

THE INDEPENDENCE MISSION 1919: INDEPENDENCE LIES AHEAD

HONESTO A. VILLANUEVA *

THE FILIPINOS HAD COOPERATED WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE WAR efforts of the United States in the First World War. Independence agitation was suspended temporarily. But when hostilities ended, the silence that they had imposed upon themselves became useless. Once again the demand for liberty and independence took a new form of vigor with the creation of a Commission of Independence on November 7, 1918 by the Philippine Legislature. The duty of the Commission was to study and make recommendations as to the proper steps to be taken to secure independence from the United States.¹

The Filipino people understood the then prevailing trend of international politics and the principle of self-determination which was popular during the Wilson administration. The Philippine Legislature therefore sent a special independence mission to Washington, D.C.² Governor General Harrison informed the War Department that the Philippine Legislature in their joint resolution on November 11, 1918, authorized the sending of a Commission to the United States composed of the President of the Senate, the Secretary of Commerce and Communication, Senators and Representatives and a small group of businessmen. The resolution reads: "The special task of the Commission during its stay in the United States will be to endeavor by every means in its power to advance the excellent relations and mutual confidence now existing between the Americans and the Filipino people and to encourage the further development of the commercial relations between both countries on a broad liberal and permanent foundation." . . . The Governor General further requested: "Please give me your views on the subject. I am advised also that the Commission will hope to take up with the President if agreeable to him, the question of fixing a date for Philippine independence with which idea I am in full accord."³

In a short cablegram from Manila, November 13, 1918, Harrison stated: "the Commission authorized by the Philippine Legislature as reported in my telegram of November 11th will start for the United States

* Former Professor of History and Chairman, Department of History, University of the Philippines.

¹ "Delegations of Filipinos to the United States," BIA, File No. 26480/97.

² Grayson Kirk, *Philippine Independence Motives, Problems and Prospects*, 48.

³ Harrison to the Secretary of War Baker, November 11, 1918, "Delegations of Filipinos to the United States," BIA, File No. with 26480/after 20.

in a few days, and I have requested the Commanding General and he has given his consent that the Commission go on transport Sherman here about November 20th. May I ask whether this may have the approval of the department?"⁴

An immediate reply of the Secretary of War, was requested to the cablegram dated November 13. The Reply was: "Confidential. Referring to telegram from your office of the 13th instant, Secretary of War requests that the Commission defer sailing until he can confer with the President."⁵

A further cablegram on November 15, was sent to Harrison. This communication gave the Manila Office a further explanation of the possible postponement of the sending a Commission of independence at this period when the President of the United States was so crowded with matters pertaining to the armistice which had just been signed.

On the 15th of November, a "confidential" cable was sent to the Governor-General by the Secretary of War. It reads: "Referring to telegram from your office of the 14th instant, Secretary of War finds the President so surrounded and immersed with problem arising with close of war and with peace conference that he finds himself in embarrassing position through the necessity of being unable to give to the Philippine Committee the necessary time for discussion and consideration of their affairs. The Secretary, while not desiring to be ungracious or inhospitable or not out of harmony with the purpose of the visit, is taking further advantage of the loyalty and support of the Filipino peoples, with the expectation that they will give this additional evidence of their belief that their interests are safe in the hands of the President, by expressing the hope that the Committee defer its visit until conditions are more favorable."⁶

At the moment when the Filipinos, through their Legislature, decided to send an independence mission, Governor-General Harrison sent to the President of the United States his most faithful confidential letter that embodied his views with respect to the question of definitely settling the independence issue. Since he had not been asked to express his opinion on the subject, the Governor-General wrote an official letter marked "confidential" and made a further remark saying, "I trust that you will not think it officious on my part to offer my views in advance of their being asked for."⁷

This letter is worth quoting to show that Harrison had certified that the Filipinos had now fulfilled the requirements for independence as set by the Jones Law in 1916.

"My dear Mr. President: The Philippine Legislature has just authorized by joint resolution the sending of a commission of Filipinos to the

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Baker to Harrison, November 14, 1918, *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Harrison to Wilson, November 13, 1918, BIA, File No. . . . pt. 2, 364/342.

United States for the purpose of advancing the excellent relations and mutual confidence now existing between the American and the Filipino peoples and to encourage the further development of the commercial relations between both countries. This commission is headed by the President of the Senate, Honorable Manuel L. Quezon and includes some of the leading men in public life and commerce. I am advised that, if considered convenient by you, they will take up with you the question of definitely settling the independence of the Philippines, and as I am not to be in Washington at the time of their expected conference with you, I take the liberty of submitting to you my views on that subject.

“Upon the passage by Congress of the Act of August 26, 1916, known as the Jones Law, the Filipino people set to work to establish here the form of government authorized by that law in accordance with the requirements of the preamble of which it was declared to be the intention of the United States to give the Filipinos their independence when a stable government shall have been established. Two sessions of the new Legislature organized pursuant to that Act have passed, and a third one is now in session; for more than two years past the executive offices, known as the Cabinet, have been in operation under Filipino direction, with the exception of the Department of Public Instruction, of which under the law the Vice Governor, who is an American, is in charge. Filipinization of the service generally has taken place very rapidly, especially since the passage in 1915 of the Osmeña Retirement Act, under which many Americans left the service under favorable financial consideration, and also as a result of the demand for many of our active younger Americans for the military service of the United States during the war. Today and for some time past the government may be said to be a Filipino government, with the exception of the positions of Governor General, Vice Governor, and a majority of the Supreme Court, the bulk of the Americans remaining in the service otherwise being in the teaching profession, either in the public schools or in the University, or in scientific and technical positions. The forty-five provinces are almost entirely under Filipino Governors and provincial boards, and so are the eight hundred municipalities, as they have been nearly from the beginning of the establishment of municipal governments in the Islands under the American system. It is, therefore, in my opinion entirely proper to state that the stable government now existing in the Philippine Islands is for the most part a stable government of Filipinos by Filipinos, and I believe that the time has come when the people of the Islands are prepared to qualify for independence under the terms prescribed in the preamble of the Jones Law.

“For the past two years or more comparatively little has been heard from the Filipinos as to their aspirations for independence, but this in no way indicates a lessening of their ambition and desires in that respect; it is rather due, first, to the absorption they have felt in the establishment

and working out of the nearly autonomous form of government authorized by the Jones Law and, secondly and above all from a sincere and universal desire on the part of the Filipino people and their leaders not to raise any question which might be misconstrued as embarrassing to the United States when our country was at war. It was no doubt moreover felt that even though our country was not so engaged, the existence of the war in which almost all the nations of the world were involved was a time inopportune for a comparatively small country to ask for its independence. The recent indications of the speedy termination of the war, followed by the news today that a general armistice has been concluded, has inspired the Philippine Legislature to believe that they would now be relieved of any reproach if they raise the question of independence. I have advised the people here on several occasions that the very essence of the war was the right of small nations to independent existence, free from aggression by the governments of larger countries; your wonderful addresses on the causes of the war, which have been published all over the world, have made that issue clear to every one, and the Filipinos have been correspondingly encouraged as to their own chances for the future. It has seemed to me that your tremendous influence in the council of peace will be felt even more decisively as to the rights and status of the subject people who are now ruled by alien monarchs, if our own Philippine question is definitely settled by Congressional enactment.

