

Robert W. Wilcox

1855–1903

DELEGATE 1900–1903
HOME RULE FROM HAWAII

An insurrectionist who fought to restore the Hawaiian monarchy, and who was sentenced to death for treason, Robert W. Wilcox eventually organized a potent home-rule movement, won election as the new territory's first Delegate, and became the first Asian Pacific American elected to Congress. A symbolic figure who embodied the complexities of managing the United States' growing empire in the Pacific, Wilcox exercised limited influence on Capitol Hill. His focus on territorial politics, devotion to Native-Hawaiian concerns, and strong preference for Hawaiian independence were all hallmarks of his brief U.S. House career.

Robert William Wilcox was born in Kahalu, Honuaua, on the island of Maui, in the Kingdom of Hawaii, on February 15, 1855. His parents were William S. Wilcox, an American sea captain, and Kalua Makoleokalani, said to be a direct descendant of Lonomakaihonua, brother to King Kaulahea of Maui. His mother died when Wilcox was 10 years old, about the time his father became a rancher at Makawao, Maui. He attended the Haleakala Boarding School in Makawao before attending school in Wailuku, Maui. He taught school in Honuaua.¹

Wilcox was elected to represent Maui in the Hawaiian legislature in 1880. In 1881 a legislature-sponsored program, Education of Hawaiian Youths Abroad, selected Wilcox as one of its beneficiaries and allowed him to continue his education. He was assigned to the Royal Military School in Turin, Italy, for military training, graduating in 1885 as a sublieutenant of artillery. Wilcox then attended the Royal Application School for Engineer and Artillery Officers, also in Turin. While attending these military institutes, Wilcox married Gina Sobrero of the House of Colonna di Stigliano. Unrest in Hawaii in 1887, the bloodless Bayonet Revolution in which *haoles*—white, often wealthy landholders—usurped power from the

monarchy, led the government to recall its Education of Hawaiian Youths Abroad students.²

Upon his return to Hawaii, Wilcox found that, under the new status quo, no elected position and no army existed for him to serve in, and this experience fueled his anger and prejudice against the islands' white elites. With the monarchy's authority severely limited and Wilcox's former mentors out of power, there was no direct route to power for the ambitious politician. Wilcox and his wife moved to San Francisco, California, where he was a surveyor, and his wife grudgingly taught French and Italian. The couple had a daughter, Victoria, but the marriage was an increasingly unhappy one. Wilcox returned to Hawaii alone in 1889, and his wife returned to Italy with their child shortly thereafter, requesting an annulment of their marriage. Tragically, Victoria died en route to Italy.³ In 1896 Wilcox married Princess Teresa Owana Kaohelani, a distant descendant of Keona, the father of Kamehameha the Great. The couple had five children, Teresa Owana Kaohelani, Robert, Virginia, Gideon, and Elizabeth; the latter two died as infants.⁴

Upon arriving in Honolulu in April 1889, Wilcox set himself up as a civil engineer and surveyor for hire. In mid-May, he hosted a meeting that resulted in the founding of the Kamehameha Rifle Association, an organization determined to undertake a hostile overturn of the Hawaiian government. Soon after, Wilcox founded the Liberal Patriotic Association, designed as the political arm of the revolt. The rebels plotted either to force King Kalakaua to sign a new constitution restoring monarchical power or to supplant him with his sister Liliuokalani with the same end in mind. Plans developed swiftly, and in the predawn hours of July 30 Wilcox led nearly 150 men to the palace as a display of force. The Royal Guard locked themselves in the palace and refused Wilcox an audience with the king, who





had fled to safety. Wilcox stubbornly refused to abandon his plan and stationed his men in a bungalow on the grounds until bombardment from government soldiers forced their surrender in the late afternoon.⁵

Members of the reform government decried the destructive activities of “two or three men, on whom this Government has spent some twenty thousand dollars to give them a foreign military education—for what?”⁶ Wilcox was charged with treason, but the law dictated that he be judged by a jury of his peers of Native or part Hawaiians. Knowing no Hawaiian jury would convict him, the reform cabinet met with Wilcox’s attorney to suggest he plead guilty to conspiracy and serve one year in prison, but Wilcox, embittered at his failed revolt and news of his infant daughter’s recent death, refused that concession. Reluctantly, the government dropped the treason charge and tried Wilcox only for conspiracy. After two juries heard the case, Wilcox was found innocent and released, and became a native hero.

A few months out of jail, Wilcox embraced his newfound status and recognition. Along with political leader John E. Bush, Wilcox helped two of the opposition groups on the islands unite to form a new political party, the National Reform Party, a more moderate opposition party calling for democratic reforms and a return of some administrative duties to the monarchy. In 1890 Wilcox won election to represent Honolulu in the Hawaiian legislature. He won re-election in 1892.⁷

Wilcox and others who had grown impatient with the new queen, Liliuokalani, formed an alliance informally called the Equal Rights League, which favored annexation and the abolition of the monarchy coupled with empowerment of Native Hawaiians in politics. Their unstated goal was the removal of *haole* politicians from places of power in the government.⁸ For participation in that scheme, Wilcox and other group leaders were briefly jailed.

But Wilcox changed his tack again. In the revolution of 1893, pro-annexationist forces overthrew Queen Liliuokalani. Wilcox worked for a short time with the new provisional government under Sanford B. Dole but eventually broke with it when he did not receive a

political appointment. Two years later, Wilcox joined a counterrevolution when it became apparent to him that the majority of Native Hawaiians supported the restoration of the monarchy under Liliuokalani. He joined the plot late as its commander in January 1895, but the effort was repulsed. Wilcox and the conspirators were rounded up, court-martialed, and sentenced to death.⁹ President Dole offered a conditional pardon in 1896, commuting the sentence to several decades of hard labor and a hefty fine; in 1898 Dole granted a full pardon.¹⁰

Shortly after the United States annexed Hawaii, the Hawaiian Organic Act went into effect in mid-June 1900, ensuring time enough to hold elections in the fall for the territorial senate (15 members), the territorial house of representatives (30 members), and the Territorial Delegate to Congress. Its greatest immediate effect was the re-expanded suffrage to the Native Hawaiian population, most of which had been disenfranchised under the republic.¹¹ In preparation for the elections, the native patriotic leagues, Hui Aloha ‘Āina and the Hui Kalai ‘Āina, rallied behind the slogans of “Hawai‘i for the Hawaiians” and “Equal Rights for the People” and merged into the Hawaiian Independent Party (HIP). At the same time, the *haole* population divided itself between the two mainland political parties, Republicans and Democrats.¹²

As the Organic Act went into effect, HIP nominated its slate of candidates, all Native Hawaiians, for the territorial offices. Wilcox headed the ticket as the nominee for Territorial Delegate and began campaigning on Oahu. Because the two major local newspapers, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* and the *Hawaiian Gazette*, criticized the convention establishing HIP as anti-white and radical, Wilcox distanced himself from those candidates who conducted anti-*haole* campaigns.¹³ The other two parties chose not to nominate their candidates until the end of summer. The Republicans chose “the cowboy from Waimea,” Sam Parker, as their nominee for Territorial Delegate. Parker, who served with Theodore Roosevelt in Cuba during his Rough Rider days, ran a well-funded campaign that promised to use Parker’s pull with the new President to the territory’s advantage.¹⁴ The



Democrats hoped to capitalize on the newly enfranchised Native Hawaiian vote by nominating in October Prince David Kawananakoa.¹⁵

When rumors circulated that Wilcox intended to withdraw his candidacy in favor of the prince, one of the founders of HIP, George Markham, switched to the Republican Party, charging Wilcox had been bribed by the Democrats.¹⁶ In response to these machinations, Wilcox's rhetoric became harsher. He promised that, as Delegate, he would work to have Sanford Dole removed as territorial governor. On the day before the election, Wilcox spoke at a rally by the ruins of the Kaumakapili Church. "This is the work of these stinking *haoles*," he said, pointing to the rubble. He predicted, "Tomorrow Wilcox will be a Napoleon and these other parties will be the Russians and Austrians who failed in their attempt to overwhelm him." Honolulu merchants plastered their newspapers with ads warning their employees against voting for Wilcox and his party.¹⁷ On Election Day, November 6, Wilcox won both a term in the remaining months of the 56th Congress (1899–1901) and a full term in the 57th Congress (1901–1903), though the final results were not announced for two days. Wilcox won his seat in the 56th Congress with 4,083 votes to Parker's 3,856; Kawananakoa finished third with 1,650. Results for the full term in the 57th Congress were virtually identical: Wilcox with 4,108, Parker with 3,845, and Kawananakoa with 1,656.¹⁸

In mid-November 1900, HIP changed its name to the Independent Home Rule Party, though it was commonly known as the Home Rule Party (HRP) or, simply, Home Rulers. As a result, both Hui Aloha 'Āina and Hui Kalai 'Āina were permanently dissolved just before Wilcox set out for Washington, DC. "We are like little calves feeding from the mother cow," said party leader J. W. Kaulia at a farewell rally for Wilcox, "and America is the mother cow, and her milk constitutes all the benefits that are coming to us from her. We must let Americans know what we want, and she will let us have it."¹⁹ On December 15, Wilcox was sworn in as the first Territorial Delegate from Hawaii at the start of the second session of the 56th Congress.²⁰

Shortly after Wilcox's election, the *Hawaiian Star* reported on plans to contest his seating in the House. George D. Gear, leader of a Republican faction in Hawaii, organized a campaign founded on charges that the election proclamation was invalid and that Wilcox was unfit because he was a bigamist, alleging that Wilcox's 1895 divorce was not made final. By the time Wilcox was sworn in, Gear had mustered additional materials against him. He produced an 1899 Wilcox letter offering his services to Filipino rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo and a letter from Celso C. Moreno, King Kalakaua's prime minister, denouncing Wilcox. The *Hawaiian Advertiser* criticized Gear's efforts to have Wilcox unseated.²¹ The effort to challenge Wilcox's election received an initial hearing by the House in early February 1901 before being referred to the Committee on Elections. The Committee reported back to the House on the next-to-last day of the 56th Congress, dismissing the charges against Wilcox and letting his election stand.²²

Wilcox participated in the House as best he could, but as with other Territorial Delegates, he was hampered by the lack of a vote. Wilcox's problems were amplified, too, by belonging to a political party that lacked any affiliation with either of the two national political parties. As some critics had predicted, this deprived him of the chance to participate in either of the party caucuses and develop working relationships.²³ "Thus, Wilcox remained throughout his Washington career a loner with little influence upon his congressional colleagues," noted his biographer. Several other factors were at play, too, including his dark complexion and prevailing discrimination toward people of color in that era. Most decisive, perhaps, was his halting English, which compromised his ability to effectively communicate on behalf of his constituency. As his biographer also conjectured, this likely made it "simply too difficult and embarrassing to buttonhole colleagues to try and secure their support."²⁴

However, Wilcox did enjoy more privileges than other statutory representatives. Unlike the Resident Commissioners from the Philippines and Puerto Rico,



he had immediate floor privileges and was entitled to address the House as a Member. But his grasp of spoken English, which in some transcripts was broken, may well have dissuaded him from speaking on the floor. The *Congressional Record* contains no speeches by him, not even inserted into the “Extensions of Remarks,” and lists only one instance in which he participated in floor debate. Language barriers aside, he enjoyed the advantage of being able to serve on House committees. He arrived too late in the 56th Congress to be assigned to any panel. But at the opening of the 57th Congress in December 1901, he was assigned to the Private Land Claims Committee and the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures.²⁵ These were middling assignments at best in terms of their influence and desirability, but they were relevant to several issues that mattered to him.

Unlike Resident Commissioners, Wilcox could introduce legislation. His major policy goal was to establish a homestead policy for Hawaii. This offered the chance for the *haole* estates to be redistributed to small Native Hawaiian farmers, a move that he and other Native Hawaiians saw as fundamentally egalitarian. Lands once under control of the Hawaiian monarchy, which had been seized by the provisional government and the oligarchs and now largely fell under federal oversight, might at least be returned to the people. Wilcox introduced H.R. 13906 on January 29, 1901, to achieve this goal. The bill called for the public land laws of the United States to be extended to the territory of Hawaii. It also empowered the Secretary of the Interior “to make rules and regulations for the entry of lands to be used for homestead purposes”; no land grant would exceed 100 acres.²⁶ The bill was referred to the Committee on Territories, where it died when the session concluded about a month later.²⁷

Still Wilcox did not relinquish the goal of redistributing both federal land and plantation acreage to promote small-scale homesteading. At the opening of the 57th Congress, he introduced another measure, H.R. 3090, to provide for the classification of public lands ceded to the United States into four categories: urban/residential; land then under cultivation; land capable of being cultivated but unused

or uninhabited; and unusable lands, including reefs and small outlying islands. Of greatest interest were those in the second and third categories, with Wilcox pushing for timely surveys and distributions to homesteaders.²⁸ That bill also was dispatched to the Territories Committee, where it eventually died. When Wilcox testified before a congressional commission visiting Honolulu in the summer of 1902, he offered a laundry list of initiatives, although this bill was not on that list. He concluded by telling the commissioners, “My great idea is to get this land system so all the people—native, white, and every American citizen of this country [Hawaii]—can have land, and not as it is now, in the hands of a few men.”²⁹

Wilcox found himself drawn into considering legislation associated with converting Hawaii from an independent republic to a U.S. territory. For example, other Members turned to Wilcox as they considered the process of converting Hawaiian currency to that of the United States. “Our country being annexed to the United States,” he told his colleagues, “we might as well have the same kind of dollars as the United States, rather than different dollars.”³⁰ Wilcox may have been ambivalent because he saw the issue of retiring Hawaiian silver currency as affecting primarily financiers in Honolulu rather than his core constituents. This legislation, which had already passed the Senate, was amended by the House. But the Congress ended before any further action could be taken. At the opening of the 57th Congress in December 1901, Wilcox introduced H.R. 4343, a bill that retired Hawaiian coin currency.³¹ A similar version of this legislation passed at the very end of that same Congress, though Wilcox, ill and a lame duck by that point, had ceased to advocate for it. The measure set out terms that placed each Hawaiian silver piece at face value on par with U.S. coins even though the Hawaiian coins were not minted at a silver weight ratio equal to U.S. coins. The federal government absorbed the cost difference.³²

Wilcox also supported an effort to transfer over to the federal government administrative control of a community on the island of Molokai where people with leprosy had been quarantined, arguing that the local board of health administered it poorly and had lost the



trust of Native Hawaiians. Just weeks after the opening of the 57th Congress, he introduced H.R. 6561, a bill to convert the colony into a federal reservation controlled by the Secretary of the Treasury. It was referred to the Committee on Territories. By transferring control, Wilcox believed the deplorable living conditions of the current colony would be improved. “They will build a hospital there, and the United States is a big Government, not like the one-horse concern here,” he noted in the summer of 1902 while testifying before a congressional commission that was visiting Honolulu, “and they will see that the poor leper is well taken care of. This is my belief. I know all the natives are scared of that place, scared of these people, scared of the board of health.”³³ He also supported bringing people suffering from leprosy from the United States—he estimated as many as 300—for resettlement at the new facility. Republican opponents latched onto this proposal to stir a backlash against Wilcox, arguing that Hawaiians of all stripes did not want the islands to become a “dumping ground” for Americans with leprosy. Though the commission backed the proposal, Congress never acted on it. Still the political consequences were serious. Wilcox had underestimated Hawaiians’ fears of the disease despite their long history with it and, according to his biographer, “unquestionably made” his biggest political misstep as Delegate as Republicans would use the issue against him in the 1902 election.³⁴

In spite of the distance between Washington, DC, and Hawaii, Wilcox continued to exert his influence over the territorial legislature’s actions. “One blast upon the Wilcox bugle is worth a thousand men,” proclaimed the *Hawaiian Advertiser*.³⁵ The truth of this characterization was demonstrated when the Wilcoxs returned to the islands from Washington in April 1901. Wilcox quickly began meeting with Home Rule Party territorial legislators to catch up on all that had taken place while he was gone, facilitating agreements and mending political fences. Among his first steps was to lobby the party to change its name to the Home Rule Republican Party to allow him the chance to caucus with the majority Republican Conference at the next session.³⁶

Thereafter, Wilcox instructed legislators in his party and the Independents to end their obstruction of Territorial Governor Sanford Dole’s nominations because their efforts at blocking all business had begun to have an adverse impact in Washington on Hawaii’s capacity for self-government. By the time Wilcox prepared to return to Washington, his leadership over the ruling opposition had spread throughout the territorial legislature.³⁷

In fact, the only Wilcox bill that was enacted into law was a measure that set the terms of some of the Hawaiian territorial senators, the lengths of which varied according to their share of the popular vote. The HRP controlled a majority of the 15 seats, but Republicans were floating a proposal to divide the longer four-year terms evenly between themselves and the Home Rulers. Initially, Wilcox responded by introducing a bill that would have provided four-year terms to all 15 Senators until the 1904 election, essentially ensuring Home Rule control for several more years. That bill was quickly shunted aside by the Territories Committee. But a month later Wilcox introduced H.R. 13076, a more politically feasible bill, which set the terms of seven of the Senators (four Home Rule, three Republican) at two years, based on their having received the lowest popular vote totals. Wilcox’s biographer described this as a victory for the Delegate, in part, because, of the four Home Rulers, three had proven disappointing to Wilcox in the territorial legislature’s inaugural term.³⁸ The bill passed the House on April 26, 1902, and shortly afterward passed the Senate. President Roosevelt signed it into law on May 19, 1902.³⁹

In early 1902, Wilcox’s health kept him from his congressional duties and largely confined him to home for several months. He suffered from severe stomach ulcers. His recurring health issues, coupled with the coming elections, shifted his attention away from Washington, where he had never fully been engaged, to back home, where his true interests were.

As 1902 opened, the first rumors about the upcoming election for Territorial Delegate appeared. Hawaiian newspapers reported a possible effort to merge the Home Rule Party with the Democrats, replacing Wilcox



with Democrat John Wise.⁴⁰ In early spring, Territorial Governor Sanford Dole predicted to California reporters that the Republican Party would do quite well in the fall since Wilcox had fulfilled none of his campaign promises, especially that of getting Dole removed as governor.⁴¹ The *Evening Bulletin* ran a story on Wilcox's record as Territorial Delegate in June, just before the HRP convention would be held. "The impression Wilcox has created in national circles has cast no credit upon the people he was elected to represent," the paper reported. Wilcox "has aided those who have sought to represent Hawaiian Americans as unable to govern themselves."⁴²

Wilcox opened the HRP convention on July 8 with a rousing speech calling upon all Hawaiians to accept annexation as a fact and embracing the Hawaiian Organic Act for bringing suffrage back to Native Hawaiians. He defended his record in Washington, blaming "missionaries" in Congress with thwarting his efforts. Wilcox also proposed that the party replace "Republican" in its name with "Democratic" in an effort to allow him to affiliate himself with the national party.⁴³ As the convention began its work, it was evident that Wilcox had laid the groundwork carefully, blocking a floor amendment demanding expanded federal spending on Hawaii. Wilcox had also managed to keep one of the most popular members of the Hawaiian royal family, Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, participating in the party despite his growing unease with the party's direction and tactics. Kuhio had been appointed chairman of a reorganization committee that drafted proposals to make the party more effective, but when Kuhio's report was presented, Wilcox and his followers tabled it, preventing any further consideration of its proposals. This action enraged Kuhio, who led a walkout, taking 40 of the 100 delegates with him. Wilcox immediately took the floor denouncing the walkout, but urged tolerance towards Kuhio and his followers.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the damage was done. The *Hawaiian Star* reported that Wilcox's political prospects were fading "not in the glory of the brilliant colors of the west, but sinking into a bank of clouds upon which can be read the gloomy word 'Failure.'"⁴⁵

Rumors flew that Wilcox had lost the favor of the former queen, and both mainland parties hastened to recruit Kuhio as their candidate, with Republicans succeeding. Kuhio's nomination quickly gained support. The Portuguese community of workers as well as the *Evening Bulletin* and the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* endorsed Kuhio.⁴⁶ Governor Dole reversed his opposition to Native Hawaiians having the vote and quickly cracked down on government corruption, minimizing criticism against him.⁴⁷ The single most important campaign issue, which Republicans eagerly seized upon, was Wilcox's plan to introduce federal control of the quarantined leprosy settlement on the island of Molokai, reported the *Washington Post*.⁴⁸ On Election Day, November 4, Wilcox lost to Kuhio, 4,696 to 6,636.⁴⁹ The pattern of voting made clear that Wilcox had lost the *haole* vote and a substantial bloc of Native Hawaiians shocked at his proposal to hand over Molokai to the federal government.⁵⁰

But the damage was not confined to Wilcox's personal political fortunes: the HRP also lost seats and control of the house of representatives and senate. Many in Hawaii believed that HRP had been broken. One historian suggests it was a "watershed" moment in Hawaiian politics, marking the ascendancy of the Republican Party and the declining influence of native politicians.⁵¹

In 1903 Home Rulers implored Wilcox to run as their candidate for sheriff of Oahu. Against the strenuous objections of his wife and the advice of his doctors, he accepted. His declining health, combined with the grueling schedule of a campaign, contributed to his further deterioration just weeks before the election. With his wife and young children at his side, Wilcox died at his home at the foot of the Punchbowl volcanic crater in Honolulu from a massive hemorrhage caused by what news accounts called "consumption," likely tuberculosis, on October 23, 1903.⁵² His career, opined the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was a "romantic and adventurous one."

Though government officials refused to give Wilcox a state funeral, throngs of mourners paid their respects to the late leader at the family estate, which led to the decision to postpone his funeral until after the elections. On November



8, after a funeral mass at the Catholic cathedral in Honolulu, Wilcox's casket was placed on a hearse and drawn through the streets by 200 Native Hawaiians to his grave site, where a crowd witnessed his interment.⁵³ The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* eulogized Wilcox as a faithful voice for the people. "It may be justly said that no other Hawaiian, not of Royal blood, has ever exerted such a powerful influence on Hawaii as Robert W. Wilcox," the editors judged. "We may condemn the nature of that influence as we please; but the fact remains that it made history and gave Wilcox rank as a tribune of his people, a man stronger in the elements of leadership than all but one of his native kings."⁵⁴

FOR FURTHER READING

Andrade, Ernest, Jr. *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Cornell University Libraries, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections (Ithaca, NY). *Papers*: In the Constance Goddard DuBois papers, 1897–1909, 1 cubic foot. The collection contains one folder about Robert Wilcox and the Hawaiian Rebellion.

Huntington Library, Manuscripts Department (San Marino, CA). *Papers*: In the Nathaniel Bright Emerson Papers, circa 1766–1944. Authors include R. W. Wilcox.

University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Hamilton Library (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 3 volumes. Materials contain articles from 19th-century American newspapers about the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Topics represented include R. W. Wilcox.

NOTES

- 1 "Robert W. Wilcox," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000459>; and A. P. Taylor (Librarian of the Archives of Hawaii), "Biographical Sketch of Robert William Wilcox," Box 174, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress Research Collection*, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Sobrero arranged for an annulment that was granted by Pope Leo XIII and the Civil Court of Italy in 1895. See Taylor, "Biographical Sketch of Robert William Wilcox"; Ernest Andrade Jr., *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996): 65.

- 4 Taylor, "Biographical Sketch of Robert William Wilcox."
- 5 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 58–60.
- 6 Editorial, 31 July 1889, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*: 2.
- 7 "Robert W. Wilcox Dead," 27 October 1903, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 3.
- 8 Merze Tate, *The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965): 114–115; Helena G. Allen, *Sanford Ballard Dole: Hawaii's Only President, 1844–1926* (Glendale, AZ: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1988): 182; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 107.
- 9 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 125–139.
- 10 Taylor, "Biographical Sketch of Robert William Wilcox."
- 11 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 191; Stephen W. Stathis, *Landmark Legislation, 1774–2002: Major U.S. Acts and Treaties* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003): 149.
- 12 Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America: A Political History of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 9; Ethel M. Damon, *Sanford Ballard Dole and His Hawaii* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1957): 340; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 194. The Hawaiian Organic Act went into effect as 31 Stat. 141 (1900).
- 13 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 194.
- 14 Allen, *Sanford Ballard Dole*: 239; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 191–192.
- 15 Allen, *Sanford Ballard Dole*: 238–239; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 195.
- 16 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 195, 196.
- 17 Ibid., 196.
- 18 Ibid., 198; Taylor, "Biographical Sketch of Robert William Wilcox"; Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977): 603.
- 19 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 200, 218.
- 20 Ibid., 219.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 House Committee on Elections, No. 1, *Charges against Robert W. Wilcox*, 56th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 3001 (1 March 1901): 1–4. See also Chester H. Rowell, *A Historical and Legal Digest of all the Contested Election Cases in the House of Representatives from the First to the Fifty-Sixth Congress, 1789–1901* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901): 601–603; Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 220.
- 23 "A Brilliant Speech," 24 October 1900, *The Independent*: 3.
- 24 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 230–232.
- 25 David T. Cannon et al., *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789–1946*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002): 1128.
- 26 A Bill To Extend the General Land Laws of the United States to the Territory of Hawaii, with Rules and Regulations for Homestead



- Entries by the Secretary of the Interior, H.R. 13906, 56th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 January 1901).
- 27 H.R. 6561, 57th Cong., 1st sess. (1901); Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 220.
- 28 A Bill To Provide Special Land Laws for the Territory of Hawaii, H.R. 3090, 57th Cong., 1st sess. (6 December 1901).
- 29 Testimony before the Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, *Hawaiian Investigation*, Part 2, 57th Cong., 2nd sess. (1902): 526.
- 30 *Congressional Record*, House, 56th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 February 1901): 1915.
- 31 A Bill Relating to the Retirement of Hawaiian Coinage and Currency, H.R. 4343, 57th Cong., 1st sess. (10 December 1901); Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 223.
- 32 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 224–225.
- 33 *Hawaiian Investigation*, Part 2: 525–526.
- 34 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 226.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 201–202.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 204.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 202.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 223.
- 39 H.R. 13706, 57th Cong., 1st sess. (27 March 1902); Public Law 57-118, 32 Stat. 200 (1902).
- 40 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 236.
- 41 Damon, *Sanford Ballard Dole and His Hawaii*: 343.
- 42 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 228.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 238.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 239–240.
- 45 No title, 18 July 1902, *Hawaiian Star*: 4.
- 46 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 243.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 244–245.
- 48 “Prince in the House: Kalanianaʻole Defeats Delegate Wilcox in Hawaii,” 13 November 1902, *Washington Post*: 3.
- 49 *Congressional Directory*, 58th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903): 133; “Prince in the House: Kalanianaʻole Defeats Delegate Wilcox in Hawaii.” For election results, see Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii*: 603.
- 50 “Prince in the House: Kalanianaʻole Defeats Delegate Wilcox in Hawaii.”
- 51 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 246–247; “Prince in the House: Kalanianaʻole Defeats Delegate Wilcox in Hawaii.”
- 52 “Robert Wilcox Died Last Night,” 24 October 1903, *Hawaiian Star*: 1; “Robert W. Wilcox Dead.”
- 53 “Hawaiians Mourn for Their Delegate,” 25 October 1903, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 18.
- 54 “Robert W. Wilcox,” 25 October 1903, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*: 4.



“IT MAY BE JUSTLY SAID THAT
NO OTHER HAWAIIAN, NOT
OF ROYAL BLOOD, HAS EVER
EXERTED SUCH A POWERFUL
INFLUENCE ON HAWAII AS
ROBERT W. WILCOX.”

Pacific Commercial Advertiser,
October 25, 1903

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole

1871–1922

DELEGATE 1903–1922
REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

From royal prince to revolutionary to Hawaiian Delegate, Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole traveled a unique route to the United States Congress. Known primarily as “Kuhio” or by his childhood nickname “Prince Cupid,” he remains the only Member of Congress born into royalty. As a royal, Kuhio consistently attracted support from Native Hawaiians who were nostalgic for the fallen kingdom and from *haoles* who respected his symbolic status. In the nation’s capital and on elaborate tours to the islands, however, the prince relied on his charm and personal diplomacy rather than his royal status to ensure advantages for Hawaiians. As the second Delegate from Hawaii, Kuhio won federal funds for infrastructure improvements, arranged the expansion of the Pearl Harbor naval base, and paid homage to his Hawaiian heritage through the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, his final, most controversial, and, arguably, most important accomplishment.

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole Piikoi was born on March 26, 1871, in the village of Kukuiula in the Koloa District of the island of Kauai. Kuhio was the youngest of three sons of High Chief David Kahalepouli Piikoi and Princess Victoria Kinoiki Kekaulike, both members of the fast-disappearing Hawaiian royal caste.¹ Princess Victoria’s sister, Kapiolani Napelakapuokakae, married into the royal line of Hawaii in 1863 when she wed King David Kalakaua. The couple remained childless so the king anointed his wife’s family as his eventual heirs. In 1880 Kuhio’s father, David Piikoi, died and King Kalakaua appointed Kuhio’s mother governor of the island of Hawaii. The king issued a royal proclamation making Kuhio and his two brothers princes in 1883 and made them wards following their mother’s death a year later. He then incorporated Princess Kekaulike’s line into the Kalakaua dynasty through the so-called Bayonet Constitution of 1887.²

King Kalakaua provided the best education available for his sister-in-law’s sons. As a child, Kuhio and his brothers lived in Honolulu, and it was at St. Alban’s School where classmates first started calling him “Prince Cupid.” Later Kuhio attended Oahu College, today known as Punahou School, in Honolulu, where he earned a reputation as an outdoor sportsman.³ Kuhio then joined his brothers at St. Matthew’s Military Academy in San Mateo, California, but their education was interrupted when the sudden death of Kuhio’s brother, Edward, forced their return home. In 1888 King Kalakaua sent Kuhio to Japan with the hope of setting up a marriage with the Japanese royal family. Kuhio spent nearly a year as the guest of the Japanese government, learning the art of diplomacy, but he made no effort to secure a marriage.⁴ Upon returning home, Kuhio briefly took up a position in the Ministry of Interior and Customs.

Continuing to groom Kuhio and his brother, David, to be potential heirs, Kalakaua sent them to study business in Gloucestershire, England, at the Royal Agricultural College. The pair toured Europe, greeted as equals in royal courts across the continent.⁵ The brothers returned from England in early 1891; King Kalakaua died in January while visiting San Francisco. His sister, Liliuokalani, succeeded to the throne and set Princess Kaiulani, daughter of Kalakaua’s youngest sister, Miriam Likelike, as her heir apparent, cementing Kawanakoa and Kuhio, respectively, as presumptive heirs behind the princess.

Liliuokalani took the throne in the midst of an economic depression and unrest among disenfranchised Native Hawaiians. Following her husband’s passing, Kuhio became a close confidante and adviser to the queen.⁶ At this time, he and his brother dropped their father’s surname, Piikoi, leaving Kalanianaʻole and Kawanakoa as their surnames for official business, in order to stand out from one another as they gained increased political prominence.⁷





On January 16, 1893, Queen Liliuokalani attempted to install a new constitution, undoing what she saw as the deleterious effects of the Bayonet Constitution and restoring power to the monarchy. This shocked the wealthy business class, led by Sanford B. Dole, a *haole* who had muscled his way onto the Hawaiian supreme court and then Liliuokalani's privy council. Dole and his friends among the immigrant elite then formed the Committee of Safety. Three days later they marched an organized volunteer militia in to occupy the government building with the aim of appealing for annexation by the United States. Dole remembered that Kuhio, working as one of the clerks there, quickly acquiesced to the takeover and began sending letters informing foreign diplomats of the change in government. "I must say the young prince worked with a vim," Dole recalled, "although the overthrow of the monarchy meant the end of royal honors."⁸

After it became clear that President Grover Cleveland's administration would not annex the islands, a provisional government reorganized as the Republic of Hawaii on July 4, 1894. Its constitution emulated parts of the U.S. Constitution, though it also prohibited many Native Hawaiians and citizens of Asian descent from voting, frustrating Kuhio. In the last weeks of 1894, Kuhio plotted a coup alongside his friend John Wise and agitator Robert W. Wilcox. However, Kuhio and Wise encountered roadblocks in their attempt to join Wilcox at the government building at the center of the insurrection. They eventually gave up and returned home in the early hours of January 7, 1895. President Dole declared martial law, and the pair was arrested the next day and held without charge. On February 11, they were at last charged with neglect in reporting treason.⁹ A military tribunal found Kuhio guilty and sentenced him to one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000. Government officials offered him clemency if he revealed the names of his coconspirators, but Kuhio refused.

While serving his sentence, Kuhio received regular visits from Chiefess Elizabeth Kahanu Kaleiwohi-Kaauwai. Kuhio was released months ahead of schedule, in September 1895, and he married Kahanu soon after.¹⁰ Faced with uncertainty about the future of the Hawaiian

government on the eve of annexation and coping with the sudden deaths of his beloved cousin, Princess Kaiulani, and Queen Kapiolani, Kuhio left Hawaii with his new wife for a belated and prolonged honeymoon in late 1899. Part of his travels took him to South Africa at the height of the Second Boer War, where he was a guest of the British Army. The couple did not return until September 1901.¹¹

In his absence, his former ally Wilcox defeated Kuhio's brother David to become the first Hawaiian Delegate in the U.S. Congress on the strength of Native Hawaiians who had been re-enfranchised under the Hawaiian Organic Act of 1900. Kuhio joined Wilcox's Home Rule Party, which became the dominant political party on a platform of restoring the rights and power of Native Hawaiians, but Kuhio grew disenchanted with the Home Rule Party after witnessing some of its racially charged politics firsthand. The party often derided *haoles* and conducted legislative business in the Hawaiian language rather than English in defiance of the Organic Act.¹²

In July 1902, the party tapped Kuhio to lead a reorganization committee. Kuhio's proposals prioritized attracting younger moderates, but Wilcox preferred the status quo, seeking to retain his ally David Kalauokalani as party president. When Wilcox loyalists tabled Kuhio's plan indefinitely at the convention, he resigned his party affiliation and led a walkout of nearly half the delegates. He demanded Kalauokalani's ouster in exchange for bringing his faction back under the party tent, but that was a nonstarter for Wilcox. On July 14, Kuhio and his followers formed the Independent Party, or Hui Kokoā, and newspapers rumored that Queen Liliuokalani had given her tacit support.¹³ He also lured his old friend John Wise away from the Democrats. Hui Kokoā's platform read as a rebuke of Home Rulers' racial politics.

Meanwhile, business interests frustrated with the Home Rule Party turned to the Republican Party.¹⁴ Republicans initially rejoiced at Home Rulers' fragmentation but soon worried that Kuhio's status as a royal could draw a decisive number of votes. Over the course of August, Kuhio considered merging his party with either one of the major parties from the mainland. Kuhio leaned



toward Democrats, but Democrats remained skittish and afraid of insulting Wilcox and the remaining Home Rulers. Native Hawaiians viewed Republicans as the party of *haoles* and the reviled territorial governor Sanford B. Dole. But a speech at the opening of the territory's Republican convention cemented Kuhio's choice to run as a Republican. Former Nebraska Senator John M. Thurston declared, "You might as well send a frog to chipper at the doors of the Court of St. James for what you want as send to Washington a Delegate who is not one of or in harmony with either of the two great political parties." After Kuhio met with key Republican operatives, Republicans readily incorporated elements of his platform into their own. This included many former Home Rule positions: the creation of county and municipal government, a legislative settlement for Queen Liliuokalani, and the revision of the tax system.¹⁵ Kuhio joined the convention as a nominee for Delegate, announcing, "I am a Republican from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet." Republicans nominated him by acclamation.¹⁶

The Home Rule-leaning newspaper *Independent* excoriated Kuhio as a race traitor, tying him to Dole and other *haoles*, whom it portrayed as oppressors. Wilcox called him "that very inconsequential little mouse."¹⁷ Many more Hawaiian institutions lined up behind Kuhio's candidacy, however. The Portuguese Political Club even renamed itself the Portuguese Republican Club as a show of support for the prince.¹⁸

Democrats, led by Kuhio's brother David, even allied with the Home Rule Party to counterbalance Kuhio's popularity. The brothers bore no ill will toward one another, and in either outcome a member of the royal family would end up leading the party in power. Home Rulers emphasized "Hawai'i for the Hawaiians" and campaigned for Wilcox's re-election, while Republicans attacked the incumbent as an ineffective demagogue. Republicans zeroed in on Wilcox's proposal to cede control of the community of people on Molokai suffering from leprosy to the federal government. When it became clear that, under federal control, inhabitants of the settlement would be strictly separated by gender, among

other changes, residents reacted strongly, and Wilcox faltered.¹⁹ Kuhio's campaign developed around embracing Americanism, saying at stump speeches, "Monarchy had accomplished a useful means, and democracy arises to carry on the work."²⁰ Ultimately, Republicans swept both the legislature and the delegacy. Kuhio won a large percentage of the white vote and attracted considerable Native Hawaiian support as well, tallying 6,636 votes to Wilcox's 4,696.²¹ Kuhio's victory fatally weakened the Home Rule Party. For a few elections, they split votes with Democrats, who eventually absorbed the remaining Home Rulers.

