

One Step Nearer

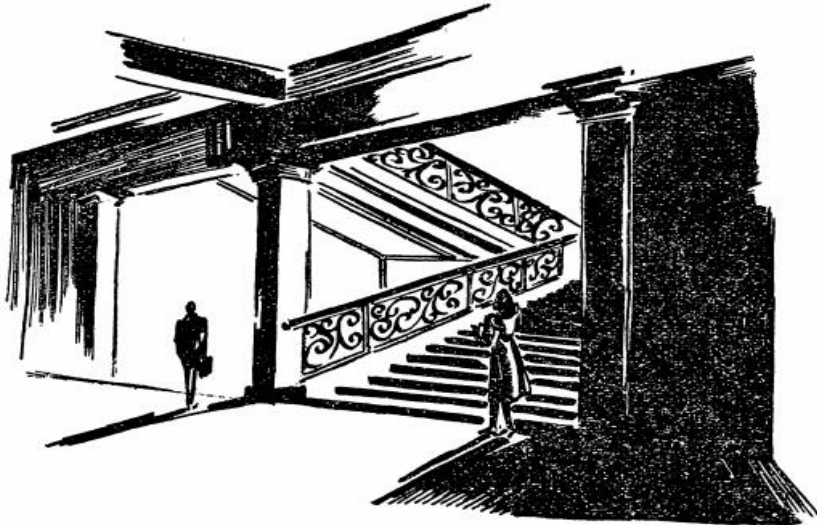
By THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
Imperial Japanese Forces in the Philippines

TODAY we are happily commemorating the first anniversary of the creation of the Philippine Executive Commission.

In observing this historic day, I consider it fitting and proper that full credit and praise be given to all of you who have so whole-heartedly cooperated with the Imperial Japanese Forces during the past twelve months, working steadfastly toward the political, economic and

social readjustment of this country after surmounting the numerous difficulties that presented themselves in the wake of the recent hostilities. As the result of your superhuman efforts and close teamwork, we can assert with confidence that during the one year's existence of the Philippine Executive Commission, we have seen an unprecedented record of achievements made in the establishment of domestic peace and tranquillity, in the rehabilitation of the economic structure of the country, as well as in giving full assurance of a life of security to the mass of the people. In other words, you of the Executive Commission have accomplished, in this comparatively short time, much to enhance the common weal of the people and have contributed greatly to increasing the total well-being of this country. At the same time, we wish to express our appreciation for the unreserved all-out coöperation you have given us, encompassing every phase of activities, in order that this holy war which is being waged by Japan for the liberation of all oppressed Oriental peoples and with the establishment of the Co-Prosperity Sphere at its ultimate objective.

Pausing for a moment and looking back to the events which transpired a year ago, we recall with great pleasure how Chairman Vargas and other recognized leaders of the peace-loving Filipino people stood up resolutely at the first clarion call of the awakening of East Asia, and courageously stepped forward to collaborate whole-heartedly with the Imperial



Japanese Forces. Upon receiving orders, you immediately set forth to the coördination of the central administrative organs thus giving new shape and life to the demoralized political structure of a country so recently visited by the ravages of war, and it must be stressed, over and over again, that this took place even while the fires of hostilities were still burning on the opposite shores of Manila Bay,

as well as elsewhere in the Philippines.

You worked hard and fast in those initial days, with astounding fervor and undying faith, and rendered your utmost for the speedy rehabilitation of the administrative structure. You have continued that effort up to this very day, without rest and without let-up, and we take great pride and joy in pointing out to the world in general, that the administrative organization of the Philippines has been brought to satisfactory completion and that day by day the enlightened policies of the Japanese Military Administration are being translated into actual practice and applied with an efficient and understanding hand by high-minded Filipino officials whose sole interest at heart is the benefit of the mass of the people. During this transition period, there were to be sure, certain elements among the populace who continued to believe in the false sensational American propaganda against the Japanese and acting under the poisonous spell of their American masters, completely forgot what their first allegiance was due to their native country and not to their defeated dominators. All their nefarious designs and traitorous acts of creating discord and internal disruption among their own countrymen were, however, of little avail, due in a large measure, to the vigilance and prudent action of the Philippine Executive Commission.

The Commission has always placed as its foremost objective and its highest goal, the guidance of the mass of people towards peace, prosperity and progress.

It has consistently acted in strict accordance with this fundamental policy, and have, to date, accomplished much that accrues to the benefit of the people. The painstaking efforts and the hard work contributed by all members of the administrative organization, regardless of rank, position or station, are matters for which every individual in the Philippines should feel a deep obligation of indebtedness and I wish to take this opportunity to highly commend each and every member in the Philippine government for his meritorious service and enviable record of accomplishment.

That the relationship between Japan and the Philippines should always have been one of close unity and of mutual trust and friendship is self-evident and in full consonance with the logical dictates of nature. Unfortunately for the two peoples, however, this natural relationship was consistently and wilfully interrupted and only until yesterday it was impossible for the two peoples to come into happy and fruitful association with each other. This unfortunate and regrettable state of affairs was entirely due to the perverted policy of Anglo-American powers who saw in such association, and end to their own selfish policy of shameful racial discrimination and self-perpetuating political and economic domination. It took the cold realities of the War of Greater East Asia and quick succession of Japan's overwhelming victories to frustrate once and for all this age-old Anglo-American plot. Today all Asia is on the threshold of a new dawn in history and in the Philippines we are facing the happy day when the establishment of the central and provincial administrative organizations composed entirely of Filipinos is already an accomplished fact.

During this period, we have also witnessed the voluntary dissolution of all existing political parties and the rallying of all true and loyal Filipinos to the *Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas* (KALIBAPI). With the initiation of this popular movement, the social structure of the New Philippines can be said to have been established on firm foundations and that the people are now in a position to march in complete concord and harmony towards their common objective of rehabilitating their beloved country. The fact that we are commemorating the first anniversary of the inauguration of the Philippine Executive Commission under these auspicious political and social circumstances is of great significance and augurs well for the continued success of our concerted effort toward making the Philippines a worthy member of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

It is fervently hoped that you will continue to be ever alert to the unmistakable trend of the times and, imbued with deep understanding of the sincere intentions of the Japanese Empire towards the Filipino people, expressed and manifested on numerous occasions in the past, continue to render the same wholehearted service and high measure of devotion to duty that you have so abundantly manifested in the past. Your responsibility hereafter will be to translate into everyday practice, all the ideals and policies outlined to you heretofore, thus fulfilling your noble mission of serving your country and approaching one step closer to the realization of your ultimate ambition.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—*The address above was delivered on the occasion of the First Anniversary of the Philippine Executive Commission on January 23, 1943.*

