

## THE PHILIPPINE BILLS

Our Commissioner to the Philippines aptly describes the failure of Congress to take any action on the critical problems confronting those islands—problems about which the Filipinos themselves can do nothing—when he calls it a “strange indifference” on our part. More than a year after the liberation of much of the Philippines, and less than five months before the Filipinos are to be granted their independence, Congress—despite frequent promises—has taken no action on two bills that would soften the economic consequences of that long-promised political liberation. As matters now stand we shall be giving the Filipinos on July 4 only the liberty to embark into economic chaos.

The two bills that should be passed at once are the Bell bill, now in the House, which would extend free trade with this country for eight years and then institute a gradually rising tariff scale, and the Tydings war damage bill, now in the Senate, which would provide dollars and credit for the repair of war damage suffered by the Filipinos in helping us defeat Japan. As regards the Bell bill it is useless now to debate the wisdom of a Philippine economy that is tied to that of the United States. There is no other market to which the Filipinos can look for many years. The proposal to make an outright grant to the Philippines for the repair of war damage and to make available further credit is the least that the richest nation in the world can do for a country that so loyally supported its war effort and suffered so greatly because of its loyalty.

Whatever the reasons for the delay, they are not good enough. We have a responsibility in the Philippines that cannot be discharged merely by granting them their independence. When we promised them that we also promised to help prepare them economically for independence. The provisions of the Philippines Independence Act of 1934 have been outmoded by the war. They are not now a valid redemption of our sworn word.