Kuhio arrived in Washington, DC, with much exuberance, though the reality of his isolated position rapidly set in. When President Theodore Roosevelt greeted Kuhio in 1903, he balked at the name Kalaniana'ole. "I shall not call him Prince Cupid, and I cannot pronounce his last name. I never would be able to remember it, anyhow," the President complained. "Can't we cut it off somewhere and make it simpler?" From then on, most Washingtonians simply referred to him as "Kuhio" or "Prince Cupid," after his childhood nickname.²² Racial prejudice was apparent in the House of Representatives' barbershop, when the proprietor curtly informed him, using a racial epithet, that he would not cut the Hawaiian's hair. Not one to suffer fools, Kuhio grabbed the barber by the collar and hauled him out of the shop.²³ On January 4, 1904, Kuhio gained some unwanted notoriety when he was arrested for disorderly conduct after scuffling outside a DC bar. He refused to pay a fine or to alert friends to his predicament and stayed overnight in jail, incorrectly claiming that, as a Member of Congress, he was exempt from arrest. The next morning the court notified friends, who bailed him out.²⁴

He enjoyed better luck in his first lottery for a desk in the House Chamber, drawing ahead of powerful Appropriations Chairman James Hemenway of Indiana. When Hemenway asked to swap desks, Kuhio complied. He was only too happy to extend the small favor and win the indebtedness of a well-placed ally. Kuhio bragged to a friend, "This damn little Delegate had a seat that some of the fellows would give anything to get."²⁵



After settling into his position, Kuhio wrestled with mainland ignorance of Hawaii. He was appointed to the traditional seats on the Territories Committee and the Post Office and Post Roads Committee, but often found himself testifying before the Merchant Marine and Fisheries or Naval Affairs panels instead.²⁶ He struggled to pass bills approving a franchise grant to expand the installation of electric lights in Hawaii. Afterward in the 59th Congress (1905–1907), he concentrated on getting money to build, repair, and maintain lighthouses on the islands and encouraging greater trade (H.R. 10512, H.R. 21927).²⁷ No one seemed to know whether funding existed for the project, so Kuhio shuffled back and forth between the Navy Department's Lighthouse Board, Speaker Joe Cannon, and a clerk of the Appropriations Committee before discovering the funds had been suspended under the belief that Hawaii was an insular possession, like Puerto Rico or the Philippines.²⁸

Over and over the prince became aware that neither congressional colleagues nor federal bureaucrats knew much about Hawaii. So he dedicated himself to educating American administrators about the islands. Much of this process happened off the House Floor, and Kuhio reveled in these extracurricular venues.²⁹ Much of his time was spent in committee rooms hosting card games, playing golf, and attending various functions to expand his social circle and influence. Sometime after 1904, the prince set up a luxurious getaway for guests near Pershing Square, dubbing it the Bird's Nest. Furnished with a bar, poker tables, pool tables, and his African hunting trophies, it became a getaway for officials where Kuhio would hold forth on Hawaii's beauty, fertility, and strategic position in the Pacific. When Princess Kahanu made the trip to the capital, the couple hosted dinner parties for Members featuring the guest of honor from the islands.³⁰ Kuhio even arranged for an exhibit on Hawaii in the Alaska–Yukon–Pacific Exposition of 1909 in Seattle, Washington.³¹

However, starting in May 1907, Kuhio's preferred method was to host colleagues on extended tours of Hawaii.³² The territorial legislature even chipped in for the three-week tour of Hawaii that spring. These excursions became more popular over time. The 1915 entourage

included 27 Representatives, 10 Senators, congressional family members, staff, and a gaggle of press. Hawaiians sailed out to greet the congressional visitors before they reached land, presenting leis and playing Hawaiian music from an accompanying tugboat.³³ The firsthand experience often helped grease the skids for legislative action afterward. "I have a few things to take up with the prince about the merchant marine and transportation facilities that come within the jurisdiction of my committee," wrote Representative William Wilson of Illinois after one tour, "and I intend to help rectify those unreasonable sailing conditions when we get together."³⁴

Kuhio's attempts to focus federal attention on the Hawaiian Islands also included more traditional efforts at legislative lobbying. In 1903 he wrote letters to every Member of Congress on the necessity to dredge and improve the Honolulu Harbor. When contacts at the War Department turned him aside the following year, Kuhio went directly to President Roosevelt himself, prevailing upon him to lean on the chairmen of the Rivers and Harbors and Appropriations Committees as well as the irascible Speaker Cannon. Kuhio even took to the House Floor on occasion, as he did in 1905, to implore the House not to ignore Hawaiian problems. "Do not make it possible for my people to reproach me because that in this great national family injustice is done to its youngest and weakest child," he said. "Do not leave it possible for any Hawaiian to say that, either politically or economically, he was better off under the old monarchy than he may be today under the American flag."³⁵

More often than not, Congress applauded Kuhio's pluck but rewarded it with little substantive legislation. But his constant pressure prodded executive agencies into making some of the improvements requested of their own accord. By the end of 1906, the Department of Commerce and Labor had started construction of a lighthouse at Makapuu Point. Kuhio won appropriations for improvements across several omnibus bills, but did not manage to pass a full harbor improvement bill until 1916, when he pushed through Congress an overhaul to the Board of Harbor Commissioners.³⁶



Faced with repeated stonewalling in committees, particularly on the issue of harbor improvements, Kuhio changed his tactics. In a period of increasing tensions between the United States and Japan, his new idea was to tie the federal government tighter to Hawaiian infrastructure through renewed focus on military and naval bases on the islands. He took his case before the House Naval Affairs Committee in 1908. “Gentlemen of the committee, this Government has for ten years neglected the safeguard of preparing a naval base in the mid-Pacific,” Kuhio declared. It amounted to an “inexcusable neglect” not of a special Hawaiian interest, but of a national security necessity.³⁷ Kuhio’s persistent lobbying on the issue over the course of a decade paid dividends after he led a 1919 tour for Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels and the navy board to visit Pearl Harbor. Daniels agreed with Kuhio’s assessment, and Congress responded to the secretary’s report with an appropriation of \$27 million for recommended improvements and expansions.³⁸

Kuhio spent much of his time protecting Hawaii from federal policy changes that conflicted with its interests. In 1917 he testified against the passage of a bill introduced by Missouri Democrat Joshua Alexander, which would have sharply regulated wireless radio usage and traffic within the United States. Laden with communications from Hawaiian businessmen, Kuhio argued that radio was essential to the growth and development of the islands and that new federal regulations would hurt Hawaiian economic expansion and the ability of its people to assimilate into American culture.³⁹ The committee accordingly scuttled the bill.

After World War I, Kuhio pressured Congress to continue the suspension of coastwise laws that forbade foreign ships from serving as passenger steamers between Honolulu and San Francisco without the payment of a hefty fine per passenger. Members on the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, however, were eager to roll back the wartime suspensions. But with American ships still pressed into service as military transports, Hawaiians relied primarily on foreign ships to travel to and from the mainland. Kuhio reasoned that an exemption for Hawaii would keep travel open until more American

ships were returned to service. The committee ignored Kuhio’s plea.⁴⁰

Prohibition dominated much of the political discussion during Kuhio’s tenure in Congress, as the temperance issue was used as a wedge to critique Hawaiians’ fitness for self-rule. The Hawaiian legislature passed a liquor licensing law in 1907 in the hope of slowing liquor traffic in the territory. In 1910 John G. Woolley of the Anti-Saloon League of America testified before Congress that the legislature’s licensing law had failed. Portraying the average Hawaiian as a drunkard and local politicians as being in the pockets of liquor lobbyists, Woolley pushed Congress to dismantle territorial home rule. Kuhio took pains to point out the hypocrisy and cherry-picking in Woolley’s testimony. “There are many good people in Hawaii who believe in prohibition but who do not believe that Congress should enact it,” Kuhio countered. He defended the right of Hawaiian self-government and relied on the history and virtue of the Hawaiian constitution.⁴¹ Only a couple weeks later Kuhio testified in favor of a congressionally approved referendum (H.J. Res. 155, S.J. Res. 80) on the prohibition of liquor sales in the territories, which gave control back to the Hawaiian people, but the referendum failed.⁴²

Pressure in favor of prohibition grew, and, in 1917, when Oahu was declared a military zone, serving alcohol on the island was banned. Kuhio viewed the restriction as unfair, since the manufacture and sale of alcohol were still permitted. A year later Kuhio introduced his own bill to prohibit the traffic and manufacture of alcohol during the war (H.R. 9960, S. 3935). However, Kuhio continued to guard Hawaiians’ right to self-government. “We are fully capable of settling all our domestic problems,” he declared, “and the waiver of this right in the instance, I trust will not be made a precedent for future inroads by the Federal Government on the inherent right of the people of the islands to home rule.” The bill passed the House a few months later by a vote of 238 to 30, following considerable lobbying from Kuhio.⁴³

As a Republican, Kuhio spent most of his time protecting the islands’ economy, but his position as a



member of the fast-receding royalty stoked a deep sense of personal responsibility to his kin and Native Hawaiians generally. His brother, Prince David Kawanakoa, died in San Francisco in 1908.⁴⁴ This left Kuhio and Queen Liliuokalani as the last of the royal line. The queen seemed intent on regaining a measure of her authority and often pressured Kuhio to reacquire crown lands lost during annexation. Kuhio dutifully pressed what he knew to be a futile point. Congress repeatedly denied the land claim, but, at Kuhio's behest, eventually granted Liliuokalani a monthly payment. Still Kuhio's relationship with the queen remained turbulent until her death on November 11, 1917.⁴⁵

Among his many legislative interests, Kuhio most forcefully advocated for Native Hawaiians, whom, he contended, had suffered terribly from the introduction of European disease and the changes in their culture. To that end, Kuhio encouraged the adoption of the English language and American cultural norms and styles to better integrate into the new Hawaii.⁴⁶ This motivation, combined with Kuhio's own hopes of becoming the first Native Hawaiian territorial governor, led to a feud with the sitting territorial governor, Walter Frear, a fellow Republican.

Kuhio and Frear had met and worked together on land use bills both in the territorial legislature and before the U.S. Congress. When Frear declined to release certain plots in the southern Kau District of Hawaii for purchase by Native Hawaiians in late 1909, the partnership broke down. Kuhio accused Frear of mismanaging public lands and kowtowing to plantation owners. "The sugar plantations can get anything they want from Frear, but the people do not get any chance," the Delegate railed. "Gov. Frear lied to the people and he lied to me and made me lie to the people in my promises."⁴⁷

Kuhio's attacks grew more strident over Frear's tenure. Complaints that plantation owners were discouraging homesteaders by turning off their water supply or closing routes to market continued to pour in, and the prince vowed to put the issue before the President himself. If that failed, Kuhio pledged to ask Congress to set up a commission to investigate Frear's administration. President William H. Taft's Interior Secretary Walter Fisher requested

a written list of offenses before traveling to Honolulu. His investigation shifted from a focus on Frear's administration to a broader appraisal of the islands' public utilities and homesteading programs. Fisher recommended the creation of a public utilities commission to monitor these services separate from the territorial governor's administration. When many of the allegations against Frear's office proved to be unfounded, Kuhio withdrew his charges and backed Fisher's recommendations. The rivalry between the Delegate and governor cost both men in 1912: Kuhio battled opponent Lincoln McCandless for 54 percent of the vote in his toughest campaign to date and saw his hopes for the governor's office dashed while Frear failed to secure reappointment.⁴⁸

Kuhio believed one of the simplest ways to ensure civil rights for his people was the admission of Hawaii to the Union. He struggled, however, against ambivalence among the more potent political groups on the islands, such as the sugar industry. "Hawaii will make the next bid for Statehood, and the request will come soon," he predicted in 1910, but momentum stalled. Although rumors spread that Kuhio planned to ask for statehood at the very next session of Congress, that request did not come for nine more years.⁴⁹ The Hawaiian legislature passed resolutions in favor of statehood in 1911, 1913, 1915, and 1917, but these efforts were largely perfunctory and lacked the full backing of the parties or funding for commissions organized to lobby for statehood in Washington. Each time Kuhio cautioned patience to statehood's proponents, sensing a lack of enthusiasm for the idea in both the halls of Congress and among the powerful agricultural oligarchs of the islands.⁵⁰ Kuhio finally brought the first statehood proposal (H.R. 12210) before Congress in 1919. The bill generated little fanfare in Washington and died before being debated in committee, leaving Kuhio to seek other means to protect his people. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Hawaii's premier paper, stated in 1920 that "Hawaii is not yet ready for statehood."⁵¹

Frustrated with the machinations of *haole* Republicans both in Hawaii and in their DC lobbying offices, Kuhio began to push more brazenly for accommodations for



his own people, the Native Hawaiians.⁵² This advocacy for homesteaders eventually culminated in his trademark accomplishment: the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1921, a bill that Kuhio championed while bucking *haole* elites within his own party. Between the rapid *haole* acquisition of former native land and the domination of the labor market by Chinese and Japanese immigrants, the situation had become dire, Kuhio argued. “If conditions remain as they are today,” he insisted, “it will only be a matter of a short space of time when this race of people, my people, renowned for their physique, their courage, their sense of justice, their straight-forwardness, and their hospitality, will be a matter of history.” Kuhio joined the popular movement among Native Hawaiians for homesteading as a possible solution for the preservation or “rehabilitation,” as it was termed, of the Hawaiian people. He pointed to the successful rehabilitation of the Maori people in New Zealand by the British government under a homesteading program. Circumstances aligned to push his own proposal in early 1920 as leases on significant portions of government land (the former “Crown lands” the queen had been eager to reacquire) were due to expire.⁵³

In April 1920, the prince introduced what he initially termed the Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill (H.R. 13500), which set up a comprehensive homesteading program and returned Hawaiians to farming the land. “The legislation proposed seeks to place the Hawaiian back on the soil, so that the valuable and sturdy traits of that race, peculiarly adapted to the islands, shall be preserved to posterity,” Kuhio explained.⁵⁴ Later that year, testifying before the Senate Committee on Territories, he claimed, “This is the first opportunity given to a poor man,” and he accused opponents of the bill of protecting the wealthy who were eager to retain their leases.⁵⁵ Senator Harry Stewart New of Indiana submitted a companion bill (S. 1881) the following session which quickly moved through Congress. S. 1881 passed the Senate and House by voice vote on June 27 and 30, 1921, respectively, and was signed into law by President Warren G. Harding.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act amended the Organic Act to set aside roughly 200,000 acres across

the Hawaiian Islands for 99-year leases to claimants at least 21 years old with 50 percent or more Hawaiian blood. However, the persistent lobbying of the islands’ sugar industry managed to retain the best lands for their sugar plantations while relegating homesteaders to less fertile and more remote acreage. Kuhio supported the exemption for sugar producers as a necessity for both passage of the bill and the maintenance of the Hawaiian economy. He bristled at accusations that he had sold out Native Hawaiians, insisting that he had negotiated the best deal possible. While Kuhio conceded that the program “does have a second class choice of lands,” he touted the provisions which made funds available for farming equipment and home construction. Ultimately, many homesteaders found themselves beholden to larger agricultural firms once again for even such basic needs as roads and irrigation.⁵⁶

Tellingly, the bill also prohibited Japanese laborers from obtaining work on federal construction projects. The provision reflected Kuhio’s tendency to protect Native Hawaiians, whom he frequently defended as prime examples of American values, at the expense of other ethnic groups. As the Native Hawaiian population dropped, he frequently warned, for instance, of competition from the growing pool of Japanese immigrant laborers. He feared the growing ethnic Japanese population would dominate island politics and have the effect of “un-Americanizing the territory.”⁵⁷

Kuhio’s antipathy for Japanese immigrants seemed based less on competition for jobs than it was on racial prejudice, given that he touted economic advantages of bringing in cheap Chinese labor to relieve a severe labor shortage on the islands’ sugar plantations. To bypass federal Chinese exclusion laws, Kuhio introduced H. Res. 93 in 1917 to authorize the immigration of 30,000 Chinese laborers to work rice fields and construct government buildings in Hawaii. Though proponents cited a long history of Chinese agricultural laborers on the islands, the bill received little consideration.⁵⁸

The labor shortage continued, however, and garnered significant attention in 1921 after a strike by Japanese workers. Yet again Kuhio requested that Congress



reverse its aversion to Chinese immigration and import Chinese laborers for a span of five years rather than allow further Japanese immigration. Texas Democrat John C. Box argued that Kuhio's proposal did not represent a "permanent" solution to Hawaii's problems. Kuhio countered that any permanent solution involving the importation of "European" labor would inevitably lead to inexcusable delays. For Hawaii's Chinese population Kuhio had nothing but praise. He attempted to distinguish Chinese immigrants from Japanese immigrants by insisting Chinese Hawaiians had a greater tendency to adopt American norms. "We have Chinese citizens there of whom we are proud," he said. "They make fine citizens."⁵⁹ Neither the House nor the Senate took up the proposal for a vote, and the legislation languished until after Kuhio's death a year later.

Kuhio encountered little serious competition for two decades. His election in 1904 was contested by King Kalakaua's former chamberlain, Democrat Curtis P. Iaukea, but the House rejected Iaukea's challenge.⁶⁰ Kuhio's campaign strategy was genial and quintessentially Hawaiian. He wrote his own campaign song based on the popular melody of "Aloha No Au I Ko Maka" and handed out white silk handkerchiefs with his initials and picture.⁶¹ Kuhio's perennial opponent was Lincoln McCandless, who abandoned the Republican Party for the Democrats in 1908. Kuhio ignored attempts to replace him within his own party after his 1912 confrontation with Governor Frear, using an endorsement from Illinois Representative James Mann, the Republican leader, who credited Kuhio with \$10.5 million in appropriations for Hawaii across his then decade of service.⁶²

Kuhio faced unusually heavy opposition in his final campaign. Pressure built within the Republican Party to replace him. Party leaders, still largely *haoles*, had grown increasingly concerned with Kuhio's fervent support of the Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill benefiting Native Hawaiians. Spurious charges circulated that Kuhio blocked a territorial women's suffrage bill, a policy Kuhio actually supported and that his wife had spoken in favor of in the territorial legislature. Kuhio's old friend and political manager

John Wise exposed the false whispering campaign, and Kuhio's prospects received an unexpected boost when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in August 1920, a mere month before the election.⁶³ Kuhio defeated McCandless one last time, winning 61 percent of the vote.

During the 1920 election, Kuhio was adamant that he would retire after his term expired in the 67th Congress (1921–1923). He once again eyed appointment as territorial governor, but lost out to Wallace R. Farrington, who had gathered endorsements from all previous living governors, including Kuhio's old nemesis Frear.⁶⁴ Exhaustive campaigning and the rigors of constant long-distance travel between Hawaii and Washington finally caught up with the prince. He fell ill in the fall of 1921 and ignored his doctors' prescriptions for bedrest. Kuhio died of a heart attack in Honolulu on January 7, 1922. He was accorded a state funeral in Hawaii with full military honors.⁶⁵

FOR FURTHER READING

Kamae, Lori. *The Empty Throne: A Biography of Hawaii's Prince Cupid* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1980).

Sch lup, Leonard. "Prince Cupid: Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole and the Quest for Hawaiian Progressivism," *International Review of History and Political Science* 19 (1982): 54–58.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Hawaii State Archives (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1903–1922, 4.3 cubic feet. The papers of Jonah Kalaniana'ole document his 19 years as Hawaii's Delegate to Congress. The papers mainly consist of bill files and correspondence. The bill files concern his campaign for Hawaiian Home Lands legislation and federal public works legislation for Hawaii. The correspondence reflects an unusually close consultation between Delegate Kalaniana'ole and the governor on legislation of interest to Hawaii. A finding aid is available at the repository.

Photographs: circa 1875–1920, 1 folder. Photographs of Jonah Kalaniana'ole as a child, young man, and during his political career as Hawaii's Delegate to the U.S. Congress. Photos record his activities as a sportsman, as a student with his brothers in San Mateo, California, and as a member of the Order of Kamehameha. Several photographs of commemorations honoring him are also included.



NOTES

- 1 Barbara Bennett Peterson, "Kuhio," *American National Biography* 12 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 943.
- 2 "Prince Cupid at Home," 24 May 1903, *Washington Post*: E10.
- 3 Peterson, "Kuhio": 943.
- 4 Lori Kamae, *The Empty Throne: A Biography of Hawaii's Prince Cupid* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1980): 67–68.
- 5 Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, "Prince Kuhio: An Introduction to His Life," in *Biography Hawaii: Five Lives—A Series of Public Remembrances*, University of Hawaii, <http://hawaii.edu/biograph/pdf/kuhioguide.pdf> (accessed 7 March 2013).
- 6 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 70–73.
- 7 Peterson, "Kuhio": 943.
- 8 Helena G. Allen, *Sanford Ballard Dole: Hawaii's Only President, 1844–1926* (Glendale, AZ: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1988): 190.
- 9 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 80–87.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 91–96; "Thurston Is Recalled," 9 June 1895, *New York Times*: 5.
- 11 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 99.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 106–107; Stephen W. Stathis, *Landmark Legislation, 1774–2002: Major U.S. Acts and Treaties* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003): 149. The Hawaiian Organic Act went into effect as 31 Stat. 141 (1900).
- 13 Ernest Andrade Jr., *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996): 239–240.
- 14 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 107.
- 15 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 242–243.
- 16 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 108.
- 17 "Wilcox and Cupid," 2 September 1902, *The Independent*: 2; "Review of the Press," 9 September 1902, *The Independent*: 1.
- 18 Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel*: 243.
- 19 "Prince in the House," 13 November 1902, *Washington Post*: 3.
- 20 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 109.
- 21 "Prince in the House"; Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977): 603.
- 22 "Prince Cupid's New Name," 29 November 1903, *Boston Daily Globe*: 31.
- 23 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 112.
- 24 "Jonah in the Jug," 6 January 1904, *Los Angeles Times*: 3; "Prince Cupid' Arrested," 6 January 1904, *New York Times*: 9.
- 25 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 113.
- 26 For a full listing of Kuhio's committee assignments, see David T. Canon et al., *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789–1946*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002): 570.
- 27 Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 28 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 113–115.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 110–111.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 112, 122; Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 31 Hearing before the House Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, *Alaska-Yukon Exposition*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (27 January 1908): 44–45.
- 32 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 128.
- 33 Roderick Matheson, *Congressional Visit to Hawaii: 1915* (Honolulu: Advertiser Press, 1915): 14.
- 34 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 158.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 59th Cong., 1st sess. (23 February 1905): 75.
- 36 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 127–129.
- 37 Hearings before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, *Pearl Harbor Dry Dock*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 January 1908): 495–496.
- 38 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 176; Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 39 Hearings before the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communications*, 64th Cong., 2nd sess. (11–26 January 1917): 383–384.
- 40 Hearings before the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Extending Relief to the Territory of Hawaii by Providing Additional Shipping Facilities Between the Territory of Hawaii and the Mainland*, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (14 July 1919): 3–7.
- 41 Statements before the Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, *Liquor Traffic in Hawaii*, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (11 February 1910): 18–20.
- 42 36 Stat. 878 (1910); Hearings before the House Committee on the Territories, *Special Prohibition Election in the Territory of Hawaii*, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (25 February 1910): 6–9; Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 141–142.
- 43 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 171–172.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 132–133; "Hawaiian Prince Dead," 3 June 1908, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 45 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 129–130, 162, 173–75.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 47 "Fight Over Hawaiian Lands," 27 December 1909, *New York Times*: 4; "The Party Split—And After," 13 December 1909, *Hawaiian Star*: 4; "Island Press On Politics," 28 December 1909, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 3.
- 48 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 143–144; "Hawaiian Delegate to Fight Governor of Pacific Isles," 31 May 1911, *Los Angeles Times*: 13; "Knox and Fisher Land," 12 October 1912, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 49 "Hawaii Would Enter Union," 9 July 1910, *New York Times*: 1; "Views of Visitors in Washington," 1 August 1910, *Washington Post*: 6.



- 50 It is unclear for whose benefit the territorial legislature offered these proposals, given the lack of funding or serious push each resolution ultimately provided. Kuhio seemed to recognize, alongside much of the press at the time, the futility of pushing a proper statehood campaign in Congress without more potent backing from Hawaiian authorities. See Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 178.
- 51 Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984): 44–46; John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawaii, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 30.
- 52 Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968): 295–296.
- 53 Daws, *Shoal of Time*: 296–297; Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Labor Problems in Hawaii*, 67th Cong., 1st sess. (7 July 1921): 450.
- 54 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 187.
- 55 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Territories, *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920*, 66th Cong., 3rd sess. (14 December 1920): 128–130.
- 56 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 197; Daws, *Shoal of Time*: 297–299; Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944; “Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill is Passed; Anti-Beer Measure Favored,” 1 July 1921, *Sacramento Union*: 2.
- 57 Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944; *Labor Problems in Hawaii*: 448.
- 58 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Relative to Chinese Immigration into Hawaii*, 65th Cong., 2nd sess. (17 January 1918): 1–3, 48–49.
- 59 Kuhio’s efforts alongside those of businessman Walter Dillingham ultimately led to pressure for Japanese exclusion in the Immigration Act of 1924. See Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003): 32; *Labor Problems in Hawaii*: 451–453.
- 60 The House rejected Iaukea’s claim that an early mistake in dispensing the ballots necessarily voided the election and also noted that voting proportions did not fall significantly outside the broader numbers. See “Contest from Hawaii,” 13 December 1904, *Washington Post*: 1; House Committee on Elections No. 3, *Iaukea v. Kalanianaole*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 2651, (26 March 1906): 1–6.
- 61 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 138–139.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 156.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 178–180.
- 64 Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*: 13.
- 65 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 185, 200; Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944.



“DO NOT LEAVE IT POSSIBLE
FOR ANY HAWAIIAN TO SAY
THAT, EITHER POLITICALLY
OR ECONOMICALLY, HE WAS
BETTER OFF UNDER THE OLD
MONARCHY THAN HE MAY
BE TO-DAY UNDER THE
AMERICAN FLAG.”

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaole
Congressional Record, February 23, 1905

Benito Legarda

1853–1915

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1907–1912
PROGRESISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

A prominent entrepreneur before entering Congress, Benito Legarda served as one of the first Resident Commissioners from the Philippines. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1907, Legarda used his vast business experience to influence tariff legislation in an effort to reshape the Philippines' economy. He was close friends with President William H. Taft—the two first met when Taft served as civil governor of the Philippines at the turn of the century—and Legarda worked closely with officials from the Bureau of Insular Affairs on a host of trade issues. While many Filipinos called for independence, Legarda took a more measured approach and believed the island government should first establish consistent sources of revenue before it sought independence. “He was a man of the highest repute,” Democratic Senator William Stone of Missouri said about Legarda, “clear-headed, intelligent, patriotic, representative, and worthy in every way of the greatest confidence.”¹

Benito Legarda was born on September 27, 1853, in Binondo, Manila Province, Philippines, to Benito Legarda Sr., a Spaniard, and Cirila Tuason. Legarda attended the Ateneo de Manila University and matriculated to the University of Santo Tomas, also in Manila, where he graduated with a law degree in 1874. His family, according to one account, had been “distinguished for decades in the business and political life of the Spanish regime,” and Legarda was himself an adept businessman, founding the Germinal cigar factory and making a fortune in the tobacco and alcohol industries. Legarda married twice, the second time to Teresa de la Paz, and together they had three children.²

In the midst of his lucrative business career, which made him one of the wealthiest men in the Philippines, Legarda won election to the municipal council of Manila and served as lieutenant mayor of the Quiapo District in 1891.³

Legarda belonged to a class of well-educated Filipinos commonly called the *ilustrados* (the enlightened ones), men who had often grown wealthy and successful under Spanish rule but who had also challenged the Spanish colonial structure from within. Their status as cultural elites may have given the *ilustrados* more conservative tendencies, but their history as internal reformers enabled men like Legarda to identify with the movement for political control that took shape in the 1890s. “They emphatically desired reform,” wrote Peter W. Stanley in his history of Philippine independence, “particularly guaranteed civil liberties, decentralization of government, separation of church and state, and recognition of their position as leaders in Filipino life.”⁴

As a result, when the Philippines went to war with Spain in 1896, Legarda backed the independence forces and served as an adviser to General Emilio Aguinaldo. Legarda was by no means a revolutionary, but he represented the Jolo Province in the revolutionary Malolos congress—named after the town about 30 miles north of Manila where the rebel government gathered—and nominally served as its vice president. Legarda only attended session twice, however, later telling American authorities, “I did not like it, and I did not swear to support the constitution.” He also served as director of the new government's treasury department.⁵

With the American occupation of the islands in February 1898, Legarda drifted away from the objectives of his more radical counterparts in the revolutionary congress. War was bad for business, and he had a lot to lose if he backed the wrong side. Legarda resigned from the Malolos congress, and returned to Manila where he found allies in United States General and military governor of the Philippines Elwell S. Otis and William H. Taft, the islands' civil governor and future President of the United States.





By siding with the Americans, Legarda risked becoming a target of the nationalist guerrilla fighters, but he nevertheless remained in Manila, where he kept a large, “palatially furnished home.”⁶ Legarda ended up testifying before a panel of American investigators studying how best to install a new government. Called the first Philippines commission, the panel heard statements on a range of topics, including the archipelago’s economic potential. Legarda, who touted his credentials as a captain of industry, complained to the commission that the Philippines lacked a stable currency and protections against foreign competition. “There is no security in business,” he said.⁷

Legarda quickly became a key figure in newly formed Partido Federal (Federal Party), which controlled patronage and worked closely with the Americans to create a new civil government. After Taft assumed the office of civil governor, he appointed Legarda to the second Philippine commission on September 1, 1901. Taft formed a close personal and professional friendship with Legarda and once described him as “a public-spirited citizen of high character” in a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt.⁸

Since its creation at the turn of the century, the Philippine commission, which Legarda likened to the American Senate, functioned as an advisory board with legislative powers for the new Manila government. It was staffed by both U.S. officials and Filipino Federalistas sympathetic to America’s goals in the Pacific. Within a short while, Legarda had won the reputation as one of “the prestigious figures at the center of the party,” working to strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and the United States.⁹ In fact, according to one historian of U.S.–Philippine relations, Legarda was one of a handful of *ilustrados* who questioned the Philippines’ ability for “self-government” and “even advocated the indefinite continuation of American rule.”¹⁰ Legarda served on the commission for six years.

