted, all of the crew (crew including all employees of the ship) shall be

citizens of the United States, native-born or completely naturalized.

"(b) For a period of one year after the effective date of this Act, upon each departure from the United States of a passenger vessel, in respect of which a construction or operation subsidy has been granted, all licensed officers shall be citizens of the United States, as defined above, and no less than 80 per centum of the crew (crew including all members of the ship other than officers) shall be citizens of the United States, native-born or completely naturalized, and thereafter, the percentage of citizens as defined above shall be increased 5 per centum per annum until 90 per centum of the entire crew, including all licensed officers of any such vessel, shall be citizens of the United States, native-born or completely naturalized.

"(c) Any member of the crew not required by this section to be citizens of the United States, may be an alien only if he is in possession of a valid declaration of intention to become citizen of the United States, or other evidence of legal admission to the United States for permanent residence. Such alien as defined above may be employed only in the stewards' department on passenger vessels."

SINCE the enactment of this Act, thousands of Filipino able seaman, who have served in the United States Merchant Marine vessels for many years, had been removed from the service, being neither citizens of the United States, native-born, nor completely naturalized.

It is apparent that the suspension of the provisions of this Act as they affect Filipinos, has been made possible through the Second War Powers Act, 1942, which gives the Secretary of the Navy the authority to waive compliance with the navigation laws to the extent deemed necessary in the conduct of the war.

Furthermore, this suspension by the Secretary of the Navy, of the citizenship requirements for officers and unlicensed seamen on the United States Merchant Marine vessels, has opened a new avenue for Filipino Seamen toward further participation in the all out war efforts of the United States.

(Continued from page 6)

that their answer was the only answer to the challenge of freedom—for only those are fit to live in freedom, who are not afraid to die for freedom."

Concluding his address in Tagalog, he reiterated our determination to keep faith with the honored dead, and our hope of final allied victory.

"Mga kababayan: Ang araw na ito ay iniuukol sa mga namatay sa pagtatanggol ng kanilang bayan at ng kala-yaan. Tayung mga Filipino ay dapat sumumpa minsan pa na hindi tayo itigwil hangang hindi matamo ang mithi ng ating mga kapatid at anak na namatay sa Bataan at Corregidor. Ang araw ng ating tagumpay ay darating. Umasa kayo."

IN the same broadcast, Mrs. Quezon addressed herself to

"the mothers of the Philippines, especially those who lost their sons" during the war. She said:

"We are the Guardians of the home. In this holy citadel we must resolve to preserve at whatever cost our Christian ideals, our Christian culture, our Christian way of life. We must preserve the Filipino home, as our soldiers in Bataan and Corregidor would want us to—as the symbol of all that is true and beautiful, of all that is worth fighting for and dying for."

Father Pacifico Ortiz, of the President's staff, also spoke to the Filipino people. He said that in honoring the memory of the Unknown Soldier, "we honor each and every one of our soldiers who died for our country." He stated that it was "tragic" that "we should call him the Unknown Soldier," for "he is not really unknown to you, he might have been your own son, father, husband or sweetheart."