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LETTER FROM MANILA

Country Had Good Crops and No Robbers

While Exports and Imports Show a Substantial Increase

(By H. E. Walker.)

Manila, Jan. 25.—The present outlook here in the Philippines is bright all around. Since General Smith assumed the office of governor general he has shown by his conduct and by his public utterances a more liberal spirit than any of his predecessors, and a desire to give a square deal all around. A greater spirit of confidence in the government and indirectly in the economic future of the islands seems to be felt by natives, and by foreigners and Americans here, since General Smith took up the reins of government. Since the time when Governor Taft left the islands this spirit of confidence has grown under the wise rule of his successors until now, when nearly everyone has an optimistic view of the situation.

The soil has brought forth most bountifully this year and the rice and sugar crops are the largest of any year since long before American occupation. The whole population from highest to lowest, with the prospect of such large harvests before them, seem satisfied with things and conditions as they are and the only independence talk heard is from demagogues like Dr. Gomez in Manila who try to stir up the people by their inflammatory utterances.

Governor General Smith, with several of the commissioners, made a trip through the southern islands during November, and during the present month he has made a trip through the rice provinces north of Manila. Every where he went the people had a chance to meet him and to air their real or fancied grievances and he has done all in his power to right such wrongs as he found. In several cases complaints were made which had no foundation in fact, such as the one of a Filipino

official in one of the southern provinces who complained that the people a short distance from the coast were starving. General Smith at once sent out to find out about the condition of these people and found that they not only were not starving but that they had exported more rice this year from their province than for several years past.

The country is free from ladronism (highway robbery) at the present time than at any time in its history. The American government has done more to eradicate this curse than did the Spanish government in all of its three hundred years of occupation. With the exception of the islands of Leyte and Samar, where there are still a few religious fanatics who come down from the hills occasionally and burn a town and kill a few natives, the islands are practically free from ladrones. All but one or two of the old time leaders have been captured by the aid of their own countrymen, who were tired of their depredations, and have either been executed or sent up for long terms of imprisonment. The native who, in the past, thought it easier to make a living by midnight robberies of his own countrymen than to work, has found that the American government finally got him and that there is no mercy shown such as he, that even his own people will not protect him, and so he has come to the conclusion that his life of a bandit no longer has charms. It is safer today for an unarmed man to go around in any part of this archipelago than it has ever been in the previous history of the islands.

The American employees here seem to be more optimistic than ever before and are investing their savings in enterprises in the islands rather than sending them home, as formerly. The merchants in Manila report the biggest Christmas trade in years and all are looking forward to an unprecedented era of prosperity for the adopted country. A short summary of the consular report by the British consul here contains some interesting facts about the increase of trade with the islands. The summary is as follows: "The consular report on the trade of the Philippine islands for the last year shows that trade of the archipelago is increasing. Both imports and exports show a substantial increase. It is interesting to note that the United Kingdom continues to lead in closely woven cottons and loosely woven cottons and yarn and thread, while in knitted fabrics Spain practically monopolizes the Philippine market. Australia has during the last three years made serious inroads into the United States lumber trade, and now holds the leading position. The bulk of the exports, roughly 95 per cent, are carried on British vessels, whilst Norwegian and German vessels do the majority of the rice carrying trade. Most of the foreign carrying trade is still in the hands of British shipping, but the proportion to the whole has fallen off, while the values of cargoes carried by American and Spanish ships have largely increased. This report though it does not show how American trade with the Philippines has increased largely during the last two or three years still admits that the value of cargo carried in American bottoms has largely increased.