In 1904, when U.S. officials unveiled sweeping changes to the Philippines’ tax system, Legarda flexed his own political muscle and fought the proposal. At one point, as the debate dragged on, he and one of his Filipino colleagues even threatened to resign from the commission in protest.¹¹

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the debate over taxes in the Philippines revealed a rift in relations with America. Legarda challenged the notion that Filipinos would simply accept the recommendations from their American counterparts on the commission. At the time, both his party, which had changed its name to the Progresistas, and everyday Filipinos were thinking broadly about their home’s political future. Although Legarda and many other business and cultural leaders remained wary of independence, it was not long before a younger generation of Filipinos built a nationalist movement. By the time Philippine voters elected their first assembly under U.S. control in 1907, independence had become a potent force.¹²

With the formation of the new Philippine government, Legarda suddenly found himself with a new job. As part of the new arrangement, the legislation authorized the Philippines to send two Resident Commissioners to Washington to represent it before Congress. In an attempt to balance the interests of both the Philippine commission, which had a notable American influence, and the assembly, which had a large nationalist contingent, the two legislative bodies agreed to elect a candidate of their own choosing who would then be quickly ratified by the opposite chamber.¹³ The commission, as many expected, chose Legarda on November 22, 1907; the assembly selected Pablo Ocampo, who had played a prominent part in the rebellion.¹⁴ Both seemed well regarded. “The presence of these commissioners should prove of value to the members of the House,” wrote the *Washington Post*, “as it brings there men who are well posted on Philippine matters and who can, presumably, speak with authority on affairs in the archipelago.”¹⁵

Legarda and Ocampo, both of whom were reportedly reluctant to accept the job, were somewhat different selections for the office of Resident Commissioner, and their appointments underscored the tension between the Philippine commission and the assembly. Whereas Legarda had risen to power by working with American officials, Ocampo made his name by routinely speaking out against foreign influence.¹⁶

The commission and the assembly wanted Legarda and Ocampo to leave for the United States as soon as possible



in order to join the upcoming debate over U.S. tariffs on Philippine goods. Travel from Manila to the United States in the early 1900s required long boat rides, including a stop in Hong Kong in order to catch a steamer to San Francisco. Legarda became seasick easily, and the trip across the Pacific on a smaller vessel made him nervous.¹⁷ By the time they left in late December, some Filipino businessmen feared that the Resident Commissioners would arrive in Washington too late to help craft tariff legislation, but Taft had reassured Legarda there would be plenty of time to address his concerns.¹⁸

Legarda was something of a media darling when he landed in America. Newspapers across the country covered his arrival, many of which applauded his long association with U.S. rule in the Philippines, a point Legarda was happy to reaffirm when he docked in San Francisco.¹⁹ “The people are indefinitely better off under present conditions than they would be under other political management,” he said.²⁰ Still, he quickly reminded American readers that U.S. occupation came at a steep price for the islands.²¹

Filipino political leaders saw the treaty to end the War of 1898 as a bad deal for their economy, and the government gave Legarda a long list of issues to address on the Hill, including the right for the Philippines to open independent trade agreements with countries that already consumed its goods, to open new trade partnerships without American oversight, to repeal tariffs that restricted a host of Philippine goods in the American market, and to repeal a trade bill giving U.S. ships sole discretion to move people and goods to and from the Philippines.²² “Our particular object,” Legarda said shortly before arriving in Washington, “will be to show Congress the great need of lowering the duty upon Philippine sugar and tobacco.”²³

For Legarda, political independence for the Philippines was a worthy, but long-term, goal—a discussion for another time. His main ambition was to industrialize and diversify the islands’ economy so that, when independence arrived, the nation could stand on its own.²⁴ “We do not expect to have much weight when political questions are being discussed,” he said in 1907, shortly after his election, “but when economic matters pertaining to the Philippine

Islands arise in either house of congress we expect to fully inform the homeland legislators.”²⁵ This was also a personal concern for Legarda, who admitted that he wanted independence, but just was not sure how to get it. “That’s the question,” he said. “I do not want to stand the risk of possible civil war or anarchy, for I have property to lose.”²⁶

Like any lawmaker, Legarda’s chances for success rested on his ability to influence the legislative process, which, in 1908, seemed tenuous. At least one Manila-based *Washington Post* correspondent wondered openly what kind of “powers and prerogatives” Legarda and Ocampo would have in the House. “The law designates them as ‘resident commissioners,’ which may mean anything or nothing,” he wrote, speculating that the two would be marginalized so Congress could avoid defining the “status of the islands.”²⁷ Well aware of the limitations placed on him as Resident Commissioner, Legarda offered an honest assessment a few days before he took office: “As we are the first delegates to represent our people officially in the United States,” he said, “much more is expected of us than we will possibly accomplish.”²⁸

Legarda took his seat in Congress in early February 1908.²⁹ House leaders assigned him and Ocampo to desks on the Democratic side of the chamber, and while the new Resident Commissioners had access to both the House and Senate floors, had office space in the new House Office Building (now the Cannon building), and could participate in debate, they lacked the ability to vote and were prohibited from sitting on committees.³⁰

Despite his limitations, Legarda focused on trade issues and tariff rates, guided by his desire to have the Philippines accorded the same treatment as America’s other territories, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.³¹ Legarda noted that the Treaty of Paris had severely circumscribed the Philippines’ sugar and tobacco markets, two of its biggest exports. Without protected access to U.S. consumers, the archipelago’s entire agricultural sector would suffer. A close partnership, he said, would ensure that “our political interests could never be severed.”³²

Legarda also had an ace up his sleeve. He planned to lean on his old friend, William H. Taft, who had since



risen to the job of Secretary of War, even telling an Ohio newspaper that the Philippines would “depend on Governor Taft” to protect its interests in Washington.³³ Luckily for Legarda, the Insular Bureau, which oversaw America’s colonial possessions, fell under Taft’s War Department. When it came to tackling the Philippines’ tariff concerns, Legarda quickly began working alongside the Insular Bureau’s chief, Clarence Edwards. Barely a month into his term, Legarda appeared publicly with Edwards at a banquet in Ohio, speaking about the Philippines’ economy and the need to remove U.S. import duties on Philippine goods.³⁴

Legarda had additional support among the press. The *New York Tribune*, writing shortly after Legarda’s speech, argued that, since Hawaii and Puerto Rico both had preferable trade deals with the United States, the Philippines should, too. “This is an unfair discrimination,” it observed, noting that trade in sugar and tobacco from the Philippines might be tripled if duties were lowered. “Logic and good faith call for their reduction.”³⁵

Crafting tariff legislation, however, meant dealing with many moving parts, not the least of which was the Philippines’ tenuous position in America’s economic orbit. In effect, the archipelago was two things at once: a significant part of America’s insular roster and a unique political entity that many on both sides of the Pacific saw as a separate country entirely. Nevertheless, the United States was in the driver’s seat. “Practically speaking,” a U.S. journalist wrote, “Congress holds the prosperity of these islands in the hollow of its hand.”³⁶

Congress, however, could not agree on how best to categorize the islands. For a decade it had gone back and forth, unable to decide if the Philippines was a domestic or international trading partner. Republicans built trade policy around the Philippines’ ambiguous status. Meanwhile, Democrats called its insular position “anomalous and preposterous” and wanted Congress to decide whether the Philippines was “altogether American or altogether foreign.”³⁷

Because the Philippines collected much of its revenue from fees on imported goods from the United States, trade

dictated much of the islands’ annual budget. By the early 1900s, the Philippines depended on America to such an extent that, if free trade went into effect and tariffs were removed, one journalist estimated, the islands would lose three-quarters of its customs revenue, one of the main sources of money for the Philippines’ treasury.³⁸

During Legarda’s first few months in the House, the trade relationship between the United States and the Philippines became something of a prelude to a much larger debate about America’s export-import business.³⁹ But in the spring of 1908, the Philippine tariff moved briefly to the fore when the Ways and Means Committee considered H.R. 21449, amending sections of the Tariff Revision Law of 1905 that dealt specifically with goods imported to the islands.⁴⁰ Prior to the committee markup, Legarda and the Insular Bureau designed amendments to adjust a handful of rates, including those on imported buttons (to protect Manila’s mother-of-pearl fisheries), and to eliminate entry fees for agricultural machinery and shipbuilding tools.⁴¹

At ten o’clock in the morning on May 5, 1908, the Ways and Means Committee began hearings on H.R. 21449. Three witnesses sat across from the committee: Legarda; the Insular Bureau chief, Clarence Edwards; and Edwards’s assistant, Major Frank McIntyre. McIntyre had written the bulk of the amendments and did most of the talking. Legarda contributed every now and then, but for the most part, he sat quietly while the committee questioned the Insular Bureau officials.⁴² The committee agreed with the proposed amendments and favorably reported the bill.⁴³

After word reached the Philippines, businesses back home clamored to know the details. Despite Legarda’s reserved role during the hearing, the island press made him the leading voice on the bill. Some headlines even listed him as coauthor: “Enthusiastic on Tariff”; “Legarda-Payne Tariff Bill Up”; “Contents of Legarda Bill”; “How Legarda Has Amended the Payne Bill”; “El bill Legarda-Payne.”⁴⁴

When the measure went to the floor on May 27, the resulting debate distilled the larger tariff question. Democrats criticized it and the GOP majority for ignoring the immediate trade concerns at home and for applying



different standards to the Philippines. “It is an emergency hodgepodge tariff bill—a sort of cross between the good and the bad—a miserable compromise,” grumbled Democrat William Sulzer of New York.⁴⁵ Ways and Means Chairman Sereno Payne of New York, ever paternalistic, countered that he believed the bill would teach the Philippines a lesson in economics. Legarda, for his part, did not speak up during debate. The bill passed that day and went to the Senate, where it was referred to the Committee on the Philippines, but it never came up for a vote.⁴⁶

About a year later, in the 61st Congress (1909–1911), the Ways and Means Committee took up the issue again, only this time in the form of two separate bills. Despite the earlier struggle for reform, a lot had changed over the preceding months. Legarda’s old friend, Governor Taft, had won election as President and was calling for an overhaul of U.S. tariffs. It promised to be a huge undertaking. At the time, the United States had no income tax, meaning the federal Treasury generated vast sums of revenue from fees placed on imported goods.⁴⁷

Payne introduced an omnibus tariff bill in mid-March, and at the end of the month, Legarda’s former colleagues on the Philippine commission came out publicly in support of much of it, including the provision to open free trade with the Philippines. They asked that the United States help the islands adjust over the next three years.⁴⁸

At around the same time, the commission sent Legarda and Ocampo “very specific instructions” on the tariffs affecting the Philippines in the Payne bill. Like the tariff legislation the year before, the new Payne measure dealt with a number of contingencies both in the United States and in the Pacific. For the last 10 years, the Philippines had assumed that the United States would open free trade, removing tariffs and costing the islands vast sums of revenue. To prepare for such a sudden loss of funding, the insular government levied direct taxes on its citizens. Even though the taxes went into effect, free trade never did, leaving the Philippines with a surplus. To put that money back into circulation, the insular government funded infrastructure projects to help industrialize the economy. With taxes fueling construction, tariffs helped run the

government. To suddenly remove the tariffs on goods imported to the Philippines would devastate the islands’ budget and threaten its public works initiatives.⁴⁹

On April 3, 1909, Legarda used the debate over what would become the Payne–Aldrich bill to make his first address on the House Floor. Ocampo had spoken the day before, protesting adamantly against the inequitable free trade proposal.⁵⁰ Legarda, as was his style, took a far more moderate approach. A major sticking point for the insular legislature and, thus, the Resident Commissioners was how the Payne bill treated Philippine sugar and tobacco imported to the mainland. If maintaining fees on goods imported to the Philippines promised to help the insular treasury, removing tariffs from Philippine goods imported to the mainland would have far-reaching benefits for Filipino farmers. Legarda told the House that his government had grown frustrated by Congress’s inability to agree on how to regulate the entry of raw material from Manila. He faulted the Senate for the recent “nonaction” on the tariff and laid additional blame on U.S. sugar and tobacco industries. As they had in the past, Big Sugar and Big Tobacco saw Philippine producers as a threat to their market share at home and vigorously sought to maintain the fees on Philippine imports. Legarda, however, pointed out that production in the Philippines had slowed in recent years and that, even if Filipino farmers increased production, they “could never catch up with America’s increased consumption.”⁵¹

Legarda concluded his lengthy remarks by turning back to the situation at home. Free exports to the United States were one thing, but allowing the Philippines to continue to tax U.S. goods or at least finding some balance was vital to the islands’ financial health. Legarda had no problem with U.S.-based businesses enjoying “a proper measure of protection,” he said. But businesses in the Philippines which had operated under almost exactly the same conditions needed similar protection.⁵²

“The Filipino people believe that, coming before this Congress with a just cause, they will receive the same measure of equity as that which the American people, through their Representatives in this Congress, have always



in the past conceded under similar circumstances,” Legarda said. The House erupted in applause after he finished.⁵³ After the bill passed the House, President Taft convinced the Senate Committee on Finance to raise the quota on imported Philippine sugar. The Associated Press called it a “signal victory,” but Taft and the War Department feared it was not enough.⁵⁴

The War Department, like Legarda, worried that free trade would disrupt key industries on the islands and cause a devastating loss of revenue. In response, on April 15, 1909, Taft called for a separate tariff bill entirely for the Philippines. Drafted by a team of “tariff experts” who had consulted with businesses in Manila, the new bill, Taft told Congress, “revises the present Philippine tariff, simplifies it and makes it to [*sic*] conform as nearly as possible to the regulations of the customs laws of the United States.”⁵⁵ Taft intended the measure to spur revenue in the Philippines, maximizing customs fees to fund the government while protecting the islands’ burgeoning industrial sector.⁵⁶ Chairman Payne agreed to the request.⁵⁷

Five days later the Ways and Means Committee sat to hear testimony on the stand-alone Philippine bill. After hearing from its authors in the Insular Bureau who said the bill was designed “to create real competition,” the committee turned to Legarda, who agreed that the bill would cover some of the projected deficit in the Philippines once free trade took effect.⁵⁸ A tense moment followed when the committee pushed Legarda on whether the bill included “fair and equitable” rates for the Philippines. At that point, Edwards of the Insular Bureau stepped in to remind the committee that “Commissioner Legarda is about as actively interested in every trade and pursuit and everything else in the Philippine Islands as anybody I know.”⁵⁹ Using his experience in the tobacco industry, Legarda quickly broke down tariff problems in the Philippines before the three-hour hearing adjourned.⁶⁰

The Ways and Means Committee favorably reported the Philippine tariff measure (H.R. 9135) on May 10, 1909, complete with a few amendments.⁶¹ Despite appearing to have the support of both parties, the tariff divided the Philippines’ own Resident Commissioners. Whereas Legarda

appeared to want to help shape the terms of the tariff bill, Ocampo opposed the idea of free trade outright. Not only did he not testify before the Ways and Means Committee, Ocampo also lent his support to Filipinos living on the mainland who petitioned Congress to kill the legislation.⁶²

Throughout the tariff debate, the issue of Philippine independence percolated just below the surface. Ocampo and the Philippine assembly saw the tariff as an inherently political issue which would dictate the Philippines’ relationship with Capitol Hill for the foreseeable future.⁶³ If Legarda seemed reluctant to address the politics of the tariff outright, however, it is likely because he and the Philippine commission realized they would be wasting their breath. Congress and Chairman Payne himself were not likely to budge on the issue.⁶⁴

When the Philippine tariff bill went to the floor for the first time on May 13, there was a long discussion, a few partisan swipes, but only token opposition. In general, the criticisms dealt less with the bill’s specifics and more with America’s colonial policy.⁶⁵ On the bill itself, Democrats called it “experimental” and weak.⁶⁶ Over the next two weeks, the House failed to achieve a quorum, delaying final passage.⁶⁷ Finally, on May 24, the House approved the amendments to H.R. 9135.⁶⁸ Despite his earlier testimony before the Ways and Means Committee, Legarda appears not to have participated in the debate on the House Floor. After a number of revisions in the Senate which sat on the measure until Payne’s larger tariff bill became law, the new rates effecting U.S.–Philippine trade cleared Congress on August 2.⁶⁹

Taft signed the Philippine tariff bill into law on August 5, 1909, immediately after signing the larger Payne–Aldrich Tariff Act. For Taft, the changes to tariff rates governing trade with the Philippines were 10 years in the making. “It gratifies me exceedingly by my signature to give it the effect of law,” he said. “I am sure it will greatly increase the trade between the two countries and it will do much to build up the Philippines to a healthful prosperity.”⁷⁰ According to one journalist, Taft flashed “a broad smile of satisfaction” when he signed the new measures into law.⁷¹



Taken together, the separate tariff bill and the Payne–Aldrich bill overhauled trade between the Philippines and the United States. It required a number of deals with sugar, rice, and tobacco producers, but with the stand-alone Philippine bill, Congress and Insular Bureau officials had attempted to provide the islands’ government with a means to raise revenue. With Payne–Aldrich, on the other hand, Congress worked to implement free trade between the archipelago and the mainland.⁷²

In mid-May 1909, just as the House was working its way through the Philippine tariff bill, the Philippine commission unanimously elected Legarda to another term as Resident Commissioner. Ocampo, however, lost re-election to Manuel L. Quezon in the assembly.⁷³ Ambitious and powerful, Quezon had served as governor in the provinces before winning election as floor leader in the Philippine assembly. After presenting their credentials to Taft in late December 1909, Legarda and Quezon began efforts to reform the Philippines’ tax code, to expand American citizenship on the islands, and to change the date on which service dates began in the Philippine assembly.⁷⁴

If Legarda had taken the lead on legislation when he served alongside Ocampo, he seemed to pass along that responsibility to Quezon, now that the tariff issue was over. In early January 1911, when the two sat before the House Committee on Insular Affairs to discuss the four-year election cycle planned for the Philippines, for instance, Legarda deferred to Quezon’s testimony, telling the chairman directly, “I have nothing to add to what Mr. Quezon said.”⁷⁵ When the committee heard testimony on the islands’ civil government that same day, Legarda again said little.⁷⁶

Much of Legarda’s activity from 1910 to 1912 took place away from Capitol Hill. He addressed crowds in a number of eastern cities, but his trip to Paris, France, was perhaps his most important. For a number of years, the Philippine government struggled to provide loans to farmers who needed help. In 1907 Congress passed a bill creating an agricultural bank in the Philippines, but few investors were willing to contribute seed money. Free trade, as required by the Payne–Aldrich law, may have

helped bolster the Philippines’ economy, but loans in the archipelago still carried exorbitant interest rates.⁷⁷ In July 1911, however, Wall Street was surprised when the *New York Times* reported that French financiers had offered \$10 million to help fund the languishing agricultural bank in the Philippines. That the deal had even been mentioned was thanks in large part to Legarda’s business acumen. One American banker told the *Times* that, because the Philippines had a virtual monopoly over essential oils used to create perfume popular in Paris, Legarda was looking to corner the market in France. In order to meet supply in Europe, however, Philippine farmers needed capital to improve their operations, which is where an active agricultural bank would make the difference.⁷⁸

In November 1910, the Philippine commission named Legarda to another term in the House, but the assembly shocked everyone by refusing to confirm his nomination. Over the next three months into early 1911, the commission and the assembly tried to work out a compromise. In the meantime, however, Congress passed H.R. 32004, which created four-year terms for the Philippines’ Resident Commissioners and extended Legarda’s existing tenure until he or his successor was elected. Importantly, the bill also provided funds for the Resident Commissioners to hire staff and gave them franking privileges.⁷⁹

Legarda had few friends in the assembly during the nomination fight back home, and, according to one unnamed delegate, the lower house was willing to “accept almost any other man but Mr. Legarda.”⁸⁰ On November 21, 1912, the logjam broke and the commission agreed to appoint Manuel Earnshaw in place of Legarda.⁸¹ For his part, Legarda was done with politics anyway, confiding to friends that he planned to retire when his old friend, Taft, left the White House after losing re-election himself that fall.⁸²

Following his congressional service, Legarda spent the rest of his life away from the Philippines, working alongside Europe’s moneyed interests to bolster the islands’ agricultural bank, which he called “my life work.” On August 27, 1915, while in the town of Évian-les-Bains along Lake Geneva in western France, Legarda died suddenly. “It was as a brilliant



scholar, charming gentleman and a financier of rare genius that Benito Legarda was known in many parts of the world,” the *Manila Times* eulogized. “It was Benito Legarda’s efforts which are said to have done more than any other thing to bring about peace between Americans and Filipinos in the days of the Empire and it was due in good part to his efforts that the American government was established here on such a firm foundation.”⁸³ Legarda’s remains were buried in his native Manila.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (14 June 1909): 3208.
- 2 Quotation and family history from “Benito Legarda Called By Death in Paris,” 30 August 1915, *Manila Times*: 1; “El Hon. Benito Legarda, Fallecido en Paris,” 30 August 1915, *La Democracia* (Manila, PI): 1; Carlos Quirino, ed., *Who’s Who in Philippine History* (Manila, PI: Tahanan Books, 1995): 124–125; Benito Legarda Passport Application, No. 578, *U.S. Passport Applications, Puerto Rico and Philippines, 1913–1925*, vol. 2, Box 4233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, www.ancestrylibrary.com (accessed 24 February 2016).
- 3 G. H. Blakeslee, “The Gentlemen from Manila,” 18 January 1908, *Harper’s Weekly*: 14; Celestina P. Boncan, “The Philippine Commission, 1900–1916,” in *Philippine Legislature: 100 Years*, ed. Cesar P. Pobre (Quezon City, PI: Philippines Historical Association, 2000): 41.
- 4 Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States–Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Manila, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997): 32; Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 44, quotation on p. 52. For a general discussion on the *ilustrados*, see Michael Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elites Respond to American Rule, 1898–1908* (Manila, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003): 26–35.
- 5 *Report of the Philippine Commission*, vol. 2, *Testimony and Exhibits*, 56th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 138: 387–388.
- 6 Thomas F. Millard, “The Men Who Have Come to Washington to Represent the Filipinos,” 2 February 1908, *Washington Post Magazine*: 4; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 64–65, 67; Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 29, 54, 57–58, 62; Boncan, “The Philippine Commission, 1900–1916”: 44; “Philippine Delegates to Congress Arrive,” 19 January 1908, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 17.
- 7 Blakeslee, “The Gentlemen from Manila”; *Report of the Philippine Commission*, Vol. 2, *Testimony and Exhibits*: 176–182. See also Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 93.
- 8 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 72–73, 79; Boncan, “The Philippine Commission, 1900–1916”: 40–41; Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 69–70; “Dual Role in the Philippines,” 5 July 1901, *New York Times*: 1. For Taft’s remarks on Legarda, see “Special Report of the Secretary of War,” 23 January 1908, *Annual Report of the War Department, 1907*, vol. IX, 60th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 2 (1908): 277.
- 9 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 116; Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 66; “Free Trade for the Philippines,” 20 January 1908, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 4. For more information on the Philippine Commission and its individual installments, see Boncan, “The Philippine Commission, 1900–1916”: 27–62.
- 10 Golay, *Face of Empire*: 103.
- 11 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 119–123, quotation on p. 123. See also Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 105–106; Golay, *Face of Empire*: 114–115.
- 12 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 124, 127–128, 132–133. On the development of opposition parties and the fall of the Federal Party in the Philippines, see Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 73–143. For the rise of the Nationalist Party, see Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: chapter 10. And for the new Progressive party, see Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 294–304.
- 13 Golay, *Face of Empire*: 139; “Two Filipino Delegates,” 23 November 1907, *Washington Post*: 3; Millard, “The Men Who Have Come to Washington to Represent the Filipinos.”
- 14 “Legarda One of The Delegates,” 7 November 1907, *Manila Times*: 1; “Legarda is Chosen to Go to Washington,” 16 November 1907, *Philippines Free Press*: 1.
- 15 “Our Cosmopolitan Congress,” 26 November 1907, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 16 “Filipino Delegates on Way,” 22 December 1907, *Washington Post*: 12. Quotation from “Free Trade for the Philippines.” See also Millard, “The Men Who Have Come to Washington to Represent the Filipinos.”
- 17 *Journal of the Philippine Commission, Inaugural Session*, vol. 1 (Manila Bureau of Printing, 1908): 115, 120, 358–370, www.hathitrust.org (accessed 18 February 2016).
- 18 “Delayed Departure,” 26 November 1907, *Manila Times*: 1; “Resident Delegates,” 13 December 1907, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 19 “Philippine Delegates to Congress Arrive,” 19 January 1908, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 17; “Filipino Delegates Here,” 28 January 1908, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; Millard, “The Men Who Have Come To Washington To Represent the Filipinos.”
- 20 “Free Trade for the Philippines.”
- 21 “Legarda’s Straight Talk,” 28 February 1908, *Cableneus-American* (Manila, PI): 2.
- 22 “Legarda’s Straight Talk”; “Commissioners Leave Tonight,” 20 December 1907, *Manila Times*: 1. The trade bill was Public Law 58-114, 33 Stat. 181 (1904).
- 23 Blakeslee, “The Gentlemen from Manila.”



- 24 Millard, "The Men Who Have Come To Washington To Represent the Filipinos"; "Legarda Offends Some Assemblymen," 28 February 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 3; "Filipino Makes A Practical Plea for Independence," 17 March 1912, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*: 10.
- 25 "'We Will Do Our Duty,' Says Legarda," 20 December 1907, *Manila Times*: 9.
- 26 Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila."
- 27 Millard, "The Men Who Have Come To Washington To Represent the Filipinos."
- 28 "People Met in Hotel Lobbies," 28 January 1908, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 29 "Needs Interpreter in Congress," 6 February 1908, *New York Tribune*: 7.
- 30 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (4 February 1908): 1540; "Commissioners From Philippines to Sixtieth Congress," 13 February 1908, *Los Angeles Times*: 12; "They Get Rights There," 14 March 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 6.
- 31 "Filipinos Urge Trade," 14 March 1908, *Washington Post*: 3.
- 32 "Free Trade for the Philippines."
- 33 Gus J. Karger, "Capitol Comment," 17 February 1908, *Times-Star* (Cincinnati, OH): 4; "A Great Big Man," 30 April 1908, *Manila Times*: 3.
- 34 "Filipinos Urge Trade."
- 35 "Trade With The Dependencies," 16 March 1908, *New York Tribune*: 6.
- 36 Thomas F. Millard, "Philippines Not a 'Problem' Nor a 'Burden,'" 23 February 1908, *New York Times Magazine*: 2; Thomas F. Millard, "Our Interests and Our Duty in the Philippine Islands," 23 February 1908, *Washington Post Magazine*: 4; Thomas F. Millard, "Congress Holds the Key," 23 February 1908, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: A1.
- 37 House Committee on Ways and Means, *Duties on Philippine Products Imported into the United States*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 20 (20 December 1905): 1, 3.
- 38 Pedro E. Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy toward The Philippines, 1898-1946* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947): 41-43; Millard, "Philippines Not a 'Problem' Nor a 'Burden.'"
- 39 "To Gather Revision Facts," 1 May 1908, *New York Times*: 2.
- 40 "Enthusiastic on Tariff," 5 May 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1; "Island Help Planned," 1 May 1908, *Indianapolis Star*: 2; "To Gather Revision Facts," 1 May 1908, *New York Times*: 2; "Legarda-Payne Tariff Bill Up," 7 May 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1.
- 41 "Legarda-Payne Tariff Bill Up"; "Contents of Legarda Bill," 9 May 1908, *Manila Times*: 1; "How Legarda Has Amended the Payne Bill," 9 May 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 6. For more information on H.R. 21449, see Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy toward The Philippines*: 92-95.
- 42 Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *H.R. 21449: Philippine Island Tariff*, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (5 May 1908): 225-232.
- 43 House Committee on Ways and Means, *Philippine Tariff Laws*, 60th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 1607 (4 May 1908).
- 44 "Enthusiastic on Tariff"; "Legarda-Payne Tariff Bill Up"; "Contents of Legarda Bill"; "How Legarda Has Amended the Payne Bill"; "El bill Legarda-Payne," 12 May 1908, *La Democracia* (Manila, PI): 1.
- 45 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (27 May 1908): 7094.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 7097; "Payne-Legarda Tariff Bill Passes The House," 29 May 1908, *Manila Times*: 1; "Railroad Gets Extension," 28 May 1908, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 47 Lewis L. Gould, *The William Howard Taft Presidency* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009): 11.
- 48 "For the Payne Bill," 1 April 1909, *Boston Daily Globe*: 9; "House to Hasten Tariff Revision," 1 April 1909, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 2; "Tariff in the Philippines," 1 April 1909, *Los Angeles Times*: 11.
- 49 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (3 April 1909): 929-930.
- 50 "A Filipino Heard," 3 April 1909, *New York Tribune*: 2; "Test Vote Monday," 3 April 1909, *Washington Post*: 1; "House Debate Goes On," 4 April 1909, *New York Times*: 2.
- 51 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (3 April 1909): 929-930.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 930. See also "House on Monday to Ballot on Hide and Lumber Tariff," 3 April 1909, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 53 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (3 April 1909): 931.
- 54 "President Wins Point for Philippine Sugar," 10 April 1909, *Los Angeles Times*: I12; Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Philippine Tariff Bill*, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (20 April 1909): 44.
- 55 Quotation from "Message by Taft Demands Bill for Philippine Trade," 15 April 1909, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1. See also "Tariff Revision for Philippines," 16 April 1909, *Atlanta Constitution*: 2; "Taft Submits Bill for Insular Tariff," 16 April 1909, *New York Times*: 3; "Tariff Message from Taft Today," 15 April 1909, *New York Times*: 3; "Free Trade in Philippines," 15 April 1909, *Baltimore Sun*: 2.
- 56 "New Tariff for the Philippines," 16 April 1909, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 3; "Trade With the Philippines," 17 April 1909, *New York Times*: 8; "Low Rates for Philippines," 21 April 1909, *New York Times*: 1; "Beveridge to Lead New Subcommittee," 27 April 1909, *Indianapolis Star*: 1; House Committee on Ways and Means, *Philippine Tariff*, 61st Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 7 (10 May 1909): 1.



- 57 “New Philippine Tariff,” 16 April 1909, *New York Tribune*: 2.
- 58 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (13 May 1909): 1998; *Philippine Tariff Bill*: 17, 32, 47.
- 59 *Philippine Tariff Bill*: 47.
- 60 *Ibid.*, 46–49.
- 61 *Philippine Tariff*: 2; “Tariff Shadow Over Congress,” 10 May 1909, *Atlanta Constitution*: 2; “Duties for Filipinos,” 12 May 1909, *Washington Post*: 5; “New Philippine Bill,” 11 May 1909, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; “Philippine Bill Reported to House,” 11 May 1909, *Wall Street Journal*: 3.
- 62 “Filipinos Want Freedom,” 13 May 1909, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; “Duties for Filipinos,” 12 May 1909, *Washington Post*: 5.
- 63 “The Future of the Philippines,” 3 April 1909, *Christian Science Monitor*: 14; “Ocampo for Protest,” 13 May 1909, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 64 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (13 May 1909): 2000.
- 65 “Philippine Bill Up,” 14 May 1909, *New York Tribune*: 2; *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (13 May 1909): 1997–2012.
- 66 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (13 May 1909): 2002, 2005.
- 67 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (17 May 1909): 2126; *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (20 May 1909): 2237.
- 68 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (24 May 1909): 2238.
- 69 “House Completes the Philippine Tariff Bill,” 3 August 1909, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 2; “Pass Philippine Bill,” 3 August 1909, *Washington Post*: 1.
- 70 “Party Pledges Fulfilled Says Taft, of Tariff Bill,” 6 August 1909, *Detroit Free Press*: 1.
- 71 “Taft Signs Tariff Bill,” 6 August 1909, *Detroit Free Press*: 1. See also “Tariff Bill Now a Law,” 6 August 1909, *Baltimore Sun*: 1.
- 72 Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy toward The Philippines*: 100–109.
- 73 “Legarda and Quezon Chosen,” 15 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 74 “Filipinos Envoys Here,” 29 December 1909, *Washington Post*: 4; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 181–182.
- 75 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *H.R. 32004*, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (26 January 1911): 6.
- 76 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Administration of Civil Government in Philippine Islands*, Part 2, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (26 January 1911).
- 77 “French to Finance Big Philippine Bank,” 20 July 1911, *New York Times*: 4.
- 78 “French Bank in Philippines,” 21 July 1911, *New York Times*: 11.
- 79 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (6 February 1911): 2022–2024; Public Law 61-376, 36 Stat. 910 (1911). For more information, see Philippine Legislature, *Election of Resident Commissioners to the United States*, 2nd legislature, 1st sess., Document No. 250—A. 38 (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1911), <https://archive.org/details/aqw4348.0001.001.umich.edu> (accessed 10 February 2016).
- 80 “Tavera Vice Legarda Is Rumor,” 8 November 1912, *Manila Times Weekly Edition*: 8.
- 81 “The Week and the Outlook,” 22 November 1912, *Manila Times Weekly Edition*: 1; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 168–169.
- 82 “Benito Legarda Called By Death in Paris.”
- 83 *Ibid.*



“THE FILIPINO PEOPLE BELIEVE
THAT, COMING BEFORE THIS
CONGRESS WITH A JUST CAUSE,
THEY WILL RECEIVE THE
SAME MEASURE OF EQUITY AS
THAT WHICH THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE, THROUGH THEIR
REPRESENTATIVES IN THIS
CONGRESS, HAVE ALWAYS IN
THE PAST CONCEDED UNDER
SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.”

Benito Legarda
Congressional Record, April 3, 1909

Pablo Ocampo

1853–1925

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1907–1909
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Pablo Ocampo served in the House as Resident Commissioner only briefly, but he was a powerful force on behalf of Philippine nationhood. From his early days as a leader in the revolutionary government to his election to the U.S. House of Representatives, Ocampo helped shape the terms of the Philippines' relationship with America. On Capitol Hill, he fought to protect the archipelago's economy from what he considered an unbalanced trade deal and worked to further the concerns of the Philippine assembly. He was, according to Sereno Payne of New York, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, "a gentleman of education, a lawyer, and a man of ability."¹ Ocampo was not fluent in English, but during his time as Resident Commissioner, he spoke compellingly for his home islands.

Pablo Ocampo was born on January 25, 1853, to an established Manila family.² He attended Colegio de San Juan de Letran before graduating from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila in 1882. After studying law, Ocampo passed the bar and began practicing in Manila, starting what would become a very diverse career. From 1883 to 1884, he served as the prosecuting attorney in Manila's Tondo District along Manila Bay. And then, under the Spanish regime, he served as secretary of the royal court from 1885 to 1887 and as relator of the supreme court from 1887 to 1888. From 1888 to 1890, he was an adviser to the Economic Association of the Philippines.³

When the war broke out between the Philippines and Spain, Ocampo severed his ties with the empire and joined the revolution. The Spanish arrested him and threw him in jail in 1896, but Ocampo remained committed to the cause and became a close adviser to Emilio Aguinaldo, the general leading the insurrection. In 1898, as the United States beefed up its presence in the South Pacific, Ocampo

was elected to the Philippines' revolutionary congress at Malolos, a town approximately 30 miles north of Manila.⁴

Ocampo's relationship with the U.S. occupying forces was rocky from the start. In 1899 the United States arrested him for his work with the revolution. Although he was eventually released, Ocampo stayed on America's radar.⁵ During his time in Manila, Ocampo became the editor of *La Patria*, a newspaper openly critical of American occupation.⁶ According to a *Los Angeles Times* correspondent in the Philippines, Ocampo was also reported to have been the mastermind behind the insurrection's intelligence operation, sending agents throughout Manila, Hong Kong, and other points in the Pacific. "His office was really the distributing point of all aid for the insurrectionists," the reporter said, "and he solicited contributions to keep up the battle."⁷

The reach of Ocampo's newspaper, alongside his history with Philippine nationalists, made United States authorities in the Philippines extremely nervous, so much so that, in the first part of 1901, American military officials deported him to the island of Guam, 1,500 miles to the east, where his political views on Philippine independence would be safely contained. But Ocampo's repeated imprisonments, first by the Spanish and then by the Americans, in addition to his work with the revolutionary government, may have only heightened his standing. Writing in the widely read *Harper's Weekly* a few years later, George H. Blakeslee, a leading American authority in the field of international relations, took stock of Ocampo's repeated sacrifices and concluded that the Manila lawyer was "a Filipino patriot."⁸

After spending two years exiled in Guam, Ocampo returned home. Despite concerns about his future in the Philippines, the former rebel leader took the loyalty oath to the United States and kept a comparatively low profile, focusing on his law practice.⁹ His politics also seemed more





moderate. While Ocampo was gone, U.S. civil authorities, led by governor and future U.S. President William H. Taft, began exerting greater control over the Philippines. They worked closely with the Philippine Partido Federal (Federal Party), which saw U.S. occupation as a stabilizing force. It was a necessary evil that Ocampo hoped was a prelude to Philippine nationhood, a goal he now believed could be negotiated peacefully.¹⁰

Not long after he returned home, Ocampo fell in with a newly formed group of Filipino elites called the Comité de Intereses Filipinos (Committee of Filipino Interests), which opposed America's imperial government. Although the new group included a number of former revolutionaries, the committee's ambitions were rather moderate. "It functioned mainly as a coalition of oppositionists promoting the welfare of the indigenous population," wrote Michael Cullinane, a historian of Philippine politics. The committee was something of a political incubator, helping leaders of the opposition form an agenda. "The primary accomplishment of the Comité," Cullinane observed, "was that it provided an organization that brought together many of the men who eventually emerged as the leaders of the Partido Nacionalista in 1907."¹¹

The Partido Nacionalista (Nationalist Party) was first conceived in 1906, the result of efforts to unite the many different opposition leaders in Manila. For much of the preceding decade, politics in the Philippines was unbalanced: there was the pro-American Partido Federal and then there was everyone else, a loose affiliation of factions opposed to American rule. These opposition groups all sought Philippine independence, but subscribed to different levels of urgency—everything from immediate independence to much more gradual freedom.

Ocampo, along with a number of his politically moderate colleagues from the committee, gravitated to a burgeoning party called Comité de la Unión Nacional (Committee of the National Union). Although its members did not push for immediate independence, they did seem to want it sooner rather than later. Eventually, in the spring of 1907, Manila's nationalist elements, led by the Comité de la Unión Nacional, fused together to form

the Partido Nacionalista, offering a stark contrast to the Federalistas' agenda (the Partido Federal changed its name to Partido Nacional Progresista [National Progressive Party] in 1907).¹²

The effort to unite the nationalist camps was still lurching forward when the campaign for the new Philippine assembly began. As part of the Philippine Organic Act of 1902, Congress created a bicameral legislature for the Philippines in which the commission functioned much like the U.S. Senate while the assembly would be popularly elected and fill a role similar to the U.S. House of Representatives.¹³ It had taken five years, but by the summer of 1907, the Philippines was preparing to cast its first ballots for a popularly elected governing body when Ocampo entered the race.

