

THE PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC

It is not inappropriate that hereafter we and the people of the Philippines should observe the same Day of Independence. When the Filipinos yesterday attained the status of an independent nation a precedent was set in international relations that may have more far-reaching consequences than we can now foresee. It is the consummation of a bloodless revolution in colonial policy such as the world has not seen before. For the Filipinos it is the fulfillment of a dream that must go back the full 381 years since Spain first seized and proclaimed sovereignty over the Philippine Archipelago.

The way to freedom has not been easy for the Filipinos—not even since their cession to us by Spain in the Treaty of Paris forty-eight years ago. But progress has been steady, if slow, since that time. And the Filipinos are more ready now than they were in 1898 to exercise properly their sovereignty in a world of powerful neighbors. Since 1935 they have been a Commonwealth. For many years before that they had enjoyed an autonomy that was revolutionary even then in colonial practice. The Jones Act of 1916, which drew the blueprint for future independence, said: "It is, as it has always been, the purpose of the people of the United States to withdraw their sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence as soon as a stable government can be established therein."

The war has left the Philippines in a far worse physical state than this country had imagined they would be when the Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act of 1934 was passed, setting July 4, 1946, as the date of independence. The Philippine Republic takes its place in the Parliament of Free and Independent Nations at a critical time in the world's history and confronted with great and pressing internal problems. But this country has been generous in providing help toward their solution and we believe it to be the intent of the United States to continue and even increase that help if it is needed.

This much we are sure we can promise the Filipinos in the name of the people of the United States: we shall watch your progress with understanding and sympathy and pride; you shall have here always a loyal friend, willing to lend a helping hand if one is needed, a friend who knows that by granting you your independence he has gained far more than he has lost.