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Revulsion to Cutting U. S. Ties Seems Growing in Philippines

The approach of Philippine independence from the United States combined with Japan's attempt to establish a new order in the Far East directly concerns United States Far Eastern foreign policy. To make a study of the economic, political, and social issues in the Philippine Islands, The Christian Science Monitor has sent its chief Far Eastern correspondent to Manila. Here is another of a group of stories based on his study.

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MANILA—"Re-examination" is the name of the Philippines movement which is designed to stave off the arrival of independence from the United States on July 4, 1946. Under the circumstances now prevailing internationally, "re-examination" is certainly worth examination, so to speak. But to estimate its weight is still difficult and it must be said at the outset that skepticism as to its utility appears justified in spite of the fact that it is a movement by the Filipinos themselves and accorded support in high quarters.

Assemblyman Jose Romero, former floor leader in the National Assembly for the party in power, is head of this movement. One of its most vocal and enthusiastic proponents is Salvador Araneta, Manila lawyer. A number of Government officials are listed as in support of it and the movement claims the indorsement of 15 out of 90 Assemblymen, as well as a good deal of quiet support from among the general public. Nevertheless it is the fact in the Philippines that even a respectable minority is not much use unless it can somehow be made into a trumping, durable majority—and thus far there seems small prospect of anything of the sort.

"Realistic re-examination" was first advocated by former United States High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt, the first high official to propose a revision of the grant of independence in 1946.

This was followed up by none other than President Quezon, who said he would have no objection to an indefinite postponement of the independence of the Philippines if some sort of dominion status, more or less similar to that of Canada, could be worked out whereby the Philippines would be subject to control by the United States only with reference to foreign relations. He differed with Mr. McNutt, who wanted to continue things virtually as they are now, with the United States controlling trade, currency and various other matters.

Assemblyman Romero took his lead from President Quezon and advocated a dominion status, without autonomy in foreign affairs, as a basis for deliberation and discussion. To back the movement an organization called the Philippine Civic League was started with a good many "big names" attached.

"We fully agree with the prevailing American view," says Mr. Araneta, "that a revision of the present program of independence in 1946 must be initiated by the Filipinos themselves. But our leaders cannot initiate the movement without first knowing the real sentiment of the people, as well as that the movement would be accepted in Washington. The only solution is for the Filipino people to speak through a national plebiscite. The question of complete independence has never been placed before the people although in 1935 three different issues were put before them to be settled by a single vote.

"Our organization intends to carry on an educational campaign among the masses to apprise them that it would be mutually advantageous both for the Philippines and for the United States to prolong our association. The people are increasingly realizing that the less dependent we are on the United States, the more we shall have to be on some powerful Asiatic nation—and as between the United States and any other country, 99 per cent of the people prefer the United States."

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