The philosophical differences which made it so difficult to unify independence supporters in the first place remained a problem. During the nominating phase, numerous pro-independence groups ran candidates for seats in the assembly often from the same district. Late in the spring, Ocampo announced his candidacy for Manila's 2nd district, releasing a platform in June that the *Manila Times*, a newspaper sympathetic to American occupation, called "very safe, sane, and conservative."¹⁴ Ocampo had become something of a realist over the years, and when he was approached about running for the assembly by calling for immediate independence, he flatly refused. American authorities would never grant it, and Ocampo did not want to waste time belaboring what he felt "constituted a deception of the people." It made more political sense to him to work alongside American authorities and prepare gradually for a lasting freedom. Because Ocampo refused to support immediate independence, the Nacionalista ticket fractured and cost him a seat in the assembly.¹⁵

Nevertheless, Ocampo suddenly found himself on the inside track for a historic appointment to Congress. The same Philippine Organic Act of 1902 that created the assembly also empowered the islands' legislature to elect two Resident Commissioners to the U.S. House of Representatives: the assembly and commission would each select one candidate who then had to be confirmed by the



other chamber. In the fall of 1907, Ocampo's name was submitted to the assembly, and on November 22, 1907, he was elected with 42 votes, more than double his closest competitor. The commission elected Benito Legarda, one of the Philippines' wealthiest businessmen and a close ally of United States Secretary of War William H. Taft.¹⁶

Ocampo had a lot in his favor: even if he had mellowed a bit, he was committed to the cause of Philippine nationhood; he ran a successful law practice; and he was well regarded among the islands' ruling class. With Legarda, the commission had selected a member of the pro-American Progressive Party. But, with Ocampo, the assembly selected someone who it hoped could more ably represent the interests of its nationalist majority.¹⁷ As Blakeslee, the American foreign policy scholar, pointed out at the time, Ocampo was also a native Filipino. "The majority of the Assembly were anxious to have their delegate a true representative of their race," Blakeslee observed. "This fact alone was enough to cause the defeat of other strong candidates who were in part of Spanish origin."¹⁸

Ocampo's politics and his long career in the public eye also seemed to make him the most viable compromise candidate. His service in the revolutionary government may have made him a radical, but by the time the assembly sent him to Washington, Ocampo had the reputation as a conservative leader among the Nacionalistas.¹⁹

The day after his election, an editorial in the *Manila Times* gave Ocampo a lukewarm endorsement, and mainland press accounts did so as well, describing the commission's decision to confirm his nomination as "a good omen." Ocampo, the *New York Times* surmised, was now the public face of the islands' nationalist movement. "The career of Delegate Ocampo will be watched with interest," the editors wrote.²⁰

Secretary of War Taft might not have completely agreed with Ocampo's politics, but the future commander in chief also held him in high regard, telling then President Theodore Roosevelt that the new Resident Commissioner was "a prominent and able member of the bar of the Islands and a man of high character."²¹

The 60th Congress (1907–1909) was set to open on December 2, 1907, only 10 days after Ocampo's election, severely condensing the new Resident Commissioner's travel schedule. During the early 20th century, the trip from Manila to Washington, DC, took about a month and required travelers to set sail from Manila to Hong Kong in order to catch a steamer to San Francisco. So there was little hope Ocampo and Legarda would make it for the opening of the session. Congress, however, had a busy legislative agenda to start the 60th Congress, and the Bureau of Insular Affairs had told the Philippine commission that, in early January, the House would consider a major overhaul of the Dingley Tariff Act governing trade between the United States and the Philippines.²²

Many people on the islands, especially in the Philippine legislature, were anxious for the Resident Commissioners to make it to Capitol Hill in time to participate in the tariff debate, but the quick turnaround from election to departure created a mess. After a series of schedule changes, Legarda and Ocampo agreed to leave Manila by December 21 in order to catch an America-bound ship sailing from southern China on Christmas Eve.²³ "At all events," one leading member of the Philippine legislature said, "it is important that they be in Washington at the time the bill is brought up in the House, so that it may have stout defenders in persons who are cognizant of all the facts in the case."²⁴

Adjusting tariff rates was complicated, detailed work that contained a number of competing interests in both the private and public sectors on either side of the Pacific. Neither Ocampo nor Legarda could claim to be tariff experts. So the legislature agreed to compile "all the necessary data" they would need to help shape the section of the legislation covering Philippine sugar and tobacco, the islands' two major commodities.²⁵

Ocampo and Legarda arrived in San Francisco on January 18, 1908, and almost immediately tried to sway public opinion to their side, telling the Associated Press that if Congress followed through on its plan to overhaul tariff rates prices back home would skyrocket.²⁶



The Resident Commissioners made it to Washington two weeks later and took their seats in the House in early February 1908. On February 4, the House approved a measure giving them access to the House Floor and the right to participate in debate. They received suites in the new House Office Building (now the Cannon building), but were prohibited from voting or serving on committees.²⁷ A few days later, the House did the “proper and handsome thing,” according to the *New York Tribune*, and voted to raise their salaries to match the rest of their House colleagues.²⁸

Because they were the Philippines’ only voices on Capitol Hill, Legarda and Ocampo had to steer legislation in both chambers. Building working relationships with both Members and Senators was crucial to whatever success they were going to have. In mid-February, for instance, Legarda and Ocampo, whom the *Baltimore Sun* incorrectly referred to as “Bonito Legarda” and “Tablo Ocampo de Leon,” were formally introduced to the members of the Senate Committee on the Philippines.²⁹

For Ocampo, establishing those relationships was likely going to be harder than normal. Unlike Legarda, Ocampo was not fluent in English and relied on his personal secretary, Antonio G. Escamilla, to translate for him. Escamilla and Ocampo likely knew one another from their time with the revolutionary government when they both served under General Aguinaldo.³⁰ Not long after Ocampo took his seat in the House, it was reported that he planned on asking Speaker Joe Cannon of Illinois if Escamilla could join him on the House Floor during debate, but it is not clear if this meeting ever occurred. Ocampo also hoped to have Legarda translate for him.³¹

Ocampo kept a relatively low profile during his first term in the House, but something as simple as his presence on the floor, especially when he sat and spoke with the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico and the Delegate from Hawaii, generated interest in the galleries above.³² In an official capacity, however, Ocampo mostly stayed behind the scenes. Evidence in the *Congressional Record* suggests that Ocampo pigeonholed Members in the chamber to discuss living conditions back home and other issues affecting the Philippines.³³

In late February 1908, Ocampo and Legarda accompanied Secretary Taft during his testimony before the House Insular Affairs Committee and nodded along in support as Taft asked the committee to raise the number of seats on the Philippine commission from eight to nine.³⁴ When the commission bill went to the floor two months later, Ocampo did not participate in debate, but Members pointed out that both he and Legarda favored the expansion.³⁵ Ultimately, the bill (H.R. 17516) passed the House and became law a few months later.

During his first term in the House, Ocampo juggled two often interrelated responsibilities, one as the Philippines’ official representative before the federal legislature and another as a booster for his homeland. At least twice in his first year he traveled outside Washington to address crowds and participate in conferences. In mid-March, Ocampo, Legarda, and officials from the Bureau of Insular Affairs went to Cincinnati, Ohio—Taft’s hometown—to attend an annual dinner hosted by the Cincinnati Commercial Club. Ocampo, speaking through a translator, touted the Philippines’ natural resources and delivered remarks meant to entice American businesses to the Pacific.³⁶ Later in the year, in October, Ocampo traveled to Lake Mohonk, New York, for a conference titled simply “The Philippines,” where he told the crowd that Filipinos across the island chain shared in “the vivid desire of being free and independent.”³⁷

A stable and lasting independence, however, required a healthy economy. Ever since the war, the Philippines had worked to build an infrastructure and a robust commercial sector. In large measure, however, the future of the islands’ economy would be dictated by its trade relationship with the United States, and that trade relationship fell squarely within Congress’s purview.

At the time, the United States had no income tax, which meant the government generated much of its revenue from fees placed on goods imported to America. Trade with the Philippines became problematic, however, because of its territorial status. On the one hand, the Philippines, as an American territory, could be seen as a domestic trading partner. On the other hand, many people on either side of



the Pacific saw the Philippines as a separate country entirely. The question on everyone's mind was whether that unique status made the Philippines a foreign commercial entity.³⁸

Before tackling tariff rates in 1909, Ocampo went before the House Insular Affairs Committee to address a completely separate concern the Philippine legislature had regarding the qualifications needed to serve in the islands' assembly. Manila wanted Congress to amend the Organic Act of 1902 so that the requirements to serve at the local level matched those for service in the insular government. The changes the Philippines wanted were modest but would have made service in the assembly slightly more difficult, raising the age limit from 25 to 26, tightening district residency regulations, and instituting a literacy test in "English or Spanish or any of the local dialects." The hearing lasted only a few minutes, and with his secretary Antonio Escamilla translating, Ocampo answered a series of questions on the electoral process back home.³⁹ The Insular Affairs Committee supported the bill, which came straight from the Philippine legislature, but with only two weeks left in the session, the full House appears to have taken a pass.⁴⁰ It would be another two years before Congress took a close look at the Philippines' civil government, and, at that point, Ocampo had already left the House.⁴¹

When the 61st Congress (1909–1911) opened on March 4, 1909, tariff reforms dominated everything. It was a monumental legislative task, and the Ways and Means Committee and its chairman, Sereno Payne, had spent much of the last term gathering research. The newly elected President Taft also threw the weight of his administration behind the reform effort. By 1909, however, the United States faced a budget shortfall of nearly \$100 million, which put a substantial amount of pressure on Congress to set sustainable rates in order to cover the country's operating costs. As part of the debate, Congress was forced to consider options for the major industries in the Philippines: sugar and tobacco.⁴²

Free trade with the Philippines had long been an ambition on Capitol Hill, but implementing it had proven difficult. Among other issues, U.S. sugar and tobacco

interests had waged campaign after campaign to protect their market share and keep Philippine products out of the country while simultaneously insisting on direct and unfettered access to consumers in the Philippines.⁴³

From the Philippines' perspective, free trade threatened economic collapse. Like Washington, the government in Manila filled its treasury with money derived in large measure from fees on imports. Recognizing Congress's ambition for free trade, however, the islands' legislature instituted a direct tax on its people in an effort to compensate for what would amount to a huge loss of annual revenue if and when free trade went into effect. Despite the foresight of the Philippines' legislature, by 1909, free trade had yet to begin, leaving the government in Manila with two sources of income: tariffs and taxes. Using tariffs to fund the government, the Philippines started a series of ambitious infrastructure projects to pump its tax revenue back into the economy. To suddenly implement free trade would risk that progress.⁴⁴

By the spring of 1909, the House's solution to the Philippine tariff issue seemed woefully one sided. H.R. 1438, the tariff bill which would eventually become the Payne–Aldrich law, created what one member of the press called "a novel free trade system." The proposal gave American businesses unlimited access to the Philippines, but used quotas to restrict the entry of Philippine goods into America. It was free only in the sense that America could export its merchandise to the Philippines with no charge. There was no vice versa.⁴⁵

On April 2, 1909, as the House was midway through its consideration of the tariff bill, Ocampo became the first Filipino to formally participate in debate. Speaking in halting English, he forcefully criticized the bill's treatment of his native Philippines. "The lack of absolute reciprocity in that provision of the bill," he said, "makes it inequitable, inasmuch as the Philippine Islands, considered a poor and small country, are under the protection of the United States, a gigantic Nation and a herald of wealth." As designed, the new U.S.–Philippine trade relationship would cost the Pacific territory vast sums every year. Compounding the problem, America's easy access to



Filipino consumers would deter international competition. “Once foreign goods are driven from the Philippine markets,” Ocampo continued, “the importer of American products would control the situation, and, following the usual practice in trade as seen in the past and in the present, he will despotically dictate the prices to the detriment of the consuming public who shall be enslaved even in their most pressing needs.”⁴⁶

But the stakes involved in the tariff bill were not all financial, and Ocampo pivoted to another topic: the Philippines’ future independence. In an ideal world, independence would allow the Philippines to impose tariffs on U.S. goods down the road if it wanted. But in Ocampo’s assessment of H.R. 1438, he saw the Philippines struggling with its hoped-for freedom. He predicted that if the bill became law, the relaxed trade terms would embolden U.S. companies to move to the Philippines. Once American companies took root in the Philippines, Ocampo expected them to use their influence to halt the movement to give the territory its independence. He was not alone in this fear. Both the assembly and the Philippine commission, where Americans wielded considerable power, opposed free trade between the United States and the Philippines.⁴⁷

Ocampo concluded his address by challenging the House to vote down the free trade provision in Payne–Aldrich, proving to the world that it was not merely trying to exploit the Philippines. Only after the Philippines won its independence would free trade “be more advantageous to both countries,” he said before closing with one last ultimatum. If Congress really wanted to open free trade with the Pacific, it should first vote to free the islands. “In this way the American people will sanctify the noble work of liberating the Philippines as it liberated Cuba and other countries.” Ocampo’s remarks earned him a round of applause.⁴⁸

A few weeks later he doubled down. “This free-trade proposition is a case of life and death with us,” he told the press. “The ambition of the Filipinos to live an independent life is one which is undeniable and persistent, and any measure tending to oppose it would only stir the people of the islands and operate to prevent the development of a better feeling between Americans and Filipinos.” Reaching back

two centuries, Ocampo contrasted America’s past against Congress’s reluctance. “Surely in the land of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams it can be permitted us to express the wish that we may be allowed to govern ourselves. It ought to be understood that in the centuries of protest against the rule of Spain we were not merely trying to throw off one foreign yoke to go under another.”⁴⁹

Despite Ocampo’s strong words, Congress approved the unique tariff schedule that gave U.S. businesses virtually unlimited access to Philippine markets. Payne–Aldrich became law on August 5, 1909. But in an effort to help soften the blow to the islands’ economy, President Taft, the Insular Bureau, and Resident Commissioner Legarda crafted a separate bill (H.R. 9135) adjusting certain rates to generate revenue for the Philippines.⁵⁰ It, too, became law in early August, but it is unclear what role Ocampo had in its passage. In fact, by the time the House voted on the revenue bill’s final passage, Ocampo was already a lame-duck Resident Commissioner.⁵¹

A few months earlier, in mid-May, Manuel L. Quezon, a leader in the Philippine assembly and a member of the Partido Nacionalista, was elected to replace Ocampo in Washington.⁵² Cabling Ocampo the day of Quezon’s confirmation, Sergio Osmeña, the assembly’s speaker, expressed his regret at having to break the bad news. He wished Ocampo a safe trip home and thanked him for his “brilliant work” on Capitol Hill.⁵³ There were conflicting reports about whether Ocampo was shocked and disappointed by his loss, but, regardless, the *Manila Times* reported that political forces beyond his control dictated the outcome. A likely theory had it that the Progresistas, confident they could flip Quezon’s seat in the assembly if he was in Washington, threw him their votes just to get him out of Manila.⁵⁴ Ocampo, accompanied by his secretary Antonio Escamilla, left DC for San Francisco on August 11, 1909. He planned to set sail home for the final time as Resident Commissioner six days later.⁵⁵

After returning to Manila, Ocampo won election to the second Philippine legislature and served in the assembly starting in October 1910, continuing his push for Philippine nationhood. He died of pneumonia on February 5, 1925.⁵⁶



NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (2 May 1908): 5609.
- 2 G. H. Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila," 18 January 1908, *Harper's Weekly*: 14.
- 3 "Pablo Ocampo," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=O000020>.
- 4 Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila"; Thomas F. Millard, "The First Filipino Delegates to Washington," 2 February 1908, *New York Times Magazine*: 9; Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States-Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1998): 32.
- 5 "Civil Rule for the Philippines," 21 August 1900, *New York Times*: 6.
- 6 Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila"; Millard, "The First Filipino Delegates to Washington."
- 7 "Filipino Rebels Who Will Go Free," 1 July 1902, *Los Angeles Times*: 4.
- 8 "Bribery Used on Insurgents," 8 March 1901, *Atlanta Constitution*: 3; *Special Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, to the President on the Philippines*, 60th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 200 (1908): 46; Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila." For more on Blakeslee as a scholar and foreign policy specialist, see <http://www.clarku.edu/research/archives/blakeslee/scope.cfm> (accessed 23 February 2016), and "George Blakeslee, Educator, U.S. Aide," 6 May 1954, *New York Times*: 33.
- 9 "Filipino Rebels Who Will Go Free"; "Two Filipinos To Congress," 23 November 1907, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 5.
- 10 Millard, "The First Filipino Delegates to Washington."
- 11 Michael Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule, 1898–1908* (Manila, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003): 128–129.
- 12 Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 286–294; Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 128.
- 13 Julius W. Pratt, *America's Colonial Experiment: How the United States Gained, Governed, and in Part Gave away a Colonial Empire* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950): 199. The Philippine Organic Act of 1902 went into effect as Public Law 57-235, 32 Stat. 691 (1902).
- 14 As quoted in Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 306.
- 15 "The Official Count of the Vote Total In Manila," 31 July 1907, *Manila Times*: 1; Millard, "The First Filipino Delegates to Washington."
- 16 "Legarda and Ocampo Are Chosen," 22 November 1907, *Manila Times*: 1; *Journal of the Philippine Commission, Inaugural Session*, vol. 1 (Manila Bureau of Printing, 1908): 94, <https://www.hathitrust.org> (accessed 18 February 2016).
- 17 Millard, "The First Filipino Delegates to Washington."
- 18 Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila."
- 19 "Filipino Rebels Who Will Go Free"; Blakeslee, "The Gentlemen from Manila."
- 20 "The Selection of Ocampo," 23 November 1907, *Manila Times*: 4; "A Radical Filipino Delegate," 24 November 1907, *New York Times*: 8.
- 21 *Special Report of William H. Taft, Secretary of War, to the President on the Philippines*: 46.
- 22 *Journal of the Philippine Commission, Inaugural Session*, vol. 1: 115, 120, 362–363.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 115, 120, 358–361, 369–370.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 362.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 361.
- 26 "Filipinos Fear Japan's Plans," 20 January 1908, *Los Angeles Times*: 12.
- 27 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (4 February 1908): 1540; "Commissioners from Philippines to Sixtieth Congress," 13 February 1908, *Los Angeles Times*: 12.
- 28 No title, 8 February 1908, *New York Tribune*: 6.
- 29 "Briefs from Washington," 18 February 1908, *Baltimore Sun*: 2.
- 30 "People Met in Hotel Lobbies," 28 January 1908, *Washington Post*: 6; David R. Francis, *The Universal Exposition of 1904* (Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company, 1913): 566, <http://books.google.com> (accessed 19 February 2016); John T. Sidel, *Capital, Coercion, and Crime: Bossism in the Philippines* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999): 58; Murat Halstead, *The Story of the Philippines and Our New Possessions, Including the Ladrones, Hawaii, Cuba and Porto Rico* (Chicago, IL: Our Possessions Publishing Company, 1898): 61, <https://archive.org/> (accessed 19 February 2016); "All Eyes on New York," 16 August 1908, *New York Tribune*: 1; "Wright Helped Out by Taft," 16 August 1908, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 7.
- 31 "Needs Interpreter in Congress," 6 February 1908, *New York Tribune*: 7.
- 32 "House Scene Recalls Champ Clark's Vision," 28 February 1908, *Detroit Free Press*: 2; "Legislative Briefs," 28 February 1908, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 33 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (1 April 1908): 4245.
- 34 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Increase Membership of Philippine Commission*, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (20 February 1908): 4.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (2 May 1908): 5607–5609.
- 36 "Filipinos Urge Trade," 14 March 1908, *Washington Post*: 3; "Speaking Against Tariff," 17 March 1908, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1; "Delegates Banquetted," 17 March 1908, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 37 "Philippines Under Debate," 23 October 1908, *Los Angeles Times*: 12.
- 38 Thomas F. Millard, "Philippines Not a 'Problem' Nor a 'Burden,'" 23 February 1908, *New York Times Magazine*: 2; Thomas F. Millard, "Our Interests and Our Duty in the Philippine Islands," 23 February



- 1908, *Washington Post Magazine*: 4; Thomas F. Millard, "Congress Holds the Key," 23 February 1908, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: A1.
- 39 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Qualifications for Electors in the Philippine Legislature*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (17 February 1909): 1–2.
- 40 House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Qualifications for Electors in the Philippine Islands*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 2184 (15 February 1909).
- 41 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *H.R. 32004*, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (26 January 1911); Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *S. 7400, Administration of Civil Government in Philippine Islands*, Part 2, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (26 January 1911).
- 42 Lewis L. Gould, *The William Howard Taft Presidency* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009): 51–57.
- 43 Pedro E. Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy toward The Philippines, 1898–1946* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1947): 76–77.
- 44 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (2 April 1909): 818; *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (3 April 1909): 929–930.
- 45 "Congress Hears Filipino Attack Tariff," 2 April 1909, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 46 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (2 April 1909): 818. For research purposes, the *Congressional Record* is inconsistent in how it identifies Ocampo. At one point he's referred to as "Mr. de Leon" and at others as "Mr. Ocampo."
- 47 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (2 April 1909): 819.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (21 May 1909): 2240.
- 50 Abelarde, *American Tariff Policy toward The Philippines*: 100.
- 51 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 1st sess. (24 May 1909): 2238.
- 52 The election was lopsided: Quezon received 61 votes, Ocampo received four, and two other candidates received one vote each. "Legarda and Quezon Chosen," 15 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 53 "Ocampo Not Puzzled," 20 May 1909, *Washington Post*: 12.
- 54 Ibid.; "Ocampo Much Disappointed," 22 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1; *Journal of the Philippine Commission, Second Session of the First Philippine Legislature*, vol. 3 (Manila Bureau of Printing, 1908): 502–504, www.hathitrust.org (accessed 22 February 2016).
- 55 No title, 12 August 1909, *Washington Post*: 7.
- 56 "Ocampo Funeral Set for Saturday," 6 February 1925, *Manila Times*: 1; "Pablo Ocampo Dead," 7 February 1925, *New York Times*: 15.



“THE AMBITION OF THE
FILIPINOS TO LIVE AN
INDEPENDENT LIFE IS ONE
WHICH IS UNDENIABLE AND
PERSISTENT, AND ANY MEASURE
TENDING TO OPPOSE IT WOULD
ONLY STIR THE PEOPLE OF THE
ISLANDS AND OPERATE TO
PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A BETTER FEELING BETWEEN
AMERICANS AND FILIPINOS.”

Pablo Ocampo
Congressional Record, May 21, 1909

Manuel L. Quezon

1878–1944

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1909–1916
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

During a career that spanned the length of America's colonial rule in the Philippines, Manuel L. Quezon held an unrivaled grasp upon territorial politics that culminated with his service as the commonwealth's first president. Although he once fought against the United States during its invasion of the islands in the early 1900s, Quezon quickly catapulted himself into a Resident Commissioner seat by the sheer force of his personality and natural political savvy. Young and brilliant, Quezon, according to a political rival, possessed "an ability and persistence rare and creditable to any representative in any parliament in the world."¹ Quezon was wary of immediate independence, but in the U.S. House of Representatives, he worked tirelessly to secure his nation a greater level of autonomy. He met privately with the President and powerful committee chairmen alike, gauging the issues and crafting legislative solutions, which culminated in perhaps his savviest political victory, the Jones Act of 1916. "Considering the time I have been here, the character of the subject, and the influences I had to fight, I feel inclined to say that I am almost surprised that I have secured so much," he said.² Long after he left Washington as a Resident Commissioner, he continued to shape the office by choosing and sometimes discarding his successors.

Manuel Luis Quezon was born on August 19, 1878, in Baler, a town on the island of Luzon in Tayabas Province, Philippines, to Lucio, a veteran of the Spanish Army and a small-business owner, and Maria Molina Quezon.³ The family lived in the remote "mountainous, typhoon-plagued" swath of the province that hugged much of the eastern coastline of Luzon. Quezon's parents eventually became schoolteachers, which allowed the family to live comfortably in Baler. Manuel, the eldest of three sons, and his brothers, Pedro and Teodorico, were taught at home by a local parish priest. In 1888 Quezon left Baler to attend

Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Manila, graduating in 1894. Shortly after, he matriculated to the University of Santo Tomas, also in Manila, to study law.⁴

About a year later, however, Quezon left school and returned home during the Philippines' revolution against Spain. He resumed his studies in 1897, but when hostilities began between the United States and the Philippines in February 1899, Quezon joined General Emilio Aguinaldo's forces. Commissioned as a second lieutenant, he saw little action, but rose to captain and served on Aguinaldo's staff. After surrendering to U.S. forces in 1901, Quezon spent six hard months in prison, where he contracted malaria and tuberculosis. He suffered from complications of the diseases for the rest of his life.⁵

On his release, Quezon resumed his legal studies at Santo Tomas and earned a bachelor of laws degree in 1903 before returning to his home province. Only in his mid-20s, intelligent, and a natural "master of political intrigue," Quezon caught the attention of American administrators, particularly Harry H. Bandholtz, the director of the local constabulary, and district judge Paul Linebarger. The two Americans soon adopted Quezon as a protégé.⁶

As a result, Quezon routinely walked a fine line, balancing the colonial agenda of his powerful American associates, the interests of Philippine nationalists, and his own career ambitions. According to a recent study by Alfred W. McCoy, a leading historian of the Philippines, Quezon—in an arrangement that seemed equal parts quid pro quo and extortion—worked as an informant for American security officials who kept a detailed list of accusations against Quezon—ranging from corruption to murder—that they could use to destroy Quezon if he ever ceased being "a loyal constabulary asset," McCoy wrote. Quezon reportedly had damaging information on his American connections as well, but he continued to spy for





them, passing along information about Philippine radicals in exchange for political support and for help ascending the ranks of the insular government.⁷

Quezon's political career began in 1903, when Linebarger named him the provincial attorney, or fiscal, of Mindoro, an island province near Tayabas.⁸ Quezon was quickly promoted to serve as fiscal of his home province, where he famously prosecuted Francis J. Berry, who owned the *Cablenews-American*, one of the largest daily newspapers in the Philippines, on charges of illegal land transactions. He won the case, but had to defend himself against charges of corruption by Berry's allies. Once the dust settled, Quezon resigned and returned to private practice.⁹

In 1906 Quezon ran for governor of Tayabas Province, campaigning not only on his reputation as a lawyer, but on his connections with Bandholtz and other American officials. Belying his inexperience—he had been in politics less than two years—Quezon deftly maneuvered past two other candidates and overcame shifting alliances to win his seat.¹⁰

As a local politician, Quezon had not yet aligned with any national political party. In fact, at the time, American administrators regulated much of the Philippines' civil activity and very little formal political organization existed outside Manila.¹¹ Following a trip to the capital for a convention of provincial governors in late 1906, Quezon, in the hopes of laying the groundwork for a shot at national office, joined the Partido Independista Inmediatista, which pushed for immediate Philippine independence.¹² In 1907 the opportunity came. He resigned from the governorship and ran for the Tayabas seat in the Philippines' first national assembly, which would function much like the U.S. House and was created by a delayed provision in the Organic Act of 1902. On July 30, 1907, he won election decisively.¹³

With the opening of the Philippine legislature, political parties and new coalitions “sprang up like mushrooms,” according to one historian of the era, catapulting Quezon into the national spotlight.¹⁴ His party, the Partido Independista Inmediatista, was absorbed by the Partido Nacionalista (Nationalist Party), creating a majority in the territorial legislature. After throwing his support

for speaker behind Sergio Osmeña, a powerful young assemblyman with a broad base of power, Quezon was rewarded with prestigious appointments as majority floor leader and chairman of the appropriations committee. From their first term in the assembly until Quezon's death, Osmeña and Quezon went back and forth in one of the Philippines' foremost political rivalries, vying for control over both the party and their country.¹⁵

After serving just one term in the Philippine assembly, Quezon looked nearly 9,000 miles away for his next political challenge. In 1907 the Philippines began sending two Resident Commissioners to the U.S. Congress to lobby on behalf of the territory's interests. The assembly and the commission selected one candidate each, which the opposite chamber then had to ratify. It is not entirely clear why Quezon wanted the position in Washington—one biographer has conjectured that Quezon wanted to be the hero who brought independence to the Philippines—but in 1909 he sought the Resident Commissioner seat occupied by Nacionalista Pablo Ocampo. Regardless of his motivations, Congress and the President controlled the fate of the islands, and the Resident Commissioners, despite not being able to vote in the House, were best positioned to influence the territory's political future on Capitol Hill.¹⁶

“I have every reason to believe that I shall succeed in my ambition, or I certainly should not permit my name to go before the Assembly,” Quezon told the *Manila Times* when asked about his candidacy.¹⁷ Though initial reports indicated that Ocampo was surprised by the challenge, the incumbent later published telegrams to and from Osmeña indicating his desire to retire.¹⁸ Quezon won handily with 61 of the 71 available votes, Ocampo received four votes—ostensibly “complimentary” gestures out of respect for his service—and a third candidate received none.¹⁹

Quezon arrived in Washington, DC, in December 1909 wearing a thick fur overcoat to protect him from the early winter chill and took up residence at the Champlain Apartment House, a new building at the corner of 14th and K Streets in Northwest.²⁰ Quezon received House Floor and debate privileges but was not permitted to serve on any committees.



Already fluent in Spanish, Tagalog, and the local dialects in Tayabas, Quezon recalled the “most serious obstacle to the performance of my duties in Washington was my very limited knowledge of the English language.” He hired a tutor, but soon began teaching himself using a Spanish–English dictionary to read books, magazines, and newspapers.²¹ His American friends gave him the nickname Casey, an anglicization of Quezon.²²

Quezon’s first term in Congress was relatively quiet legislatively. Publicly, he toed the party line on immediate independence, but, privately, he believed his territory should wait for independence for at least a generation.²³ Quezon’s primary goal as Resident Commissioner was to win the hearts and minds of the American people—and, consequently, Congress—to support greater political autonomy in the Philippines.²⁴ Accordingly, he acted more like a publicist than a lawmaker. “My opinion is that we don’t so much need to have delegates here as to have a press,” he confessed to a friend back home, “and money which has to be spent for delegates ought to be spent on publication.”²⁵

Calling the Capitol “at once the best university and the nicest playhouse in the world,” Quezon wandered the corridors of the new House Office Building (now the Cannon building) strategically bantering with Members and journalists.²⁶ He was a bachelor and naturally gregarious, and he frequently mingled with Congressmen and administration officials at dinner parties and long lunches. Compared to the Philippines’ older, more staid Resident Commissioner, Progresista Benito Legarda, Quezon displayed a flashier style. The two disagreed on certain policies, but they got along “tolerably well,” according to Quezon’s biographer.²⁷

Quezon’s maiden speech in the House on May 14, 1910, reflected his goal to win over popular opinion.²⁸ He thanked the United States for its investment in the Philippines and appealed to America’s revolutionary past, observing that most people would rather “emancipate” the islands than “subjugate” them.²⁹ He carefully emphasized that his constituents would not be satisfied with anything short of independence. “Fillipinos [*sic*] are not, as yet, a happy people,” Quezon said, hinting at his gradual strategy to win greater autonomy while playing up his nationalist bona fides.³⁰

In the fall of 1910, the policy differences between Legarda and Quezon and, consequently, between the Philippine commission and the assembly threw their re-election into chaos. Because Legarda opposed immediate independence, the assembly refused to certify his nomination. In retaliation, the commission rejected Quezon’s candidacy.³¹ For months, the Philippine legislature tried and failed to settle the dispute.³² Finally, in February 1911, the House stepped in and passed a bill extending Quezon and Legarda’s terms until October 1912, giving the insular legislature time to resolve its differences while maintaining representation on the Hill. The bill also lengthened the general term of service for Filipino Resident Commissioners to four years and raised their office budgets to match those of the rest of Congress.³³

It was not until the fall of 1912 that the assembly and the commission reached a deal. In November Quezon recommended Manuel Earnshaw, a conservative industrialist with little political experience, as a replacement for Legarda, who wanted to retire from politics anyway. With the commission on board, Quezon was re-elected to another term. As a result of his carefully crafted compromise, Quezon enjoyed a smooth re-election to the 63rd and 64th Congresses (1913–1917).³⁴

Throughout the first decade of the 20th century, American corporations looking to open outposts in the Philippines had been stifled by a law preventing them from buying land in large enough quantities to open commercial farms. But when the insular government bought a huge tract that had once belonged to the Catholic Church and was then unable to sell it directly to Filipino farmers, the American Sugar Refining Corporation, which had a stranglehold on sugar refining in the States, quickly snapped up the vacant property. Democrats cried foul, criticizing the William H. Taft administration for approving the sale, and began considering ways to clamp down on deals with U.S. monopolies.³⁵

In Washington Quezon called out Democrats for timing their criticism to coincide with the upcoming presidential election, but he joined the chorus opposing the sale of additional friar lands.³⁶ In mid-May 1912,



Quezon delivered two long, impassioned speeches on the House Floor, filling the *Congressional Record*. He argued in favor of a bill that would place the friar lands under the same size restrictions put on the sale of other public lands. Speaking on behalf of the Philippine assembly, Quezon told the House that Filipinos would rather pay to keep the land than to sell it off to “individuals for exploitation.” Quezon did not oppose American investment outright, but he wanted to protect the islands from corporations that could hurt native businesses.³⁷ It was also a troubling sign, leading Quezon to suspect that American officials would not fulfill the promise of independence.³⁸ The House never acted on the Philippines’ land bill and the land itself remained under Manila’s control, but the fact that U.S. monopolies got wrapped up in the debate tarnished Taft’s re-election bid that fall.³⁹

Quezon’s ambition for greater autonomy in the Philippines won him no friends in the Taft administration, which had long sought to tighten the relationship between the territory and the mainland. At one point, Clarence Edwards, the chief of the Insular Bureau, warned Quezon that he was “stirring up too much trouble” and threatened “to get rid of him,” according to one account of their meeting. Despite his own reservations about independence, Quezon replied that he was simply doing the people’s work and would continue to fight. President Taft reportedly “lost his temper completely” when he heard what the Resident Commissioner had said.⁴⁰

Quezon, however, was not as worried about the Taft administration as he was about the party faithful in Manila. Hoping to shore up his standing back home before the upcoming election, he anxiously looked for a way to put an independence bill on the floor of the House. Early in his push, Quezon reportedly formed a close partnership with Democrat Cyrus Cline of Indiana. Cline had studied the situation in the Philippines and believed he could make independence a reality. Their relationship was so strong, the *Indianapolis Star* reported in March 1912, “that he and Quezon became almost like long-lost brothers. Quezon was so frequently in Mr. Cline’s committee room that he began to take on the mannerisms of a native-born

Indianan, although his language was a little out of joint with the Hoosier dialect.”⁴¹

Along with Cline, Quezon cultivated other more powerful allies in the House, including Democrat William A. Jones of Virginia, who chaired the Insular Affairs Committee. Jones was a consistent supporter of Philippine independence, but he was ill and worked slowly and methodically to build consensus on the issue within his committee.⁴²

Looking for a way to hasten the independence process in order to give his party a campaign issue, Quezon put together his own proposal (H.R. 22143) that he knew Jones could get behind. The bill, which Jones put his name on after party leaders gave it the go-ahead, set an independence date eight years later and provided for the creation of a Philippine senate. The islands would remain under America’s military umbrella for the next two decades while a separate resolution would force other foreign powers to stay clear of Manila while the new government settled in.⁴³

“As a representative of the Filipino people in this country, I have given my hearty approval and co-operation to both the bill and the resolution,” Quezon said in a letter to the *New York Tribune*. By creating an eight-year buffer in which the United States would still exercise a measure of control, he believed the bill would “[give] the people of the Philippines an opportunity to practice self-government before finally assuming all the responsibilities of a wholly independent nation.”⁴⁴

Despite support in Jones’s committee, Quezon’s independence measure hit a snag when the Democratic nominee for president, Woodrow Wilson, advised the chairman to sit on the bill. Wilson, who bluntly told Quezon he did not think leaders in Manila would ever be able to unite the Philippines’ diverse population, worried that independence would distract U.S. voters from other issues.⁴⁵

Over the summer of 1912, however, Wilson walked back his opposition, giving Quezon the opening he needed. Quezon told the Insular Bureau’s new chief, Frank McIntyre, that full independence could wait if Congress would agree to subtler changes. The Philippine commission had become



so unpopular, Quezon said, that simply creating a territorial senate would buy the federal government time to deal with the question of independence.⁴⁶

As tariff issues ate up much of the legislative calendar in 1913, Quezon counseled patience back home. He worked the angles in Washington to influence territorial appointments and lobbied for changes to the Philippine commission.⁴⁷ In August Quezon won a substantial victory when he convinced President Wilson to appoint Democrat Francis Burton Harrison of New York, a supporter of independence and a powerful member of the House Ways and Means Committee, as the Philippines' new governor general.⁴⁸

Quezon thought highly of Harrison, and Harrison returned the sentiment, later calling the Resident Commissioner "one of the greatest safety-valves" Manila had in Washington. "These delegates have no vote," Harrison later wrote about his friend, "but they are given a voice in the House, and the voice of Mr. Quezon was worth many votes.... His brilliant speeches made an impression upon Congress, and every American Representative who heard him felt sympathy for this young man so ably pleading for the independence of his race."⁴⁹

Quezon and Harrison disagreed on one key issue, however: the urgency of independence. Harrison wanted to hand over the archipelago's government to the Filipinos as quickly as possible, according to one historian of the era, but Quezon, like other party leaders in Manila, knew the islands would stumble if America pulled its resources too quickly. With Sergio Osmeña's help, Quezon sidestepped Harrison, drafting a new independence bill with the cooperation of the Wilson administration in Washington.⁵⁰

