

Ref. 404

QUEZON SUGGESTS SEMI-INDEPENDENCE

He Hints of the Possibility of Continuing Under U. S., With Treaty-Making Power

ASSAILS PRESENT STATUS

Trade Effects Stressed in Talk to Normal School Class—'Risk' of Liberty Preferred

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
MANILA, P. I., March 26—President Manuel Quezon tentatively suggested today that continued relations with the United States might be arranged if treaty-making powers were vested in the Philippines. His statement aroused new discussion over the question of independence.

Speaking extemporaneously to the graduating class of the Normal School, he stated that independence was preferable to a continuance of the present relationship beyond 1946. He admitted that he had lost all confidence in the ability of the Philippines to defend herself for many years to come against aggression by a major power. The President said that he lost confidence after seeing what happened in Europe.

He intimated, however, that the Philippines would accept independence at the risk of being conquered afterward. He told his audience to impart the proper philosophy of life to the young Filipinos. He added:

"Let any conqueror come. We may be under his power for another 300 years, as under Spain, but the day will come when the Filipino people will emerge triumphant."

President Quezon's remarks about preferring independence to a continuance of the present relationship apparently was directed at the advocates of re-examination who want a review of the question of relations with the United States, looking to postponement of independence. President Quezon stated:

"Conditions of the present relationship are too markedly in favor of the United States and against the islands, because while United States goods enter here freely, Philippine goods meet all sorts of restrictions and limitations in the United States.

"Where is the justice in that? How can the Philippines progress economically?"

He added that the Philippines did not have the power to conclude commercial treaties so that Philippine goods banned from the United States might find markets elsewhere.

"One of the most important things in government is national economy," he said, "but under existing conditions, with the powers of the Commonwealth restricted by those retained by the President and Congress, the Philippines cannot shape her national economy."

He added that perhaps continued relations with the United States "might be acceptable" if the Philippines had the power to conclude commercial treaties. He added that he thought the American Government never would permit that and said that those who advocate re-examination see only the material side, meaning economic benefits from American protection and a free market.

Turning to the defense question, President Quezon said that he had ceased to believe that with the Philippines' scant resources it would be possible to repel the invasion of a major power during the early years of nationhood. "We might just as well face the situation and accept it," he said. "It is foolish to believe that the presence of the United States enhances the danger of Philippine invasion, because America would not attack a foreign power without provocation, and vice versa."

This portion of President Quezon's remarks caused speculation here because of the position in which it placed General Douglas MacArthur, who has steadfastly insisted, since accepting the post of military advisor in 1935, that the Philippines could defend itself with a native army built up in ten years. General MacArthur was unavailable for comment.

President Quezon's statement recalled that there had been a drastic retrenchment in the defense program, including the training of only 20,000 men yearly, instead of 40,000. President Quezon's reasons for his statements puzzled many observers, but some who are close to official circles said that he was sending up a trial balloon in order to stir a reaction in Washington. President Quezon intends to go to the United States in June or July. He will visit South America before returning.

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