“The steady evolution of ability for self-government in the Philippines which is so marked in the eyes of all observers here, has no doubt passed almost unnoticed by the rest of the world when events of such tremendous importance were engaging the attention of all great countries. To those of us, however, who have been at work here in the Philippines it is intensely gratifying to see the undoubted ability which the Filipinos have displayed in executive office as well as in their legislative and judicial duties. The habit of executive decision has grown very firmly in those who have been entrusted with the exercise of those duties, and considering the very complex and varied questions which have come before this country during recent years, the generally high average of successful handling of public questions by the Filipinos themselves is deserving of universal commendation. Most of the doubts and fears expressed by critics of our progressive concessions to the Filipinos have been relegated to the past, and while it would be difficult to assert that any government ever set up by man is perfectly satisfactory in every respect, I will be glad to have the operations and achievements of the Filipinos in public office subjected to the most severe scrutiny without any fear of the judgment of any impartial observer as to their general integrity, patriotism, self-control and wisdom in the disposition of public matters. From a close association with the Filipinos and their representative men over a period of more than five years, I have no hesitation now in stating that I consider the Filipino

people capable of conducting an independent government and that I believe that the concession to them of independence would best promote their own happiness and welfare.

"It has been very gratifying to us here to have you make public recognition from time to time of the loyalty of the Filipinos to the American cause during the war; that loyalty is deep, genuine and universal in the Philippines. It is based upon the recognition of what the United States had done specifically for the Philippine people and, also, upon an appreciation of what the United States is fighting for in this war as expressed on many public occasions by yourself. I think that in their offer and organization of a division for the military service, in their loan of a destroyer and a submarine to our Navy, in their response to liberty loans and Red Cross appeals, the Filipinos have made visible demonstration of their attitude towards our country. It is reserved perhaps to those of us who had the privilege of serving here with them in the Philippines to know how deep seated, sincere and spontaneous their gratitude to us and their loyalty to our flag really is.

"I hope it may be possible for you to receive the commission sent to our country by the Philippine Legislature and that they may be accorded the privilege of discussing with you the independence question; I trust, also, that it may seem to you wise to submit that question to Congress now for final determination for I hope and believe that our Congress, in accordance with the promise made in 1916, should and will now definitely settle the independence of the Philippines. If it should seem wise to Congress also to grant to the new Philippine Government something in the nature of the Platt amendment, I feel confident that the rights and interests of the inhabitants themselves will appear secure beyond question in the eyes of all the outside world."⁸

This famous confidential letter embodied Harrison's true belief that the Filipinos should be free. From a close association with the Filipinos and their representatives for a period of five years, Harrison had no hesitation in saying that the Filipino people were a people capable of self-government and that independence would best promote their own happiness and welfare. He hoped that the United States Congress would consider a new Philippine Government something akin to that of the Republic of Cuba as American protectorate.

Harrison further communicated with the War Department explaining the main purpose of the Independence Mission under consideration. On November 19, he cabled Secretary of War Baker, stating that both houses of the Legislature, wished him to transmit at their request the following message: "The main purpose of the Philippine Mission was to secure from the United States the final adjustment of matters affecting our national independence. This mission could have been sent some time ago but the

⁸ *Ibid.*

war in which America was engaged and this noble issue in which we have given our unqualified indorsement did not permit us to take such a step. The hostilities having ended with the victory of American arms and ideals, our duty called upon us to act, hence, the Joint Resolution unanimously passed by the Philippine Legislature providing that a special mission be sent to the United States. The Filipino people, which demand of its representatives these final steps, is earnestly desirous to establish its own independent government, not alone as the only fitting culmination of its efforts on behalf of its ideals of liberty and democracy, but also as a practical corollary of the principles of self-government enunciated and reiterated by the President of the United States in his war message. The mission is now organized and has decided to sail on the *Manoa* due in San Francisco about the seventh of next month. This is publicly known and it has received the cordial approval of the whole country. In view, however, of the suggestions of the War Department transmitted to us by the Governor-General four days ago . . . we are ready to defer to his wishes by postponing for the time being the trip of the Mission. We are mindful of the grave responsibility we are assuming before the Filipino people in delaying the execution of a demand in which we are involved its most vital interests, but we take this step after full deliberation, without misgivings, because of our firm conviction that the President already has a plan that will satisfy the National aspirations of the Filipino people, which we have on repeated occasions presented to the Government of the United States, and that the execution of such plan in so far as the Government of the United States is concerned is assured, during the present administration. In view of these facts and so that we may submit the point of view of the Filipino people, would the President allow us to hope that he will find opportunity to confer and deliberate with the Filipino Mission as to details, as soon as it may be compatible with the most pressing war matters of the Government of the United States. As authorized spokesmen of our people we would not properly express its feelings if we did not take advantage of this opportunity to say that the Filipino people is profoundly grateful to the United States for her encouraging promises of independence, and for the assurances now reiterated all confirming our faith that the interests of the Filipino people are safe in the hands of President Wilson.”⁹

With the postponement of the projected departure of the Philippine Mission for the United States, the War Department in a cablegram to Manila, January 29, 1919 informed the Governor-General that the Mission

⁹ Harrison to the Secretary of War, November 19, 1918, BIA, File No. Copy, pt. 2, copy 364/342-A; See also BIA, File No. with 26480/after 29; BIA, File No. 36480/14½. This confidential memorandum for the Governor-General was submitted by a joint statement of Osmeña and Quezon, Manila, November 19, 1918. Memo for the Governor, BIA, File No. 26480/14.

may be able to take the next available transport sailing from Manila. The instruction stated that a rush answer should be made.¹⁰

Senate President Manuel L. Quezon who was then in New York with his secretaries cabled Osmeña on January 31, 1919 with reference to the sailing of the Philippine Mission which by then had been approved by the War Department. He asked Osmeña that the Mission should all go to the United States in one transport. The reason for all of them to go in one group was to avoid issuing any statement to the Press until the Mission has seen the President. This can be best accomplished to bring the Mission on the transport because it would stop only in Guam, Honolulu and San Francisco where he would then meet them. "There should be the understanding that no one is to say anything except the head of the Mission," said Senate President Quezon, "and he can only give to the Press the resolution verbatim of the Philippine Legislature authorizing the trip of the Mission until after the conference with the President, in which case, the head of the Mission may say what the President authorized to say. If for lack of comfort on the transport some prefer merchant vessels tell them there are no accommodation for all and they should come together. You assure them of the courteous treatment by the officers of the transport."¹¹

Manuel L. Quezon also mentioned the members of the Mission like: Rafael Palma, Dionicio Jakosalem, Senator Liongson, Senator Singson, Senator Gabaldon (if he wishes), Ramon Fernandez, Mauro Prieto, Tomas Earnshaw, Juan Allegre, Pablo Ocampo, Gabriel La O, Quintin Paredes (atty. general), Aldanese, collector of customs, Maximo Kalaw (Secretary), Arsenio Luz, Alejandro Roces, Francisco Varona, Pedro Gil and Evangelista for the labor man. He had the complete hand to select the members of the Mission.

