
CONDITIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

JUNE 4, 1900.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORGAN presented the following

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF THE EVENING STAR, WASHINGTON, D. C., BY THEODORE W. NOYES, RELATIVE TO CONDITIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

A TALK WITH OTIS.

GOOD PROSPECTS FOR EARLY PEACE IN LUZON—NATIVES BECOMING MORE TRUSTFUL—TRADE REVIVING AND INSURGENT BRIGANDS SCATTERING—AMERICAN PATIENCE NEEDED.

[Editorial correspondence of the Evening Star.]

MANILA, P. I., *January 1, 1900.*

Among my New Year's calls of 1900 was a visit to the busiest man in the restful Tropics and one of the busiest men in the whole world. The duties and responsibilities which burden the commanding officer of the American army in the Philippines and the military governor of the islands are almost crushing in their weight. Military operations here involve the direction of a force of 65,000 men, so scattered as to cover numerous points in the vast area of the Philippines and confronted by varying conditions in the different islands. When distances and difficulties of transportation and numbers of men equipped and moved are considered, this expedition ranks among the most notable in military history. Civil administration as governor involves the task of creating a sound and wholesome system adapted to existing conditions and of gradually substituting it for that against which the people have revolted, and, in the interval, in order that anarchy may not exist, of enforcing with absolutely essential modifications the old Spanish laws and customs.

The combined general and governor has been beset at one time or another, simultaneously or in succession, not only by the insurgents, but by our own impetuous volunteers, who, under the impression that the war was over and anxious to get home, developed (until the situation was made clear to them) the possibility that the Republic might be left without an army at the time when one was most needed. Uncle Sam has performed the difficult maneuver of swapping war horses mid-stream. The governor was beset also by the strong foreign mercan-

tile firms located in Manila, who resented the limitations upon their trade necessarily imposed by the war. He was pulled this way and that by persons with axes to grind and jobs to develop. He had to create a judicial system, and to assume some of the functions of a law-giver, compelled to enforce the confused Spanish laws while striving to codify, correct, and revise them in gradual preparation for the substitution of a modern and American system. He had to become the taxgatherer of an empire, sitting at the receipt of custom, enforcing Spanish internal-revenue and customs laws and studying them carefully in order that through judicious modifications a reasonable and honestly administered system might be evolved. He had to create local civil governments and an educational system, with hardly an atom of foundation upon which to build. Too often the labor set by the Egyptian of making bricks without straw was imposed upon him.

A TREMENDOUS TASK WELL PERFORMED.

General Otis has attacked the task set for him conscientiously, self-sacrificingly, and with a tremendous capacity for hard work. A fourteen-hour day, instead of one under the eight-hour law, represents his period of labor. A weak man would have been completely overwhelmed with the multifarious duties imposed upon him in conducting an active military campaign in the Tropics and in caring for a great army of men in part unaccustomed to war and confronted by new and strange conditions, and in serving at the same time virtually and temporarily as President, Congress, and Supreme Court in relation to millions of Asiatics.

New Year's did not mean a holiday for General Otis, but it relieved the pressure upon him, so that I was enabled, in the course of a long conversation, to secure from him interesting statements concerning conditions and prospects in the islands. His official headquarters are in the palace of old Manila, on the plaza, next to the cathedral of a walled city whisked from the surface of southern Spain by some Arabian Nights process and set down in the Tropics, with its moat and bastions, its narrow, gloomy streets, showing, on the building line, the blank and forbidding walls of monasteries and convents or the plain, uninviting exteriors, broken only by cage-like, projecting balconies, which bar sight of and entrance to the spacious and attractive interiors of many Spanish homes.

To reach the office of General Otis one enters the impressive vestibule and ascends to the second floor of the palace the wide staircase dominated by a marble statue of Magellan, the Columbus and Captain Cook of the Philippines.

Questioned concerning the promise of the new year for the Philippines, General Otis said:

THE YEAR'S OUTLOOK.

