

Philippine Independence Won After Struggle of Centuries



President Roosevelt Handing Signed Philippine Constitution to Manuel Quezon, President of the Philippine Senate. Inset, Emilio Aguinaldo, Who May Be a Candidate for President.

By WILLIAM C. UTLEY

IN 1898, when Admiral Dewey's guns had hardly concluded their pronouncement that America had become a world power, and the echoes were still rumbling over Manila bay, the 10,000,000 inhabitants of the Philippines were already demanding complete political independence.

Ten years from this coming Fourth of July they may get it at last, after a long struggle, both physical and diplomatic. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed his name in ink to the constitution of the new Philippine government. So did Manuel Quezon, president of the island senate. Six weeks before that, members of the Philippine house of representatives signed it, one of them in his own blood.

Philippine independence has not always been our worry. The struggle had its beginning centuries before the United States ever existed.

The story really opens, so far as the white race is concerned, in the year 1521, when Fernando Magellan, that most irrepressible of all gadabouts, "discovered" the archipelago of the eastern Pacific. It may be well imagined that Skipper Magellan's hearties, with many moons on the open sea having depleted their food supply to the extent that the dinner menu consisted of fricassee of leather riggings and boiled tongue (of shoe), hailed the islands with delight. The native rice and sugar, which would have been just another Tuesday night dessert at Mrs. Gomez' Seaman's home back in sunny Spain, must have looked to them like a banquet for the gods.

Senor Magellan is still there, but not because he fell in love with the scenery. He was killed by natives on the island of Mactan. And what remained of his stout-hearted crew continued around the globe without him.

When the boys got back home they were pretty much the toasts of their respective communities and were invited to address the local Kiwanis and Rotary and the Iberian equivalent of what we call the Hot Stove League. Egged on with bribes of hot tamales and rare Castilian wines, they were not above spellbinding wide-eyed señoritas with reluctant admissions of their darling deeds. Mixed in with their revelations there was probably a little truth and the word eventually got out that there were Philippine islands somewhere in the Pacific, say about two miles and three fathoms out from Barcelona.

Bullied the Natives.

At any rate, Spanish sailors of the next generation again found the Philippines, and began bullying the natives into submission in 1565, gaining complete control in 1570. It is doubtful if these Spaniards knew, or anybody else knew until the Rand-McNally map makers got busy, that their colonial holdings included 7,083 islands—two of them, Luzon and Mindanao, 40,000 and 38,000 square miles in area, and nine others more than 1,000 square miles apiece.

However, Filipinos, like elephants, never forget, and the idea of complete independence kept rankling in their minds for quite a spell until in 1896 it swelled forth in open revolt under Emilio Aguinaldo. The Spanish rulers pacified Senor Aguinaldo with threats, promises and goodness knows how many pesetas, and he and his principal henchmen retired to the heterogeneous obscurity of Hong Kong in 1897, there to plot their subsequent revolt of 1898.

In that year America won the war with Spain and Spain ceded the islands to the United States for \$20,000,000. The Filipinos thought they ought to be given independence at that time, and when they failed to get it they broke out again and were not pacified until July 4, 1901.

The United States still later arrested an independence movement by granting them an autonomous government under the Jones act of 1916. The islanders were quick to offer their aid to the United States in the World war, and as soon as it was over began a consistent petitioning for independence which has never subsided.

Must Wait Ten Years.

They made some headway in December of 1932, when congress passed the

Hawes-Cutting bill. This provided that, subject to the approval of the bill by the Philippine legislature, the islands would be allowed to draw up a republican constitution which would have to be acceptable both to them and to the President of the United States. Then, after a period of ten years, the islands would be granted complete independence. During the ten years, exports and the number of Philippine immigrants to the United States would be restricted. After that the islands were to be outside the American tariff wall.

President Hoover vetoed the bill January 13, 1933, on the grounds that it had been selfishly planned to protect American agriculture against Philippine labor and products; it did not satisfactorily discharge American responsibility towards the islanders, who were unready for independence ("Economic independence of the Philippines must be attained before political independence can be successful" was the way he put it); and it would lay the islands open to the dangers of turbulent conditions in the Far East. Congress overrode the veto four days later. The Philippine legislature rejected the bill nine months afterward.

The new constitution was prepared under the conditions of the Tydings-McDuffie bill, which was passed by the last congress and signed by President Roosevelt. Its chief differences from the Jones act are in the manner in which it allows the islands a gradually increased dosage of economic divorce from the United States for their people to taste before they decide finally to cut away all ties on July 4, 1945.

At present all Philippine exports to the United States come in duty free. The Tydings-McDuffie bill provides that in the sixth year of the ten-year commonwealth period a duty of 5 per cent will be levied. This will be graduated annually until at the end of five years the duty would be 25 per cent. Economic experts are generally of the opinion that this would cut terrifically into Philippine exports, some even contending that the islands would be economically ruined even before they gained their complete independence.

