



W. C. JOHNSTON

THE Philippine Islands are governed with less corruption than any state in the union.

The statement was emphatic. Moreover, it was by one who is in position to know, one who has been in the closest touch with Philippine administration for the past three years, and who proved the Philippine Heney.

William C. Johnston, a Portland man, who left this city in 1928 as a soldier in the Second Oregon Volunteers, returned two weeks ago for the first time since. He has been for three or four years in the service of the insular treasury department as special examiner. His mission was to investigate irregularities of provincial officials. That he did his work well is attested by the fact that many Americans are in high esteem as island officials are sojourning in Bilibid, the penitentiary.

A "carpet-bag" administration of greater efficiency and honesty than a full, complete representative form of government in the United States! The statement seemed astounding. Mr. Johnston was asked to specify. He did this with as much facility as he established his premises, and prefaced with another example.

"I am familiar with administration in the regular army," said he. "We know that is drastic, and monetary affairs are checked and rechecked with exhaustive care. But I say unhesitatingly that civil administration of the insular is better. Money is checked there unfaithfully. With the energy and integrity of the head officials maintained as at present, the Philippines will enjoy a government not even in quality to those served by any in our home land."

That this verdict may not be accepted as the speech of an employe, it is well to note that Mr. Johnston has severed his connection with the government since he has just taken a position in San Francisco, and is not looking forward to reward for his praise.

Philippines "No Good." "The Philippines are not much good," said Mr. Johnston. "There is too much deceit, revenge and selfishness in most of the Filipinos to ever permit them to become a nation of equals."

on a civil-service basis, it being the special effort to observe civil-service rules in this respect. Assistants to bureau chiefs, or deputies, are appointed by the commission, subject to approval of the civil-service board.

Provinces are laid out for civil government, and districts for school purposes, the bounds of both being nearly identical as a rule, but not necessarily so. For each province there is a governor, a treasurer, a supervisor, a secretary and a president of the provincial board of health. The governor is elected by municipal councilors, who in turn are elected by the voters of the province. All subordinates of the provincial government must pass civil-service examinations and must be approved by the secretary of that department.

who Can Vote. Cebasa do bringays, or heads of precincts under the old Spanish regime, have the ballot ex-officio. Each person who was headman in the old precinct needs but establish this fact. Then each male of the tax roll is entitled to vote. This property qualification is liberally and generously interpreted as a rule, yet finds few aspirants for the franchise. Each man who can read and write either English, Spanish or the native language is given the ballot. This interpretation of the law is again liberal, and if a Filipino makes any showing whatever in the direction he is admitted as an elector.

The electors named may vote for municipal councilors. Municipalities are arbitrary divisions of the province, usually containing an important city or town, and are not municipalities in the sense in which American city governments are spoken of as such. Such municipalities are divided into four classes, the number of councilors elected being graduated according to the population. A first-class municipality has a population of over 25,000 people, and is entitled to 18 councilors, a second-class has more than 18,000 and less than 25,000, a third-class over 12,000 and less than 18,000 inhabitants and is entitled to 10 councilors, and the fourth class is any municipality having more than 5,000 people and less than 12,000, and is entitled to eight councilors. These municipalities are incorporated the same as in this country. The municipal councilors may also levy a municipal tax (subject to limitations), elect a president, and finally vote for the provincial governor. Local qualifications of electors require that they should be residents of the municipality for six months prior to the election where they seek to vote. Americans otherwise qualified are permitted to vote at these elections, and any elector is eligible for office.

Mr. Johnston says that the franchising finds few to exercise it. In a municipality with a population of 15,000 people, 200 voters is a big average. Assuming that there is an adult male for each five of the total population, there should be about 3,000 electors in this instance, whereas it is found that less than 10 per cent of this number actually exercise the franchise. Strenuous efforts are usually made to bring out a full vote, but the vast majority of Filipino men, with the liberal qualifications named, cannot vote. However, it is believed that the next generation will have a larger percentage of voters, as many of the children are learning to read and write.

