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## PHILIPPINE OUTLOOK OBSCURE

Sayre Statement Serves to Revive Debate  
And Increase Re-examinationist Activity

By H. FORD WILKINS

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

MANILA, March 2—Recent pronouncements regarding the independence of the Philippines both from High Commissioner Francis B. Sayre and from the highest Filipino authorities have served locally both to bewilder and intensify feelings regarding the disposal of these island possessions after 1946. As things stand Mr. Sayre's recent reaffirmation of his belief that the Philippines will not be occupied by America beyond the independence day now set rests without challenge.

It is conceded generally here that Mr. Sayre's views on independence were not a snap judgment. In essence they were expressed by him before he departed from the United States. That they are almost diametrically opposed to Paul V. McNutt's views after the latter's two and a half years' incumbency in the post of High Commissioner also is realized. Mr. Sayre believes the Filipinos will not accept any kind of compromise based on a lessening of the autonomy they now enjoy. Mr. McNutt, on the contrary, is convinced that they are frightened by international circumstances to the point where most Filipinos would be willing to accept American proprietorship in exchange for a guarantee of their present status of freedom.

## Filipino Opinion

The true point of view of the Filipinos is at present unascertainable without pinning down individually each one of the sixteen million inhabitants on what they actually believe. This is obviously impossible. The best one can do is to ask representative elements of the various factions what they believe. Significantly, Manuel Quezon, first President of the Commonwealth, made himself unavailable for comment. Mr. Quezon represents the leadership of the Filipinos now in power.

The pro-McNutt Filipino Re-examinationist party is headed by Assemblyman José Romero, who said: "We gather from High Commissioner Sayre's statement that he is not fundamentally opposed to re-examination of the political phase of American-Philippine relations as he is often reported to be. He does insist, however, that the initiative must come from this side. He believes it unlikely that the National Assembly will make any such request. He also sees practical difficulties on the American side, although he thinks many members of Congress would be seriously swayed by the desires of the Filipinos."

## Incidents Traced

"As regards the attitude of the Assembly it should be noticed that only a little over a year ago all Manila papers, including those now opposed to re-examination, said that the majority of the members of the Assembly favored Mr. McNutt's proposal. The names of those for and against re-examination were given. Fifteen Assemblymen are still firmly and publicly for their original opinion, while many more are seriously studying the question, and it is not unreasonable to hope that the pendulum

may swing back in a year or two.

"It seems to us that the difficulty as to where the initiative should proceed would be obviated if Congress restored to the Independence Law the provision in the original draft for a plebiscite shortly before 1946. There are many who feel that the plebiscite conducted in 1934 did not present the question fairly and squarely because it was coupled with the question of ac-

cepting a more autonomous commonwealth government, which they did desire, and the implication was that they renounced independence forever if they rejected the act. Furthermore, great changes in the world have taken place since then. Signatures in great numbers are pouring into the offices of our Civil League (Re-examinationist organization) expressing a desire to be permitted to pass squarely on the question."

## Views of Americans

Turning to American opinion on Mr. Sayre's statement, Samuel F. Gaches, president of the American Chamber of Commerce, said:

"Mr. Sayre's opinion is essentially the opinion of every thinking man in the Philippine Islands. The Tydings-McDuffie law was accepted by the Filipinos before it went into effect. It definitely places the date of independence and that date cannot be changed without the consent of both parties to the agreement. The people of the United States will not consider any change in date without the first gesture being made by the Filipino people."

This view is fairly solidly backed by the entire American community. As expressed by A. D. Calhoun, manager of the National City Bank of New York branch here, "Mr. Sayre's statement is a frank and accurate analysis of the situation as it now exists. Regardless of our individual feelings and wishes in regard to Filipino independence, there are so many imponderables in the international situation that we cannot very well think otherwise."

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