Vice-Governor General Yeater in his cable to the Secretary of War on February 15, 1919, informed him that the Commission sailed for San Francisco, on February 14, with the names mentioned above as well as others. The complete list of the Commission was not published until three days before its departure. Added to the names mentioned above as selected by Quezon were those of Representative Rafael Alunan, Gregorio Nieva, Jose Reyes, Delfin Mahinay, Ceferino de Leon, Jorge Bocobo, Conrado Benitez, Enrique Altevas, Jose A. Santos, and Camilo Osias.

An impressive farewell demonstration was held by the people to honor the Mission. On the morning of their departure, the Malecom Drive was filled by multitudes, and the military authorities temporarily suspended the order against public entry into the area between Malecom and the military pier where the transport Sherman was anchored. It was noteworthy that

¹⁰ Delegations of Filipinos to the United States, BIA, File No. with 26480/after 29.

¹¹ Quezon to Osmeña, January 31, 1919, BIA, File No. with 26480/after 29. These names above were enumerated by Quezon in his letter to Osmeña, dated January 30, 1919, writing from Hotel Belmont, New York. See BIA, File No. 26480/22.

no public manifestation was requested, and there was sufficient time for an organized effort in that respect. However, the general public gathered spontaneously in an orderly manner at the pier without any previous planning. The demonstration was considered at that time as the greater show of mass-support for Philippine Independence. The members of the Mission declined all invitations to social functions, except the one for banquet tendered by the Chamber of Commerce on the eve of their departure.¹²

On this occasion Secretary Rafael Palma, temporary head of the Commission, expressed in forceful logic the desired expansion of commercial relations between America and the Philippines, and the preservation and cultivation of the friendly ties binding the two peoples. The Speaker also said that there was a great field for the investment of American capital and he also expressed himself cordially the loyalty of the Filipinos to the United States during the world war, the resulting ovation was such that it touched the hearts of every American present. The language of the Speaker was as follows:

“The world has contemplated the moving spectacle of the American flag waving free and *undisputed* over these remote islands not by the aggressive imposition of material force which *barely expressed* but through the sincere and spontaneous esteem of the determined and united support of the entire Philippine people.”¹³

Vice-Governor-General Yeater said in turn: “The members undertaking the Commission have shown exceptional discretion. They have not only renounced all banquets, public or political, tendered, but also, in spite of the insistence of newspapermen, in no instance gave out any information, whatever, of the political objects of the mission. To present properly the facts of the matter, I should say too that the people here hope that this mission will accomplish a final arrangement for the independence of the Islands to some concrete form and this impression is brought to me by those who come from the province, and has been clearly stated in private conversation with the most influential person who resort to the Ayuntamiento and by those who came to the pier to wish success to the voyagers. . . . I can say that there is planted deep in the hearts of Filipinos a feeling of confidence in the generosity, justice and altruism of the American people and that they feel sure that those leaving on this expedition will effect a satisfactory adjustment of the future status of these Islands.”¹⁴

Such was the true picture of the departure of the Independence Mission as described by Vice-Governor General Yeater, that the people were hopeful of the happy return of the Commission to bring home a new order of government in this far-flung colony of the United States. The way to

¹² Yeater to the Secretary of War (Baker), February 15, 1919, BIA, File No. 26480/28.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

independence was now clear. The Filipinos expected that independence was near at hand.

The mission arrived in Washington, D.C. on the 3rd of April 1919 when President Wilson was still in Paris. This mission was provided with "A Declaration of Purposes" for guidance. This declaration pointed out that the Filipinos "do not need to repeat the declaration regarding the national aspirations of the Filipino people. Such declarations have been made from time to time in the most frank and solemn manner by the constitutional representatives of the Philippine nation and a matter of permanent record in public documents covering more than a decade of persistent efforts particularly during the last three years. America, on her part, has been sufficiently explicit in her purpose from the beginning of her occupation of the Philippines. . . .

"In submitting the Philippine question to the government and people of the United States, whether directly or otherwise, the Independence Commission will find it unnecessary to refer to the natural acerbity of the situation, or to the anxiety of our people which two decades of occupation have served to accentuate. The steadfastness of our position is not due to the sentimental nature, but of the justice of our cause, sanctified by the 'Laws of God and Nature' not only, best admitted in the promises solemnly made by the United States and accepted by the Philippines."¹⁵

The Declaration of Purposes recited the policies of the Republican Party and finally on March 4, 1913, a change of administration from Republican to Democratic took place. Harrison told the Filipinos of the message of President Wilson informing them of the policy of giving the Filipinos a greater participation in the government and every step taken towards ultimate independence. The Jones Law was finally signed on August 29, 1916, which promised the independence of the Philippines. It further cited the development of education, sanitation, public works, transportation, agriculture, commerce and industry; the establishment of the Civil Service and the independent Judiciary. Finally, the Commission was to be guided now with only one goal: *Independence*; and one instruction: *to get it*.¹⁶

There was also a further instruction to the Philippine Mission dated March 17, 1919 asking it to convey to the Government of the United

¹⁵ "Resolution on March 8, 1919 of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines, in Joint Session Assembled, Adopting a Declaration of Purposes for Guidance of the Independence Commission." BIA, File No. . . pt. 2, copy 364/348; See also "Declaration of Purposes" Publications of the Independence Mission, Bulletin No. I, (March 1919).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* This "Declaration of Purposes" was carefully drafted and contained a resume of all the facts and principles supporting the aspirations of the Philippine Islands for independence, the Legislature expressed in such deep statement the deep everlasting gratitude of the Filipino people to the American people for their altruism and generosity and for having assisted the Filipinos reaching at their present prosperity and preparedness for assuming the full responsibilities of free government. The Filipinos during this period were so sure of themselves of American goodness and altruism leading them towards the goals of independence, but did they know that they were being "hood-winked" by American business interests of Wall Street?

States the assurance of goodwill, friendship, and gratitude of the Filipino people and to submit the question of independence with a view of final settlement. It called the attention of the Government of the United States to the summary of facts and propositions contained in the "Declaration of Purposes" approved by the Philippine Legislature on March 8, 1919. This instruction further asked the Mission to have a frank exchange of views with the officials in Washington in order to achieve promptly a definite adjustment of details and the civilization and execution of the independence plans in accordance with the principles already established and agreed upon with the United States.

Since the world war was now over and the victorious nation was busily engaged in applying the principles that emerged triumphant from the conflict, the mission was also instructed to submit the independence question to the United States, or even to any other competent world tribunal for settlement. The Filipinos were even willing to discuss the terms of independence and the scope of the covenants necessary to guarantee the safety and stability of the new state and to establish and maintain such external relations, especially with America, as may be equitable and beneficial and as the circumstances may demand. The Commission had in mind that the Philippines should join a concert of powers to guarantee the independence of weak powers. The commission members further instructed, that if independence was granted to make the country a safe place where law and order, justice and liberty prevail; where Americans and foreigners as well as nationals may live peacefully in the pursuit of happiness and prosperity and in the enjoyment of their property as well as of their rights and their liberty.¹⁷

On April 4, 1919, Manuel L. Quezon, Chairman of the Independence Commission made his remarks, addressed to the Secretary of War. He said:

"The Philippine Legislature at the behest of the Filipino people sent this Mission to the United States bearing the message of good will, gratitude, and respect from all the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands. As chairman of this Mission, I deem it a great honor to convey the message to the Government and people of the American Republic.