Councilors are elected for two years, half of the total number each year. The presidents are elected for two years. Every two years the councilors of a province meet at the capital thereof and elect the governor for two years. All councilors attend these provincial elections, as a rule, showing keen interest. Filipinos are nearly always chosen for the office of governor of provinces, but the governor is named by the American receiving this honor. He had been appointed governor of Leyte Island, and when the first election was held, won by a majority of the ballots. In the non-province of mountain provinces the people are not given such full franchise powers. In the four or five provinces coming under this class electors are permitted to choose their municipal officers, but the governor is named by the civil governor of the insular government.

"Elections are always accompanied by frauds and various crimes," said Mr. Johnston, "and the number of protests sent up to the civil governor from the provinces is legion. The civil governor has a reviewing power. Protests against municipal officers go first to the provincial board and then to the civil governor. There is scarcely an election which does not bring forth an effort

after it is over to oust the successful candidate."

Filipinos name their own election judges in the provinces. At the present time, and in fact since elective powers were granted, the usual party division is for or against the Friars, or the Fraile and anti-Fraile parties. The friar party embraces all who favor the old Spanish friar church rule, while the opposition is the following of the Aglipay, the Filipino who has established himself an independent pope and is struggling to free the people from the control of the Spanish priesthood. Parties as a rule divide election judges between them, and American judges are chosen where available, as the Filipino seems to have confidence that the American can best serve in this capacity.

Schools Are Public. Schools have made considerable progress, but the system is plainly at a low ebb yet. The only American teachers used in the country now is a superintendent of the school district, which corresponds to a province, and the principal of a municipality, who acts as a city superintendent. Others as a rule are Filipinos. It is not rare to find a mere Filipino youth of 15 to 16, who has just mastered a smattering of English, to be instructing 40 or 50 Filipino children. A strenuous effort is being made to eliminate the old Spanish method of studying dead, and adopt American customs. Within another generation the standard of teachers will improve, as the education of Filipino children for this work will be further advanced, and the most intelligent are being chosen. Teachers throughout a province are appointed by the division superintendent, and are subject to his order of removal, but all teachers are paid by the municipalities.

A school year is indicated, during which pupils must be taught in all the provinces, this usually being eight to nine months. To maintain the schools a definite tax is set apart. Under the old law that has been in force until the past two months, the school tax was one quarter of one per cent on all lands of a province, which money is collected and turned into the provincial treasury and redistributed again among the municipalities. Under the new law there is a certain percentage of other revenues devoted to school purposes in addition.

Philippines take kindly to educational work, and usually give a good attendance. They show eagerness to learn, especially the English language, which is being taught in all the schools. In the poor sections, where children have to work in the rice fields harvesting time, there is a falling off in that season. There is no religious instruction of any kind in the public schools.

One Protestant School. The Catholic church still maintains educational institutions, especially in the large cities. One Protestant mission school has been established, it being known as the Silliman school, taking its name from the donor of the fund used in building it. This has a good attendance, ranging well toward 200, and is intended as an institution for higher education. School buildings are often crude, yet as many as 150 to 200 children often being crowded into one institution, where wooden benches are arranged around the side of a shack and the children are packed as close as they can be kept on the benches. As at present only 1,000 American teachers are permitted to be employed in the islands, and these are paid \$75 to \$125 a month. At the capital of each province a secondary school is maintained out of the provincial fund, this being in the nature of an academy or college for the Filipinos. In these practically all teachers are American, and the children advanced from the primary schools are given more thorough instruction.

Land Tax System. A change has recently been made in tax laws, the effort of the new order being to lift some of the burden from land interests. Until the new law went into effect, there was merely a land tax, industrial tax and custom receipts to support the insular, provincial and municipal governments. The land tax continues as before. It is first assessed

by the provincial board of assessors, and then revised by the provincial board of revision. The latter consists of the provincial officers and two additional residents of the province chosen by the civil governor of the islands for this work. The revision board has heavy duty to perform, as the Filipino assessors often levy with a revengeful hand, trying to drive an enemy out of existence. Assessments of land stand for five years after made, so that this work does not occur often.