Varied Resources.

The Philippines are not, as many folks in the metropolitan centers of the states might believe, a nation of elevator operators, bus boys and professional ping-pong players. They raise great quantities of rice, sugar cane, hemp, manila, coconut, corn, tobacco and magney. Their forestry, fishing and mining is important. They manufacture sugar, cocon, coconut oil, cigars and cigarettes, chocolate and coffee.

In 1895, before the American market was opened up to them, the exports totaled about \$19,000,000. In 1929 it had reached \$164,000,000, although everything but sugar slumped to a considerable degree during the depression that followed. While only 3 per cent of the exports reached the United States before the islands became an American possession, 61 per cent of them are today sold in American markets.

The present agreement is not what the Philippines have long hoped for, but in their enthusiasm they have apparently decided it is about all they will get, for in the island plebiscite which followed the signing of the constitution by President Roosevelt, they approved the document by an overwhelming vote. Women voted for the first time in the history of an oriental country, as the result of a bill passed by the legislature last December and signed by Gov. Gen. Frank Murphy, former mayor of Detroit.

The new Philippine constitution, which now becomes effective as soon as the existing government is terminated by a proclamation of President Roosevelt, is much like our own constitution, with the following important differences:

The president may serve only one term, six years. He can veto any part of any bill. The legislature, with two minor exceptions, cannot appropriate more money than his budget calls for. The vice president is a member of the cabinet, and cabinet members may speak before the legislature.



There will be only one legislative body, the assembly. In times of war or other great national emergency it can vote to make the president a dictator. The Supreme court will have eleven justices, automatically retired at seventy, who can declare a law or treaty unconstitutional by a two-thirds majority vote.

Women to Vote on Suffrage.

Literate men over twenty-one will be allowed to vote. A plebiscite will be held in two years on woman suffrage, and if 300,000 women vote for it they will be given the right of suffrage.

All natural resources are to become the property of the state, not to be leased for longer than 25 years. The state may operate and establish industries and systems of communication and transportation, in the interests of national defense. The state will protect labor and regulate relations between landlords and tenants and between labor and capital. It may provide for compulsory arbitration.

Treaties will be ratified by a majority of the assembly, and that body alone may declare war.

Although the plebiscite on May 14 was a landslide in favor of the new constitution, it was held in the wake of an uprising which was the bloodiest the islands had seen in 15 years. There were several actual battles. Constabulary officers ultimately quelled the uprising, but not until 61 rebels were dead and 54 rebels and 10 constabularies wounded. Quezon and Murphy were in the United States at the time.

Dissatisfaction with the trade requirement of the Tydings-McDuffie bill was one of the things upon which the revolt was based. It is thought in many circles that the Filipinos will not be so anxious for independence as they are now, when 1945 rolls around, if the bill is followed to the letter.

Economic Future.

A congressional committee headed by Senator Millard F. Tydings of Maryland, co-author of the bill, has just returned from the islands with recommendations which will probably provide material for a study of their economic future. The bill calls for a conference on that subject one year before the commonwealth period expires, but it is probable that this will take place at an earlier date.

The final outcome, it is thought, will result in one of the following possibilities:

(1) Complete Independence, exactly as proposed, which will involve (according to most authorities) economic ruin and probable absorption of the Philippines by "an oriental power."

(2) Independence, exchanging tariff preference to the islands for free entry of American goods.

(3) Dominion government of the islands, allowing them trade preference, but keeping a political string attached to them.

The islands are determined to have independence, complete and at any cost, according to Quezon, who has fought for it in diplomatic circles in this country for many years, served as president of the island senate since 1916, and will in all likelihood be its first president.

The dapper little diplomat, somewhere about sixty years of age, admitted that his nation was setting out on a great adventure and would probably make mistakes.

"What nation does not?" he asked. "But we have been prepared for our adventure by a great republic. We have trusted you in the past and have been rewarded for our trust. We have depended upon you and we have not been disappointed. We know that we can count upon you in the future."

Mentioned as a possible candidate to oppose Quezon for the presidency is Aguinaldo, the same Emilio Aguinaldo who led the revolts and guerilla warfare more than thirty years ago. Quezon then was his trusted lieutenant.

WAY OFF TO ONE SIDE
A country storekeeper from Missouri visited New York city recently. On his return, he was the center of attraction around the stove in his store the first evening. "New York is some town all right," he told his listeners. "Cars scootin' like lightning over yer head, dash-burned long trains a-divin' underground, buildin's so blamed high ye can't see the tops of 'em, millions o' miles o' paved streets, an' autos a-chasin' ye all over the street. It's a big town, all right, as I say, but it'll never be a success. It's too fur away."

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5.25-18 9.20	5.25-18 8.40	5.25-18 7.60	4.75-19 5.55
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