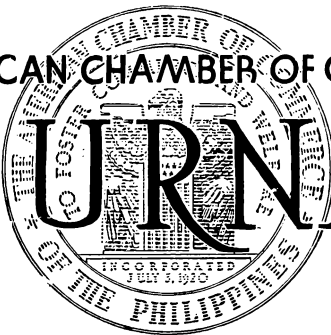


# THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# JOURNAL



## Editorials

*"... to promote the general welfare"*

Probably the most hopeful development in many a moon in the field of Philippine-American economic relations was the announcement made simultaneously in both Washington and Manila by the American and Philippine chief executives that a high-level Philippine-American economic commission will shortly be created to advise on the establishment of a sound and well-balanced economy here.

President Quirino returned to Manila from the United States on Saturday afternoon, February 11, and made the announcement on his part that evening in Malacañan, and President Truman's announcement in Washington, as reported in a press dispatch, bore the same date, both appearing in the Sunday papers. This promptitude, suggestive, indeed, of haste, is doubtless indicative of the urgent importance given to the matter by both the American and Philippine heads of state.

The Manila report of President Quirino's announcement ran, in part—

"President Elpidio Quirino will start shortly a series of conferences with American Ambassador Myron Cowen to take up the organization of a proposed joint top-level Philippine-American Commission to map out a comprehensive and complete blue-print for Philippine economic development in accordance with the understanding reached between President Quirino and President Truman in Washington, it was learned last night in Malacañan. . .

"As soon as President Quirino and Ambassador Cowen reach an agreement, the proposed joint body will be immediately organized. Malacañan expects the Commission to be organized by the middle of March. . . It will be composed of ten members,—five Filipinos and five Americans . . . headed jointly by American and Filipino chairmen. . . President Quirino will choose from local businessmen and professionals as Filipino members."

According to the Washington report, President Truman "favors the idea of a high-level American commission to the Philippines to advise on economic rehabilitation."

"Mr. Truman is said to be seeking a man of the caliber of Detroit bank president Joseph Dodge, who carried out a similar mission to Japan. . . The Commission to be appointed would be one of considerable stature. . . President Truman's attitude, according to sources close to him, was that this matter must be approached vigorously."

It will interest members of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines to learn that the idea for

forming some such commission originated in this Chamber and was taken up by the Vice-President of the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce in New York in a letter to the members of the New York Chamber. Mr. Koch wrote:

"One suggestion which deserves the support of the entire membership of this Chamber is that a small, top-level, non-political, permanent joint Philippine-American economic commission be established to study, recommend, and follow-through on measures for the attainment of a sound and well-balanced economy in the Philippines."

The proposal was called to the attention of Mr. Jose Yulo just before he left Manila for the United States with President Quirino, and was discussed with him in New York by officers and directors of the Philippine-American Chamber and the National Foreign Trade Council there.

The present plans appear to be a development of this preparatory work. The local planners had a less official body in mind, voluntary, chiefly local, and more or less permanent, but in some respects the present plan appears to be an improvement since more heed is likely to be paid to an official group such as Presidents Truman and Quirino appear to have agreed upon.

It is not amiss to enter a word of caution. Our past experience with joint governmental commissions has not been an entirely happy one, especially when the make-up was either too political or too technical and professorial, which often results, in the first case, to a spreading out of genial platitudes and, in the second, to theoretical and impractical generalizations. Advantage, too, has sometimes been taken of recommendations more or less tentatively advanced by the experts, which have later been given too radical an implementation in practice.

Reassuring, however, is Mr. Truman's reference to such a man as Mr. Dodge and Mr. Quirino's statement that he will look for his appointees among the businessmen and professionals.

But only the thought that American and Filipino leaders see the need for such a body as is proposed, and that they feel that it is so urgent that it get to work immediately, is a most heartening thing in these desperate days.