The provincial tax to sustain the provincial fund cannot be less than one quarter nor more than one half of 1 per cent of the land valuation, and the municipal tax must be as high as one quarter and not to exceed three eighths of 1 per cent, making a total tax for these purposes of not exceed seven eighths of 1 per cent on land valuations. This limit is fixed to prevent excesses of any kind.

This land tax is collected by the provincial treasurer, and after apportionment, is returned to the municipalities, when it is available for disbursement. One quarter of the municipal tax must be for primary schools and if the assessors have levied the other quarter permitted, it is available for municipal expenses. Of the provincial tax one eighth of 1 per cent is devoted to maintenance and construction of public roads and the balance of this levy is available for general provincial purposes, including maintenance of the provincial schools.

Road Work General. The provincial board is composed of the governor, who is chairman, provincial treasurer and provincial supervisor who is in charge of public property and supervises road construction. The supervisor is supposed to be a civil engineer. Road building is in charge of the provincial treasurer, the insular government. The latter has in charge several general projects, affecting large areas, paying for the same out of the insular government funds, which consisted under the old order, of industrial taxes and custom receipts. The provincial fund set apart for roads is fully used with good results.

Surveys of the friar lands bought by the government have just been completed, and arrangements are being made to sell these lands to the people. It was found that the friar holdings em-

braced vast areas. The government bought such as came under the headings of haciendas, or plantations, leaving really adjacent to churches and held incident to these with the friars. While nothing is stated publicly, it is generally anticipated throughout the islands that the government did not get much of a bargain in these lands, not what was expected when the deal was made.

Church Was Divided. Church affairs have resolved themselves into friar and anti-friar factions, the political division corresponding to this line. Agripay, a priest under the Spanish regime, and had some trouble with the church dignitaries and inaugurated the independent movement, declaring himself the pope of the new church. This party gained rapidly before it became apparent that the government would acquire friar lands, and has since seemed to hold its own. In some sections Agripay's adherents predominate over the regular Catholic and again are outnumbered at others. The independent movement seems to have spread all over the islands. Struggles for control of the church property have resulted. Agripay's people, where they controlled a place, thought that they had a right to the church and were selling them. The insular government has recognized the title of the regular church party to all such church property. The effect of this decision will probably end these contentions, but Agripay's people are not in good spirits over the result. There are numbers of the friars still in the islands, although they are not as numerous as in the old days.

Protestants have not done a great deal of work in the islands, the most being the most substantial gain made. Protestant missionaries have been working diligently and Mr. Johnston says

that they are accomplishing something and have assurance of more later on.

Tribe to Constabulary. The constabulary does most of the severe military work now. Each municipality has its police, composed of native subordinates and officers, but these accomplish little. The constabulary, which numbers from 150 to 200 in each of the 34 provinces, as a rule is commanded by American or English officers, although lately Filipino lieutenants are being placed in provincial companies. In Mindanao the regular troops still control, as civil government has never been established there, but elsewhere in the islands the civil government is uppermost, and uses the constabulary to suppress ladrones.

Scalps—troops—have—cannot—be—used until requested by the provincial governor to aid his constabulary, and this is barely ever occurring. Each province is under the command of a senior inspector with rank of captain, and he has two to four lieutenants, the constabulary being divided into platoons or squads throughout the province. A high tribute is paid by Mr. Johnston to the work of the constabulary. They have shown themselves capable of coping with almost any condition arising. All are armed with carbines, shotguns and revolvers, and only infrequently are mounted. When a ladron raid is reported, the constabulary proceeds to the ground quickly and punishes severely, often killing many of the natives sympathizing or aiding the ladrones. In a few instances the American captain has been deserted in a close place, and had to fight single-handed until he could get out, but as a rule the constabulary will stand with their officers and whip a much superior body of ladrones. Many daring adventures

are experienced by the officers and men.