Quezon's new proposal postponed independence for almost a generation and gave the President a say in the Philippines' affairs, but it also transferred much of the daily management of the islands to the Filipino people. In other words, it was a huge risk, less about independence than it was about "increasing home rule," the historian Peter W. Stanley observed. In one conversation after another, Quezon leaned on McIntyre at the Insular Bureau for support, knowing full well that Harrison would fight back.⁵¹

Quezon sought similar assurances from the President, and after meeting with Wilson in early 1914, the Resident Commissioner believed he had at least the conditional support of the White House. Wilson was not comfortable setting a date for independence and was more or less content to step back and wait to see how things played out, according to the *Washington Post*. That was fine with Quezon, who, along with Osmeña and other leaders, proceeded to amend the draft bill to include two long-standing Democratic requests: first, that independence would be possible only after the Philippines established a "stable" government in Manila, and, second, that the bill set no timetable for independence.⁵²

When Quezon gave the new bill to Chairman Jones, he ran into some familiar problems. Jones continued to drag his feet, and House Democrats pivoted to other issues as the 1914 elections neared.⁵³ Quezon stepped up his lobbying, speaking with the Insular Bureau, business leaders, and the White House before winning enough support that summer.⁵⁴ Although the Insular Affairs Committee opted not to hold public hearings on the bill, Jones said he was in regular contact with Quezon during the markup. Earnshaw, meanwhile, went home to the Philippines to rally support for the bill.⁵⁵

Under Quezon's guidance, the House cleared the rule governing debate after two hours of discussion. Republicans moved to table the legislation, but Quezon fought them point by point, arguing that the looming threat of a world war made Philippine autonomy more important than ever. Moreover, he said, by creating a Philippine senate, the United States would simply be "rearranging" the existing government, not creating something new.⁵⁶

When the bill came up for general debate two days later, Republicans ripped into the Insular Affairs Committee for marking it up behind closed doors. Chairman Jones had earlier called it "an emergency measure," but Republicans cautioned Quezon about trusting the motives of the committee.⁵⁷

Quezon responded forcefully. "I am not a Democrat nor a Republican, nor even a Progressive," he said. "The Filipinos take no sides in your partisan differences." He



reminded the House that the measure had wide support in the Philippines, and he implored his colleagues to keep election-year politicking out of the debate.⁵⁸

Quezon gave a full-throated defense of the bill on the floor a few days later, telling the House that the self-government provisions would allow the Philippines to prepare for independence.⁵⁹ He also used America's own revolutionary history to highlight the sentiment in the Philippines, asking his colleagues to imagine what it felt like to fight for political freedom.⁶⁰ Democrats rallied to his words, and one Texan even went so far as to say that any other debate on the Jones bill would be an "anticlimax."⁶¹

Quezon dutifully monitored the bill during amendments: countering mischaracterizations, opposing certain suggestions, and defending others.⁶² After the bill passed the House and went to the Senate, he faced a whole new task. The core of the bill bolstering home rule in the Philippines made it through unchanged, but a handful of legislators threatened to kill the measure unless the Senate reworked the independence clause in the preamble. Quezon hustled to iron out a deal, but the 63rd Congress closed without a solution.⁶³

The 64th Congress picked up Quezon's bill right away, naming it H.R. 1, the first piece of legislation introduced in the House on the first day of the new session. Senate leaders placed it on the legislative calendar a day later (S. 381).⁶⁴

For Quezon, however, the bill remained a huge political gamble. He told the Senate Committee on the Philippines that it was not ideal, but the measure was about as good as he thought he could win.⁶⁵ After approving the markup, the Senate committee pressed Congress to quickly pass this second version of the Jones bill.⁶⁶

Things came to a screeching halt in January 1916, however, when Democratic Senator James Clarke of Arkansas offered an amendment replacing the preamble's "stable" government requirement with a provision requiring the United States to pull out of the Philippines completely within four years. Looking to distance themselves from earlier GOP policies toward the Philippines, Senate Democrats, with the support of President Wilson, approved the change in a close vote in early February.⁶⁷

Clarke's amendment completely changed the course of debate for Quezon, who now had a monumental decision to make. If he backed the amendment, Stanley observed, the Philippines would likely become independent quicker than originally planned. But that threatened to bring a host of troublesome issues with it, including widespread financial problems that could derail the future of the Philippines.⁶⁸ If Quezon opposed the amendment, however, the bill could fail altogether, erasing years of work.⁶⁹

Quezon ended up supporting the Clarke amendment, and when the bill went back to the House, Chairman Jones begrudgingly brought the Senate version to the floor on May 1, 1916. Debate that day lasted nearly 13 hours.⁷⁰

When Quezon addressed the chamber, he did his best to convey the gravity of the situation: Congress, he said bluntly, had the power to determine the Philippines' future. Quezon admitted that much of the bill had become "defective," but that he was willing to compromise on the Clarke amendment rather than risk the best chance the Philippines had to become independent. If the alternative was the status quo, "I am for the Clarke amendment body and soul," he said.⁷¹

Despite Quezon's impassioned remarks, enough Democrats teamed up with Republicans to vote down Clarke's "poison pill." Jones offered a few changes in keeping with the Clarke amendment, but when those failed as well, the chairman submitted his own Philippine bill, which more or less mirrored the one the House passed at the end of the 63rd Congress and which contained the "stable" government provision. Jones's version quickly passed the House.⁷²

Assuming that this version of the bill would again die in the Senate, Quezon was crushed. "This ends my work in Congress," he told the Associated Press after the vote. "I am not coming back. What is the use? The action of the House tonight makes the fight for independence harder. I notice not a single Republican voted for the Clarke amendment. They had it all figured out in advance."

Surprisingly enough, the bill did not die in conference with the Senate.⁷³ Not long after the Jones bill cleared the House there were whispers that the Senate would acquiesce



and abandon the Clarke amendment as well. On May 8, Quezon visited the White House and implored President Wilson to back the revived legislation rather than risk having to start all over.⁷⁴ Nearly four months later, the Senate finally cleared the House bill, a version of which Quezon had helped write years earlier.⁷⁵ With Quezon in attendance, the President signed it into law on August 29, 1916.⁷⁶

Following the success of the second Jones bill, Quezon resigned as Resident Commissioner on October 15, 1916.⁷⁷ Friends in Washington threw him a farewell banquet at the Willard Hotel, and his arrival in Manila—during a typhoon, no less—was akin to a national holiday. Bunting-wrapped boats and flotillas greeted his ship in the choppy downpour, beginning two days of public speeches and celebratory banquets.⁷⁸

Back in the Philippines, Quezon was elected to the new territorial senate, where he was named president of the chamber.⁷⁹ In 1918 Quezon married his cousin, Aurora Aragon. The couple had four children, Maria Aurora, Maria Zeneida, Manuel Luis Jr., and Luisa Corazon Paz. Luisa died in infancy.⁸⁰

Quezon also kept one foot in Washington. He continued to lobby for Filipino independence, traveling to the capital on several “independence missions” between 1919 and 1934.⁸¹ Following the passage of the Tydings–McDuffie Act in 1934, which created the Commonwealth of the Philippines, Quezon won election as the first president of the Philippines in 1935. Throughout his post-congressional tenure, Quezon held near-dictatorial sway over the Partido Nacionalista, either personally selecting or approving each of the next nine Philippine Resident Commissioners. He leveraged the Resident Commissioner position as a means to solidify his support in Manila, enabling him to virtually exile political opponents. On the other hand, if an ally broke ranks with him on the Hill, Quezon was quick to name a replacement.⁸²

As president in the 1930s, Quezon worked to strengthen his authority at home and tried to brace the nation for war as Japan began encroaching on the islands.⁸³ Despite an attempt to bolster his archipelago’s defenses and under pressure from U.S. officials, Quezon and his family fled

his home country and set up a government in exile after Japanese forces invaded in early 1942. He lived in Saranac Lake in Upstate New York as his health started to fail. Quezon died on August 1, 1944, succumbing to the long-term effects of his battle with tuberculosis.

After a funeral mass at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Washington attended by high-ranking American military officials, Quezon’s body was placed in a mausoleum at Arlington National Cemetery until it could be repatriated to the Philippines.⁸⁴ American forces began an invasion of the Philippines in October 1944 and captured Manila in February 1945. Quezon’s family, living in Los Angeles since his death, departed for the Philippines with his body on June 28, 1946.⁸⁵ He was reinterred on August 1, 1946, in Cementerio del Norte in Manila. In his honor, an outlying suburb of Manila was named Quezon City and became the site of the national capital of the Philippines.⁸⁶

FOR FURTHER READING

Gwekoh, Sol H. *Manuel L. Quezon: His Life and Career; A Philippine President Biography* (Manila, PI: University Publishing Company, 1948).

McCoy, Alfred W. “Quezon’s Commonwealth: The Emergence of Philippine Authoritarianism.” In *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, edited by Ruby R. Paredes (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988): 114–160.

Quezon, Manuel L. *The Good Fight* (New York: AMS Press, 1974, reprint of 1946 edition).

Quirino, Carlos. *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*, with an introduction by Alejandro R. Roces (Manila, PI: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1971).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library (Ann Arbor, MI). *Microfilm*: 1909–1944, 54 microfilm reels. The papers of Manuel Luis Quezon contain correspondence, speeches, articles, and other papers related to all phases of his career in the Philippines and as Resident Commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1916): 7158; *Congressional Record*, House, 65th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 August 1916): 12839.



- 2 *Congressional Record*, House, 65th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 August 1916): 12839.
- 3 There is some conflicting information surrounding Quezon's family history. The noted historian Alfred W. McCoy cites a U.S. military intelligence report claiming that Quezon's biological father was a "Padre" who had an affair with Quezon's mother which resulted in her getting pregnant with Manuel. Before he was born, Quezon's mother was forced to get married "thus assuring that [Quezon] would be born in wedlock." See Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009): 110.
- 4 Roger Soiset, "Quezon, Manuel Luis," *American National Biography* 18 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 28–29; Michael Cullinane, "The Politics of Collaboration in Tayabas Province: The Early Political Career of Manuel Luis Quezon, 1903–1906," in *Reappraising an Empire: New Perspectives on Philippine-American History*, ed. Peter W. Stanley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): 64–69; Peter W. Stanley, "Quezon, Manuel Luis, (Aug. 19, 1878–Aug. 1, 1944)," *Dictionary of American Biography*, Supplement Three, 1941–1945 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974): 613–615; Carlos Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom* (Manila, PI: The Community Publishers, Inc., 1971): 18–23, 41, 48–52, 58.
- 5 Manuel Luis Quezon, *The Good Fight* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1946): 88.
- 6 The relationship between Quezon and American officials in the early 1910s is discussed in detail in Cullinane, "The Politics of Collaboration in Tayabas." The quotation is from Cullinane, "The Politics of Collaboration in Tayabas": 77.
- 7 According to McCoy, even after Quezon became Resident Commissioner, he continued to spy on Philippine radicals for America's colonial administrators. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*: 96–97, 109–111, 187–188, quotation on p. 111.
- 8 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 66; Quezon, *The Good Fight*, 92.
- 9 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 63–71; Cullinane, "The Politics of Collaboration in Tayabas Province": 73–74; Frank L. Jenista, "Problems of the Colonial Civil Service: An Illustration from the Career of Manuel L. Quezon," *Southeast Asia: An International Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1974): 809–829.
- 10 At the time, the provincial governors were not directly elected. Instead, they were elected by town councilors, who themselves had been popularly elected under restrictive suffrage laws. Quezon's complicated campaign for governor is discussed in detail in Cullinane, "The Politics of Collaboration in Tayabas Province": 79–81.
- 11 An exception was the Partido Federal—formed in December 1900, primarily among Manila elites uniting on a platform of peaceful American sovereignty and eventual Philippine statehood. As a formal political party, however, its reach never extended far outside the capital. See Michael Cullinane, *Illustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule, 1898–1908* (Manila, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1989): 63–64, 97–98.
- 12 Cullinane, *Illustrado Politics*: 251, 256, 274.
- 13 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 78.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Though specific timelines vary, several scholars discuss the development of the Partido Nacionalista and Partido Nacional Progresista in 1906 and 1907. See Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 127–129; Cullinane, *Illustrado Politics*: 286–315; Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 77–81.
- 16 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 85.
- 17 "Quezon for Ocampo's Seat," 11 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 18 "Ocampo Much Disappointed," 22 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1; "Ocampo Not Puzzled," 20 May 1909, *Washington Post*: 12.
- 19 "Legarda and Quezon Chosen," 15 May 1909, *Manila Times*: 1; "Quezon for Ocampo's Seat"; *Congressional Directory*, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913): 125.
- 20 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 89; Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States–Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Manila, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998): 165–166.
- 21 Quezon, *The Good Fight*: 114–115; Felix F. Gabriel, "Manuel L. Quezon As Resident Commissioner, 1909–1916," *Philippine Historical Bulletin* (September 1962): 254.
- 22 Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1990): 241.
- 23 Michael Paul Onorato argues that Quezon opposed complete independence, preferring a permanent political link to the United States. See Michael Paul Onorato, "Quezon and Independence: A Reexamination," *Philippine Studies* 37, no. 2 (1989): 221–239. See also Lindley Miller Garrison to Woodrow Wilson, 19 January 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 29, ed. Arthur Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979): 147–152.
- 24 Gabriel, "Manuel L. Quezon As Resident Commissioner, 1909–1916": 254.
- 25 Quoted in Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 170.
- 26 Quezon, *Good Fight*: 114.
- 27 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 93–94.
- 28 Gabriel, "Manuel L. Quezon As Resident Commissioner, 1909–1916": 254.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (10 May 1910): 6312.



- 30 Ibid., 6310.
- 31 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 168–169.
- 32 Philippine Assembly, *Election of Resident Commissioners to the United States*, 2nd Legislature, 1st sess., 1911, Document No. 250—A. 38 (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1911), <https://archive.org/details/aqw4348.0001.001.umich.edu> (accessed 10 February 2016).
- 33 *Congressional Record*, House, 61st Cong., 3rd sess. (6 February 1911): 2022–2024; Public Law 61-376, 36 Stat. 910 (1911).
- 34 Manuel L. Quezon Certificate of Election (endorsed 22 November 1912), Committee on Elections (HR63-AJ1), 63rd Congress, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Philippines National Assembly, *Diario de Sesiones de la Asamblea Filipina*, Tomo VIII (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1913): 160–161; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 181–182.
- 35 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 157–163. For a more contemporary history of the friar lands, see Charles H. Cunningham, “Origin of the Friar Lands Question in the Philippines,” *American Political Science Review* 10, no. 3 (August 1916): 465–480. For newspaper coverage of the friar land sales in newspapers, see, for example, “Protest Sale of Friar Lands in Philippines,” 1 January 1912, *Christian Science Monitor*: 9; “Committee Asks Friars’ Lands Be Sold Off in Lots,” 11 January 1912, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; “May ‘Gobble’ Friar Lands,” 9 May 2012, *Washington Post*: 4; “Would Protect Friar Lands,” 9 May 2012, *Baltimore Sun*: 11.
- 36 McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*: 255–256.
- 37 *Congressional Record*, House, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess. (1 May 1912): 5698–5703.
- 38 *Congressional Record*, House, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess. (15 May 1912): 6503–6510.
- 39 McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*: 256; Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 96–97.
- 40 Francis Burton Harrison, *The Corner-Stone of Philippine Independence: A Narrative of Seven Years* (New York: The Century Co., 1922): 47.
- 41 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 172; “Committee Head Steals Cline’s Glory as Future Emancipator of Filipinos,” 31 March 1912, *Indianapolis Star*: B11.
- 42 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 172–173; “Committee Head Steals Cline’s Glory as Future Emancipator of Filipinos.” On Jones’s illness, see *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 September 1914): 1291.
- 43 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 173; “To Free Filipinos Eight Years Hence,” 21 March 1912, *New York Times*: 1; “Filipino Bill In,” 22 March 1912, *New York Times*: 3; “Nations May Pledge Filipinos Freedom,” 26 March 1912, *New York Times*: 8.
- 44 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 174; “Quezon for Independence,” 1 April 1912, *New York Tribune*: 7.
- 45 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 179.
- 46 Ibid., 180.
- 47 Ibid., 190.
- 48 Ibid., 198–201; Harrison, *The Corner-Stone of Philippine Independence*: 3–4; “Not A Good Philippine Counsellor,” 29 August 1913, *New York Tribune*: 6.
- 49 Harrison, *The Corner-Stone of Philippine Independence*: 46–47. See also “Choice of Harrison Forced on Garrison,” 22 August 1913, *New York Tribune*: 4; “Burton Harrison Confirmed,” 22 August 1913, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 198–200.
- 50 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 212–213.
- 51 Garrison to Wilson, 19 January 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 29: 147–152. See also Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 213–214, quotation on p. 213. The President also met with Chairman Jones to discuss the situation in February that year. See “Wilson Takes Up Philippines,” 12 February 1914, *Baltimore Sun*: 2.
- 52 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 213–215; Garrison to Wilson, 19 January 1914, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 29: 149; “‘Watchful Waiting,’ His Policy,” 12 February 1914, *Washington Post*: 3; “Philippine Bill Offers Independence,” 4 June 1914, *Christian Science Monitor*: 7; “Early Independence of Philippines Urged,” 21 August 1914, *Indianapolis Star*: 16; “Step to Free Islands,” 21 August 1914, *Washington Post*: 3.
- 53 “To Give Filipinos Self-Government,” 4 June 1914, *New York Times*: 5; “Philippines Must Wait For Freedom,” 5 June 1914, *New York Tribune*: 4; “A New Philippines Plan,” 5 June 1914, *New York Times*: 10.
- 54 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 215, 220; “To Free Filipinos,” 4 June 1914, *Los Angeles Times*: I1; “New Wilson Bill To Free Filipinos,” 4 June 1914, *New York Tribune*: 1.
- 55 *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 September 1914): 15843; *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (2 October 1914): 16079.
- 56 *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (26 September 1914): 15800–15812, quotation on p. 15806.
- 57 *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 September 1914): 15838, 15845.
- 58 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (28 September 1914): 1290–1291; *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1914): 16022.
- 59 *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (1 October 1914): 16015–16016.
- 60 Ibid., 16019.
- 61 Ibid., 16031.
- 62 *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (3 October 1914): 16137–16138; *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess.



- (6 October 1914): 16217, 16234; *Congressional Record*, House, 63rd Cong., 2nd sess. (9 October 1914): 16383.
- 63 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 219.
- 64 Senate Committee on the Philippines, *Future Political Status of the People of the Philippine Islands*, 64th Cong., 1st sess., S. Rept. 18 (17 December 1915): 1.
- 65 Hearings before the Senate Committee on the Philippines, *S. 381: Government of the Philippines*, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (17 December 1915): 71.
- 66 *Future Political Status of the People of the Philippine Islands*: 3.
- 67 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 221; House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Political Status of the Philippine Islands*, 64th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 499 (6 April 1916): 1.
- 68 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 223.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 224.
- 70 “Will Keep Philippines,” 2 May 1916, *Washington Post*: 1; *Congressional Record*, House, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1916): 7144–7214; “No Independence for Philippines,” 2 May 1916, *Atlanta Constitution*: 2.
- 71 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1916): 2225.
- 72 “Will Keep Philippines”; “No Independence for Philippines.”
- 73 “Clarke Amendment Defeated in House,” 2 May 1916, *Los Angeles Times*: 11; “No Independence for Philippines.”
- 74 “Senators Yield on Philippines,” 9 May 1916, *New York Tribune*: 6.
- 75 “Senate Hedges on Philippines,” 17 August 1916, *New York Tribune*: 2.
- 76 “See Filipinos Free by 1921,” 26 August 1916, *New York Tribune*: 4.
- 77 *Congressional Record*, House, 64th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 January 1917): 748.
- 78 Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*: 114–118.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 114.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 127, 152, 192.
- 81 See Bernadita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934* (Manila, PI: National Historical Institute, 1983).
- 82 Eugenio S. De Garcia, “The Man Quintin Paredes,” 5 September 1934, *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine*: 3; “Osias Will Return to D.C. Tomorrow,” 22 December 1933, *Washington Post*: 12; “Filipinos Reappoint Guevara, Drop Osias,” 21 August 1934, *Christian Science Monitor*: 5.
- 83 For more on Quezon’s time and his power as president, see Alfred W. McCoy, “Quezon’s Commonwealth: The Emergence of Philippine Authoritarianism,” in *Philippine Colonial Democracy*, ed. Ruby R. Paredes (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988): 114–160; Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires*
- The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929–1946* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965): 151–195.
- 84 “Quezon Rites Tomorrow,” 3 August 1944, *New York Times*: 19; “High Dignitaries of State to Attend Quezon Rites Today,” 4 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 9; “Arlington Burial, Tribute to Quezon,” 5 August 1944, *New York Times*: 11; “Quezon to Rest at Arlington Until Philippines Are Freed,” 5 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 2.
- 85 “Family of Late Filipino Chief in Southland,” 4 November 1944, *Los Angeles Times*: 3; “Quezon’s Body Starts for Manila Tuesday,” 29 June 1946, *New York Times*: 19.
- 86 “New Capitol in Manila,” 30 December 1946, *New York Times*: 3.



“I AM NOT A DEMOCRAT
NOR A REPUBLICAN,
NOR EVEN A PROGRESSIVE.
THE FILIPINOS TAKE
NO SIDES IN YOUR
PARTISAN DIFFERENCES.”

Manuel L. Quezon
Congressional Record, October 1, 1914

Manuel Earnshaw

1862–1936

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1912–1917
INDEPENDENT FROM PHILIPPINES

As a marine engineer and shipbuilder, Manuel Earnshaw never intended to dip his toes into political waters. Even when he did represent the Philippines in the U.S. Congress for two terms, he left nary a ripple.

But Earnshaw's selection as Resident Commissioner, engineered by the kingmaker of Filipino politics Manuel L. Quezon, ended an ugly impasse between the islands' commission and assembly and—not coincidentally—also cleared Quezon's path to single-handedly negotiate the first step toward Philippine independence: the Jones Act of 1916. Earnshaw readily admitted his lack of policy chops, noting that, when discussions turned to politics, he sought the refuge of “the billiard room or some other part of the club, for politics is not, nor has it ever been my game.”¹ Still, he dutifully followed Quezon's lead and seemed content to serve as a symbol of the Philippines' thriving economy—an accompaniment to the political arguments advanced by Quezon of Filipinos' readiness for autonomy. Like all good businessmen, he longed for the stability and order that certainty brought. “The main thing, the essential thing in the whole matter is this: That something definite be given [to] us,” Earnshaw told the *New York Times*. “We want something specific in the way of time, not ‘when we are fit for self-government,’ or ‘when it shall seem best’ in the eyes of somebody. We want the year, month and day—and until that date is set there will be unrest and disquiet in the Philippines.”²

Manuel Earnshaw was born in Cavite City, Cavite Province, Philippines, on November 19, 1862. The oldest son of a British engineer, Daniel Earnshaw, and Gavina Noguera, a Filipina, Manuel grew up in the Manila area with his brothers, Tomas and Daniel. Earnshaw graduated from Ateneo de Manila University, a prominent secondary school. Cavite City sits on a peninsula jutting into Manila

Bay just south of the city of Manila. Drawn to the sea, he learned the business of shipbuilding as an apprentice in his father's engineering business. He joined the Spanish Navy and earned a marine engineering degree from the Manila Nautical School.

Earnshaw worked for his father's business, D. Earnshaw & Company, as a marine engineer beginning in 1885. His career advanced rapidly when the Wilks & Boyle Company hired him in 1888. Four years later, he rose to partner in the company, and his name was emblazoned on the new masthead, Boyle & Earnshaw. In 1901 Earnshaw acquired full control of the company, later renamed Earnshaw Slipways & Engineering Company, and formed a new partnership that included his brothers. By 1912 Earnshaw's company had grown into the islands' largest shipbuilding plant—capable of repairing or building boats up to 460 feet in length at its docks and facility that spread across more than seven acres.³ On February 4, 1888, Earnshaw married Maria Villar Ubalda; the couple had no children.⁴

While Earnshaw never seemed drawn to politics, politics eventually prevailed upon him when he was tapped as a compromise candidate to represent the Philippines on the Hill. By 1910 the process for choosing Resident Commissioners had broken down. Past practice had been to have the unelected Philippine commission choose one nominee—usually an *ilustrado* or prominent businessman—while the assembly chose its own candidate who had a progressive view toward independence. But to ratify those selections, each body had to approve both candidates. Benito Legarda became the sticking point in this internal schism. Legarda, who had served as Resident Commissioner since 1907, never had been very palatable to the assembly. But his public opposition to independence as Resident Commissioner rankled the popularly elected body, sinking his stock even further.⁵





Assembly speaker Sergio Osmeña manufactured a crisis when he pressed to have both nominees for Resident Commissioner be individuals who had wide popular backing, including meeting the approval of the assembly, which refused to support Legarda's renomination. By 1911 the conference between both bodies deadlocked and failed to reach a compromise. The U.S. Congress eventually had to step in with a temporary fix by extending the terms of both Legarda and his fellow Resident Commissioner, Manuel Quezon.⁶

Quezon resolved the crisis in 1912 by working with Governor General W. Cameron Forbes to secure consent from the William H. Taft administration that Legarda would be replaced with another prominent businessman. He then convinced Earnshaw to be that man. Earnshaw's background as a Filipino captain of industry pleased the conservative commission, which approved him. The Philippine assembly, at Quezon's prodding, eventually stood down, rubber-stamping Earnshaw's nomination to the 63rd Congress (1913–1915) in a 55 to 10 vote on November 21, 1912. It ended an embarrassing moment for the territorial government that undercut the case for Filipino self-rule.⁷

The day after the legislature formally approved both Quezon and Earnshaw, the *Manila Times* observed that the latter's selection as Resident Commissioner would "commend itself to all sections of the community. He is a business man, a native of the Philippines of high standing, ability, and integrity ... and may be depended on for that wise union of conservatism and progress which the times demand." A week later, the paper reiterated the point by noting that Earnshaw's selection was a refreshing change. "It will be said at once that he is without political experience or knowledge," the editors conceded, "but to most spectators of the great political game here and elsewhere it is a positive relief to see a high office filled by one who is not a politician and cares little or nothing for the ways and methods of politicians."⁸

Quezon's motives were not purely altruistic. For one thing, the Earnshaw compromise cleared the path to his own re-election, now as the senior Resident Commissioner.

"Beyond this, moreover, it established a pattern, to which Quezon remained attached for as long as he held office as resident commissioner," observed historian Peter W. Stanley, "of yoking him with a colleague who was rich, personally dignified as a representative of the Filipino people, and politically impotent." Legarda and Earnshaw each filled the bill of being from the merchant-industrialist class, but the former, in addition to being senior in service to Quezon, enjoyed a warm friendship with President Taft and pursued an independent course, particularly on tariff issues. Earnshaw, on the other hand, was no political creature, and his position on independence more closely aligned with Quezon's. "The last thing Quezon wanted was a rival either in Filipino electoral politics or American legislative politics," Stanley writes. "Earnshaw knew nothing about American politics. He did as Quezon advised him."⁹ He enjoyed traveling, however, and Washington seemed to him an agreeable excursion.¹⁰

Whatever the expectations for Earnshaw's service, it is clear that he left almost no legislative fingerprint during nearly four years in Washington. During Earnshaw's two terms of service in the 63rd and 64th Congresses (1913–1917), the *Congressional Record* barely mentioned his name, other than to note his attendance at various sessions of the House. After taking his seat on April 7, 1913, the Opening Day of the 63rd Congress, Earnshaw never gave a floor speech, introduced a single bill or resolution, or even inserted extensions of remarks or supplementary materials into the official debates, nor did he follow the example of other Resident Commissioners, who often gave copious testimony before congressional committees considering legislation that might affect the Philippines. He also spoke sparingly to the press. Earnshaw did have one thing in common with other Filipino colleagues, past and future; his powers were circumscribed by the fact that he could not vote on final legislation or even hold a committee assignment.

This silence seemed to be the way that he—and Quezon—wanted it. "I know nothing of politics," Earnshaw confided shortly after his election, and that clearly commended him, in Quezon's eyes. He admitted never having read the draft text of the proposed Jones



Act or even studied the particulars of the Payne–Aldrich Tariff of 1909. “When offered the post of Resident Commissioner,” Earnshaw told the *Manila Weekly Times*, “I asked Manuel Quezon and other political leaders whether I should be obliged to have anything to do with occupying the post. . . . They all replied, ‘Not unless you wish to do so’ and on that condition I accepted the appointment.” When reporters pressed him about his position on immediate independence for the Philippines, Earnshaw demurred, citing his inexperience: “I am at sea on all the principal things I should know about.”¹¹ Indeed, he lived up to his end of the bargain, deferring to Quezon as the authority on all policy issues, including the question of Philippine autonomy.¹²

That pattern of deference was set from the beginning of this political marriage between the wealthy industrialist and the rising politico. When their ship landed in San Francisco in late December 1912, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the delegation would press the new (and seemingly sympathetic) Woodrow Wilson administration for passage of an independence bill. But Quezon did all the talking, noting that “sentiment throughout the islands is extremely intense for home rule. The people believe that they are now able to govern themselves.” Quezon also pointed to the islands’ strong economy, which was “never in a more prosperous state.” Earnshaw, a millionaire from the Philippines’ industrialist class, seemed little more than a showcase for that claim, the very embodiment of the islands’ economic vitality.¹³ The new Resident Commissioner, the *Chronicle* noted, “travels in magnificence, having a retinue of servants with him.”¹⁴

While Quezon took a highly public profile promoting the passage of the Jones bill as it percolated in the House during several sessions, Earnshaw lent the effort only an occasional public endorsement. He likely lobbied businesses with stakes in the Filipino economy as well. Otherwise, he appears exclusively to have been a silent partner who may well have helped to fund the lobbying effort with his own personal fortune by entertaining key committee members and government officials, but who was a mum wingman to the senior Resident Commissioner.¹⁵

Four months after the Jones Act became law, the *Manila Times* reported that Earnshaw had tendered his resignation and retired from the House in mid-January 1917, citing health issues and the pressing needs of his vast business enterprise.¹⁶ His belief that his work was accomplished also seemed apparent in an address he made marking the 20th anniversary of the martyred patriot Jose Rizal weeks earlier. “The United States of America, which has always taken the lead in the advocacy of national liberty,” he told a crowd at Washington’s Ebbitt restaurant, “has begun to accede to the aspirations of our people by the congressional enactment last August of our new organic law, called the ‘Jones law,’ which gives us an ample autonomy and a clear, unmistakable promise of our independence.”¹⁷

Earnshaw’s and Quezon’s terms were set to expire anyway in early March of that year to comply with the new provisions of the Jones Act. “I am more than happy to have had the opportunity to live in Washington and represent the Philippine Islands there,” Earnshaw told the *Manila Times* on his return trip home, “but it is my intention to settle down . . . and devote myself to my private affairs and my business.” During a stop in Japan on the journey back to Manila, he and Quezon briefed their successors, Jaime C. de Veyra and Teodoro R. Yangco, who were en route to Washington.¹⁸

Upon his return to the Philippines, Earnshaw resumed his business affairs until he retired in 1921. Earnshaw committed suicide with a revolver in his family’s Manila mausoleum on February 13, 1936. His suicide note indicated that age, declining health, and financial reverses were to blame.¹⁹

Quezon, who remained on close terms with Earnshaw, recalled his colleague as a “wonderful man in every respect and a sincere patriot.” He generously added in retrospect, “The part he took in getting through Congress the Jones act has given him a place in the history of the Philippines.” Earnshaw’s last wish was that his body not be removed from the family crypt but simply be buried there. He is interred in Manila’s Cementerio del Norte, where six other Resident Commissioners also are buried.²⁰



NOTES

- 1 “Earnshaw, Who Succeeds Legarda Talks on Independence Question,” 29 November 1912, *Manila Weekly Times*: 43.
- 2 “Philippine Freedom Advocated by New Resident Commissioner,” 30 March 1913, *New York Times*: SM6.
- 3 “Growth of Earnshaw Company,” 18 October 1912, *Manila Times Weekly*: n.p.
- 4 *Congressional Directory*, 64th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915): 125; “Manuel Earnshaw,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=E000015>; “Growth of Earnshaw Company”; “Philippine Freedom Advocated by New Resident Commissioner”; “Reverses Drive Earnshaw to Suicide,” 14 February 1936, *Manila Tribune*: 4; U.S. Passport Applications, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Philippines, 1907–1925, box 4251, vol 8., National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 25 February 2015).
- 5 Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 168–169.
- 6 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 168–169.
- 7 Philippines Legislative Assembly, *Diario de Sesiones de la Asamblea Filipina*, Tomo VIII (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1913): 161; Manuel Earnshaw Certificate of Election (endorsed 22 November 1912), Committee on Elections (HR63A-J1), 63rd Cong., Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, NARA; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 181–182.
- 8 “The Week and the Outlook,” 22 November 1912, *Manila Times Weekly Edition*: 1; “The Point of View—Topics of the Week: Delegate Manuel Earnshaw,” 29 November 1912, *Manila Weekly Times*: 2.
- 9 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 181–182.
- 10 “‘One of the Finest Capitals’—Philippine Commissioner So States,” 1 September 1913, *Washington Post*: CW6.
- 11 “Earnshaw, Who Succeeds Legarda Talks on Independence Question.”
- 12 Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 181–182.
- 13 “Filipinos Want Home Rule; Will Urge Passage of Bill,” 28 December 1912, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 18.
- 14 “Philippine Delegate Is Here; In Favor of Independence,” 11 March 1913, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 1.
- 15 “Philippine Freedom Advocated by New Resident Commissioner”; “To Urge Island Independence: Philippine Delegate Arrives,” 31 December 1913, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 18; “Reads Filipinos’ Future,” 31 December 1916, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 16 “Earnshaw Resigns Commissionership,” 11 January 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1.
- 17 “Reads Filipinos’ Future.”
- 18 “Earnshaw Resigns Commissionership”; “Earnshaw for Private Life,” 27 June 1917, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 19 “Noted Filipino Ends Life,” 14 February 1936, *New York Times*: 9; “Reverses Drive Earnshaw to Suicide.”
- 20 “Manuel Earnshaw Commits Suicide in Mausoleum,” 22 February 1936, *Philippines Free Press*: 35; “Manuel Earnshaw,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=E000015>; “Manila North Cemetery,” <http://www.manila.gov.ph/manilanorthcem.htm> (accessed 13 April 2011).



“HE IS A BUSINESS MAN,
A NATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES
OF HIGH STANDING, ABILITY,
AND INTEGRITY ... AND MAY
BE DEPENDED ON FOR THAT
WISE UNION OF CONSERVATISM
AND PROGRESS WHICH THE
TIMES DEMAND.”