"The year opens with favorable conditions and prospects. There is no actual war in the modern sense anywhere in the islands. Fighting the Filipinos is not even the most important military problem. Transporting and feeding and caring for our soldiers constitute the great task. Wherever and under whatever condition the enemy is struck he is scattered. The military campaign is working itself out

slowly but surely to an inevitable conclusion. In Luzon, north of Manila, there is no longer any organized army of insurgents; the outlaw element of that army is dispersed in small bands, whose offenses of murder and robbery against their own people are bringing them under the ban of Filipino public sentiment and are causing information to be lodged against them by the natives so that their destruction or conversion into permanent "amigos" is a matter of course in a reasonable period.

"While I may not speak definitely of projected military movements, it is certain that during the dry season the same process of dispersion and compulsory disintegration which has been applied to the insurgent forces north of Manila will be extended to the entire island, including Cavite and adjacent provinces, where the last considerable concentration of fighting Tagalogs is being effected.

AMERICAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE PATIENT.

"Patience should be a prominent feature now of the public attitude toward the military campaign. A very trying period both for the soldiers and the people has been reached. A misunderstanding of conditions here will easily lead to unreasonable criticism. It is to be remembered that the Filipinos no longer face the American soldiers. If they are in danger of being cornered they hide their arms and appear in peaceful white as the most conciliatory of amigos. The Spanish method was not only to kill insurgents caught in arms, but to devastate the offending district and to shoot down on suspicion these nominal noncombatants. American public sentiment would not permit a duplication of this method. Filipinos captured while bearing arms are relieved of their rifles and after a period of detention are released. It does not pay us to keep them and care for them. The Filipino military need is not men, but arms and ammunition. Tagalog armed opposition seems to dissipate as our force approaches, but as that force passes by or withdraws the Filipino bandit reappears, and if our soldiers return to the starting point instead of pushing forward he celebrates a victory. This kind of warfare is exasperating to the soldiers and from its apparent unproductiveness of results arouses the impatience of the public. Two or three regiments could march anywhere in Luzon and destroy everything which Aguinaldo could oppose to them. While the real war is over, the need of a large and vigilant army here has not passed. The process of weeding out the robber bands will be slow and tedious, but the result is sure.

NATIVE CONFIDENCE INCREASING.

"With an increased cavalry force, with a steadily enlarging knowledge of the topography of the islands, with a vigorous, pushing policy on our part, and with a decrease of Filipino sympathy for the robber bands, which, flying before the Americans, have brutally turned their weapons against their countrymen, the pacification of the islands will be hastened. Whole sections need only to be convinced of the permanence of American protection against the local banditti to cooperate heartily with us. They have been deterred, and are still to some extent, by the fear that after a while the American soldiers will be removed to some other point and that they will be exposed to the murderous fury

of the cutthroats who are threatening with death all who show a friendly spirit toward Americans. The contrast between our conduct toward the people and that of Spanish or insurgent soldiers is appreciated and confidence in us is steadily increasing. Insurgent leaders themselves while in the field have placed their families in the security of American protection at Manila."

MILITARY PROBLEMS MISUNDERSTOOD.

"Misunderstanding of the conditions here and lack of knowledge, to be obtained only by presence on the ground and by a general view of the whole situation, have caused criticism of the apparently purposeless policy of capturing and abandoning towns many times in succession. The vital point of attack was not the town, but the concentrating Filipinos, and not so much the Filipinos themselves as the arms and ammunition which they carried. Our comparatively small force, occupying a long, thin line, could not afford to permit the enemy to concentrate at any adjacent and threatening point, and was compelled to take the initiative and to strike wherever he showed a disposition to assemble in force. If the concentration movement was prevented, if the Filipinos were dispersed with losses, and arms and ammunition were captured, the action was successful, even though through lack of garrisoning force or on account of the undesirability of its occupation for military purposes the village of nipa huts at which the engagement occurred was not held after the Filipinos were chased out. With the increased force of soldiers now in the islands it will be possible to garrison and hold all points of strategic value."