There has never really been a single case of treason among the constabulary, says Mr. Johnston. The only time when such a charge seemed possible was when an entire company deserted with their guns, but they had been paid irregularly and had much to complain of, and seemed to be resenting this more than turning against the government. In this instance regulars were hurried to the scene and drastic punishment was meted out to the deserters, who were nearly all captured, with their rifles. Filipino officers cannot be relied upon to any great extent, and it is the spirit of the American fighting at the head that holds the Filipino face to face with severe fighting.

With this order of government, Americans supervising and directing all things of moment, the Portland man says that splendid results in efficiency are being obtained. But the native must be watched all the time. Many of the Americans put in office in the early days have been removed for cause. At present, however, there is the slightest evidence of an irregularity, thorough expertise of provincial books is commended, and everything commensated with financial affairs is checked over with painstaking accuracy. If any official is found short, he is brought up with a short turn. Several officials formerly in high favor are now serving from 5 to 15 years in the island penitentiary, and the wholesome lesson has been learned everywhere. Mr. Johnston believes that the system of checking up all officers handling money will be effective in maintaining absolute honesty so long as the heads of the departments and bureaus have the same high purpose animating work at the present time.

As an Officer. "Why should governments interest themselves in the healthfulness or unhealthfulness of the food people eat?" asked the man with the three "X" knowledge. "For the reason," replied the man with the information to give out, "that when worn, automobiles and grade-crossing accidents are doing so much to reduce the population of the earth, something has got to be done to maintain the population."

Office in a Provincial Capital.

Silliman Institute, Dapaguete.

THE SOCIAL HIGHWAYMAN

From the London Express. YOUR thief is often as nimble as a cat, and as cunning as a fox. He is a young man, with a steady income for years from a rich vulgarian, who left to him the selection of a suitable constituency, the engagement of agents, the allotment of subscriptions and the entertainment of the proper men in the division.

They again, there are those most golden of geese, the men and women anxious to cut a figure in society. The social highwayman who can claim such a victim acquires an assured income. There are commissions from a score of tradesmen; there are commissions from other highwaymen who are desirous of an introduction to the golden goose. In question, in fact, there is the expense which the highwayman alleges he has incurred in securing due publicity for his patron's doings.

Let me give an example. My friend A, the hair apparent to a peasant, was shepherding Mrs. B from the states. Mrs. B had bought at A's suggestion a wonderful collection of china. "This is all very well," said the astute A, "but now we must get the collection advertised." Mrs. B consented, and A sent an invitation for dinner to C, a writer of some note in the art world. C came, was shown the china, was struck by its beauty, and out of sheer admiration wrote a column about it in a weekly paper. Some months later C met D, a friend of Mrs. B's. "Hello," said D, "I hear your prices have gone up." "What do you mean?" "Why, Mrs. B, tells me she had to pay you 1500 for that article on her china."

A always said C acted like a cad in telling the facts to Mrs. B. True, A had pocketed the 1000, and C had never asked for or received a penny, but all the same, A considered that C was "a low writer fellow, and no gentleman." He'd have given him a "tenner" out of the spoils if C had asked for it.

THE SOCIAL HIGHWAYMAN

For the highwayman. The connection resembles the shark and the pilot fish. The pilot introduces the shark to his prey. All the expenses incurred thereby are paid by the shark and a percentage goes to his ally. I know of a man whose dinner are the talk of society. The Savoy, the Carlton, Claridge's, hold his name in high esteem. But he does not pay the bills, bless your innocent! Among his rich and distinguished guests a quiet little Hebrew is ever present. Scores of most useful acquaintances has he made by those open-handed repasts given by his dashing, open-handed, popular friend. But it is the little man who pays.

Such is the social highwayman. And remember that, if there is not plunder for him in the exploitation of politics or social ambition or articles of vertu, he will have at the man with money, with wine, cigars, motors, house properties, and who can say what besides. For he is a robber, as I have said, of incredible ingenuity. Almost does he deserve his reward.

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