"The Philippine Mission, Mr. Secretary, is here charged with a high and solemn obligation. It is enjoined with a noble and sacred trust. It is instructed to present the great cause so essential and necessary to the happiness and existence of the entire Filipino people. I refer to our national birthright to be free and independent. We, therefore, formally submit hereby the vital and urgent question of Philippine Independence to you, and through you, to the Government of the United States in the confident hope that it shall merit a just, righteous, and final settlement.

"Independence is the great national ideal of the Filipino people. The members of the Philippine Mission here, representing all elements of Phil-

¹⁷ Instruction from the Philippine Commission to the Philippine Mission, March 17, 1919, BIA, File No. pt. 2, with 364/348.

ilippine life, are and all, ready to testify to the absolute truth of this assertion. We believe that this is the proper time to present the question, looking to a favorable and decisive action, because of the declared and uniform policy of America to withdraw her sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize our independence as soon as a stable government in the Philippines managed and supported by the people themselves, and that it can and will be maintained under an independent Philippine government, the testimony of your own official representatives, Governor-General Harrison and Acting Governor-General Yeater, will bear out. The fulfillment of this solemn promise you owe to yourselves, to us, and to humanity at large.

“We also find inspiration and justification for our decision to appeal at this time to the government and people of the United States for the granting of our independence in the declaration of principles for the preservation of which America in the recent World War held life and property cheap. America fought ‘for the liberty, the self-government, and the undictated development of all peoples,’ and cheerfully assumed her full share in the war ‘for the liberation of peoples everywhere.’ The American people were willing to dedicate their lives and their fortunes, everything that they were and everything that they had, for the things you have always carried nearest your hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Government, *for the rights and liberties of small nations.*’ Mr. Secretary, may I be permitted to recall at this juncture that in fighting for so high and noble ideals the Filipino people have stood by you during the critical years of the gigantic struggle and, to a man, were ready, nay anxious, to shed their blood, side by side with your own soldiers?

“I beg leave to place in your hands, Mr. Secretary, a document I have with me. It contains instructions of the Philippine Legislature to the Independence Commission to present the question of independence to the United States, and amply sets forth our bases for appealing for independent national existence. Mr. Secretary, will it be necessary to repeat what we have always been pleased to recognize that, with the helping hand of the United States, the Philippines saw prosperity and progress unprecedented? Through the joint labor of Americans and Filipinos, the history of your occupation of the Islands is replete with achievements great, and results splendid. You have truly treated us as no nation has ever before treated another under its sway. And yet you—and none better than you—will understand why, even under such conditions, our people still crave independence, that they, too, may be sovereign masters of their own destinies.

“Sir, when our national independence shall be granted us, the world will know that the people of America are indeed ‘bearers of the good will, the protection, and the richest blessings of a liberating rather than a con-

quering nation,' and that it was *our* liberty, not *your* power, *our* welfare not *your* gain you sought to enhance in the Philippines." ¹⁸

After Quezon's speech, the Secretary of War delivered to the Mission his following rejoinder. He said: "Senator, Mr. Governor-General and gentlemen of the Philippine Delegation: My first duty is to convey to you an expression of the President's regret at his absence from Washington at the time of your visit. When it was first suggested that the mission should come to the United States, the President foresaw his absence and caused me to suggest the visit be deferred in the hope that he might be personally here when the mission came and have the opportunity to meet you and hear your views, and express his own. It has turned out, however, that his engagements in Europe required his return there, and so he is unable to be in Washington now to receive you. He left a letter addressed to me which he asked me to read to you." ¹⁹

The letter reads: "Dear Mr. Secretary; Will you please express to the gentlemen of the Commission representing the Philippine Legislature my regret that I shall be unable to see them personally on their arrival in Washington, as well as my hope that their mission will be a source of satisfaction to them and that it will result in bringing about the desirable ends set forth in the Joint Resolution of the Legislature approving the sending of the Commission to the United States.

"I have been deeply gratified with the constant support and encouragement received from the Filipino people and from the Philippine Legislature in the trying period through which we are passing. The people of the United States have, with reason, taken the deepest pride in the loyalty and support of the Filipino people.

"Though unable to meet the Commission, the Filipino people shall not be absent from my thought. Not the least important labor of the conference which now requires my attendance is that of making the pathway of the weaker people of the world less perilous—a labor which should be, and doubtless is, of deep and abiding interest to the Filipino people.

"I am sorry that I cannot look into the faces of the gentlemen of this Mission from the Philippine Islands and tell them all that I have in my mind and heart as I think of the patient labor, *with the end almost in sight*, undertaken by the American and Filipino people for their permanent benefit. I know, however, that your sentiments are mine in this regard and that you will translate truly to them my own feelings."²⁰

This was one of the last letters of President Woodrow Wilson to the people of the Philippines and the Philippine Legislature. He foresaw that

¹⁸ Address of Manuel L. Quezon to the Secretary of War, April 4, 1919 in the War Department. The Secretary was in on the whole affair, See BIA, File No. pt. 3, Copy 3, Copy 364-348; also see Quezon Papers, Box 43 (Manila).

¹⁹ Quezon to Osmeña, April 4, 1919, copy of cable, BIA, File No. pt. 2, 364/348.

²⁰ Wilson to Baker, March 3, 1919, BIA, File No. pt. 2, with 364/348. The underscoring is mine.

independence of a dependent people like the Filipinos was almost in sight. But he did not see the day of their independence. Harrison did see the day of independence that they sponsored in the realm and power of the Democratic party. However, Harrison attended the inauguration of the Republic of the Philippines in July 1946.

The Filipino Mission sent a letter of response to President Wilson who was then in Paris. This letter was very commendable to a great statesman and a friend of Filipino independence. Manuel L. Quezon sent this message to Wilson in the name of the Philippine Independence Mission. It reads:

“President Woodrow Wilson, Paris: The Philippine Mission in Washington, bearing a message of good will, respect and gratitude from all the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands to the Government and people of the United States, regret their inability to convey this message to you in person, but are happy and gratified at the reassuring statements you left in the hands of the Secretary of War which were delivered to them on the occasion of their official visit to the Secretary of War.

“The Filipino people are gratefully conscious of what you have done and are doing in their behalf and of your efforts to secure for them as for the rest of mankind, the blessings of Liberty, Justice and Democracy. The avowed policy of the United States to grant the Philippine independence which has brought about friendly and affectionate relations between the Americans and Filipino people and won for the United States the unqualified support and loyal cooperation of the Philippines during the war is not only a positive evidence of the faith of the American people in the principle of self-government, but it is also an object lesson of the world.

“In the name of the Filipino people as well as in our own, we beg to express to you our cordial and respectful greetings wishing you success in the noble task you have before you in helping to bring about a just and lasting peace to the world based upon the right of every people, whether great or small, to have an independent existence and enjoy free and unhampered self-development.

