

THE PHILIPPINES AGAIN BEFORE CONGRESS

PHILIPPINE independence will take place on July 4, 1946, according to the Tydings-McDuffie Law. That is political independence from the United States. Economic independence, however, is a different matter. It means ending the free entrance of Philippine goods into the United States. Should this step be taken in 1946, Philippine industries may likely be destroyed and her revenues might be so diminished that she might not be able to maintain a stable government at all. The outcome might be the loss of her political independence. Therefore, the Joint American-Philippine Preparatory Committee has suggested to the American Congress that the economic independence of the Philippines be postponed for 15 years after the grant of political independence. The state and war departments of the United States government have endorsed the suggestion. Vice-President Osmeña concurred, saying that by such a plan the United States will insure a lasting foundation for the Philippine republic. Postponement of economic independence means that the free entrance of the Philippine prod-

ucts into the United States should not be suddenly stopped in 1946 but should be gradually restricted in such a way that if by 1946 Philippine goods entering the United States pay an equivalent of 25% of the duties collected from similar goods entering upon similar goods coming from foreign countries, an increase of 5 per cent yearly thereafter should be added until 100 per cent is reached 15 years after, or in 1960. Economic leaders believe that the imposition of 100 per cent customs duties on Philippine goods entering the United States will not enable Philippine producers to sell their products in the United States in competition with similar goods coming from other tropical countries. The result will be the destruction of Philippine agriculture and industry inasmuch as the Philippines does not have a market within her own territory large enough to consume all her export crops, such as sugar, copra, abaca, and tobacco. Neither can the Philippines compete in other markets outside the United States, such as Japan, China, Europe, or South America, because trop-

ical products in those countries are sold at very low prices.

Thus the question of Philippine independence is once more revived in Congress. It comes up directly in connection with a bill reported by Senator Tydings and Representative Kocalkowski amending the provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Law concerning the trade relations between America and the Philippines after 1946. It is also being connected with the plan of fortifying Guam.

Representative Crawford of Michigan is of the belief that the postponement of Philippine independence, political and economic, is the only alternative to "giving the Islands to Japan." He accused President Quezon of embarrassing the state department by his last trip to Tokyo where he was entertained by prominent Japanese. Opposing the proposed appropriation of \$5,000,000 for the fortification of Guam, Crawford accused Filipino leaders of flirting with Japan. He pointed out that "certain Philippine officials now holding office and other high ranking Filipinos who hold within their hands the industrial and economic powers of the Islands, will be glad to go along with their brother Orientals, the Japanese, to furnish within the Philippines the necessary leadership and provide the way for social and cultural

relations and the two countries will become more closely connected in every way."

Referring to Japanese penetration in Mindanao, Crawford said, "Filipinos as lawyers, shopkeepers, and homesteaders are working hand in glove, side by side and cheek to cheek with the Japanese in their illegal acquisition of the titles to Philippine land, all in direct violation of the public domain laws of the Islands * * * as a matter of fact the President of the Philippine Commonwealth has impliedly sanctioned the entire operations of the Japanese. Davao is the first independent state set up in the Philippines by Japan. Others are to follow. Japan does not wait for the departure of the United States. She moves in now."

Secretary Jorge B. Vargas qualified the statements of Crawford as "absolutely false." Prominent members of the National Assembly denounced them as untrue. Assemblyman Maximo M. Kalaw expressed himself as in favor of close political association with the United States rather than with any other nation.

While the Philippine bill now before Congress is primarily intended to effect a gradual, rather than a sudden, termination of the free entry of Philippine products into the United States, it promises to open up

again the question of political independence. It is quite likely that, under the present circumstances, a "realistic reexamination" of this problem will be attempted. Senator King, who had till very lately always advocated complete and early independence for the Philippines, has now declared that his view on the subject has been greatly modified by the present disregard of treaty agreements on the part of the Japanese government. He has in mind particularly the so-called Nine-Power Treaty of which the United States and Japan are among the signatory parties. Under that Treaty Japan has bound herself to respect the administrative and territorial integrity of China as well as to protect the equal rights of all nations to trade in China. This has often been referred to as the "open-door policy." The invasion of China by Japan and the conduct of the Japanese army in disregarding the rights of na-

tionals of other states to trade with the Chinese constitute apparent violations of that Treaty. The protests of the United States were answered by the Japanese government with a declaration that conditions in China have changed,—meaning that Japan can not be bound by the terms of a treaty which is not applicable any more to existing conditions.

High Commissioner McNutt is, as publicly known, in favor of a realistic reexamination. The purpose of such step is to continue the present Commonwealth status until such time as may be most propitious for the maintenance of an independent Philippines. While a few Filipinos have expressed themselves in favor of this plan, most of the Filipino political leaders have not taken any definite position on this question except to say *sotto voce* that the Tydings-McDuffie Law should be followed.

* * *

Thin Slices

THE landlady brought in a plateful of extremely thin slices of bread and butter, which rather dismayed her hungry men boarders.

"Did you cut these, Mrs. Brown?" said one.

"Yes—I cut them," came the stern reply.

"Oh!" went on the boarder. "All right; I'll shuffle and deal!"—*Parade.*