

¶Why America should annex the Philippines.

## CAN WE HOLD THE RICHEST LAND ON EARTH?

WHEN the United States took over the Philippines, their riches were only suspected. Today, enough is known to drive mining engineers balmy with dreams. Enough is known to give pause to world economists. Enough is known for responsible leaders to estimate that the natural resources of the Philippine Islands are adequate in all save one element—tin—to *supply the whole needs of the United States in case of wars, long or short, independent of world raw-material markets.*

I don't mean that everyone in the Philippines is rich. There is misery and failure here. Worse, there is virtual peonage, all the wretched inequalities of a system that draws its heritage from both European medievalism and Oriental despotism.

In spite of the efforts of the United States, the humbler people of the islands are still more than forty per cent illiterate culturally; more than ninety per cent illiterate economically.

What is meant is that: that to men within initiative and enterprise the Philippines are uncommonly, incredibly bountiful. If the Philippines were a state of the union they would stand fifth in land size. They are ten times bigger than Holland or Palestine; much larger than the British Isles; nearly twice as large as old Austria-Hungary. Yet they have a population of only fifteen million, barely exceeding that of New York State. Japan, slightly bigger, has a population of eighty million. Italy, almost the same size, has forty-five million.

In a world of striving nations, hungry for raw materials, the Philippines, alone of vast and fertile areas, remain virgin.

Their very physical appearance, their geography, their throat-choking beauty under all conditions of season and weather, seem to thrust forward a guarantee of wealth untold.

The Philippine Islands have the majority of the world's coconut

supply. In Tayabas Province alone, there are 22,000,000 coconut trees. The coconut has a part in the deadly quarrels of men. Its oil has a high glycerin content, and is therefore essential in the manufacture of explosives. Its dried shells make charcoal, used in manufactures of gas masks.

But the munificent coconut is not the most important single factor in the wealth of the Philippines, although thirty per cent of the population depends upon it for their living. Rice and sugar exceed it in crop values; it stands fifth in area cultivated. But it forms a point from which you can judge, backward and forward, the scope of the resources of the Philippines.

Your money, as an American tax-payer, helped to bring these resources out of rumor into reality. Your money and efforts paid for roads and communications and education that made them available.

You ought to know just what we are giving up when we give up the Philippines. Even before Europeans coveted the treasure-troves of the Philippines, Siamese, Chinese and Japanese were raiding them. A Japanese pirate, Tayfusa, made an attempt to settle there nearly four hundred years ago, but was

chased by the Spaniards. Japanese "pirates" are still at it.

Japanese fishermen net in Philippine harbors. Other Japanese ships anchor, send crews ashore, build logging camps, and steal millions upon millions of board feet of the best Philippine hardwoods each year. This is known to the authorities. Because it happens in areas so remote, it is difficult for constabulary patrols to reach them; because word of the activities are withheld by bribed provincial officials; and because the Commonwealth has not yet enough armed vessels to establish an effective guard—nothing can be done about it.

The Japanese government "officially" knows nothing. But you continue to read in Manila papers of fights in lonely *barrios* in which natives are killed by Japanese lumber or fish pirates. These are small affrays, which can suddenly grow into large ones.

The confused status of Philippine-American relations, the uncertain political future of the islands, makes them a danger spot.

Three courses are open to the United States to end this suspense—and this hazard:

First, to extend permanently the

present economic co-operation and trade preferences. Remain, in brief, the benevolent "Uncle."

Second, to cut loose absolutely and let the Philippine republic take its chances economically and politically among the family of free nations.

Third, hold onto them, frankly and boldly: repeal the Tydings-McDuffey Act, annex the Philippines.

The first course, most everyone who knows anything about the islands agrees, is the most perilous. A joint commission has recommended that Uncle Sam not button his pocket until 1960. The Commonwealth, with a lobby of its most astute and charming big shots, is striving desperately to have the free trade extended for all time.

This would give the United States the responsibility for the Philippines, without the authority. It would complicate our national military policies, increase our armaments budget. It would give us much expense, but little profit. It would permit unwarranted competition to some domestic products. Its "preferred nation" trading privileges would inevitably bring friction with Japan, the best foreign customer of the Philippines.

Justifiably, the Japanese could ask for the same privileges we got. It would make us the "cop" of the Orient. "It would practically guarantee a war between Japan and the United States," the Americans in Manila will tell you.

The Tydings-McDuffey Act would give us naval and military base rights in the Islands. It would make us accountable for their protection. Thus it would bring up the whole question of whether the Philippines can or should be defended.

This much you may as well hear right away. It is the reasoned judgment of every responsible American Navy and Army officer with whom I have discussed it. *The Philippines are indefensible.* It would be humanly impossible for the United States, without a fantastic outlay of money, to hold the islands more than briefly against an enemy with short lines of communication from home bases close at hand. We should have to put a gun in the hands of every able-bodied American, turn our whole nation into a munitions factory, to garrison 7,083 islands to the point whereat a militarist would admit they were "safe."