“It will be a pleasure to the Mission to communicate to the people of the Philippine Islands your message as transmitted by the Secretary of War and your own feeling and translated by him, which we are sure, will instill in them fresh hope and will evoke in their hearts feeling of deep gratitude.”²¹

On April 18, 1919, Quezon sent Osmeña a summary of the achievements of the Independence Mission. He made the opening statement that “In every respect the Mission had made good. The American people know now, and have learned with undisguised gratification, pride and appreciation of the friendly sentiments of the Filipino people toward them. They are fully informed of the evidence we have given especially during the war, and

²¹ Quezon to Wilson, April 5, 1919, BIA, File No. pt. 3, 364/349-A; also see Quezon Papers (Manila).

the sincerity of these sentiments and nothing we could have said or done would have had so wholesome an effect upon the public opinion to prepare it for sympathetic hearing of our plea.”²²

Quezon went further to say that the interests of commercial organizations have been aroused. These commercial groups even went out of their way to entertain these missions.

As far as the independence question was concerned, the mission upon its arrival in Washington sought an official visit to and was received by the Secretary of War. The President being in Paris, the Secretary of War received the Mission accompanied by the Chief of Staff, the Assistant Chief of Staff, the Governor-General of the Philippines, and the Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, General McIntyre.

Soon after greetings were exchanged Quezon discussed the purpose of the Mission and delivered to the Secretary the “Joint Resolution of the Philippine Legislature and the Instructions of the Philippine Independence Commission” and the Secretary received it. Later, Secretary Baker read to them the message of the President already referred to.

President Manuel L. Quezon of the Philippine Senate informed Osmeña that the Mission was able to obtain a frank and explicit declaration of the stand of the administration on the question of independence. The administration did not only confirm this policy of ultimate independence but it went further—it admitted that all was ready for the granting of independence. “This fact alone” said Quezon, “would justify the trip of the Mission to secure a formal recognition on the part of the authorities in Washington that condition in the Philippines are ripe for the granting of independence.”²³

The Chairman of the Mission was so convinced of the total affectionate effects of having succeeded in awakening the interests of the American people with respect to the Filipino problems and consequently, the consideration of Congress of the Philippines would have been postponed. The Philippine Legislature had done well in sending the Mission at this very time. Quezon was very optimistic of the goodness of our relations with the ruling country. It seemed to him that independence was so near, that independence lies clear ahead as envisioned by President Wilson. But both men were wrong. They relied too much on their optimism. The Republican Party was then in the helm of power again and it was next to impossible to convince them that a stable government had been established in so short a period after the Jones Law was enacted. The Republicans reverted once again to their earlier slogan that Filipinos were incapable of ruling themselves or incapable of self-government.²⁴ It had so succeeded that independence was postponed until a later period in 1946.

²² Quezon to Osmeña, April 18, 1919, Quezon Papers (Manila).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Supra*: Chapters V and VI. These Chapters V and VI are in my prepared manuscript ready for publication—“The Foundations of Filipino-American Relations 1898-1921” University of the Philippines (1971).

It seems as if the Anti-Imperialist League was altogether not very pleased with the Filipinos creating a Commission of Independence to go to America and work for independence after they had sensed the result of the election of November 1918 in the United States. The Filipinos had in a few days after the election passed a new "Resolve," and stated that their only object was to foster friendly commercial relations with possible investors, to be sought diligently, and as a clan always unfriendly to independence, to receive of course assurance that there would be now no "political agitation." The Filipinos therefore had executed a "volti-face", says Mr. Erving Winslow, the Secretary of the Anti-Imperialist League in Boston. Winslow further said: "Careful language is used because of the desire for independence cannot be swallowed whole at once, but the promoters are to be assured that the whole independence question is to be put in 'cold storage'. Before this resolve was passed we were asked to help! Probably now, since nothing is left but the name and every new investor will drive a nail into the coffin of liberty, we shall not be expected to do so. Had we not better make terms to hold our peace for the sake of a few 'ground floor' shares in the 'Rizal Oil Co.,' E. Aguinaldo, Chairman of Directorate."²⁵ The Anti-Imperialist League now felt that the Independence Commission had turned about face to the good old noble movement to be free from the hands of the big business interests in America or rather in Wall Street.

While the Mission was in Washington, Secretary of War and Mrs. Baker gave them a reception on Saturday, April 6. To this reception prominent guests were invited to meet the members of the Mission such as the prominent members of the Cabinet, generals and other army officers, members of the Senate and House of Representatives and other personages in the social and political circles of Washington. On Friday, April 5, the Mission tendered a luncheon in honor of the Secretary. Mr. Quezon acted as a toastmaster and in proposing to the health of the Secretary of War, spoke of the purposes of the Mission and the gratification of the Mission at the encouraging words of both the President and the Secretary of War. Mr. Baker answered, reiterating his former declarations officially made to the Mission. Other speakers were Mr. Mondell, the future majority leader of the House of Representatives; Senator Hitchcock, Secretary Palma, Mr. Osias and Mr. Abad Santos. Both Representative Mondell and Senator Hitchcock spoke in support of the realization of Filipino ideals. Palma discussed the stability of the Government, Osias of the progress of education and Abad Santos of the desires of the young generation of Filipinos to see the Philippines independent.

On the night of April 7, a banquet was given by the Committee on Entertainments in honor of the Mission. On behalf of the Committee, those present were Mr. Fairchild, an American business tycoon in the Philippines, Lowenstein, and Pardee of Wall Street who had big business interests in

²⁵ Winslow to Baker, March 14, 1918, BIA, File No. 26480/38.

the Philippines. Mr. Fairchild acted as toastmaster. The speech of welcome was made by Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison, and Manuel L. Quezon, Chairman of the Mission, gave the response. Other speakers were Dionicio Jakosalem, Philippine Secretary of Commerce and Communication, who spoke of the commercial progress of the Philippines, Mr. Camilo Osias, of the economic side of education, and Dean Bocobo, of the aspirations of the Filipino people. On the part of the Americans, the speakers were Representative Towner, Chairman on the Committee on Insular Affairs, followed by ex-Representative Miller and ex-Representative Cooper. Cooper once again recited Rizal's *Last Thoughts*.

The Mission had received many courtesies of the War Department since their arrival. Mrs. Harrison, the mother of Governor-General Harrison gave a reception to the Mission. Mrs. Harrison was a novelist and a writer of Virginia and considered very wealthy and prominent in Washington circles. The Mission was understood to have visited the tombs of Washington, William Atkinson Jones who had just recently passed away, and Theodore Roosevelt who died that February 1919.