Manila Times, November 22, 1912

Jaime C. de Veyra

1873–1963

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1917–1923
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

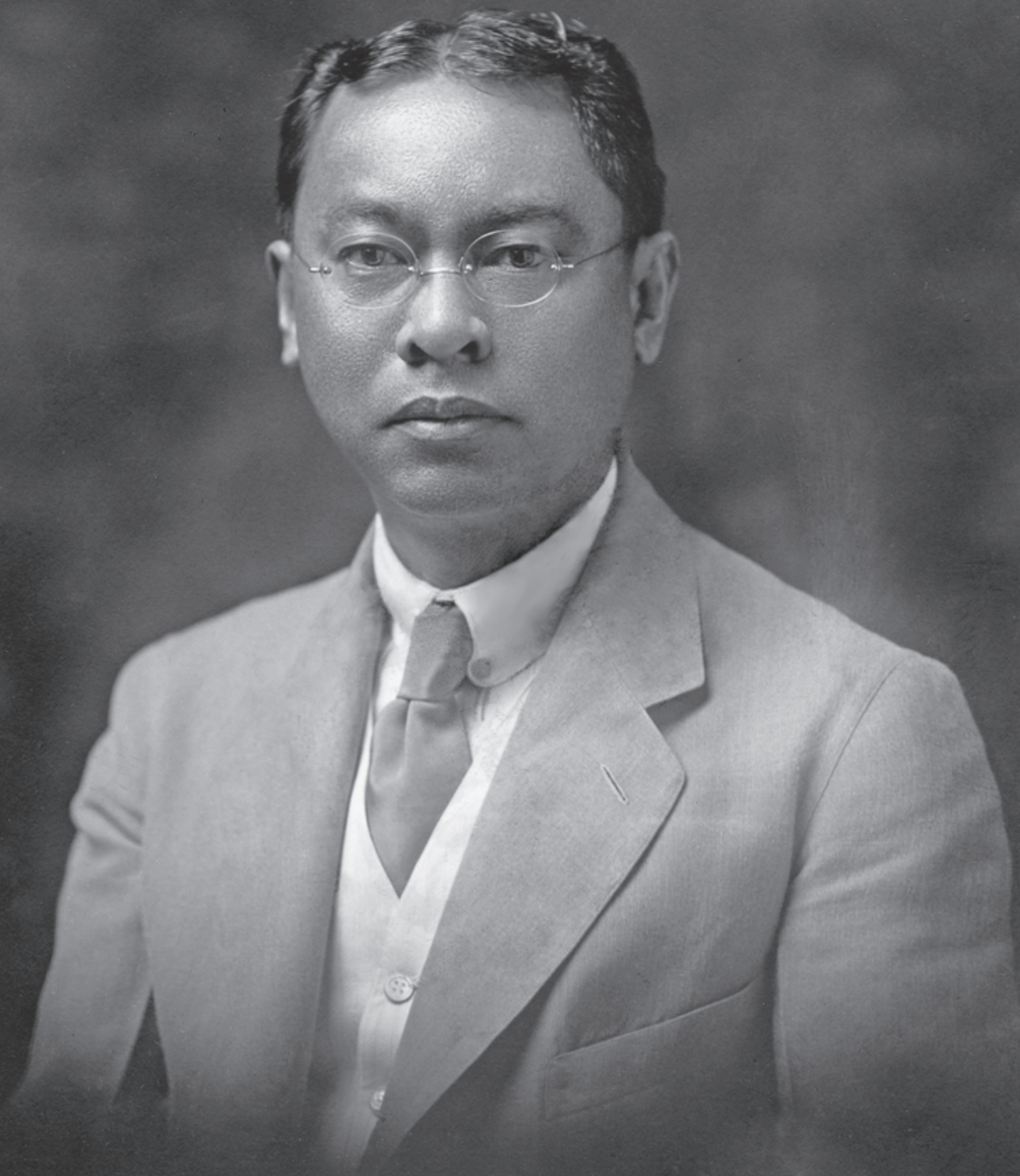
As a journalist turned politician, Jaime de Veyra was the voice of the Philippines in Washington following enactment of the landmark Jones Act of 1916. As Manuel L. Quezon’s successor in Congress, de Veyra spent six years as Resident Commissioner navigating the shifting U.S. political landscape, speaking on behalf of the Philippine legislature, and lobbying for an independent Philippines. “No benefits, however great, and no altruism, however splendid, can compensate any people for the lack of that national independence,” de Veyra noted in a House Floor speech late in his career. “Without freedom wealth is nothing, culture is meaningless, existence itself is only the procession of idle images on a purposeless screen.”¹

Jaime Carlos de Veyra was born in Tanauan, which is on the northeast coast of Leyte Province in the Philippines, on November 4, 1873, to Felix de Veyra, the director of a private school, and Ildefonsa Diaz. Born into a middle-class family on an island 600 miles southeast of Manila, de Veyra received an education in the local schools. He left Tanauan at age 15 to attend the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Manila. After he graduated with a bachelor of arts in 1893, de Veyra remained in Manila for two more years to study at the University of Santo Tomas, studying alongside future national leaders Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Quezon. The Philippine Revolution of 1896 interrupted de Veyra’s studies, prompting him to return home and join the fight against the Spanish, eventually serving as secretary to provincial rebel commander General Ambrosio Mojica. On June 28, 1907, he married Sofia Reyes, a notable social worker who became one of the most prominent women on the islands. The couple had four children, Jesus María, Manuel, Lourdes Josefina, and Maria Rosario. In 1961, when de Veyra was in his late 80s, he received an honorary PhD in humane letters from Ateneo Municipal de Manila.²

After the war, de Veyra worked as a newspaper editor, starting *El Nuevo Día* (*The New Day*) with his former college classmate, Sergio Osmeña, on the neighboring island of Cebu. Together they dug into local political issues that arose during the transition from Spanish rule to American occupation. The publication was critical of the new U.S. administration, and cautious American bureaucrats viewed de Veyra “as anti-American with pro-Republic sympathies.” Many worried that the paper might be too radical, but Osmeña’s deft skills as a diplomat kept it from being censored or shut down.

El Nuevo Día ended up being a short-lived experiment. Osmeña quickly won election as governor of the province, leaving de Veyra to manage the paper by himself. But de Veyra was also gradually drawn into Cebu City politics, winning election as municipal councillor in 1901. When *El Nuevo Día* folded in November 1902, de Veyra jumped to another newspaper, *La Nueva Era* (*The New Era*) and oversaw its Tagalog section. He also managed a private school in Leyte. In 1904, after narrowly losing the race for governor of his home province of Leyte, de Veyra returned to Manila to join the staff of *El Renacimiento* (*The Renaissance*), a newspaper run by a former colleague from *El Nuevo Día*, Rafael Palma. Like their old publication, *El Renacimiento* criticized the U.S. colonial government.³

In 1906 de Veyra left journalism for good. That year he again ran for governor of Leyte against Peter Borseth, one of the few remaining Americans in a popularly elected office. According to one scholar, de Veyra was part of an emerging generation of politicians who commanded local bases of power outside Manila, their influence enhanced by U.S. officials who wanted native allies to help maintain control of the Philippines. Running as a Nacionalista, de Veyra was seen by Manila authorities as an unpalatable “radical.” Officials in Leyte, on the other hand, celebrated





when he won the governorship. An American supporter cabled the news to Manila: “God lives. Leyte saved. Borseth overwhelmingly defeated.”⁴

De Veyra served as provincial governor for little more than a year before running for a seat from Leyte in the newly created first Philippine assembly. Elected in July 1907, he served for two terms (1907–1912) alongside familiar faces. Osmeña, now a representative of Cebu Province, was speaker of the assembly, and his other college contemporary, Manuel Quezon, represented Tayabas and served as majority floor leader.

When *Outlook* magazine profiled the assembly shortly after it first convened, it noted that de Veyra had shed his reputation as a “revolutionary firebrand” in favor “of more moderate measures.” De Veyra, according to *Outlook*, understood the assembly to be something of a “political training-school” where Filipino politicians could prove to the world that they were capable of handling the responsibilities of self-government.⁵ During his time in the legislature, de Veyra earned the nickname “Protector of Children,” steering government subsidies toward pasteurizing the islands’ milk supply and authoring a law making women eligible to be schoolteachers.

After Quezon went to Washington as Resident Commissioner in 1909, he and de Veyra stayed in close contact.⁶ That political connection advanced de Veyra’s career at various turns, and in 1913 he was nominated to serve on the Philippine commission. Four other Filipinos were also selected so that, when the commission convened later that year, Native Filipinos held the majority for the first time. De Veyra eventually became the commission’s executive secretary.⁷

Under the Jones Act of 1916, a formal, popularly elected senate replaced the Philippine commission, and in Washington neither Quezon nor Manuel Earnshaw stood for re-election as Resident Commissioner. De Veyra and Teodoro R. Yangco were nominated to take their places, and, as the nominee of the new senate, de Veyra sailed through the process. Facing only minor opposition, both men were elected to three-year terms by a joint session of the Philippine legislature on January 10, 1917.⁸

De Veyra’s political skill, one Manila newspaper noted, made him “ably prepared” to direct the Philippines’ agenda on Capitol Hill in the years following the Jones Act.⁹ According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, he and Yangco shared the workload. In effect, de Veyra would represent the Filipino people while Yangco would work to protect the Philippines’ commercial interests.¹⁰ While Yangco did not stand for re-election in 1920, de Veyra was re-elected by the Philippine legislature on February 7, 1920. His second term commenced midway through the 66th Congress (1919–1921).¹¹

Throughout his career on the Hill, de Veyra had the expert help of his wife, Sofia, who began her career as an educator and in her own right had become a leading proponent of Filipino women’s issues. In 1907 she founded the first training school for nurses on the islands and later organized women’s clubs throughout the archipelago that she then consolidated into the National Federation of Women’s Clubs. The *Philippines Free Press* once observed that she was “the most envied woman of the Philippines” and a role model for many young women who aspired to careers in public service.¹²

When the Nineteenth Amendment granting U.S. women the right to vote went into effect, Sofia de Veyra spoke frequently on the East Coast lecture circuit, stressing the gains of Filipino women. Because of the matriarchal culture on the islands, they enjoyed progressive property rights and professional opportunities unavailable to women in the United States, Mrs. de Veyra noted. She voiced the strong desire among Filipinos for “progressive legislation” particularly in women’s health care, child health, and day care. She confidently predicted that Filipino women would soon gain access to the ballot and was an unceasing advocate for the right of the Filipino people for self-rule.¹³ “I want the Americans to know the truth about that distant country,” Sofia said, “which is not infrequently misrepresented and misunderstood.”¹⁴

During his entire six-year stint in Washington, House Rules barred Jaime de Veyra from serving on committees or voting. He spoke sparingly in debates, perhaps a half dozen times in all. He did not deliver his first floor speech until the



closing weeks of the 65th Congress (1917–1919), when he eulogized William A. Jones, chairman of the Insular Affairs Committee and namesake of the Jones Act of 1916, calling him “the American most dear to our hearts.”¹⁵

De Veyra was far less a legislator than he was a salesman, constantly publicizing the Nacionalista platform and calling for independence at the earliest possible moment.¹⁶ Like Quezon, he was a pragmatist who leveraged a variety of opportunities to promote Philippine sovereignty. He often spoke to the press and privately lobbied Members of Congress and administration officials. He and Yangco frequently gave public lectures around the country, but principally in major East Coast cities, to publicize Philippine autonomy.¹⁷ The pair also helped form a Philippine American Chamber of Commerce to encourage trade and rally support for independence. De Veyra was often found testifying before House and Senate committees on economic matters, including the adjustment of the Philippines’ debt load, tax revisions for U.S. citizens living on the islands, and salary changes for U.S. colonial officials.¹⁸

When de Veyra went to Washington, Democrats controlled both the House and the presidency and were generally more focused on domestic reforms and mobilizing for World War I than the status of the Philippines. In 1916, the year before he arrived, Democrats agreed to support the Jones Act, gradually eliminating U.S. control over the Philippines, but when Republicans took over in 1919, Congress changed its approach.¹⁹ When the GOP issued calls to strengthen U.S. authority in the Pacific, the Philippines’ territorial legislature responded by more or less putting de Veyra in charge of an independence mission to Washington.²⁰

De Veyra met the independence mission when it disembarked in San Francisco in February 1919, and over the next two months, the delegation traveled the country, publicizing Philippine independence. After meeting with Secretary of War Newton Baker, the delegation brought their cause to a number of cities, pushing for a final resolution on the Philippines’ political status. Shortly after the mission’s visit, the Philippines opened an official press bureau in Washington and put its two Resident

Commissioners in charge of placing key issues before the general public.²¹ Two months later, de Veyra published a memorial calling for immediate independence in the *Congressional Record*, and in 1920 he led a Filipino delegation to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions to lobby for immediate autonomy.²²

With Republican nominee Warren G. Harding’s decisive victory in the 1920 presidential election, de Veyra and other pro-independence activists realized they would need to move quickly to secure as much as they could from the outgoing Wilson administration. A former chairman of the Senate Committee on the Philippines, President Harding, like many Republicans, believed the United States should hold the islands indefinitely.²³

By November 1920, Horace M. Towner of Iowa, chairman of the House Insular Affairs Committee, publicly declared he would not consider immediate independence, forcing de Veyra and his newly elected colleague, Isuro Gabaldon, to shift their attention to the White House. Wilson had earlier told Congress that the Philippines had “succeeded in maintaining a stable government . . . and have thus fulfilled the condition” in the Jones Act as a prerequisite for independence.²⁴ In the fall, in order to move one step closer to sovereignty, the two Resident Commissioners persuaded Wilson’s secretary to ask the President to support a bill certifying that the Philippines successfully fulfilled that requirement, but it was too little, too late. No Member in either chamber acted on Wilson’s request.²⁵

De Veyra backed one last, desperate measure in the waning days of the Wilson administration to speed an independence provision through Congress. Edward King of Illinois submitted H.R. 14481, a bill to enable the Philippine government, by means of a presidential proclamation, to form a constitutional convention within one year of its enactment. Once the Filipino people drafted and approved a constitution, the President could, at his sole discretion, declare the Philippines free and independent. In supporting the King bill, de Veyra cast aside concerns that the removal of U.S. military protection might embolden Japanese designs on the islands. “We are willing to take a chance and we are confident we shall be



able to ... defend ourselves from any possible aggression.”²⁶ The bill went to the House Committee on Insular Affairs, but never resurfaced.

Early in the next Congress, de Veyra and Gabaldon met with President Harding to discuss the status of the Philippines in his new administration. The President refused to render an immediate decision about independence, but told the Resident Commissioners he would review the results of a fact-finding mission led by General Leonard Wood and former Governor General W. Cameron Forbes, who were sent to assess the Philippines’ “fitness” for independence. Even before Wood and Forbes departed for the islands there were doubts their report would have much effect. “Nothing in connection with the investigation indicates that the movement to turn the islands loose from this country will be encouraged as a result of the inquiry,” the *New York Tribune* reported.²⁷

The Wood–Forbes Commission visited the islands from May to August 1921 and spoke with territorial government officials, Filipinos, American residents, and “foreigners of every walk of life.” The commissioners spent a week in Manila, visited all but one of the 49 provinces of the islands, and held meetings in nearly 450 cities and towns.²⁸ In its final recommendation, the commission not only cautioned against independence “until the people have had time to absorb and thoroughly master the powers already in their hands,” it actually recommended strengthening the powers of the governor general while weakening the territorial legislature.²⁹ President Harding endorsed the findings and nominated General Wood to reassert U.S. authority as the islands’ new governor general.

In Washington, de Veyra and Gabaldon protested the commission’s report in a joint statement. They took particular umbrage at the suggestion of curtailing the hard-won rights of the Philippine legislature: “To a subject people like us, the power of the Philippine senate to confirm or not to confirm appointments ... is a bulwark against possible tyranny on the part of the governor general ... therefore we can not surrender it.” De Veyra also submitted a letter of protest and supporting documentation to President Harding, challenging the reported results in the *Congressional Record*.³⁰

The Wood–Forbes Commission inspired a second Philippine independence mission to the United States in June 1922. As with the original mission three years earlier, de Veyra helped to coordinate its activities. Unlike the 1919 group, this one had a singular political goal: challenging the Wood–Forbes report to protect the promise of autonomy embodied in the Jones Act. Senator Quezon and Philippine house speaker Osmeña, the insular legislature’s highest-ranking officers, led the delegation.

The House received the independence mission on June 21, 1922, shortly after their arrival in the United States. Peering down from the public gallery, they listened as Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Horace Towner complimented Manila’s leaders as “educated men,” “able orators,” and “keen debaters,” and he noted paternalistically that Congress was “proud to claim them as our legislative children. We have given them, and they have gladly received and assimilated, our form [of government] and most of our procedure.” After being recognized on the floor, the mission delegates went to meet with Speaker Frederick Gillett of Massachusetts and other Members of the House.³¹

Nine days later, de Veyra submitted a “statement of conditions” demonstrating the viability of the Philippine government. The 23-page entry in the *Congressional Record* accompanied the official memorial that the delegation submitted to President Harding and Congress. Publicizing the message via the Philippine press bureau, de Veyra argued that the time was ripe for independence. Not only had the Philippines kept their end of the bargain by maintaining a “stable government” per the Jones Act, but each of the island’s main political parties favored independence.³²

In 1922 de Veyra opted not to stand for renomination as Resident Commissioner. In retrospect, the reasoning behind his decision is not all that clear. One could perhaps infer that de Veyra understood that, with the transition from Wilson to Harding, the case for immediate independence had been temporarily shelved. It is also plausible that, after more than 15 years in elected office, he was ready to return to private life. While he subsequently held appointed positions, de Veyra never again sought elected office and seemed content to focus on academic pursuits.



Three weeks before his term expired at the end of the 67th Congress (1921–1923), in early March 1923, de Veyra submitted a request from the Philippine legislature calling for a constitutional convention. The “holding of a constitutional convention,” he said, was the “next logical step to be taken in the direction of . . . complete and absolute independence.” He insisted that the desire for independence was requested “in no spirit of ingratitude, in no forgetfulness of the obligation of the Filipino people to the United States.” Touting the United States’ own history and noting that many U.S. citizens were sympathetic to Philippine autonomy, de Veyra asked how much longer Filipinos must wait. Citing the Jones Act, de Veyra noted that the stable government provision was the only requirement Congress asked of the Philippines prior to independence. Since the Philippines had met that obligation, de Veyra said, Congress’s opposition to independence was meant only to benefit “small circles and private interests that derive profit from the present conditions.”³³

Upon the election of his successor Pedro Guevara, de Veyra returned to the Philippines, where he became a respected academic, widely recognized as “the peerless literary critic in Filipino-Spanish literature.” He published broadly in periodicals and academic journals and also authored several well-received books. He served as the head of the Spanish language department at the University of the Philippines for nine years and was the assistant director of the National Library of the Philippines. At the urging of President Manuel Quezon, he headed the Institute of National Language from 1936 to 1944.³⁴ De Veyra also was a member of the Real Academia Española de la Lengua and the Philippine Historical Committee. He died in Manila on March 7, 1963.³⁵

FOR FURTHER READING

De Veyra, Jaime C. *Efemérides Filipinas* (Manila, PI: Impr. y Librería de I. R. Morales, 1914).

_____. *El Último Adiós de Rizal, Estudio Crítico-Expositivo* (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1946).

_____. *Tandaya; O, Kandaya, Algunos Ensayos Historico-Literarios* (Manila, PI: 1948).

_____. *La Hispanidad en Filipinas* (Madrid, Spain: Publicaciones del Círculo Filipino, 1961).

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

The New York Public Library (New York, NY). George F. Parker Papers: 1919–1926, approximately 0.6 linear feet. Correspondents include Jaime C. de Veyra.

University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI). Anti-Imperialist League Papers: 1903–1922, items and 5 volumes. Authors include Jaime C. de Veyra.

University of Michigan, Bentley Historical Library (Ann Arbor, MI). *Microfilm*: 1909–1944, 54 microfilm reels. The papers of Manuel Luis Quezon contain correspondence, speeches, articles, and other papers related to all phases of his career in the Philippines and as Resident Commissioner in the U.S. House of Representatives. Correspondents include Jaime C. de Veyra.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 67th Cong., 4th sess. (15 February 1923): H3696–3698.
- 2 Gregorio F. Zaide, *Great Filipinos in History: An Epic of Filipino Greatness in War and Peace* (Manila, PI: Verde Book Store, 1970): 616–621; Carlos Quirino, *Who’s Who in Philippine History* (Manila, PI: Tahanan Books, 1995): 69; “DeVeyra Buried Today,” 8 March 1963, *Manila Times*: 2-A; U.S. Passport Applications, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Philippines, 1907–1925, box 4266, vol. 24: Passport Applications-Philippine Islands, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 2 March 2015); *Congressional Directory*, 67th Cong., 4th sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1923): 126.
- 3 Michael Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule, 1898–1908* (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003): 210–219.
- 4 Cullinane, *Ilustrado Politics*: 166–167.
- 5 G. H. Blakeslee, “The First Philippine Assembly,” 25 January 1908, *Outlook*: 174–179, quotation on p. 178.
- 6 Zaide, *Great Filipinos in History*: 618; Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 168.
- 7 “Five Natives: Philippine Commissioners Are Selected,” 16 October 1913, *Boston Daily Globe*: 11; Stanley, *A Nation in the Making*: 205–206; Zaide, *Great Filipinos in History*: 618.
- 8 *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Representantes*, 11 January 1917 (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1918): 433; Jaime C. de Veyra Certificate of Election (endorsed 17 March 1917), Committee on Elections (HR65-AJ1), 65th Congress, Records of the U.S. House



- of Representatives, Record Group 233, NARA; “Yangco and Veyra Chosen to Be Resident Commissioners to U.S.,” 11 January 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1.
- 9 “The New Resident Commissioners,” 12 January 1917, *Cablenews-American Daily* (Manila, PI): 6.
- 10 “New Filipino Agents in United States,” 20 April 1917, *Christian Science Monitor*: 7.
- 11 De Veyra Certificate of Election (endorsed 9 February 1920), Committee on Elections (HR68-AJ2), 68th Congress, Record Group 233, NARA; *Congressional Directory*, 67th Cong., 4th sess.: 126.
- 12 Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1932): 16–18.
- 13 “Filipino Women Have Made Great Strides, One of Them Says,” 2 May 1920, *Boston Globe*: SM15; “Status of Philippine Women High,” 26 October 1922, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3; “Mother is ‘Boss,’” 5 June 1922, *Los Angeles Times*: sec. 3, p. 11; “Says Suffrage Is in Grasp of Filipino Women,” 27 April 1922, *Baltimore Sun*: 11.
- 14 “Mme De Veyra Shows Filipino Progress,” 10 January 1921, *Boston Globe*: 4.
- 15 *Congressional Record*, House, 65th Cong., 3rd sess. (16 February 1919): 3523–3524.
- 16 “New Philippine Delegates,” 13 January 1917, *Washington Post*: 2; “New Filipino Agents in United States.”
- 17 Public Law 64-240, 39 Stat. 545 (1916); “Philippine Issue to be Discussed,” 8 December 1917, *Christian Science Monitor*: 11; Jaime C. de Veyra, “The Philippine Elections,” 6 July 1919, *New York Times*: 30.
- 18 “New Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce,” January 1920, *Bankers Magazine*, vol. 100: 72; “Trusts American Capital,” 23 June 1921, *New York Times*: 28; Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Indebtedness of the Philippine Government*, 67th Cong., 1st sess. (1921): 18–19; Hearing before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Internal-Revenue Revision*, 67th Cong., 1st sess. (1921): 22–24; Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Increase of Salaries of Auditor and Deputy Auditor of the Philippine Government*, 67th Cong., 4th sess. (1922): 3–6.
- 19 Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States-Philippines Relations, 1898–1946* (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997): 171–172.
- 20 Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934* (Manila, PI: National Historical Institute, 1983): 9–17.
- 21 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 13, 15, 17–18, 305.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 9–17, 27; *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (11 June 1919): 8848; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 27; “Filipinos Press Claims,” 5 June 1920, *Christian Science Monitor*: 10.
- 23 Gerald E. Wheeler, “Republican Philippine Policy, 1921–1933,” *Pacific Historical Review* 28 (1959): 377–390; Eugene Trani and David L. Wilson, *The Presidency of Warren G. Harding* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1977): 158–159.
- 24 Woodrow Wilson, Eighth Annual Message, December 7, 1920, in *American Presidency Project*, ed. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29561> (accessed 15 January 2016). See also Jaime C. de Veyra, “The Philippine Problem: The Truth about the Philippines,” 5 March 1921, *The Independent* 7, no. 309: 12–14.
- 25 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 27.
- 26 “Filipino Independence Gets a Boost in House,” 17 December 1920, *Los Angeles Times*: 11.
- 27 “Policy in Philippines Waits on Wood’s Report,” 15 March 1921, *New York Tribune*: 4; “Seek Philippine Independence,” 15 March 1921, *Washington Post*: 6; “Wants Filipinos Given Short Test,” 2 June 1921, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 28 *Condition in the Philippine Islands: Report of the Special Mission to the Philippine Islands to the Secretary of War*, 67th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Doc. 325 (1922): 10–12.
- 29 *Condition in the Philippine Islands*: 45–46.
- 30 “Criticize Philippine Report,” 2 December 1921, *Washington Post*: 6; *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 67th Cong., 2nd sess. (5 January 1922): 13263–13268.
- 31 *Congressional Record*, House, 67th Cong., 2nd sess. (21 June 1922): 9110–9112, quotation on p. 9110. Towner also inserted the mission’s petition for independence into the *Record*.
- 32 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 29–52; “Insist All Filipinos Want Independence,” 25 July 1922, *New York Times*: 9; *Congressional Record*, House, 67th Cong., 2nd sess. (30 June 1922): 9821–9844.
- 33 *Congressional Record*, House, 67th Cong., 4th sess. (15 February 1923): 3696–3698; “Seeks Constitution for the Philippines,” 16 February 1923, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 34 “Jaime C. de Veyra,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000276>; Zaide, *Great Filipinos in History*: 618–619.
- 35 “New Filipino Commissioner,” 18 February 1923, *Baltimore Sun* 2; “De Veyra Buried Today”; “Jaime C. de Veyra,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000276>.



“WITHOUT FREEDOM
WEALTH IS NOTHING,
CULTURE IS MEANINGLESS,
EXISTENCE ITSELF IS ONLY THE
PROCESSION OF IDLE IMAGES
ON A PURPOSELESS SCREEN.”

Jaime C. de Veyra
Congressional Record, February 15, 1923

Teodoro R. Yangco

1861–1939

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1917–1920
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Known as the “Rockefeller of the Philippines,” Teodoro Yangco, whose business acumen and wealth made him the islands’ leading philanthropist, enjoyed a brief, symbolic term as a Resident Commissioner in the U.S. Congress. Yangco followed in the tradition of Benito Legarda and Manuel Earnshaw when he was selected as one of the islands’ two concurrent Resident Commissioners on a track reserved for leading industrialists and merchants. These men tended to be gradualists on the independence question as opposed to their colleagues, who came from overtly political backgrounds and tended to espouse the popular will of Filipinos who favored immediate autonomy. But as a staunch ally of Manuel L. Quezon, who sometimes disagreed with his friend on tactics but not objectives, Yangco believed that, in the wake of the Jones Act, full freedom remained the central aspiration for Filipinos. “I am a business man and have [been] much involved in this question of Philippine independence,” Yangco noted in 1919. “I am supposed to be a conservative. I believe still the time has come for independence. We are grateful to America for the great things she has done for us, and our desire now to separate from her side is only the natural desire of the child when he comes of age to leave the care and control of a parent.”¹

Teodoro Rafael Yangco was born in San Antonio, Zambales Province, Philippines, on November 9, 1861, the only child of the troubled union of “Capitan” Luis Rafael Yangco, a wealthy entrepreneur and industrialist, and Ramona Arguelles. When Teodoro was four, his father built a grocery store in Manila and moved away to manage it. For six years, Ramona raised Teodoro alone in San Antonio, where private tutors educated the boy. In 1871, at the beckoning of Luis, 10-year-old Teodoro traveled 120 miles to live with his father and attend

Ateneo de Manila University, one of the Philippines’ most prominent finishing schools. His father eventually remarried to Victorina Obin, and from this union Teodoro gained three step-siblings: Pacita, Luisa, and Luisito.² Teodoro graduated from Ateneo de Manila University with a bachelor of arts degree in 1880. He enrolled in the law program at the University of Santo Tomas for one year, but his father encouraged him to pursue a commercial degree instead of law. Yangco studied business in Madrid for a year but left disgusted. “Except for the fact that I was entitled to a vacation,” he recalled, “my time was wasted. I learned little or nothing of value.” Yangco moved on to Ealing College, a small school in West London, where he lived between 1882 and 1886.³

Upon returning to the Philippines in 1887, Yangco worked for his father to learn the business from the ground up. As a self-made entrepreneur, Luis Yangco did not provide his son any special favors and, in fact, verged on being overbearing. “Now Teodoro,” he said, “you’ll work as a clerk in my office. Don’t think that simply because you have studied in Europe you can be a manager right away.” A salaried employee, Yangco clerked and slowly worked his way up to manager after a 10-year apprenticeship. His father garnished his wages during that time, using that money to construct a private department store, Bazar Siglo XX (Twentieth Century Bazaar), in Teodoro’s name. During the 1896 Philippine Revolution, when Luis was arrested and imprisoned for six months, Teodoro managed the family business. As a reward for his successful work, Yangco received a hefty raise and 13 ships to start his own business. He continued to manage his father’s firm while, in his spare time, building his own shipping company.⁴

In 1907 Teodoro broke ties permanently with his father when Luis accused his son of using “insulting language” and abruptly disinherited him. Undeterred,





the younger Yangco formed a transportation firm that managed shipyards and shuttled commercial merchandise. Its reach was extensive, as it operated between eight cities throughout the Philippines. Additionally, Yangco was the proprietor of the Twentieth Century Bazaar store, started a dry dock and slipway operation, and expanded his real estate holdings. As a director of the Philippine National Bank and president of the Philippines Chamber of Commerce, Yangco worked with numerous government and business officials throughout the Philippines.⁵

Philanthropy became a central aspect of Yangco's life—which, by all accounts, was simple and unostentatious, given the magnitude of his wealth. He sponsored projects such as the building of schools and playgrounds around the country. Yangco also sponsored a number of Filipino students who studied in Europe and the United States.⁶ The pious, lifelong bachelor was particularly active in charity work for children and even adopted several boys. Two boys, Lucio and Simplicio Godino, were conjoined twins whom he adopted in 1919 after their mother's death, saving them from being relegated to life as a circus act.⁷

Yangco toured the United States during the time of the 1915 World's Fair in San Francisco and visited a number of cities, including Washington, New York, and Chicago. A tall man with wavy dark hair and deep-set eyes beneath large brows, he made favorable impressions on American captains of industry, such as International Harvester's Cyrus McCormick.⁸ In several news interviews, he stressed Filipinos' desire for eventual independence and their satisfaction with Governor General Francis Burton Harrison. Yangco, who believed that Filipinos were not ready to govern themselves immediately, endorsed a protectorate system as the nation moved toward independence.⁹

With the passage of the Jones Act in the waning months of the 64th Congress (1915–1917), the Resident Commissioners' political emphases were in transition. The new law provided a path to independence that, initially, did not seem to require the vocal advocacy that had long been the approach of past Resident Commissioners, most notably Manuel Quezon. By the start of the 65th Congress (1917–1919), American critics pointed to Philippine

politicians' "excessive" focus on achieving Philippine independence at the expense of its economic development.¹⁰ This type of criticism reinforced the need for a Resident Commissioner with sterling business credentials.

These factors weighed on Quezon and Philippine assembly speaker Sergio Osmeña as they considered candidates to succeed Manuel Earnshaw. Newly elected to the Philippine senate, Quezon exercised considerable control over the selection process. In late 1916, he approached Yangco and offered him the Resident Commissioner post. Yangco initially refused Quezon's offer, noting that it was a "fixed principle of his life" to stay out of politics. But Quezon, with whom Yangco had an almost fraternal bond, eventually persuaded his friend; Yangco himself recognized "the vital necessity of sending a recognized business leader to represent the aspirations of the Filipino people." Quezon later described why Yangco was an ideal choice, noting, "We need a man in the United States who is deeply interested in our institutions as well as in the development of our natural resources."¹¹

On January 10, 1917, the Philippine assembly elected Yangco by a nearly unanimous 68 votes (two other opposition candidates garnered a single vote each). The legislature simultaneously elected Jaime de Veyra—a newspaperman-turned-politician—to serve alongside Yangco in the other Resident Commissioner slot.¹² News coverage in the United States pointed to the different roles de Veyra and Yangco would play. The former "was named to represent the political aspirations of the Filipino people, while Yangco will represent the business interests—a division of labor that has been followed in the appointment of Philippine resident commissioners since the office was first created."¹³ The *Cablenews-American* approvingly noted that Yangco's "broad sympathy with all modern progress, whether social, political or industrial, especially fits him to represent the Philippines in Washington, under this new phase of relations between the Islands and the United States." Before leaving the Philippines, Yangco conducted a fact-finding trip to assess the islands' business needs. Shortly before his departure for Washington in early April 1917, the *Cablenews-American* described him



as “the right man for the place,” one who would follow in “Earnshaw’s shoes.”¹⁴

In a legislative sense, Yangco’s service was remarkably threadbare. Part of this lack of production derived from the institutional roadblocks that greeted every Resident Commissioner. House Rules circumscribed their powers—most notably preventing them from holding a committee assignment or voting on the House Floor. During his three-year term, overlapping with parts of the 65th and 66th Congresses (1917–1921), the *Congressional Record* mostly just notes his attendance. After taking his seat on May 1, 1917, Yangco gave just two floor speeches in that span, both of which eulogized the life of William A. Jones of Virginia, chairman of the Insular Affairs Committee and sponsor of the bill that bore his name and set the Philippines on the long path to eventual independence. Yangco was also appointed to Jones’s funeral committee. But he authored no bills or resolutions, nor did he follow the example of other Resident Commissioners by offering testimony to the various congressional committees considering legislation that might affect the Philippines. Whereas his colleague Jaime de Veyra served as a vocal advocate for Philippine independence in the mold of Quezon, Yangco had a far less overtly political role. While Resident Commissioners generally straddled a line between being legislators and diplomats, Yangco especially appears to have been more focused on representing Filipino institutions and business interests far outside the hall of the House.¹⁵

Yangco and Quezon enjoyed warm relations for many years, but a lingering strain seemed to fall upon their friendship, in part because of Quezon’s pragmatic political wrangling that ushered the Jones Act into law. Yangco disapproved of Quezon’s support for the Clarke Amendment to the Jones Act of 1916, which promised independence for the Philippines rather quickly after the law’s enactment. Like many business elites who valued the trade relationship in place with the United States, Yangco at first preferred a slower, more incremental path to independence.¹⁶ Quezon, too, professed to support graduated independence, an ideal embodied in the original language of the Jones Act. But looking to pacify

independence supporters in Washington and Manila who backed the Clarke Amendment, Quezon publicly supported it (Congress later stripped the fast-track provision from the final legislation). Yangco questioned Quezon’s political expediency. In 1917, when Yangco first arrived in Washington to assume his duties as Resident Commissioner, Quezon invited him to stay at his home. Yangco reluctantly accepted and, when he arrived, left his baggage at the curb while knocking on Quezon’s door. “I did not bring it,” Yangco explained, “because before I accept your hospitality I want you to know that I am opposed to your policies.” The outgoing Resident Commissioner put his arm around Yangco and gently ribbed him, “You are a saint.” Later he would tell Yangco, “If all my friends were as frank and sincere with me as you are, I would be a different man.”¹⁷

Whatever his personal inclinations, Yangco’s work in Washington undergirded the push for independence in the waning years of the Woodrow Wilson administration. But Yangco provided implicit proof for Filipinos’ fitness for self-rule almost exclusively through his personal example as a cultured philanthropist and business elite rather than through Quezon-like political maneuvering.