"Must civil development await the complete destruction of the robber bands?"

CIVIL GOVERNMENT NEED NOT WAIT.

"No. The military operations have already reached the stage where their problems are surpassed in importance by those of civil administration. It is much to be desired that Congress should act promptly upon the President's suggestions in this respect, to the end that order may be evolved from chaos. The problem is to build up a structure republican in form upon an inadequate and unreliable foundation. The start upon substantially self-supporting municipal governments has been made, and at many points these are groping toward the light. The outline of a simple form of local government has been framed and put in practical operation wherever feasible. There is a steady, though slow, increase in the degree of Filipino cooperation in such governments. The mass of Aguinaldo's followers are young and irresponsible. Property owners of intelligence already sympathize with the Americans, but, as I have already said, they are in many cases terrorized by the Aguinaldists, who promise death to them as soon as the Americans retire. With the garrisoning of the towns this fear will be dissipated, and the progress of civil government, of education, and of the reign of reasonable and fixed law will then be hastened. American protection, schools, and local self-government will go hand in hand. There are many intelligent Filipinos, in whom I have the fullest confidence as the developers of the future of the Philippines under the protection and with the inspiration of the spirit of the great Republic."

TRADE TO BE FOSTERED.

“An important civil problem has been to preserve and foster the trade of the islands so far as consistent with successful military operations. All of northern Luzon, including the tobacco region tributary to Aparri, is now open to trade, and to-day the embargo has been removed from many ports of importance in the southern islands, including a few hemp ports. Pacification of Luzon south of Manila through military movements will soon open up this section also. Every effort has been made to interfere as little as possible with the natural flow of trade, but military necessities and the demands of commercial activity and prosperity are frequently at variance.”

At this point in the interview a dispatch was brought to General Otis which stated that Aguinaldo's wife and sister had just been made prisoners in north Luzon, and that Aguinaldo himself was being chased from rancherio to rancherio with some prospects of his capture. Practically all of Aguinaldo's people are now in custody, and only his presence here is needed for a happy family reunion in Manila. Many of Aguinaldo's cabinet officers and his civil and military lieutenants have also been captured.

In response to a question concerning Aguinaldo's character and influence and the importance of his associates, General Otis said :

AGUINALDO'S CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE.

“Aguinaldo's prestige and influence with the Filipinos have been very great. Even now the lowest class endow him with superhuman attributes, including immunity from bullets, but his hold has weakened among the more intelligent Filipinos, and he has been denounced among them as a mountebank. From the time that he returned to Cavite in May, 1898, and became subject to Mabini's inspiration he had never the intention of cooperating faithfully with the United States, except in so far as the Republic would be useful to him in holding Spain helpless while he worked his scheme of self-aggrandizement. Some of his associates were mere mercenaries; others were ambitious for power. Mabini was the master spirit, able, radical, uncompromising. He furnished the brains which made Aguinaldo's cabinet formidable. He was brought before me recently, paralytic and a prisoner. I offered him his freedom on parole not to stir up trouble; he hesitated and said: ‘I have not changed my convictions.’

“I told him that I did not respect him the less on that account, and repeated the offer.

“‘I have no means of support; I can not put my freedom to any use,’ he replied.

“Buencamino is a professional turncoat, everything in turn and nothing long. He has been an officer in the Spanish army and was secretary of state in Aguinaldo's cabinet when he was captured.

“Paterno, who is not yet in custody, has played a curious rôle. He arranged the treaty by which Spain bought off Aguinaldo and his associates in the revolution of 1896. He demanded from Spain money and a title of Castile, prince or duke, as the price of his achievement. After the United States intervened he again appeared as the agent of Spain in a proclamation which pronounced monarchy the fitting government for the Filipinos, and advised them to side with Spain against

