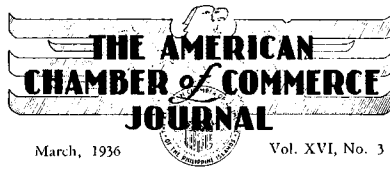


Local
Subscription and
United States: **P4.00** per year
Foreign
Subscriptions: **\$3.00 U. S.**
Currency, per
year



March, 1936

Vol. XVI, No. 3

Single Copies:
35 centavos

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Entered as Second Class Matter May 25, 1921 at the Post Office at Manila, P. I.

The Philipines' Stimulating Business Atmosphere

It must now be acknowledged in every quarter that the Tydings-McDuffie act has affected the Philipines outside the field of economics, but in ways widening opportunity for business. The Philipines, in orderly step, are taking a new position on the field of manly endeavor. The tempo of the movement is quick; opportunity lies in keeping abreast of the parade, that the movement veritably is. Philippine youth accepting new challenges and trying its hand at novel ventures, the envious of the oldtime defeatism are in retreat. "They can, but we can't."

There used to be a good deal of this feeling among the people. Chinese could merchandise, Filipinos could not. Foreigners could manufacture, Filipinos lacked the knack of it. This is the defeated way the people felt. It extended into many choices, dress included — especially the dress and manners of women and it affected business. The change to a venturesome attitude came almost overnight. Its potentials had been accumulating, but a touch was needed to give it movement. Now it is seen to have tremendous momentum; it bows again against all opposition. The Islands sing a song of democracy, and feel the democratic spirit inspiring them. (They took the overthrow of the Bourbons in Spain a few years ago coolly, if not antagonistically; and they were far from dismayed when Spain swung back to the right; but now, Azana's second popular victory finds them quite in accord with it—an evidence of psychologic change that could only come of the Philipines' new confidence in themselves.)

If the people have confidence in themselves, as everything shows they have, it only means that they have confidence in mankind generally, and in man's popular institutions. Like so many modern peoples, the Filipino people hold the past at great discount; they have put it behind them, and they look to the future. Their country is pleasing them immensely, in its revelation of new resources; and their insular administration is pleasing them, in that it carries on well. Creed seems to make slight difference; regardless of creed, democracy has sunk in, and its new roots are in the fertile hearts of the people.

For good business, there is nothing like good democracy; where democracy is dynamic and the people confident of their rights, if you do not find an Italy or a Germany, you do find an

England, a Canada, an Australia; and you find perhaps a United States, hardest hit by the depression because it was most prosperous, getting up its spirit again, therefore rebuilding its trade. This is what affects the Philipines now, introducing business opportunities hitherto unheard of.

Observe the opportunities associated with woman's new freedom in the Islands. It is a positive sign of the times that the picture exhibiting a popular brand of bathing suits in a downtown show window, is a picture of a girl of the Islands; it means that this bit of trade has turned in that direction, and 5 years from now 10 bathing suits will be sold where 1 is sold now.

So it is with everything in women's wear. Democratic, electrically unafraid, dress reflects the inner consciousness.

There are schemes of great emprise, of course; and unlike the situation 20 years ago, the bold souls behind these ventures have capital of their own. The oldtime individualism that so victimized the people by their own over-suspicious egoism, weakens before new adventures in practical cooperation. Moreover, there is a most happy cooperation between citizens of the Islands and sojourners here, a middle ground of vast potentiality.

The opening of women's wear departments in leading stores downtown attests alertness in these stores to the changed popular psychology. It is noted that these events were fashion news to the Philipines newspapers, and that the news items about them were written by women reporters, Filipino young women, familiar with their subject. It all means a trade swing into a wider field.

The field is in fact so wide as to affect everything. Less and less do you observe the newspapers relying on movie stars of Hollywood for style suggestions. The observant Philipines *Free Press* has just given a number of illustrated pages to dresses for every occasion, that a popular debauntee of Manila selects to wear; and this is but an example of what all the papers find expedient and newsworthy, for women. It is not something passing, either; it is here to stay.

Extending to everything, the field eminently embraces real estate in all the larger centers, led of course by Manila—that

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them. This preposterous threat soon dissolved.

The planters have paid more in interest alone on just the mill loans than the offer amounted to. They have also paid nearly all of the principal, the balance standing at some P7,000,000, hardly the worth of a single mill. So the uneconomical, unbusinesslike, unsound transaction has been the commercial salvation of Negroes, of the bank, and largely that of the government itself.