Yangco settled in Washington’s Cleveland Park neighborhood in a residence he shared with his staff assistant, a chef, two servants, a chauffeur, and three adopted children.¹⁸ His biographer maintains that, while he entertained at many of the city’s finest hotels, he also kept his distance from the political intrigue of the wartime capital and “quietly evaded all attempts to make him a party to the artificiality and insincerity that characterized” its social life. Yangco also continued his philanthropic activities by giving generously to the American Red Cross—notably outbidding the financier Bernard Baruch during a wartime DC charity gala—and helping to save one of the capital’s African-American churches from lapsing into foreclosure.¹⁹ This charitable aspect of his time in DC won wide press coverage, and that seemed to be the point. In many respects, he served as a cultural ambassador whose refinement, wealth, and generosity countered coarse stereotypes about Filipinos and perceptions that the islands’ political elite were calculating opportunists.²⁰



Yangco, of course, also helped to promulgate business opportunities for the islands. He and colleague Jaime de Veyra played support roles when the First Independence Mission visited the United States in spring 1919. Led by Quezon and drawing from the islands' leading political class, technocrats, and businessmen, the mission included a special committee focused on commerce, Yangco's area of expertise. In late 1919, Yangco and de Veyra encouraged the formation of the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce, a New York-based group dedicated to promoting trade relations between the United States and the Philippines.²¹ After the mission departed, the Resident Commissioners also oversaw the establishment of a Philippine press bureau, which sought to carry on the public relations work initiated by the delegation. With a small staff in Washington and an agent in New York, the bureau's mission was to distribute print materials about the Philippines to U.S. media outlets.²²

In February 1920, Yangco announced that he would resign as Resident Commissioner, noting that he was eager to return home to attend to his large business empire. He did not, however, give up his role of being an ambassador of Filipino business, representing the Philippine Chamber of Commerce at the Pan-Pacific Commercial Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii. Yangco continued to advocate for Filipino independence as he traveled the world and raised his children.²³ He provided scholarships for students and gave to numerous charities and civic organizations on the islands, including the Young Men's Christian Association, for which he was dubbed the "father of the YMCA in the Philippines." On April 20, 1939, Teodoro Yangco died in Manila at age 77 after a series of complications from pneumonia. His remains were interred in the Manila North Cemetery.²⁴

FOR FURTHER READING

Ruiz, Demetrio E., Jr., "Teodoro Rafael Yangco: His Life and Business Career (1861–1939)" (master's thesis, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines, 1975).

Stagg, Samuel Wells. *Teodoro Rafael Yangco, Leading Filipino Philanthropist and Grand Old Man of Commerce* (Manila, PI: University of the Philippines, 1934).

NOTES

- 1 George T. Shoens, "Free Philippines Now," 11 May 1919, *New York Times*: 36.
- 2 Samuel W. Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco: Leading Filipino Philanthropist and Grand Old Man of Commerce* (Manila, PI: University of the Philippines, 1934): 45–51.
- 3 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 59; Demetrio E. Ruiz Jr., "Teodoro Rafael Yangco: His Life and Business Career, 1861–1939," (master's thesis, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines, 1975): 65, 69–72.
- 4 Ruiz, "Teodoro Rafael Yangco": 89, 93–101.
- 5 "Teodoro R. Yangco," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=Y000004>; "Old Yangco Disinherits His Elder Son, Teodoro," 19 October 1907, *Manila Times*: 1; "Teodoro R. Yangco Passes Away at 77," 21 April 1939, *Manila Tribune*: 4; Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1932): 55–56; Luis Yangco quotation from Gregorio F. Zaide, ed., *Great Filipinos in History: An Epic of Filipino Greatness in War and Peace* (Manila, PI: Verde Book Store, 1970): 630–631. For an extensive description of Yangco's business empire, see Ruiz, "Teodoro Rafael Yangco," chapters 6–8.
- 6 Fernando A. Bernardo, *Silent Storms: Inspiring Lives of 101 Great Filipinos* (Pasig City, PI: Anvil, 2000): 221–223; "Leader of Business in Manila is Here," 12 December 1915, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 24; "Yangco Pensionado Goes," 29 September 1918, *Manila Times*: 2; *Congressional Directory*, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919): 129. Dubbed *pensionados*, many of the students returned to the Philippines as civil servants. Yangco also defrayed the expenses of training the first group of Filipino nurses at a Manila hospital.
- 7 "Filipinos, Aged 11, Quarrel Seldom and Are Very Active and Healthy," 25 November 1919, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 13; "Twins, Joined Together, Visiting Boys Are Opposed to Operation," 25 November 1919, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 13.
- 8 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 125–131; "Leader in Business of Manila Is Here," 12 December 1915, *San Francisco Chronicle*: 24.
- 9 "Leader in Business of Manila Is Here"; "Tribal Feeling Block to Rule by Filipinos," 21 February 1916, *Christian Science Monitor*: 8; "Filipinos Not Yet Ready for Freedom," 21 April 1916, *The Republic* (Rockford, IL): 1.
- 10 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 135–136. See also "Practical Politics in Philippines," 9 September 1915, *Indianapolis Star*: 8.
- 11 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 136.
- 12 *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Representantes* vol. 12 (Manila, PI: Manila Bureau of Printing, 1918): 430–431; Teodoro R. Yangco Certificate of Election (endorsed March 17, 1917), Committee on Elections (HR65-AJ1), 65th Congress, Records of the U.S. House



- of Representatives, Record Group 233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; “Yangco and Veyra Chosen to be Resident Commissioners to U.S.,” 11 January 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1; “The New Resident Commissioners,” 12 January 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 6.
- 13 “Two Filipinos Appointed Resident Commissioners,” 11 March 1917, *Indianapolis Star*: 2.
- 14 “The New Resident Commissioners”; “The Right Man for the Place,” 28 March 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 6; “Yangco Goes to Learn of Trade,” 6 March 1917, *Manila Times*: 2.
- 15 *Congressional Record*, House, 65th Cong., 1st sess. (1 May 1917): 1659; *Congressional Record*, Index, 65th Cong., 2nd sess.: 375; *Congressional Record*, Index, 65th Cong., 3rd sess.: 225; Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 137. Stagg suggests Yangco and colleague Jaime de Veyra helped to secure tariff legislation that benefited the Philippines, but no record of such a bill is listed in the *Congressional Record*, nor is there committee testimony that alludes to such legislation.
- 16 “Filipinos Not Yet Ready for Freedom”; “Tribal Feeling Block to Rule by Filipinos.”
- 17 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 140–141, 163–167.
- 18 *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, Washington, District of Columbia, Roll T625_210, sheet 2B, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 8 February 2016).
- 19 “Yangco Donates On Eve of Departure,” 5 April 1917, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI) 2; Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 140, 143–146, 151–152.
- 20 “Filipinos to Help Win War,” 1 October 1917, *Washington Post*: 8; “Philippine Issue to be Discussed,” 8 December 1917, *Christian Science Monitor*: 11; Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 159–162. According to Stagg, Yangco’s reputation preceded him. President Wilson acquainted himself with Yangco after hearing of his philanthropic efforts and receiving a Filipino hat as a Christmas gift.
- 21 “\$10,000,000 Bank Being Formed in Philippines,” 26 April 1916, *Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette*: 6; “To Aid Philippine Trade,” 12 December 1919, *New York Times*: 28.
- 22 Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippines Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934* (Manila, PI: National Historical Institute, 1983): 9–26.
- 23 “Sunday School Work,” 11 April 1922, *Washington Evening Star*: 16; Carlos Quirino, ed., *Who’s Who in Philippine History* (Manila, PI: Tahanan Books, 1995): 206.
- 24 Stagg, *Teodoro Rafael Yangco*: 151–152; “Don Teodoro Yangco, Philanthropist and Benefactor, Dies; Burial Sunday,” 21 April 1939, *Philippines Herald*: 2; “Teodoro Yangco Passes Away at 77”; “Manila North Cemetery,” <http://www.manila.ph/manilanorthcem.htm> (accessed 13 April 2011).

Isauro Gabaldon

1875–1942

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1920–1928
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

W ealthy and well connected, Isauro Gabaldon was part of a cohort of rising politicians who helped transform the Philippines and dominated the territorial government in the early 20th century. By the time he became Resident Commissioner, the islands were already along a path toward independence, but a presidential administration change only a short while later completely altered that trajectory. As a result, Gabaldon spent his eight years on the Hill fighting congressional efforts to reassert control over the insular government. As he once told colleagues, “on every occasion which I have addressed the Congress ... I have declared that immediate, absolute, and complete independence is the desire of the great majority of the 12,000,000 inhabitants of the islands. Nothing less than this ... will be satisfactory to the Filipino people.”¹

Isauro Gabaldon was born in the northern Philippine town of San Isidro, Central Luzon, on December 8, 1875. The landlocked Nueva Ecija Province, where he spent his earliest years, offered limited educational opportunities; Gabaldon’s well-to-do family instead sent the four-year-old to Spain for his primary education in the city of Tébar, about 120 miles southeast of Madrid. At the age of 16, he attended the colleges in Quintanar del Rey and Villanueva de la Jara in Cuenca, earning a bachelor’s degree from the latter school in 1893. “My dream was to be a military man,” Gabaldon recalled years later. “But my father was against it. In school I was strong in philosophy and letters. And when the time came for me to decide, the happy mean was chosen: I took up law.”²

Gabaldon studied at the Universidad Central in Madrid for five years, but returned to the Philippines after his father’s death, earning a law degree from Manila’s University of Santo Tomas in 1900. That same year he married Bernarda Tinio, whose family had considerable wealth and land. The couple raised two children, Teresa and Senen.³ After passing the bar

in 1903, Gabaldon worked in private practice for three years. In addition to his work as a lawyer, Gabaldon was an oil and gold executive, and he owned several large rice-producing estates.⁴

Gabaldon made a rapid transition into politics and, though he at first avoided party labels, he struck an alliance with other up-and-coming nationalist politicians, such as Manuel L. Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, and Jaime de Veyra.⁵ In 1906 he won election as governor of his home province, Nueva Ecija. As with other provincial governors, such as Osmeña and de Veyra, he left the governorship before his three-year term expired, running for a seat in the newly formed national assembly. Elected as a member of the Nacionalista Party on July 13, 1907, Gabaldon served two terms (1907–1912) in the national assembly representing Nueva Ecija. In Manila, he chaired the committee on provincial and municipal governments and served on three other panels: police, accounts, and agriculture.⁶ While in the legislature, he authored a bill subsequently named after him that provided 1 million pesos to construct modern public schools throughout the islands, but particularly in the *barrios* (neighborhoods). Despite his vast wealth, he earned a reputation for keeping a watchful eye on the *aparcería* (sharecropping) system, protecting the rights of agricultural laborers and small farmers.

From 1912 to 1916, Gabaldon again served as provincial governor in Nueva Ecija, but with the enactment of the Jones Act in 1916 and the creation of a popularly elected senate, Gabaldon sought and won a seat in the newly formed legislative chamber. During his three years in the senate, he chaired the committee on accounts and served on the agriculture, commerce, communications, railroads, and rules committees.⁷

In February 1920, the Philippine assembly nominated Gabaldon as its candidate for the Resident Commissioner post vacated by Teodoro Yangco, who was returning to the





Philippines to focus on the private sector. With Speaker Sergio Osmeña's backing, Gabaldon won the support of Nacionalista leaders, but still faced some opposition from the party. He was challenged for the nomination by Teodoro M. Kalaw, a key Quezon aide, but prevailed by a 53 to 16 margin. The assembly elected Gabaldon over the minority party candidate, Tría Tirona, on February 7, 1920, by a vote of 69 to 3.⁸ Gabaldon later comfortably won re-election in February 1923, for the period from March 4, 1923, to March 4, 1926, and again in late 1925, for the period March 4, 1926 to March 4, 1929.⁹

By the time Gabaldon arrived in Washington early in the fall of 1920, Congress had already gone home to finish election-year campaigning. As was customary for Resident Commissioners, Gabaldon submitted his election credentials first to the President, who then informed the legislature. Gabaldon spent nearly two months in the capital settling himself and his family before the House convened for a lame-duck session on December 6, 1920.

Like other Resident Commissioners, House Rules barred him from committee service and voting on the House Floor, but he made it clear that he planned to use the power of publicity to an extent that neither his colleague, Jaime de Veyra, nor his immediate predecessor, Teodoro Yangco, had done. Even before the start of the session, he honed a message that would be the hallmark of his eight-year career as Resident Commissioner. "It is of the utmost importance to continue friendly relations between the Philippines and the United States that Congress should take up the question of independence without further delay," he told the *Christian Science Monitor*. "The officials of the Philippines and the masses of the Filipino people are alike insistent that independence shall be granted. As we have demonstrated our ability to govern ourselves just as often as we have had the opportunity to demonstrate it, there is absolutely no question as to our ability to do so in the future."¹⁰

At the time, however, the political calculus in Washington greatly complicated Gabaldon's task. Both Congress and the White House were controlled by Republicans, the party which traditionally sought to

maintain U.S. control in the Philippines. Moreover, the new President, Warren G. Harding, had chaired the Senate's Committee on the Philippines in the 66th Congress (1919–1921) and had a poor view of President Woodrow Wilson's efforts to expedite Philippine independence.¹¹

On March 3, 1921, the final day of the 66th Congress, Majority Leader Frank Mondell of Wyoming asked unanimous consent to allow Gabaldon to speak on the floor. The Resident Commissioner opened his inaugural speech to the House by reminding Congress that its "promise" of freedom remained "unredeemed." Gabaldon reassured his colleagues that Filipinos appreciated U.S. efforts to improve schools and public health on the islands. He described the Philippines' two-decade apprenticeship in government, highlighting the stability of the insular legislature and local governments, and discounted the threat of Japanese invasion. But Filipinos, he said, expected independence sooner rather than later. "It will be the greatest example of international square dealing in the history of the ages."¹²

Gabaldon and fellow Resident Commissioner Jaime de Veyra met with Harding shortly after his inauguration, but the President refused to commit one way or the other on the matter of independence. His inclinations became clear enough when shortly afterward he dispatched a fact-finding mission to assess the islands' "fitness" for self-rule. Harding assured the Resident Commissioners that he would not make a policy decision until the investigators submitted a formal report.¹³ Perhaps sensing the drift of the new administration, Gabaldon tried to preempt the mission by recommending a four- to five-year period of "probational independence."¹⁴

Led by General Leonard Wood and former Governor General W. Cameron Forbes, both of whom opposed independence, the mission visited the islands from May through August 1921. After interviewing a wide range of people, including resident Americans and Filipino political leaders, the mission advised Harding to strengthen the governor general's office and retain the islands because, in its opinion, the Philippines had not yet mastered self-rule.¹⁵ Harding unsurprisingly endorsed the report.



Gabalдон and de Veyra protested the recommendations, especially the suggestion to embolden the governor general at the expense of the Philippine legislature.¹⁶ In a floor speech refuting the principal findings of the Wood–Forbes report, Gabalдон alleged that it was a thinly veiled attempt to “find excuses for delaying independence.” To critics who claimed that Japan would exercise undue influence in the Pacific, he claimed the Philippines were perfectly capable of defending its borders and pointed to provisions in the Washington Naval Conference of 1921, a treaty signed by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France, that all but eliminated the threat. In the final analysis, he claimed, “The [Wood–Forbes] report is a clever, but unworthy attempt to change the issue from that of stable government to a multitude of other conditions not required by Congress.”¹⁷

After Harding appointed Wood to the office of governor general in the fall of 1921, the relationship between Filipino leaders and the American administration quickly deteriorated.¹⁸ The situation became so dire that in 1923 the islands sent another delegation to Washington to lobby Congress and the new President, Calvin Coolidge. Members responded by submitting six bills between December 1923 and March 1924, beginning the process toward independence.¹⁹ Coolidge, however, rejected the suggestion outright and instead asked Congress to again strengthen the governor general’s office.²⁰

Despite Coolidge’s opposition, many in Congress sided with the Philippines, and in February 1924, Gabalдон testified on behalf of H.J. Res. 131, which cleared the way for a new constitution and immediate independence. Gabalдон’s testimony described the stability of the insular government as well as its loyalty during the First World War. The Philippines, he noted, “not only ... maintained peace and order but also performed the international obligations of America” in the Pacific.²¹ The House Insular Affairs Committee withheld its report on the bill until its chairman, Louis Fairfield of Indiana, introduced H.R. 8856 two months later, providing for a measure of self-government, but still giving the United States veto power over the proposed commonwealth legislature. Filipinos

rejected the bill, and the whole effort stalled heading into the fall elections.²²

In late 1924, Gabalдон found himself in the middle of an anti-independence backlash. Led in part by the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce, the effort to maintain American control in the Philippines took a nasty turn when, from late November 1924 to January 1925, the *Washington Post* ran a 41-part series titled “Isles of Fear” written by Katherine Mayo.²³ Mayo held a number of nativist and anti-Catholic beliefs, and her articles directly challenged Gabalдон’s claims that the Philippines had established a stable government and were ready for independence.²⁴ She accused Filipino officials of widespread graft and rampant corruption, and her articles used crude stereotypes to depict Filipinos as lazy, irresponsible, and incapable of managing a modern nation-state.²⁵

In response, Gabalдон and fellow Resident Commissioner Pedro Guevara, who had earlier succeeded de Veyra in the House, penned a detailed reply in the *Washington Post* dismantling Mayo’s assertions.²⁶ Gabalдон also denounced Mayo’s thesis on the House Floor, calling it “unjust” and “wholly unnecessary,” a “wholesale indictment of my people.” He implied that Mayo invented her data and that she had a singular purpose: to conjure up “material with which she might blacken the character of the Filipino people and belittle their civilization, customs, culture, achievements, and progress.”²⁷

Over time, congressional intransigence seemed to take its toll on Gabalдон. His rhetoric took a sharper tone as he began to, in his words, “speak plainly” about the Philippines’ status. In 1926, for example, Jonathan Wainwright of New York proposed sending a delegation to the Philippines every two years to investigate the political situation.²⁸ Gabalдон roundly opposed the bill, and the fact that its author was “one of the recognized foremost opponents of independence,” he said, “does not add to my enthusiasm for the measure.” Gabalдон envisioned the delegations traveling to the islands to “look the Filipinos over, dine and confer with the American opponents” of independence, and then “return and advise Congress” to retain the islands.²⁹ But even that criticism failed to gain



traction. Wainwright's measure passed the House and was reported out of the Senate Committee on Territories before the Senate decided not to fund the missions.³⁰ On the last day of the 69th Congress (1925–1927) in March 1927, Gabaldon somberly admitted to the House that there was a “growing belief in the Philippines that America does not intend to ever give us independence.”³¹

In his final year in the House, Gabaldon marshalled resources to try and beat back a number of discriminatory measures. In January 1928, Frank Willis, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, submitted S. 2292, increasing the salaries of 13 presidential appointees, and directed \$125,000 from Filipino revenue taxes toward hiring additional assistants and technical advisers. Another Willis bill, S. 2787, circumvented the Philippine senate and proposed empowering the governor general to appoint provincial governors for the Muslim and other non-Christian provinces. In the House, Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Edgar Kiess of Pennsylvania submitted companion bills, H.R. 8567 and H.R. 10074, respectively. When both the Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis and newly appointed Governor General Henry L. Stimson testified in support of the measures, Manuel Quezon asked independence allies in the Senate to fight back. Meanwhile, the Resident Commissioners readied to testify in committee hearings.³²

On January 31, 1928, both Gabaldon and Guevara testified before the House Insular Affairs Committee against the proposals to increase the salaries and staffs of the islands' presidential appointees. In a prepared statement, Gabaldon blasted the effort as “tyrannical” and scolded Congress for not consulting the Philippine legislature on tax issues. “It would seem,” Gabaldon said, “that the representative system of government implanted in the islands imposed upon this Congress the duty of adhering to the fundamental principle of government that ‘taxation without representation is tyranny.’”³³ According to the Jones Act, Gabaldon reminded the committee, the avowed purpose of the United States was to set the islands on the path to self-rule and independence “and certainly you would be doing the opposite of that policy if you make

the Philippine participation in governmental affairs a mere fiction instead of a real fact.”

The following day the Resident Commissioners were scheduled to testify before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, with Guevara taking the lead. But in between hearings, Guevara suffered a heart attack. Gabaldon, concerned for his colleague's health and hoping for time to prepare new remarks, asked Chairman Willis to postpone the hearing, which Willis promptly denied. Gabaldon learned of this while visiting Guevara in the hospital.

Incensed, Gabaldon appeared before the committee later that day and registered his displeasure in no uncertain terms. Only Chairman Willis and one other Senator had bothered to attend the hearing. Gabaldon complained that the 45 minutes allotted him to speak had been cut to 15 minutes just before the hearing opened and, after describing Guevara's condition, said that it would be an “unnecessary and a useless expenditure of your time as well as mine to proceed as I intended.” Gabaldon simply submitted his statement and Guevara's into the record, fully aware that the Senators would ignore them before convening an executive session immediately afterward. “We do not want hearings to be dragging out,” Willis told Gabaldon during the testimony. “You see we have other matters: Porto Rico, Hawaii.”³⁴ The Willis and Kiess measures never made it to a vote on the floor, but because of Congress's maneuvering, the Philippine legislature later appropriated \$125,000 to expand the staff of the governor general.³⁵

Barely a month later, Gabaldon informed the House that he would resign as Resident Commissioner. Frustrated in Washington, he wanted to run for a seat in the Philippine legislature and breathe new life into the independence battle at home.³⁶ As a parting shot, he inserted an incendiary farewell address into the *Congressional Record*, what political observers described as “the most bellicose formal announcement” ever made by a Philippine Resident Commissioner.³⁷ The national press corps quickly picked it up, particularly his claim that every U.S. dollar invested in the Philippines was an “additional nail in the coffin of our independence.”³⁸



Gabaldon ran through a laundry list of what he described as insults and half-truths directed at the insular government that repeatedly seemed to frame the debates about independence. The Wood–Forbes Mission report provided a perfect example. Philippine officials exhausted themselves having “to deny the many counts ... against our readiness to govern ourselves,” he said. Gabaldon held special contempt for Katherine Mayo and her series of influential articles, saying, “She misrepresented us in the most vile and venomous manner that a human being could stoop to, and we were obliged to answer her.” As for the Wainwright fact-finding bill and other such dilatory proposals, Gabaldon predicted that Congress would always have Members who “oppose us.”³⁹

Gabaldon also inverted the argument that American rule provided protection from Japanese imperialism. Not only was a major U.S. military presence on the islands “a menace,” he said, it made the Philippines a more attractive target. Strategically, the islands were a liability for the U.S. military, he added, noting “there is nothing in the world to prevent Japan from taking the Philippines if she desires.” Gabaldon predicted that, if such a war took place, the Philippines “would be reduced to a no-man’s land by the time the Americans and the Japanese got through fighting for its possession.”⁴⁰

But the Resident Commissioner saved perhaps his sharpest remarks for the empty promises of the Philippines’ governors general, especially those made by Stimson. Stimson’s insistence that economic development be linked to political independence was little more than a smokescreen for a reassertive U.S. imperialism, he said, pointing out, “The very reason that we have not been given our independence is the investment of American capital in the islands.”⁴¹ Greater autonomy was no substitute for independence.

Speaking for the “Filipino race and for the Philippines nation to be,” Gabaldon encouraged his countrymen, “Stand firm. Insist upon that which has been promised us. Autonomy will perhaps give our leaders more power, but only more power over you. Independence alone will place power exclusively in your own hands.”⁴²

Philippine leaders roundly denounced Gabaldon’s address. In some parts, it read like a stump speech, and, in fact, it became the blueprint for his campaign for a seat in the Philippine legislature. In other parts, it read like a declaration of a new political party, marking a clear break with the Nacionalistas, including both Quezon and Osmeña. Philippine leaders scrambled to reassure Stimson that the Resident Commissioner had gone rogue and did not speak for the insular government, as the *New York Times* reported.⁴³ Writing a half-century later, one historian suggested that raw “political ambition” and the belief he could wrest power from Quezon motivated Gabaldon to resign and run for the insular legislature.⁴⁴

But betting against Quezon and the political establishment proved an unwise wager.⁴⁵ Gabaldon’s scorched-earth campaign won him few friends, and he blasted the Nacionalistas for backing off demands for complete independence in exchange for a circumscribed form of autonomy.⁴⁶ The *Manila Times* advocated against his “non-cooperation” platform and recommended that Gabaldon prepare for “a stinging rebuke at the polls” if he continued on.⁴⁷ On Election Day in early June, the Nacionalistas retained control of both houses of the Philippine legislature, and Gabaldon lost to Aurelio Cecilio, 7,263 to 6,442 votes.⁴⁸ After his defeat, Gabaldon’s resignation as Resident Commissioner became effective on July 16, 1928.⁴⁹

While Gabaldon did not return to a career in electoral politics, he remained involved in the independence movement, returning to Washington as a member of an independence mission in 1933. He died on December 21, 1942, in Manila during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines and was interred at the Cementerio del Norte in Manila.⁵⁰

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1927): 5955.
- 2 Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1932): 277.



- 3 Anthony R. Tuohy, ed., "Hon. Isauro Gabaldon Gonzalez," *Album Histórico de la Primera Asamblea Filipina* (Manila, PI: I.F., 1908): 41; Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines: 276–278*; "Isauro Gabaldon," National Historical Institute of the Philippines, accessed 14 April 2011, <http://www.nhi.gov.ph/downloads/fishgov0053.pdf> (site discontinued); U.S. Passport Applications, Puerto Rico and Philippines, 1913–1925, box 4233, vol. 2, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 25 March 2015). Reference to Gabaldon's marrying into wealth is made in Michael Cullinane, "Illustrado Politics: The Response of the Filipino Educated Elite to American Colonial Rule, 1898–1907," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1989): 523n12.
- 4 Philippines Senate, "Isauro Gabaldon," Former Senators' Profiles, http://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/former_senators/isauro_gabaldon.htm (accessed 18 February 2016).
- 5 Cullinane, "Illustrado Politics: The Response of the Filipino Educated Elite to American Colonial Rule, 1898–1907": 247, 384, 403, 435–436.
- 6 Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines: 276*.
- 7 "Gabaldon Chosen to Replace Yangco as Commissioner to U.S.," 7 February 1920, *Manila Times*: 1; Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines: 276*; "Isauro Gabaldon," National Historical Institute of the Philippines.
- 8 *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Representantes*, vol. 15 (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1924): 545–546; "Gabaldon Chosen to Replace Yangco as Commissioner to U.S.," "Resident Commissioners to Washington Elected," 8 February 1920, *Cablenews-American* (Manila, PI): 1; Isauro Gabaldon certificate of election, (endorsed 9 February 1920), Committee on Elections (HR66-AJ2), 66th Congress, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, NARA; *Congressional Directory*, 69th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 1927): 131.
- 9 "New Filipino Commissioner," 18 February 1923, *Baltimore Sun*: 2; *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Representantes*, vol. 18 (Manila, PI: Bureau of Printing, 1931): 1638–1645.
- 10 "Filipinos Demand Freedom at Once," 18 October 1920, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 11 Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States, 1899–1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974): 251–258.
- 12 *Congressional Record*, House, 66th Cong., 3rd sess. (3 March 1921): 4482–4484. Gabaldon had issued a public statement in early January making essentially the same points. See "Filipinos' Stand on Independence Given," 2 January 1921, *Baltimore Sun*: 2.
- 13 "Policy in Philippines Waits on Wood's Report," 15 March 1921, *New York Tribune*: 4; "Harding Sees Filipinos," 15 March 1921, *New York Times*: 10.
- 14 "Wants Filipinos Given Short Test," 2 June 1921, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 15 *Condition in the Philippine Islands: Report of the Special Mission to the Philippine Islands to the Secretary of War*, 67th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Doc. 325 (1922): 10–12, 45–46.
- 16 "Criticize Philippine Report," 2 December 1921, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 17 *Congressional Record*, House, 67th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 January 1922): 1483–1487, quotation on p. 1484; "Commissioner Attacks Report on Philippines," 21 January 1922, *Washington Post*: 10.
- 18 Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934* (Manila, PI: National Historical Institute, 1983): 53–63.
- 19 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 74–80, 87. The bills were H.R. 2817, H.R. 3924, H.J. Res. 127, H.J. Res. 131, S. 912, S. Res. 35.
- 20 The mission statement is reprinted in *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 2nd sess. (6 June 1924): 11094–11095. Coolidge's letter to the mission is reprinted in *Independence of the Philippines*, 69th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 77 (3 March 1926): 2–4. Coolidge commented on the Philippines in his third, fourth, fifth, and sixth annual messages. See *American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>.
- 21 Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Philippine Independence*, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (17 February 1924): 25–27; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 88–89.
- 22 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 99–105. Changes also included the following: Commonwealth officials would support and defend the Philippines' constitution instead of the U.S. Constitution; no one with military experience would serve as U.S. commissioner; the power to muster the armed forces would remain with the President; and only the U.S. Supreme Court would have jurisdiction over the Philippines.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 122–124. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (3 March 1928): 4016.
- 24 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 122–124; "Isles of Fear' to Present Truth About Philippines," 28 November 1924, *Washington Post*: 10. The articles were compiled into a single volume, Katherine Mayo, *The Isles of Fear: The Truth About the Philippines* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company: 1925). For biographical information about Mayo, see "Katherine Mayo, Writer, Is Dead," 10 October 1940, *New York Times*: 25.
- 25 See, for instance, the second Mayo installment, Katherine Mayo, "Warned that Chaos in Philippines Forbade Full Success," 30 November 1924, *Washington Post*: 1. The editorials are "Conditions in the Philippines," 7 December 1924, *Washington Post*: EF1; "Vetoing Seditious Propaganda," 11 December 1924, *Washington Post*: 6; "The Philippines As They Are," 24 January 1925, *Washington Post*: 6.



- 26 Isauro Gabaldon and Pedro Guevara, “‘Isles of Fear’ Articles Answered by Filipinos,” 7 December 1924, *Washington Post*: 2. See also Vicente G. Bunuan, “Filipino Progress Called Refutation of Miss Mayo,” 25 January 1925, *Washington Post*: E6; Vincente G. Bunuan, “Morality and Stability Urged as Reasons for Filipino Independence,” 26 January 1925, *Washington Post*: 13.
- 27 *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 2nd sess. (3 January 1925): 1167–1173, quotations on p. 1167.
- 28 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 1st sess. (21 June 1926): 11710.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1927): 5957.
- 30 *Congressional Record*, Index, 69th Cong., 1st sess.: 683; *Congressional Record*, Index, 69th Cong., 2nd sess.: 270.
- 31 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1927): 5957.
- 32 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 185–187.
- 33 Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Employment of Certain Civilian Assistants in the Office of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands*, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (31 January 1928): 1–6, quotations on p. 1–2.
- 34 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, *Appointment of Governors of the Non-Christian Provinces in the Philippine Islands*, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (1 February 1928): 1–17, quotations on p. 2–3, 14–17; “Gabaldon Accuses Senator Willis of Lack of Courtesy,” 7 March 1928, *Baltimore Sun*: 13; *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (3 March 1928): 4015–4021.
- 35 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 185–189; *Congressional Record*, Index, 70th Cong., 1st sess.: 531, 539, 801.
- 36 *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (9 March 1928): 4410; “Gabaldon to Quit His House Seat,” 4 March 1928, *Washington Post*: 5.
- 37 “Territories: Gabaldon’s Going,” 19 March 1928, *Time*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,786723,00.html> (accessed 14 April 2011).
- 38 See for example, “Filipino Quits Congress to Aid Liberty Move,” 7 March 1928, *Los Angeles Times*: 6; “Filipino Envoy Demands Liberty,” 8 March 1928, *Christian Science Monitor*: 6; “Filipino Quits Congress with Attack on U.S.,” 6 March 1928, *Baltimore Sun*: 1.
- 39 *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (3 March 1928): 4016–4017.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 4020–4021.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 4015.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 4017.
- 43 “Regret Gabaldon’s Action,” 9 March 1928, *New York Times*: 27; “Gabaldon’s Views Not Favored Here,” 8 March 1928, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 44 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 194.
- 45 *Ibid.*; “Filipino Quits Congress With Attack on U.S.”
- 46 “Gabaldon Refuses to Back Aquino,” 3 June 1928, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 47 “New Attack on U.S. Policy Opens in Philippines,” 16 April 1928, *Chicago Tribune*: 32; “Cooperation Is Issue Confronting Filipinos,” 17 April 1928, *New York Times*: 50. The *Manila Times* editorial was reproduced in “Lack of Cooperation in Philippines Scored,” 26 April 1928, *New York Times*: 15.
- 48 “Belmonte Faction Given Much Credit for Downfall of Resident Commissioner Gabaldon,” 7 June 1928, *Manila Times*: 1.
- 49 “Gabaldon Defeated in Philippines Vote,” 7 June 1928, *Washington Post*: 4; “Isauro Gabaldon,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=G000001>; *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (9 March 1928): 4410.
- 50 “Isauro Gabaldon,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 432; Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States–Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997): 322, 325–326; “Manila North Cemetery,” <http://www.manila.gov.ph/manilnorthcem.htm> (accessed 13 April 2011).

Pedro Guevara

1879–1938

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1923–1935
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

The longest serving Resident Commissioner from the Philippines and a protégé of Manuel L. Quezon, Pedro Guevara waged a difficult battle promoting Philippine independence while fighting congressional measures to curb territorial sovereignty and economic progress. Guevara acted for much of his career as the voice of the Philippine legislature in Congress in a low-key style of delivery that relied on prepared statements rather than fiery, impromptu speeches. Guevara began his career a stalwart proponent of independence, saying, “For 25 years I and my people have lived under the American flag. Yet wherever I go Americans take me for ... some other Oriental. Americans know very little about us or our country, and they care even less than they know. To continue American control, under such conditions, is an injustice to the Filipinos.”¹ But his perspective shifted in his final years as Resident Commissioner, and disagreements with his patron Quezon over the best path to independence led to his quiet retirement from politics.

Pedro Guevara was born on February 23, 1879, in Santa Cruz, Laguna Province, Luzon, Philippines. The son of Miguel Guevara and Maria G. Valenzuela, he attended local schools some 60 miles to the south of Manila. Guevara’s family sent him north to the capital to attend a finishing school, Ateneo Municipal de Manila, and then Colegio de San Juan de Letran. Guevara earned a liberal arts degree at the latter school in 1896, finishing at the head of his class. When the 1896 revolution broke out, Guevara fought the Spanish and earned the rank of lieutenant colonel for his service, including helping to lead Filipino forces in the Battle of Mabitac. In the Philippine-American War, he joined the insurrectionaries who opposed U.S. occupation forces, serving as aide and private secretary to General Juan Cailles, commander of Philippine rebels in Laguna Province. After the war ended, Guevara

joined the Philippine constabulary, a paramilitary unit that maintained peace. After five years of service, Guevara returned to civilian life and, in a pattern reminiscent of others who later became Resident Commissioners, worked as a journalist. He became chief editor of *Soberanía Nacional* (*National Sovereignty*), a newspaper that championed Philippine independence, and also served as city editor for four other newspapers. During this time, Guevara studied at La Jurisprudencia, a Manila law school, and passed the bar in 1909. He married Isidra Baldomero, and the couple had one son, Pedro Jr.²

As with many other contemporary politicians—Isauro Gabaldon, Jaime de Veyra, and Sergio Osmeña among them—Guevara easily transitioned from being an editorialist to an elected public servant. His political career began in 1907, when he was elected as municipal councillor in San Felipe Neri, Rizal Province. Two years later he won election to the Philippine assembly, representing Laguna Province, and he was re-elected in 1912 to a second term. In 1916, under the provisions of the Jones Act, he was elected to the first of two terms in the Philippine senate, representing a district that included Manila and the provinces of Rizal, Laguna, and Bataan. He served in the senate until his election as Resident Commissioner. A well-respected jurist, Guevara chaired the Philippine delegation to the Far Eastern Bar Conference in Beijing, China, in 1921. A year later he joined a group of prominent Filipinos who traveled to Washington, DC, as part of the second Philippine independence mission.³

Upon Guevara’s return to the Philippines, senate president and Nacionalista Party powerbroker Manuel Quezon tapped his fellow senator to succeed Jaime de Veyra as Resident Commissioner. Domestic political jockeying momentarily complicated his nomination, however, when the insular government set a special election





to fill the impending senate vacancy. Democrats put forward a nominee, but the Nacionalistas failed to produce a consensus candidate. Desperate to retain the seat, Quezon stalled by encouraging Guevara to remain in the senate until a suitable candidate could be found. The U.S. House of Representatives threatened not to seat the new Resident Commissioner so long as he held his Manila seat, forcing Guevara to resign and leaving Quezon to bargain with Governor General Leonard Wood on the timing of a special election. Nevertheless, the Filipino legislature elected Guevara as Resident Commissioner on February 17, 1923.⁴ He won re-election in 1925, 1929, 1932, and 1934 and served continuously until the position was reorganized under the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935.