One of the most important things that the government has done for the Filipino people, as a whole, was the establishment of postal saving banks in the most important post-offices throughout the islands. These banks are under the direction of the director of posts and are now established in all the provincial capitals from which they are to be gradually

extended to all the more important interior offices in the country. In these banks the people can deposit their savings, any amount from one peso (fifty cents gold) up being accepted. These deposits will draw interest at the rate of 2 1/2 per cent per annum and can be withdrawn at any time, only two withdrawals being allowed in one calendar month. Any person over six years of age may open an account and there is a provision whereby postal savings bank stamps of the denominations of five, ten and twenty centavos each are sold. These stamps are pasted upon a card furnished by the banks, a different card being used for each denomination, and when these cards have stamps on them to the value of one peso then they may be deposited the same as one peso in money. This provision will enable children with a few centavos to start the habit of saving which is the most important thing they can learn. Filipinos have always been an improvident people and have never looked ahead to a time of adversity. In the past they have never had a chance to deposit their money in any safe place but have hidden it away around their houses or given it to a friend for safe keeping and the friend has, in many cases, appropriated it to his own use.

The first trial by jury ever held in the Philippine islands was held before Judge Springer of the court of First Instance at Bongao, Mindanao, last month. A Moro named Panda returned home and found that his daughter had been murdered by a servant woman named Lakiva, this occurred in April, 1906. Panda immediately drew his kris, without which no Moro ever leaves his home, and started in pursuit of the woman. He found her within a mile of the spot where the crime was committed and killed her there.

The case came to trial in December and excited much interest among the Moros. When the trial came off many of the dattos and big chieftains were present in the court room. After the evidence was all in, the court called upon six of the big chiefs present to state what, under Moro law and custom, should be the punishment for the crime. Opinion ranged from a fine of 150 to 400 pesos, the average being 300 (\$150), which the court imposed.

Courts of First Instance in the Moro province are permitted by Act 114 of the legislative council, to ignore the provisions of the penal code when trying Moros whose offenses are against Moros.

Mr. W. A. Sutherland, who has charge of the young Filipinos being educated in the United States at the expense of the Philippine government, has arrived in Manila for the purpose of preparing a Philippine exhibit for the coming exposition at Jamestown. Before leaving the states Mr. Sutherland was in consultation with Secretary Taft and others interested in the Philippines, rela-

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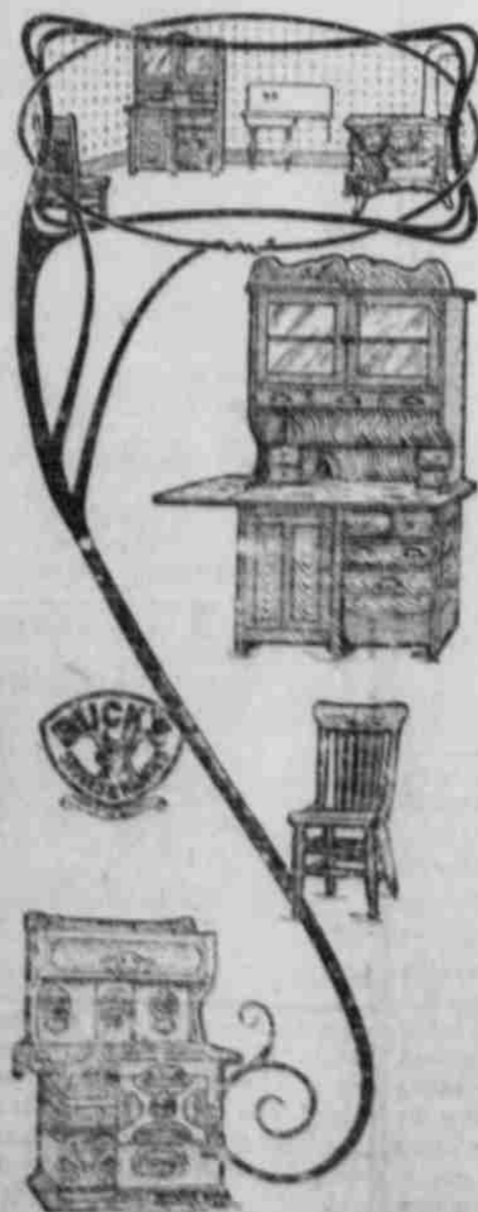
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