The general idea, if war comes to the Philippines, would be for

us to retire fighting—and come back later. The United States has made little attempt to prepare for more than that.

The Navy has the base of the Asiatic Fleet at Cavite; repair bases elsewhere. Don't be impressed by the term "Asiatic Fleet"—its a motley collection of old cruisers, obsolete destroyers, gunboats useless away from rivers.

Corregidor, the island fortification at the entrance of Manila Bay, and its related defenses undoubtedly could withstand enemy fleets indefinitely; prevent landings in either Manila or Subic bays. But they could not prevent occupation of Manila by troops landing elsewhere on Luzon. Corregidor is the strongest post in the Orient, in sharp contrast to Singapore, which French and American and Japanese intelligence officers tell you is a "publicity base"—that is, its guns exist chiefly on paper.

One of the first acts of Quezon was to establish a "National Defense" program. The Filipinos of all the islands and races are excellent fighting men—brave, intelligent, enduring. In their jungles and mountains, on even terms as to armaments, they are invincible—as the American soldier of 1,900 quickly learned. If an old-fash-

ioned war would be arranged for them, perhaps Quezon's defense plans could be taken more seriously; but modern war is industrial, and the Philippines are agricultural. Moreover, a population of 15 million cannot turn out an army large in the modern way.

Quezon's choice of a commander for his new army exposed the thinness and futility of his plan. He selected out of friendship rather than stark capability. He picked MacArthur, an old personal crony, but a man not considered by militarists as better than third rate in military talents and savvy. MacArthur, for example, as a professional soldier, a military student, cannot be mentioned in the same breath with American officers like, for instance, Fox Conner.

The Quezon-MacArthur army is all togged out in boy scout uniforms with shiny helmets, a handful of small planes that are used for training purposes in the States but are called "light bombers" out here, and a fleet of motor launches—these to patrol a coast line more than twice as long as that of the whole United States!—which serve chiefly to give joy rides to politicians around Manila Bay.

MacArthur is called a "Field Marshal" and he is set up in fine

style in an air-conditioned penthouse, everything "found"—with a salary twice as large as Pershing ever got for commanding the A. E. F. The "army and its high command," so far as usefulness goes, is an imposition upon the poor taxpayers of the islands. As a contribution to their national defenses, it is laughed at by responsible American military men. *It is recognized by them for exactly what it amounts to in a military sense; the personal bodyguard of an Oriental war lord with potentialities for insuring his tenure of office, for keeping him in power, for discouraging domestic political opponents rather than repelling foreign enemies.*

The second course, washing our hands completely of the Philippines, would be less dangerous. Provided: we take home all our soldiers and sailors from the Orient. Provided: we resolutely shut our eyes to subsequent events in the Philippines, no matter what happened there, no matter which nation snapped them up. Provided: we close our ears, and turn our backs, upon the inevitable calls for help.

"This course," Americans in Manila declare, "would never get us into war with Japan if we really minded our own business. But

independence for the Philippines means loss of independence by the common people of the Philippines. It means the loss of all the money we have invested in the Philippines. No responsible Filipino leader, from Quezon down, really wants independence, but they don't know how to reverse their yelps of forty years and save face."

The third course is to hold onto the richest land on earth. Frankly to develop the exploit and enjoy the wealth in the way the British and French and Dutch draw treasure from their colonies.

To give the Philippines up, Ford Wilkins, an American in Manila suggests, is as though some foreign nation conquered us after we had kicked loose from Britain in 1776, improved and developed us to modern times—and then handed us back to the Indians.

The great fear of Americans at home seems to be that if we do not clear out of the Philippines we shall get into war over them. Americans on the spot, who should know, say this is a misunderstanding; that quite the contrary is true.

We are far more likely to have a war with Japan over the Philippines if we give them up than if we hold them.

We do not have to expend enormous sums, build huge armies, to hold the Philippines. Our flag over a territory—if other nations know we are not fooling, and will back it up—has greater effectiveness than cannon.

“No nation,” says High Commissioner McNutt, “would think of attacking the Philippines while the American flag flies over them, even if there wasn’t a rifle in the islands!”

The simple act of annexation would insure the safety of the islands. We had disputes with foreign nations about Hawaii until we annexed it; that ended that. We could divide the Philippines into several units, with consideration for racial problems, and take them into the Union as states; this would multiply the disinclinations to tamper with them—*W. B. Courtney, condensed from Collier’s.*

\* \* \*

### CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

A MAN was charged with shooting a number of pigeons, the property of a farmer. Counsel for the defense tried to frighten the farmer.

“Now,” he remarked, “are you prepared to swear that this man shot your pigeons?”

“I didn’t say he did shoot ’em,” was the reply. “I said I suspected him of doing it.”

“Ah! Now we are coming to it. What made you suspect this man?”

“Well, firstly, I caught him on my land with a gun. Secondly, I heard a gun go off and saw some pigeons fall. Thirdly, I found four of my pigeons in his pocket—and I don’t think them birds flew in there and committed suicide.”—*Kablegram.*