The newspapers of the United States according to Quezon's observation were commenting on the visit of the Philippine Independence Mission favorably and from every side they heard reports that the Mission was producing very good effects upon public opinion. The letter of the President and the remarks of the Secretary of War to the Mission were indorsed by many important papers.²⁶

Later on June 2, 1919, the Philippine Independence Mission was given an open hearing by the Joint Committees of the Senate and House Representatives, and the Chairman of the Committee on Insular Affairs, Hon. Horace M. Towner, who presided over the meeting. In the open hearing he (Towner) asked Senator Harding, Chairman of the Senate Committee to preside, but the latter declined. In the opening remarks, the chairman of the Committee told the Mission that they should be frank to say what they desired to say. The joint hearing wanted to be given information regarding the existing conditions in the Philippines. They wanted to know further the progress the Filipinos had achieved. They wanted to know in the way of Legislation that would affect their interests, not only politically but economically and socially; or anything that they would make for the betterment of the people. One of the most important statements made by Mr. Towner was "You understand without my telling you, that there is an insistent demand for very pressing and very important legislation, and unless you press your demand it is not likely that they will receive consideration."²⁷

²⁶ Quezon to Osmeña, April 8, 1919, BIA, File No. 26480/62. The marginal note says: "Costly: Send an open message and get on the wire as soon as possible 4/9/1919."

²⁷ *Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines, United States Senate and the Committee on Insular Affairs House of Representatives*, held jointly. (Washington Government Printing Office, 1919) 4-5.

Towner went further by saying: "We want to know what you want, what you desire. The people of the United States haven't anything but the most kindly feeling and cordial wishes for your success, and if we can help you in any way we want to do it. We want to be in a position to at least consider what you think ought to be done, and we want you to feel perfectly free, as I said before, to make your statements in your own way, without any reservation, without any hesitancy, with no feeling that you are asking a favor, but with the consciousness that you are here by right and that we would give you a fair and impartial hearing upon not only this occasion but upon all others." These words of Congressman Towner were so full of wisdom and frankness to the Filipino Mission, that they were encouraged very much by American altruism and fairness.

Hence Manuel L. Quezon, the Chairman of the Philippine Mission of Independence was quick to say in these hearings, and with great counsel that: "So large and representative a body has come to you charged by our people with the noble and sacred Mission of pleading for the national independence of the Philippine Islands. The Filipinos feel that the time has come when steps should be taken immediately by the Government of the United States for the recognition of the sovereignty of the Filipino people over their own country. It is, I think, the first time in the history of the world where a country under the sovereignty of another seeks its separation from the latter not on the ground of grievances or abuses that call for redress but rather on the ground that the work of the ruling country has been so well and nobly performed that it is no longer necessary she should still direct the destinies of her colony; and so the colony, with love and gratitude for the governing country, seeks her separation. We have nothing but words of praise and appreciation for the work so well performed by the United States, and yet you will readily understand why nothing short of independence would ever fully satisfy our people. The granting of our national freedom at this time is in accordance with the avowed policy of the United States with regard to the Philippine Islands."²⁸

Quezon further traced the policies of the American Presidents from Mckinley to Wilson. Mckinley enunciated that the main purpose of the United States in the Philippine Islands was to help the Filipinos develop an autonomous government so that their independence will be recognized as soon as they could show that they were able to manage their own affairs. Their various declarations all moved towards the development of good government and eventual independence. Finally the Act of Congress, approved by President Wilson on August 29, 1916, made the formal declaration to give the Filipinos their independence as soon as a stable government was established. This was an act for the avowed purpose to finalize their independence.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

After making an extended remark, Mr. Towner, the Chairman of the occasion, asked Quezon if he would allow him to be interrupted. He asked Quezon if the Philippine Legislature had adopted a memorial or petition which they would desire to present to Congress. "Yes," replied Quezon and that he would be pleased to submit the Resolution passed by the Philippine Legislature and the "Instruction of Purposes" submitted to them by the Philippine Commission of Independence.²⁹ These two documents were ordered to be printed in the Congressional Record.

Senator Harding, Chairman of Senate Committee on the Philippines, asked Quezon if he wanted the Committee to construe that the purport of his appeal was to have a complete severance of relations without any provision for a protectorate or anything of that sort. Quezon replied that the Philippine Legislature had not instructed them on that matter. He asserted that the future relations between the two countries would be discussed by their representatives after a congressional legislation has been enacted to recognize Philippine independence. "However" Quezon said: "It might anticipate the assertion that the people of the Philippines are prepared to have the independence of the country recognized by the United States without any protectorate; but if it should be deemed preferable by the United States that some kind of political relationship should exist, we would be willing to accept that. In other words, we shall take independence of the Philippines with or without any protection."³⁰

Senator Harding countered, "the point I am trying to get at is, you are voicing the aspirations of the Filipinos; what is your judgment about that? Do you want to be wholly severed from any connection with the United States in your independence?" Quezon interposed, "Are you asking me my preference or my judgment, Senator?" Senator Harding, replied, "I am asking for your expression or your judgment." Quezon answered: "Perhaps, it might be to the interest of both the United States and the Philippines that some kind of understanding should exist whereby after independence of the islands has been recognized that there shall be some kind of connection between the two countries. But that is merely secondary consideration. . . the most essential thing is that independence of the Philippines be recognized—either absolute independence or independence under the protectorate of the United States."

Senator Harding again said: "Which would your Commission prefer?" "I think", said Quezon, "that the independence of the Philippines under the League is what at the present time appeals to everybody in the Philippines. But if there be no league the Filipinos would like to see the independence of the Philippines recognized and guaranteed by international agreement among the great powers, but if that should not be possible, they want independence anyway."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

One of the last questions of Senator Harding to Quezon was: "Based on your experience as a Delegate in Congress, would you advocate an earnest consideration of this question (Philippine Independence) while the world—and the Senate in particular—are engaged in discussing the League of Nations *is definitely disposed of?*"

Quezon replied that from the standpoint of the Filipinos that was the appropriate time and that was the way the Filipinos looked upon the matter. Then he told Senator Harding that in his long experience in Congress he realized the difficulties of the problem. Again he told Senator Harding that if he is questioned as to the wisdom of immediate independence, as a Filipino, he would immediately ask for it. Because, according to him, European affairs, were in no way related to the immediate recognition of Philippine independence, for this was a matter that was decidedly for the United States Congress to consider. And if there was going to be a League of Nations, he would like that the Philippines be made a member under United States sponsorship. He further answered Harding by saying: "I don't really see any reason for waiting. I think that one joint resolution could grant Philippine Independence and do it in 24 hours if Congress felt like doing it."³¹ Here Quezon presented vigorous plan for independence and answered the questions asked by senators and representatives who were very much interested in the elucidations of the different phases of the Philippine problems. Senator Chamberlain asked Quezon: "What would then happen to the Philippines if within 60 days we absolutely severed relations with the Philippine Islands and recognized their independence? What would happen then?" Quezon replied that all we have to do was to elect the successor of the Governor-General. Chamberlain countered, "You have the machinery in all the provinces. No matter what their language or racial condition is? You think you have the machinery ready to set in motion? Quezon answered, "Yes sir, absolutely. All we need—and we can readily do it in 60 days."³²

Representative Towner countered: "Mr. Quezon," he said, "Let me call your attention to the fact that if you are an independent country you will have to organize an independent government. You have none now, you have no constitution; you have the Organic Act of the United States, but you have no constitution of the Philippine Islands. It would be necessary for you to present the constitution for consideration of your own people and probably for the consideration of Congress."³³ Quezon replied, "I am answering the Senator's practical question."

