

'INDEPENDENCE OF PHILIPPINES ILLEGAL'; JUDGE

Court Lackey's Views Reflect Imperialists'

By MANUEL GOMEZ, Secretary,
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One of the most ingenious reasons for not giving the Filipinos their ardently desired independence is that the United States government has no power to do so!

This learned opinion is put forward by Judge D. R. Williams in the Virginia Law Review and is echoed in a score of imperialist newspapers and magazines thruout the land. It comes on the heels of Harvey S. Firestone, Jr.'s visit to the Philippine Islands, during which young Firestone stated that the Philippines would be an excellent place for rubber growing if United States rule there should be perpetuated and the native land laws "liberalized" in the interests of big capital.

"Legal" Reasoning.

Judge Williams, however, says nothing about rubber. He merely points out, in a legal way, that the United States is not empowered by the constitution to let the islands go. Quoting various decisions of the supreme court, he declares that congress has no powers not specifically allocated to it in the constitution, "which nowhere grants the right of withdrawing the sovereignty of the United States over previously acquired territory."

It was quite all right to acquire the Philippines, the judge would have us believe, but to set them free is quite another matter. That would be to violate the constitution, something which

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Judge Says It Is Illegal to Free the Philippine Islands

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no god-fearing imperialist would dare to do. What a great old constitution it is!

Silent on Rubber.

"Judge Williams," declares the American Review of Reviews, "is in a position to know. He held official posts in the Philippines for a long time . . ." That this makes him an authority on the United States constitution is not clearly explained, but it is obvious that it does make him somewhat of an authority on Filipino rubber possibilities. But, as I have already pointed out, he has nothing to say about rubber.

The Review of Reviews continues:

"If we are to withdraw from the Philippines and abandon the political title that is now recognized by every other sovereign power, the thing ought not to be done by virtue of a casual vote of one congress at Washington. The matter is important enuf to call for a referendum in the form of an amendment to the constitution . . . Perhaps such a referendum would be desirable, because uncertainty about the future political status of the Philippines is proving detrimental (to the rubber interests?—M. G.) It is not likely that independence is seriously desired."

Want Independence.

By whom is it "not likely that independence is seriously desired?" As for the Filipinos, they have been demanding their freedom vociferously for years. Every political party in the islands is pledged to the cause of independence. The two big parties, Nacionalistas and Democratas, recently entered into a united front agreement to oppose any steps hostile to Filipino independence.

New Reason—Rubber.

Firestone's visit to the Philippines has produced an entire new crop of "reasons" for not freeing the islands. Firestone declared that he had investigated immense areas suitable for growing rubber and had learned of vaster areas in the interior now inaccessible because of lack of roads.

Asked by the Manila correspondent of the Chicago Daily News "if the procrastinating policy of congress in determining the future relations of the Philippines to the United States was a deterrent factor in the problem of investment in agriculture in the islands," he replied that it was.

When asked if the land laws limiting company land holdings in the Philippines to 5,000 acres were discouraging to prospective investors, he replied that they were, and that if those laws did not exist there would be no question about capital's coming into the islands to foster rubber as well as other farm enterprises.

Firestone Agrees.

Asked as to his view of the Filipino proposal that American capital undertake the financing of native land-owners in producing rubber, Firestone replied that he thought such a proposal would not interest American capitalists.

Firestone has not been asked what he thought of the timely constitutional discovery of Judge Williams, but there is reason to believe that he is entirely in accord with the learned jurist regarding this interesting legal point.

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