In the Tydings-McDuffie act it is the major business factor. It had boomed Philippine sugar along rapidly, so that Congress felt constrained to grant a quota of a million tons a year during the Commonwealth period. This will of course continue to be the life-blood of the islands while it lasts. Moreover, not all centrals nor even a majority, were built by the planters and with bank money; other capital stepped in. The industry became well financed and well managed, with prodigious attention to better fields, better cultivation, and more prolific cane. Many private fortunes have been made—other than those of the planters—as a result of their unorthodox ambition to succeed; and now that their industry will not use all of their capital, they begin gambling in other ways.

Mining attracts them. They are not men who, fingers once burned, will keep away from the fire. They can be plundered again and again. But they are likely to turn out mine-owners by being liberally plundered, just as they have turned out to be mill owners.

It seems that you can do about as much with sugar cane on Negroes soil as you can on any soil. Perennially your wealth is renewed.

This explains the growth of Bacolod in less than 20 years from a quiet village to an active city of 40,000 inhabitants with a brand-new main street, a shiny new capitol costing P500,000 and streets of presentable and even luxurious homes, with schools and colleges, public and private; with banks and business blocks; and clubs including a University club. It explains why a number of business houses of Manila are either moving their Iloilo agencies to Bacolod or establishing new agencies there. In the past this explained Iloilo's prosperity. It would now seem that Bacolod plans to rival it.

As nearly all planters in Negroes went there originally from Iloilo, many have town homes in Iloilo. It is only now, with Bacolod in her new dress, and with her gayer spontaneity, that Iloilo's first place in the family is threatened.

How generally it has been taken that the Negroes planter's capacity to endure is beyond exhaustion is illustrated in what the government has made him do with his sugar. All the time he has been pouring floods of fortune into the islands' channels of revenue and trade, he has been left without a port at his island.

Instead of developing a port there, the government improved the port of Iloilo and made him ferry his sugar to it; then finally, he did manage to get steamships to call offshore at Negroes and load sugar shipside. That is his situation today. If he therefore can be accused of false economics, he is not alone.

He is building Bacolod without a port. The Bacolod shore is shallow and a long pier ought to be built to deep water. He has improved Pulupandan where sugar is loaded, but he needs a port there too. Whether the government is slow or prompt to provide these obviously needed facilities, makes little difference. Bacolod will grow and sugar can stand it.

For it happens that our sugar is a minor lot in America's total consumption. As Cuba grows the major lot and America likes to give her domestic cane and beet sugar some protection, Cuba is kept under the enjoyment of a tariff varying from high to moderately low. The Philippines of course have the price of sugar's worth at New York plus the tariff currently charged Cuba. Just now this happens to be \$90 a cwt.—\$18.00 a short ton, \$18,000,000 on the islands' annual quota of 1 million tons. This bounty from the American treasury is assured to the Philippines during the Commonwealth because Negroes planters 20 years ago borrowed funds they should not have got, from the Philippine National Bank that should not have made the loans.

The second city of the Philippines, Bacolod, attributable to the American régime is another foolhardy outcome of this

irrational experiment. One reader who will smile over this summary is Dr. Richard T. Ely, dean of economists in the United States whose memory has probably discarded more knowledge of the subject than most minds will ever pick up; and his basic saying is, *Under all, the land*. You can't down a people who live and work their land. William James, Stanley Baldwin, President Quezon, and other facile pragmatists: that is true that in practice proves to be true.

The Philippines' Stimulating Business Atmosphere

(Continued from page 3)

is changing into such a vivacious metropolitan capital of all things Philippine as makes her beyond knowing, almost, to anyone who has not visited here during the past 10 years. There are grave obstacles in the way, but everyone now wants a home; and thousands of provincial families still desire homes in or near Manila where parents may be with their children a good deal of the time during their years in school here.

The schools find it necessary to adjust themselves to change. It may be given as an axiom that the best any school may offer will but make it the more popular. The Jesuits, always keenly sensitive to the exigencies of the hour, though they managed until 4 years ago with a hall in their old walled city school for dramatics, have now, on calle Padre Faura, a trim new theater appraised secularly the best in town; and of course it was prudent to make this theater surpass the earlier one established at the University of the Philippines.

Well, what of a theater more or less, someone asks? This much at least, no little added business. A native theater begins here, a native culture begins expressing itself in drama; and incident to this, though far from evoking it, is new business. Now that the movement begins, it will move swiftly; the people have dramatic powers that the theater movement will lend expression. But the arts in general begin speaking in terms of democracy. So flows the stream of conscious desire, presenting opportunities on every hand to those who move with it.

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