Senator Nolan, also made this remark, "If I understand you right, your idea is that if we try to apply the principle of self-determination as a practical proposition to all the rest of the world, we ought to be in a position now to apply it to our own territory."³⁴ Quezon replied: "Exactly".

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

Then Senator Phelan of California also said: "And your desire is to have your independence within a reasonable time now, in order that you might make that application for membership in the League of Nations!" "Yes sir," said Quezon. Phelan again said: "Well, you are more familiar than we are with the conditions in Asia. Do you mean to say that you have no fear of outside aggression in the event you are without protection of the United States or the League of Nations?" "We have no fear of outside aggression," said Quezon. "But if there is aggression," said Phelan, "Are you in a position to resist it?" Quezon replied, "I don't mean to say that. It would be too much for a Filipino to say that the Philippine Islands could withstand an attack from a first class power." Phelan said: "Well, it is not good international manner to attack people, but they insinuate themselves by zones of influence. You see that every day in Asia now".³⁵ Quezon seemed to have been struck by this question because he knew that he feared Japan some years before and that he hesitated and confided before to McIntyre in 1913 and 1914 that independence should not be granted for some generations to come.³⁶

Senator Phelan and Quezon also talked about the Japanese in the Philippines. Quezon revealed that the Japanese were migrating to the Philippines and that the Filipinos cannot prevent that, if the Japanese wanted to. "That would be the easiest way of conquest, wouldn't it?" "But Senator", said Quezon, "you are not giving us protection today against that system of conquest. The Japanese are going to the Philippine Islands and taking land there." "The Japanese are?" asked Phelan. And yet Filipinos can not possess land in Japan.

Other members of the Philippine Mission like Palma made their remarks in their open hearings. Palma gave an account in the hearing of the splendid progress made in the Philippine autonomous government and demonstrated its stability. Vicente Singson Encarnacion spoke of the great economic development of the Philippines. Tirona dwelt on the unanimous desire of the Filipinos to be independent as shown by the attitude of the two political parties in the Philippines. Camilo Osias, the assistant director of education, spoke of the magnificent achievements of the people and the government along educational lines. The speeches made during these long series of hearings of the Committee made good impressions.³⁷

Before and after the appearance of the Philippine Independence Mission in the United States, many believed that the Philippine independence question was nearing solution. The remarks of the Chairman of the Joint

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Supra*, Chapter VIII, See manuscript prepared by me ready for publication—"The Foundations of Filipino-American Relations 1898-1921" Univ. of the Philippines (1971).

³⁷ Wolcott (Assistant Chief, Bureau of Insular Affairs) to Yeater, June 3, 1919, BIA, File No. pt. 3, 364/after 354.

Committees, the honorable Horace M. Towner, was enlightening, especially when he told the Mission, "You understand, without my telling you, that there is an insistent demand for every pressing and very important legislation, and unless you press your demand it is not likely that they will receive consideration and we want to know what you want and what you desire." These words were received by the Filipinos with hopes that Philippine independence was near at hand. It seemed as if the solemn covenant expressed by the author of the Jones Law was about to be fulfilled. The Philippine Legislature and the Governor-General made their declarations that the Filipinos had organized a complete administrative machinery as an instrument of a stable government.

Immediately after the Committee Hearings, Representative Mason of Illinois introduced in the House of Representatives House Bill, H.R. 5719 providing for independence during the first session of the 66th Congress on June 3, 1919. This bill was referred to the Committee on Insular Affairs.³⁸ It was ordered printed but the bill was not acted upon.

Another attempt to grant the independence to the Philippines under the Wilson Administration was again planned. Representative Hon. Finis J. Garrett, a high ranking Democrat of Texas wrote Secretary of War Baker of his aim to introduce a bill touching on the Philippine question and what form the bill should be presented. However, he felt that it was wise to defer the filing of the measure until a conference with the Secretary of War was held or until the final form of the bill was submitted to the President upon his return from Paris. In his personal letter to Baker, Representative Garrett confided that he being a ranking Democrat member of the Committee on Insular Affairs, any measure that he may introduce would be construed as, in a sense, a party expression on the question of freeing the Filipinos.³⁹

The Secretary's response to Garrett's letter regarding independence was even more encouraging because it included a fixed date for complete separation. He believed that a resolution should be passed by Congress to give the Filipinos a complete assurance of their freedom. However, he hesitated to press on an immediate resolution until the return of the President and thought he should first confer with him. "Off hand," said the Secretary, "I should say that the thing to do would be to fix a definite date in the future at which independence should be declared, and if I were writing the resolution at this minute I would say that it should be on the anniversary of the battle of Manila falling on the year 1925, and the people of the Philippine Islands . . . in the meantime should select a popular constitutional convention and formulate and adopt a constitution, subject to the approval of the President of the United States, (it may be, however, that the President had entirely different idea on this subject as the result of his

³⁸ *Congress Record*, 66th Congress, 1st Session, 1007-1098; Supra; Footnote 27.

³⁹ Garrett to Baker, June 6, 1919, BIA, File No. 364/379.

conferences abroad), and I would suggest that you and I take the matter with him on his return which cannot in any case be long delayed.”⁴⁰

This plan of the Secretary of War Baker and Garrett seemed to indicate that a resolution fixing the final date of separation from the United States would soon be forthcoming. Unfortunately the President came home with grave problems such as the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations which occupied his thoughts so much and which perhaps contributed to his sickness that ultimately carried him into his grave. Confronted as he was with these world problems, the President was too occupied to immediately consider the question of Philippine independence. It was very difficult to ascertain as to whether or not Secretary Baker took up the matter of Philippine independence with the President after the latter returned from Paris.

In any case, the Filipinos' claim of their right of independence was weakened. But the Filipinos were not a people to be discouraged. They knew that God's will and the rule of justice would prevail at the end. Their Resident Commissioners in Washington and their spokesmen wrote President Wilson and reminded him that they were entitled to be free by right of the law previously stated. Commissioner Jaime C. de Veyra and Isauro Gabaldon wrote the President through his secretary, Mr. Tumulty: "We have made attempts to lay before you our desire, which is also that of the Filipino people, that the independence of the Philippines be considered as one of the problems to be recommended by you in your coming message to the Congress of the United States. We have thought this matter seriously and maturely and we respectfully submit for your action.

"Since last year, your Representative in the Philippines, the Governor-General, has declared that the condition imposed by the Congress of the United States to the Filipino people, of maintaining a stable government, has been fulfilled. . . . There is, therefore, sufficient evidence to recommend to the Congress an immediate action."⁴¹

It is very difficult to ascertain whether this letter had any influence in Woodrow Wilson's decision of sending his message to Congress on December 7, 1920, recommending independence.

With the Republican Party in complete power in 1920, Representative King, on 3rd Session of the 66th Congress, introduced a House bill, H.R. 1448, to provide for the independence of the Philippines. On December 6, 1920, this bill was referred to the Committee on Insular Affairs. This bill authorized the President of the United States to issue a proclamation to the effect that on a day to be designated by him, the Government of the Philippine Islands may convene a constitutional convention which shall be elected by the qualified electors of the Islands for the

⁴⁰ Baker to Garrett, June 8, 1919, BIA, File No. 364/379.

⁴¹ De Veyra and Gabaldon to Wilson, Nov. 30, 1920, Wilson Papers VI, Case File 44. LC.

purpose of drafting and approving a political constitution for the Filipino people—a constitution that was to be ratified by the electors and approved by the Governor-General.

The bill further provided that the Governor-General shall so certify to the President of the United States who shall declare by proclamation the withdrawal and surrender of all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction, control, and sovereignty then existing and exercised by the United States in and over the territory and people of the Philippine Islands and the full recognition of the independence of the Philippine Islands as a separate and self-governing nation.⁴² Unfortunately, Congress did not make a move to consider the bill.

A similar bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator King of Utah during the 3rd Session of the 66th Congress, 1920.⁴³ This bill provided for the withdrawal of the United States from the Philippines ten years after the passage of the bill. It provided that the Filipinos were to adopt a republican form of government and to create the necessary political machinery of government to take over the duties and responsibilities of an independent states.⁴⁴ This bill was not also acted upon.

President Wilson remembering the pledge made or embodied in the Jones bill that he signed on August 29, 1916, now sent his fateful message to the 66th Congress' 3rd session, which read as follows: "Allow me to call your attention to the fact that the people of the Philippine Islands have succeeded in maintaining a stable government since the last action of Congress in their behalf, and thus fulfilled condition set by the Congress as precedent to a consideration of granting independence to the Islands. I respectfully recommend that this condition preceded having been fulfilled, it is now our liberty and our duty to keep our promise to the people of these Islands by granting them the independence which they honorably covet."⁴⁵

This message had been awaited by the Filipino people and a great many of the leading Democrats of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States. The President had unqualifiedly stated that the Filipinos had satisfied the requirements of the Jones Law and so therefore, they were entitled to be free and sovereign. But Congress was faced by many problems. The President was also weakened by the sickness he had incurred in September 1919 in his campaign in the West with reference to the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. He was too incapacitated to marshal his Democrat supporters to push the necessary resolution to free the Philippines. The Republicans in Congress

⁴² A copy of this bill, see: BIA, File no. Copy pt. 3, 364/384.

⁴³ *Congressional Record*, 66th Congress, 3rd Session, 10.

⁴⁴ This bill introduced by Senator King provided for the Philippine Independence during the next ten years after the passage of the bill.

⁴⁵ *Congressional Record*, 66th Congress, 3rd Session, 26; See also Extract of the Message sent to Harrison December 8, 1920, BIA, File No. pt. 3, with 364/383.

were against the granting of independence. They repeated their old slogans that Filipinos were not fit to govern themselves and if they were allowed to go free, the Islands will be at the mercy of world powers; anarchy would set in and the Filipinos will be killing one another. So therefore, they could not be left to themselves; the U.S. was committed to help and guide them. These were the campaign slogans of the Republicans that they had succeeded in promoting for two decades. But independence for the Filipinos that Wilson and Harrison had supported and worked for was finally achieved in 1946. Therefore their work was not in vain. Time marches on and so human freedom cannot be denied.

Governor-General Harrison having received the message of Wilson on December 8, 1920, sent his hearty appreciation to the President upon his recommendation to Congress for Philippine independence⁴⁶ on December 24, 1920. The President was also informed by Secretary of War Baker of a cablegram he received from Harrison on December 22, a resolution passed by the Philippine Legislature on December 16, 1920. The Resolution reads: "The Filipino people have received with the deepest satisfaction and gratitude that part of the message of the President of the United States to Congress which has reference to the granting of Philippine independence to the people of the Philippines; in view of the fact that a stable government has already been organized in the same. Upon reiterating our faith in the magnanimity and justice of the American people, we, the Constitutional representatives of the Philippine people, believe it to be our duty to state on this solemn occasion that the fulfillment of the promise made to our country and expressly embodied in our present organic law by determining in a definite manner the cessation of a condition of dependence will usher in an era of lasting friendship and confidence, which, through a spiritual union between America and the Philippines, will promote and strengthen the permanent interests of both peoples. . . . We trust that this recommendation of the President. . . pregnant with the spirit of the glorious traditions of the great Republic, will find an echo in the generous hearts of the representatives of the American Nation, who will thus give to the world an incontrovertible proof of their determination to carry out the principle, so stoutly sustained during the recent war, of establishing the relations between the peoples, be they great or small or new and firm bases of liberty, justice and democracy."⁴⁷

On December 16, 1920 Congressman James A. Frear made a forceful speech in the House of Representatives with reference to the Philippine problem that the United States should carry out their promise of independence.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Harrison to Wilson, December 13, 1920, Wilson Papers, VI, Case File 44, LC.

⁴⁷ Harrison to Wilson, December 22, 1920, BIA, File No. 364/388-A.

⁴⁸ *Congressional Record*, 66th Congress, 3rd Session, December 16, 1920, pp. 440-447.

Later he wrote a letter to the Secretary of War which was sent to the White House touching on the Philippine case. In this brief statement he said that Dewey, Mckinley, Taft and Wilson were quoted in favor of withdrawing American sovereignty and granting Philippine independence. But although Congress by legislative enactment has promised to carry out that pledge, it has failed to do so. General Sherwood, the oldest member of Congress, frequently cited for bravery during the Civil War, strikes the right note in his question, "Why do we not grant independence to the Philippines?"

Mr. Frear said further, "Congress professes a deep interest in Ireland and one branch has resolved that she should be given a government of her choice—yet Congress ignores the claim of the Philippines." Mr. Frear further declared that an effort should be made to right the wrong by arousing those who believe in the square deal for these Islands advocated by McKinley, Taft, Roosevelt and Wilson. He cited many authorities and arguments to prove the Filipinos have met every test and were entitled to a fulfillment of American pledge to the Filipinos. Among these authorities he mentioned were members of the 66th Congress who were willing to let the Filipinos go free. Such names were Joseph W. Fardney, William R. Green, Nicholas Longworth, Willis C. Haroley, Allen C. Hawley, Ira C. Cepley, Luther W. Mott, George M. Young, James A. Frear, Jolen R. Tilson, Landley H. Halley, Charles B. Timberlake, George M. Bowers, Henry W. Watson, Claude Kitchen, Henry T. Rainey, Cordell Hull (later Secretary of State under FDR), John N. Garner (later Vice-President under FDR), James W. Collier, Clement C. Dickinson, William A. Oldfield, Charles R. Crisp, John F. Casew and Whitwell Martin.⁴⁹

Such was a group of influential Congressmen, who were willing to let the Philippines go, but the opponents of Philippine independence dominated the United States Congress and it was totally impossible to grant the Philippines her freedom. The Philippine problem became a political football between the Democrats and Republicans. This problem was so unfortunate for the Republicans, who took the reign of powers after 1921, could not believe that the Filipinos were capable of self-government. They thought that independence should be postponed for generations to come. They succeeded in the postponement of independence for over two decades until they were freed in 1946 under the administration of the party that pledged for the Philippine independence. The Filipinos were now free to manage their own affairs that they wanted so much. Nothing matters to them except independence. They did not hesitate to accept the independence regardless of its consequences.

⁴⁹ Frear to the President, January 10, 1921, BIA, No. with 364/386.