When Guevara set off on the long voyage to Washington, DC, in August 1923, a “monster parade” accompanied him to his ship, the Associated Press reported. A marching band and military cadets joined the throng, with Guevara at its head wearing a *barong*, a long embroidered shirt that symbolized Filipinos’ wish for independence.⁵ Guevara arrived in the U.S. capital in mid-September, months before the 68th Congress (1923–1925) was set to convene in early December. Like his predecessors, he played the part of diplomat rather than legislator, in some measure because House Rules prevented him from holding a committee assignment or voting on final legislation on the floor. But he also seemed quite comfortable working the press and serving as a public advocate. In that aspect, he went to work immediately. Even before he claimed his seat, he weighed in on independence and growing tensions with the controversial Governor General Wood.

From the start, Guevara’s independence pitch was more nuanced than that of his colleague, Isauro Gabaldon, who demanded nothing short of immediate and unfettered self-rule. Guevara, the *Los Angeles Times* noted, “was the opposite of the agitator type,” and while journeying to Washington, he told Filipinos who met him during a brief layover in Honolulu that the key to eventual independence hinged on their ability to demonstrate “self-

control” in overseeing their affairs. While he demanded a “final solution” to the Philippines’ status, he envisioned it ideally as a kind of protectorate system “with a localized responsibility, capable of bringing about the necessary harmony and co-ordination of the different departments of Government, for its efficient operations.”⁶ He admitted that Japanese and European encroachments might be a concern with full independence and, to that end, preferred “a protectorate from the United States.” But, given a choice between complete independence with no special grant of U.S. military protection or the ambiguous governance reasserted by U.S. officials after President Woodrow Wilson left office, Guevara had a clear choice: “We unquestionably stand for the former.”⁷

Guevara’s unhappiness with the current structure, like that of so many Filipinos, derived from the ambiguities of the Jones Act. On the one hand, the act granted the islands a greater role in self-rule, including a popularly elected senate. After several years, Manila officials believed that they had fulfilled the spirit and the letter of that legislation by creating a stable government. But, on the other hand, the governor general still was empowered to override the government and Filipino legislative initiatives “may be disregarded any time.” While Filipinos were blamed “for any inefficiency or failure” of governance, the governor general seemed to accrue all credit for what went right.⁸

The newest occupant of the governor general’s post, Leonard Wood, irritated matters by trying to reassert control over the islands. In July 1923, his actions provoked a mass resignation of Filipino politicians, including Quezon, from the governor general’s cabinet. Later that fall, when Secretary of War John Weeks sent a memorandum of endorsement to Governor General Wood, Quezon and Philippine house speaker Manuel Roxas ordered Guevara to visit Secretary Weeks to express their displeasure with Wood’s executive encroachments. Impatient for action, the territorial legislature then dispatched a special mission to Washington to request Wood’s recall and lobby for immediate independence.⁹ “We do not object to General Wood personally,” Guevara noted, trying to frame the issue as something larger than a personal spat, “but to the office



which he occupies and the method of his appointment.”¹⁰ In Boston for a speech at the Harvard Union, Guevara told the *Christian Science Monitor*, “The struggle with General Wood is merely a small incident in the bigger fight for full self-government.”¹¹

President Calvin Coolidge defended Wood and used subsequent annual messages to request that Congress grant the governor general more resources at the expense of the insular government.¹² Despite the Coolidge administration’s clear efforts to reassert control over the islands, independence efforts percolated in Congress in 1924. In February, the special mission, accompanied by Guevara, testified before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions to support S. 912, a bill authored by Chairman William King of Utah that authorized Filipinos to convene a constitutional convention. Once ratified and approved, U.S. military forces would withdraw within six months. Predictably, administration officials lined up against the bill. Secretary of War Weeks argued independence would precipitate a political collapse while the Navy’s Admiral Hilary P. Jones testified about the need to retain the Philippines to ensure U.S. strategic interests in East Asia. Governor General Wood echoed these sentiments in a telegram to the committee that Guevara and Gabaldon roundly condemned.¹³ War Department staff later asked the House Insular Affairs Committee to stall on its review of S. 912, effectively killing it.¹⁴

Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Louis Fairfield of Indiana submitted H.R. 8856 just as momentum on S. 912 waned. The House bill granted commonwealth status to the islands, allowed for a Filipino to be elected as governor general, continued a bicameral legislature, and also set out a judicial system. Controversially, however, it created a presidentially appointed post of U.S. commissioner empowered to veto legislation, contracts and the governor general’s executive actions, and to muster the armed forces of the Philippines. The commonwealth period would last for 30 years, after which Filipinos would vote in a plebiscite to maintain commonwealth status or to declare independence.

Delegates from the independence mission supported the broad outlines of the Fairfield bill but balked at the 30-year commonwealth period and the notion of a commissioner with unchecked power. Though Fairfield was amenable to changing the bill, little support existed in Manila, and the chairman sidelined the entire effort.¹⁵ Later that Congress, Guevara attempted to revive interest in H.R. 8856. “The structure of our political institutions,” Guevara said, was built on a “weak base” of limited sovereignty. Emphasizing that Congress “has never been reluctant . . . in the prompt solution of those problems affecting the life, happiness, and prosperity” of its citizens, he asked the Rules Committee to send the bill to the House Floor, but it never resurfaced.¹⁶ Soon all momentum stalled as Congress adjourned for the presidential nominating conventions and the fall elections.¹⁷

A wave of negative propaganda designed to curb Philippine autonomy broke across the U.S. press in late 1924. From November 1924 to January 1925, the *Washington Post* published “Isles of Fear,” authored by Katherine Mayo, who trafficked in racist stereotypes and belittled the Philippines’ push for independence. Retentionists, including the *Post* editorial board, seized on the series and praised it for confirming their views.¹⁸ Guevara was one of a number of Filipino officials who refuted Mayo, publishing a response with Isauro Gabaldon in the *Post*. In a New York City speech, Guevara alleged Mayo’s work as one component of a “campaign of misrepresentation waged by the irreconcilable opponents of Philippine independence . . . for their own benefits or that of the interests they represent.” He stressed that Mayo’s portrayals failed to convey the true “life, culture, and spirit of a people or race.”¹⁹

Guevara also fought against attempts to separate parts of the Philippines from the insular government. In May 1926, Robert Bacon of New York submitted H.R. 12772 to create a separate province intended to resolve the “fundamental antipathy” between the Christian Filipinos in the Luzon and Visayan Islands and Muslim Filipinos, or Moros, in the Mindanao, Basilan, Palawan, and Sulu Archipelago. According to Bacon, the Moros were “an altogether distinct people from the Christian Filipinos



... not only in language and religion but in physical type and mental outlook.”²⁰ The first Philippine commission established a single province for Moro territory under the control of a military governor.²¹ Bacon’s bill enabled the governor general to make these appointments without the consent of the Philippine senate. He argued that the Moros were essentially a distinct people and that the insular government had made no real attempt to integrate them. Bacon’s underlying goal, however, seemed to be securing key natural resources in Moro lands—namely, rubber.²²

Guevara responded to Bacon on the House Floor one month later. He dismissed the racial distinctions between Christian and Muslim Filipinos, saying that “differences in religion and civilization are the natural result of the political situation which the Filipino people have been forced to endure for the last 300 years” under foreign rule. Guevara admitted that the Moros had no representatives in the Philippine legislature, but under the Jones Act, only the U.S. Congress could grant that right. To resolve the issue, Guevara suggested an “amendment to the present organic law ... which would enfranchise the Moros and permit them to elect their own legislators and governors with ... the same freedom of choice as that now enjoyed by Christian Filipinos.” Guevara concluded, “Disintegration of ... the Philippine Islands can serve no useful purpose.” Members of the Committee on Insular Affairs agreed, and Bacon’s bill never left committee.²³

After four years of stalwart opposition to Wood and his policies, Guevara was presented with an opportunity to reset relations when the governor general died unexpectedly in August 1927. Guevara informed Manila that the Coolidge administration wanted suggestions about selecting a new governor general. The primary candidate was Henry L. Stimson, the former Secretary of War in the William H. Taft administration. President Coolidge asked Stimson to visit the Philippines to assess the effectiveness of the insular government. A retentionist himself, Stimson nevertheless proved amenable to all sides. Unlike Wood, Stimson honored Philippine sovereignty where it existed and treated Filipino colleagues with respect. With widespread support in Manila and Washington, President

Coolidge nominated Stimson on December 13, 1927. When the Senate confirmed him four days later, Guevara praised the appointment, calling it “a new era for the islands [*sic*] government and people.”²⁴

Despite this attempt to moderate relations with the insular government, President Coolidge continued to request more resources for the governor general’s office in his annual messages. In January 1928, Frank Willis, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, submitted S. 2292. That bill proposed an increase in the salaries of 13 presidential appointees and directed \$125,000 from Philippine internal revenue taxes toward hiring additional assistants and technical advisers. A companion bill (H.R. 8567) was submitted by House Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Edgar Kiess of Pennsylvania. These measures placed the appointments of technical advisers solely in the governor general’s hands. Another Willis bill, S. 2787, and its companion, H.R. 10074, proposed the appointment of governors for the Muslim and non-Christian provinces of the islands without the Philippine senate’s consent. Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis and Governor General Stimson testified in support of each of these bills to the dismay of Quezon, who coordinated with Senate allies to block their passage and asked other members to submit independence bills as substitutes. Guevara prepared for battle in the committee rooms.²⁵

Guevara sparred with Chairman Kiess while testifying against H.R. 8567. Among his eight points of disagreement with the legislation, he argued that the Kiess bill would weaken the Jones Act by curtailing the Philippine legislature’s power to appropriate funds by eliminating the “functions of the departments and bureaus of the Philippine government.” Such an action would reinforce “the colonial nature of the system of government implanted in the Philippine Islands.” Frustrated by Guevara’s stonewalling, Kiess demanded to know why the Philippine legislature seemingly opposed any congressional action. Guevara answered, “We are opposed to any amendment to the Jones Act which will mean a backward step” in achieving Philippine sovereignty.



After testifying for two hours, Guevara suffered a heart attack and was taken to a local hospital. He was scheduled to testify against S. 2292 before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs the next day, but Gabaldon took his place.²⁶ Although S. 2292 and S. 2787 passed the respective committees of jurisdiction in both chambers, neither came to the House nor Senate Floors for a vote, and the House versions languished in committee.²⁷

Guevara balanced expanding Philippine sovereignty with preserving its economy, particularly the sugar industry. In March 1928, beet sugar proponent Charles Timberlake of Colorado submitted H.J. Res. 214, a bill to reduce the duty-free importation of Philippine sugar from an unlimited number to 500,000 tons. Timberlake noted precedent for his legislation and argued that U.S. authorities “never contemplated forcing the American farmer into competition with tropical labor 7,000 miles across the Pacific.” Timberlake partially framed his legislation as preventing the Philippines from becoming “dependent on a single competitive export crop” in accordance with “the universally accepted principle of crop diversification.” Guevara asked Timberlake if it was fair for the United States “to send any of its products to the Philippine Islands without any limitations ... while the Philippine Islands are ... limited in the sending of their products” to the United States, but Timberlake dodged the question. Guevara countered with his standard proposal for independence, “May I suggest that the best remedy is to get rid of the Philippine Islands, and we are now ready to be gotten rid of by the United States.”²⁸ The bill died when Governor General Stimson blasted it in the press.²⁹

When the House adjourned in May 1928, Guevara remained in the United States. In June he joined Quezon at the Democratic and Republican presidential nominating conventions to promote Philippine independence. At the Republican convention in Kansas City, Missouri, the pair successfully lobbied against the inclusion of a platform that called for limiting Philippine rights. In Houston, Texas, Guevara and Quezon, with an assist from Senator King, convinced Democrats to retain a platform calling for independence that echoed the 1924 platform.³⁰

Isauro Gabaldon resigned in July 1928, leaving Guevara the sole Filipino Resident Commissioner for nine months just as the battle over sugar tariffs was heating up. In December 1928, the House Ways and Means Committee convened hearings on tariff readjustments in anticipation of President-elect Herbert Hoover’s request to revise the Tariff Act of 1922. A worldwide depression in sugar prices and the rise of an aggressive sugar lobby threatened the free trade privileges enjoyed by the Philippines since the enactment of that legislation.

Testifying before the committee in early 1929, Guevara started with a simple question that echoed his perpetual message: “[W]hile the Philippine Islands are under the American flag, will the United States be justified in imposing limitation on our present free trade?” Guevara reminded members that imposing trade restrictions was tantamount to “economic slavery, because while the United States is free to send to the Philippine Islands all her products and merchandise, we will not be free to export” the same products. When committee members asked Guevara repeatedly what the Philippines did to cultivate trade with neighboring countries, Guevara reiterated that U.S. tariff restrictions compelled nations to restrict trade against the Philippines as a territory of the United States.³¹

On March 7, 1929, President Hoover called an extraordinary session of Congress to consider proposals for agriculture relief and tariff revisions. In light of these initiatives, the Philippine legislature sent a special mission to Washington to negotiate tariff revisions. Arriving in April 1929, the mission was led by Philippine house speaker Manuel Roxas and senator Sergio Osmeña and joined by newly elected Resident Commissioner Camilo Osias.³²

The next hurdle Guevara and the mission faced came in the form of H.R. 2667, submitted by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Willis Hawley of Oregon. It called for a revision of the tariff schedules. The bill passed the House without many changes that affected the Philippines. But led by beet supporter Chairman Reed Smoot of Utah, the Senate Committee on Finance offered amendments sharply increasing the duty on sugar and other products from the Philippines. In contrast to Osias’s fiery testimony,



Guevara submitted a prepared statement to the committee in June 1929, again requesting equal treatment between the United States and Philippines. He once more leveraged the economic conflict to request independence. Retained as a territory, Guevara noted, the matter amounted to interstate commerce. Passing the amendments, however, “would place the United States in the same position of Great Britain in her dealings with the thirteen American Colonies which brought about their separation from the mother country.”³³ Smoot’s amendments gained little traction before the committee reported the bill in September 1929.

When the bill reached the Senate Floor, fresh amendments spurred a renewed campaign for independence. Louisiana Senator Edwin Broussard again sought to increase the sugar duty, but also offered a path to independence. Some Senators balked when the independence issue crept into the tariff debate. Both amendments failed, but this opened the door for Guevara and Osias to once again campaign for the release of the Philippines. Guevara addressed the House on December 7 and again on December 13, each time stressing the economic argument for an independent Philippines. Despite rising sentiment and support from Democratic Members, Republicans in both chambers stood firm against independence.³⁴ The final act, popularly known as the Smoot–Hawley Tariff, became law in June 1930. It did not significantly affect Philippine exports, but neither did it feature the independence provisions Guevara and his colleagues had encouraged.³⁵

Guevara carried forward his comparison of the islands to the American colonies as he continued his pleas for independence across the United States.³⁶ In the summer of 1931, Quezon published a report postulating a 10-year trial period of autonomous government ending in a plebiscite. The report muddled the insular government’s official stance on independence. Quezon seemed to favor an American protectorate with only limited independence. The legislature instructed Guevara to continue to press for full independence and urged him weeks later to correct a *Washington Post* editorial which had presumed Moro

opposition to independence.³⁷ Guevara struggled to respond to this misinformation as Congress prepared to convene the 72nd Congress (1931–1933) in December 1931, and government leaders Osmeña and Roxas themselves traveled to Washington to make their case.

Despite the efforts of retentionists to portray the Philippines as deeply riven over the question of independence, supporters in Congress had grown plentiful enough by 1932 to advance a new bill for Philippine independence. Named for the chairman of the House Insular Affairs Committee, Butler Hare of South Carolina, the proposal, once approved by the insular legislature, would provide for an immediate constitutional convention followed by an eight-year schedule for independence. Speaker John Nance Garner of Texas rallied Democratic support and brought the bill to the floor under a suspension of the rules, limiting debate to 40 minutes.

During debate, Guevara proclaimed that this bill would “decide the fate of 13,000,000 people.” Describing prior legislative efforts as temporary fixes, Guevara deemed that the Hare measure embodied the “redemption of American pledges ... and the fruition of our hopes for separate nationhood.” At the conclusion of Guevara’s unusually impassioned rhetoric, many Members rose in applause. With Guevara watching, the House approved the bill by a large majority, 306 to 47.³⁸ The Hawes–Cutting bill, a competing Senate version of the Hare bill, led a conference committee to increase the window to independence to 10 years, but the final legislation was completed before the year was out.

Congress had passed the legislation over the stern objections of the Hoover administration, however, and President Hoover vetoed the bill on January 13, 1933. Wasting no time, the House overrode the veto that same day 274 to 94. After the vote, Guevara expressed “the gratitude of the Filipino people, which I say to both Republicans and Democrats for their altruistic stand on the ... independence question.”³⁹ The Senate followed suit on January 17 by a vote of 66 to 24, and the combined Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act became law.⁴⁰ However, the Philippine legislature still had to approve the measure,



and infighting there scuttled the bill. Guevara sided with his mentor Quezon, who feared a loss of influence, had the bill succeeded. After Quezon rallied the votes to reject the independence bill in the Philippine senate, Guevara accompanied him back to Washington to produce another independence bill.⁴¹

Throughout early 1934, Guevara and Osias occupied opposite sides of the Hare–Hawes–Cutting law debate. Whereas Osias publicly split from Quezon over rejecting the law in December 1933, Guevara lobbied for passage of another bill. In January 1934, Guevara submitted a concurrent resolution from the Philippine legislature rejecting the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act. He expressed his “profound gratitude” for Congress’s actions, but his “patriotic duty” compelled Guevara to take another course. Acknowledging that “many of the Members of this House voted ... in the belief that my stand was an expression of the will of the Filipino people whom I represent,” Guevara subordinated his preference for the Hare–Hawes–Cutting bill to “the majority of the Philippine Legislature,” who rejected it.⁴²

Quezon found a favorable climate for a new independence bill in Washington, where the new Franklin D. Roosevelt administration was eager to be done with the issue. Negotiations resulted in the Tydings–McDuffie Act (H.R. 8573, S. 3055), which granted independence and removed military bases from the Philippines while providing authorization to negotiate for a future U.S. naval presence. Guevara endorsed the bill as “the epitome and synthesis of America’s aim and purpose in the Philippines” and further ensured that this attempt at independence would meet approval in the Philippine legislature.⁴³ The bill quickly passed both the House and Senate, and President Roosevelt signed it into law on March 24, 1934.⁴⁴

Guevara involved himself little in negotiations over Tydings–McDuffie, focusing instead on the preservation of the Philippine economy. Days after passage of Tydings–McDuffie, Guevara protested a clause in H.R. 9790 that raised the price of coconut oil to 3 cents per pound. He cautioned that the price increase could “dynamite” approval of the new independence bill because the tax

would exacerbate the “economic sacrifices of the Filipino people, which are already ... unbearable” and cripple the nation’s prominent coconut industry. Guevara pointed out the “inconsistency” of Congress to pass “a new organic law and, before the President’s signature to it is dry, penalize the recipient with additional burdens and oppressive inflictions.” Guevara sent letters to President Roosevelt as well as six prominent Senators and submitted a public statement voicing his objections. Representative John McDuffie of Alabama echoed Guevara’s concerns and suggested that the tax violated the spirit of the independence measure that bore his name. Under this onslaught, the tax bill wallowed in committee, and the Philippine legislature approved Tydings–McDuffie in May 1934.⁴⁵

Guevara’s next economic hurdle was a direct consequence of the national bank emergency and the devaluation of the dollar. Representative McDuffie introduced H.R. 9459 and Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland introduced S. 3530 to settle the resultant devaluation profit in the Philippine currency reserves, enabling the U.S. Treasury to transfer the balance to the Philippine insular government. While advocating for the bill, Guevara noted how the devaluation hurt the Philippines’ ability to collect duty rates and obtain full returns on railroad bonds. In two cases, Guevara estimated the Philippines lost about \$13 million. Guevara appealed to his colleagues’ sense of fair play in restoring the funds. In a practical sense, the restoration of the funds would “forestall economic complications and ... prevent financial debilitation” in a nation on the verge of independence. The Tydings bill passed the Senate easily and, after a vigorous debate in the House, passed on a 188 to 147 vote. President Roosevelt signed it into law on June 19, 1934.⁴⁶

As early as June 1934, Guevara showed signs that he had wearied of Filipino politics, feeling that he had been buffeted by insular divisions one time too many. Reports emerged about Guevara advocating for a protectorate for the Philippines, claiming that full independence would lead to disaster. His political patron Quezon dismissed the claims. Guevara had also applied to be a delegate at the 1934 Philippine constitutional convention. In



light of the rumored statements, Quezon threatened to pull his support for Guevara's candidacy.⁴⁷ However, the threat did not hurt Guevara's prospects, as he was selected to the constitutional convention in July 1934 and was re-elected as Resident Commissioner one month later.⁴⁸ The constitutional convention worked from July 1934 to February 1935 on a draft which President Roosevelt approved in March. Following a plebiscite, the Philippines was established as a commonwealth in May 1935.⁴⁹

During his last term in the 74th Congress (1935–1937), Guevara continued to focus on preserving the economy and the security of the Philippines. He lobbied the House to relax tariffs in the Jones–Costigan and Revenue Acts of 1934. Guevara also began openly advocating for a protectorate system rather than complete independence, fearing that Japan was a “real menace to Philippine independence.” He relayed open threats made by a Japanese diplomat in Manila before asking the House to consider amending H.R. 3482, a bill pledging the commitment of U.S. military forces to Latin American countries, to include the Philippines. Richard Welch of California reminded the House that Guevara “was in favor of absolute independence” during debate over the Tydings–McDuffie Act. “I have not changed my mind,” Guevara replied, but he stated that he wished for “independence for the Filipino people, but not for the benefit of some other nation” to swallow it up. Guevara held no faith in the ability of a neutralization treaty to protect his nation after Japan's decision to ignore the Kellogg–Briand Pact and leave the League of Nations. When Welch continued to needle Guevara, the Resident Commissioner countered, “[I]f reversing my opinion ... will mean security for the Philippine Islands I will not hesitate to reverse my stand or my opinion.” H.R. 3482 did not pass, but a companion Senate bill (S. 707) added the Philippines to the protection list and it became law.⁵⁰

In August 1935, Guevara returned to Manila to vote in the presidential elections, and he brought his protectorate proposal with him. In accordance with these views, he rescinded his support of the Tydings–McDuffie Act. Nevertheless, he endorsed Manuel Quezon's campaign

for president of the Philippine Commonwealth. In a newspaper interview at his home, Guevara stated his preference for a protectorate in the presence of Quezon and two other public figures, General Emilio Aguinaldo and Bishop Gregorio Aglipay, who were running against Quezon. Guevara claimed to have spoken with a number of Members of Congress “and it is my opinion that a ... majority would favor the extension of American protection to the islands.” The reporter noted that in private Quezon reacted with “tacit approval.”⁵¹ Soon afterward, though, he blasted Guevara's proposal in a public statement.⁵²

One week after Quezon won the presidency in a landslide, Guevara announced his retirement from politics effective on October 1, 1935, even though his term as Resident Commissioner did not officially expire until February 14, 1936.⁵³ After leaving office, he started a private law practice in Manila. The *Philippines Free Press* complimented his “long and distinguished career in government, culminating in his many years as Resident Commissioner in Washington.”⁵⁴ Besides law, Guevara pursued a number of business interests and continued to advocate for a Philippine protectorate as a private citizen.⁵⁵

On January 19, 1938, Guevara suffered a fatal stroke while arguing a case before the Philippine supreme court and died in Manila. Calling him “one of the dearest friends I have ever had,” President Quezon credited Guevara as a “devoted and very able public servant” who “stood his ground regardless of whether or not it affected him adversely politically.” Guevara was interred in the Cementerio del Norte in Manila.⁵⁶

NOTES

- 1 Guevara quotation from “Filipinos Hoping For Protectorate,” 8 November 1923, *Christian Science Monitor*: 2.
- 2 *Congressional Directory*, 74th Cong., 1st sess., 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935): 129; “Death Strikes Guevara in Act of Pleading Case Before Supreme Court,” 20 January 1938, *Manila Tribune*: 1; “Pedro Guevara, Jr.,” 22 November 1947, *Washington Post*: B2. Pedro Guevara Jr., was born circa 1903. “Filipinos Elect an ‘Independent,’” 7 March 1923, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 3 *Congressional Directory*, 74th Cong.: 129; “Death Strikes Guevara In Act of Pleading Case Before Supreme Court”; Bernardita Reyes



- Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934* (Manila, PI: National Historical Institute, 1983): 37–38, 428.
- 4 Frank H. Golay, *Face of Empire: United States-Philippine Relations, 1898–1946* (Quezon City, PI: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997): 242–244; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 67; Pedro Guevara certificate of election, (endorsed 24 February), Committee on Elections (HR68-AJ2), 68th Congress, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; “Gabaldon, Guevara Re-elected,” 10 November 1925, *Manila Times*: 1; “Philippine Legislature Elects Commissioners,” 8 February 1929, *Washington Post*: 9; “To Represent Philippines Here,” 23 August 1934, *Wall Street Journal*: 5.
- 5 Associated Press, “Manila Holds Huge Parade in Honor of New Agent to U.S.,” 12 August 1923, *Chicago Tribune*: 13.
- 6 “Independence Haste Decried,” 12 September 1923, *Los Angeles Times*: 17; “Philippine Envoy Seeks Settlement,” 17 September 1923, *New York Times*: 19.
- 7 “Filipinos Hoping for Protectorate,” 8 November 1923, *Christian Science Monitor*: 2.
- 8 “Philippine Envoy Seeks Settlement.”
- 9 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 70–74.
- 10 “Hart Defends Leonard Wood,” 9 November 1923, *Boston Daily Globe*: 24. See also “First Philippine Plea Is Given to President,” 16 December 1923, *Washington Post*: 14; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 77.
- 11 “Philippine Envoy Seeks Settlement.”
- 12 Coolidge commented on the Philippines in his third, fourth, fifth, and sixth annual messages. See Gerhard Peters, “State of the Union Addresses and Messages,” in *American Presidency Project*, ed. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/sou.php>.
- 13 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 91–92.
- 14 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possession, *Philippine Independence*, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (11, 16 February and 1, 3 March 1924); Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 89–90.
- 15 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 101–102. The amended bill removed the independence plebiscite and reduced the probationary period to 20 years. Commonwealth officials would support the Philippine constitution instead of the U.S. Constitution and no one with military experience would serve as U.S. commissioner. Regarding executive and legislative branch powers, the power to muster the armed forces would remain with the U.S. President; the U.S. Supreme Court also would have jurisdiction over the Philippines.
- 16 *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 2nd sess. (16 December 1924): 698.
- 17 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 99–105.
- 18 Ibid., 122–124; “‘Isles of Fear’ to Present Truth About Philippines,” 28 November 1924, *Washington Post*: 10. The articles were compiled into a single volume, Katherine Mayo, *The Isles of Fear: The Truth About the Philippines* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company: 1925). For biographical information about Mayo, see “Katherine Mayo, Writer, Is Dead,” 10 October 1940, *New York Times*: 25. For the *Post*’s supportive editorials, see “Conditions in the Philippines,” 7 December 1924, *Washington Post*: EF1; “Vetoing Seditious Propaganda,” 11 December 1924, *Washington Post*: 6; and “The Philippines As They Are,” 24 January 1925, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 19 *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 2nd sess. (3 March 1925): 5348–5350, quotation on p. 5349. Gabaldon’s remarks about the Mayo articles are in *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 2nd sess. (3 January 1925): 1167–1173.
- 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 1st sess. (6 May 1926): 8831.
- 21 Bonifacio S. Salamanca, *The Filipino Reaction to American Rule, 1901–1913* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1968): 113–117, 256n107.
- 22 Golay, *Face of Empire*: 266–267.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 1st sess. (26 June 1926): 12063–12066; *Congressional Record*, Index, 69th Cong., 1st sess.: 810.
- 24 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 181, 184–185; “Coolidge to Receive Filipino Legislators,” 22 September 1927, *Washington Post*: 1; “Stimson Named for Governor of Philippines,” 13 December 1927, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; “Senate Confirms Morrow as Envoy,” 18 December 1927, *New York Times*: 23; Larry G. Gerber, “Stimson, Henry Lewis,” *American National Biography* 20 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 787–790; *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (21 December 1927): 916–917.
- 25 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 185–187.
- 26 Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Employment of Certain Civilian Assistants in the Office of the Governor General of the Philippine Islands*, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (31 January 1928): 7, 19–20. Gabaldon described Guevara’s condition in Hearing before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, *Appointment of Governors of the Non-Christian Provinces in the Philippine Islands*, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (1 February 1928): 2; Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 187.
- 27 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 185–189; *Congressional Record*, Index, 70th Cong., 1st sess.: 531, 539, 706, 731.
- 28 *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (22 March 1928): 5212.



- 29 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 188–189; *Congressional Record*, Index, 70th Cong., 1st sess.: 736.
- 30 Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 189–190; “To Work For Philippines,” 6 April 1928, *New York Times*: 4. The 1924 and 1928 platforms are similar. See George Thomas Kurian, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Democratic Party*, vol. 3 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1997): 520–521, 531.
- 31 Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Tariff Readjustment—1929: Vol. V, Schedule 5, Sugar, Molasses, and Manufactures of*, 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (21–22 January 1929): 3288–3292. Guinn Williams of Texas made a similar statement on Guevara’s behalf, see *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (24 January 1929): 2194–2197.
- 32 Herbert Hoover, “Proclamation 1870—Requesting an Extra Session of Congress on Agricultural Relief and Tariff Changes,” 7 March 1929, in *American Presidency Project*, ed. John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=22069> (accessed 12 February 2016); Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919–1934*: 198–201, 204–206.
- 33 “Urges Wide Powers in Flexible Tariff,” 17 July 1929, *New York Times*: 11.
- 34 “Haitian Policy of U.S. Praised and Condemned,” 14 December 1929, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 10; *Congressional Record*, House, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (7, 13 December 1929): 261–262, 618–630; Golay, *Face of Empire*: 281–282.
- 35 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance, *Tariff Act of 1929: Vol. XVII, Special and Administrative Provisions*, 71st Cong., 1st sess. (12–13 June and 15–18 July, 1929): 260–262; Golay, *Face of Empire*: 278–282. Smoot–Hawley became law as Public Law 71–361, 46 Stat. 590 (1930).
- 36 “Filipino Pleads for Freedom at Politics Parley,” 1 July 1930, *Christian Science Monitor*: 5; “Guevara Makes Plea for Filipino Freedom,” 28 October 1930, *New York Times*: 52; “Reasserts Filipino Stand,” 23 May 1931, *New York Times*: 8.
- 37 Golay, *Face of Empire*: 296–298; Pedro Guevara, “Moros Declared to Favor Philippine Independence,” 20 September 1931, *Washington Post*: M7.
- 38 “House Votes to Free Philippines in 1940; Stimson Is Opposed,” 5 April 1932, *New York Times*: 1; *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (4 April 1932): 7401–7412, Guevara quotation on p. 7410.
- 39 *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (13 January 1933): 1769.
- 40 Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929–1946* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965): 106–108; “Hail Defeat of Veto: Filipino Commissioners Call Independence Grant Unprecedented,” 18 January 1933, *New York Times*: 2.
- 41 Friend, *Between Two Empires*: 129–130.
- 42 *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (4 January 1934): 128–129.
- 43 *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (19 March 1934): 4836.
- 44 President Roosevelt’s special message was reprinted in *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (2 March 1934): 3580–3581; *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (19 March 1934): 4225, 4831, 4842; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (20 March 1934): 4921, 5164; Public Law 73-127, 48 Stat. 456 (1934); Golay, *Face of Empire*: 320–327.
- 45 “Calls Oil Tax Move Blow at Philippines,” 3 April 1934, *New York Times*: 2; “Filipino Says Tax on Oil Is Ruinous,” 2 May 1934, *New York Times*: 8; *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (29 May 1934): 9864–9868; *Congressional Record*, Index, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess.: 613; Golay, *Face of Empire*: 327–328. Guevara also testified against the passage of H.R. 7835. See Hearings before the Senate Finance Committee, *Revenue Act of 1934*, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (12–15 March 1934): 389–394.
- 46 Guevara’s appeal is in *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (11 June 1934): 11079–11080; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (13 June 1934): 11273; *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (14 June 1934): 11351–11546; Golay, *Face of Empire*: 329–330; Philippine Currency Act, Public Law 73-419, 48 Stat. 1115 (1934). Per Golay, the devaluation profit is the dollar value increase of gold equivalent to the currency reserves on deposit in the U.S. when the convertibility of the dollar was suspended.
- 47 “Guevara Statement Stirs Manila Storm,” 19 June 1934, *New York Times*: 8; James G. Wingo, “Guevara Still in the Fight,” 7 July 1934, *Philippines Free Press*: 9.
- 48 “Philippine Elections,” 12 July 1934, *Wall Street Journal*: 4; “Solons Select New P.I. Envoys to Washington,” 21 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: 1, 2.
- 49 H. W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 160–161.
- 50 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (21 January 1935): 716–717; *Congressional Record*, Index, 74th Cong., 1st sess.: 633, 770. The bill became law as Public Law 74-56, 49 Stat. 218 (1935).
- 51 Vicente Albano Pacis, “A Philippine Protectorate?,” 1 October 1935, *Washington Post*: 9.
- 52 “Quezon is Opposed to U.S. Protectorate,” 24 August 1935, *New York Times*: 7.
- 53 Guevara did not submit a formal letter of resignation. The terms of the Tydings–McDuffie Act limited the Philippines to one Resident Commissioner with the inauguration of the Commonwealth. With Quezon elected and prepared to appoint a new commissioner, and with the House of Representatives on recess until January 1936, Guevara saw no official reason to return to the United States.



- 54 “Guevara Will Retire From Political Life,” 25 September 1935, *Philippines Herald*: 1; “Guevara is Opening Manila Law Office,” 26 September 1935, *Philippines Herald*: 1; “Guevara’s Protectorate Stand,” 5 October 1935, *Philippines Free Press*: 28. President Quezon appointed Quintin Paredes to serve as Resident Commissioner on February 14, 1936. See also “Quintin Paredes,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=P000050>.
- 55 Vicente Albano Pacis, “The New Philippines,” 14 December 1935, *Washington Post*: 9; “Filipino Urges U.S. Pact,” 16 February 1936, *New York Times*: 26; “Guevara Heads Mining Firm,” 24 January 1937, *Tribune* (Manila, PI): 10.
- 56 “Death Strikes Guevara in Act of Pleading Case Before Supreme Court.”

William P. Jarrett

1877–1929

DELEGATE 1923–1927
DEMOCRAT FROM HAWAII

Known alternately as “Big Bill,” “Silent Bill,” and “Quiet Bill” to his constituents, soft-spoken William (Bill) Paul Jarrett became the first Democratic Delegate from Hawaii in the U.S. Congress. Elected in 1923, he devoted his time in the House to securing more autonomy and infrastructure for the Hawaiian Islands. A low-key, but productive, legislator, Bill Jarrett sponsored several bills during his tenure that sailed to passage. One of a handful of prominent Hawaiian Democrats, Jarrett lost re-election to a third term in 1926 to one of the islands’ rising Republican stars.

William P. Jarrett was born on August 22, 1877, in Honolulu, in the Kingdom of Hawaii, to William Haalilio Jarrett and Emma Kaoo Stevens Jarrett. His father worked as a mechanic and foreman for the public works department and served as superintendent of the wharves in Honolulu.¹ The younger Jarrett received his education at the Saint Louis preparatory school in Honolulu before pursuing a career in law enforcement. In 1908 Jarrett married Mary H. K. Clark, with whom he had six children. Jarrett’s home life endured its share of tragedy. Their first child, Mary, was barely a year old when she died in 1910. Jarrett’s wife died giving birth to the couple’s sixth child on December 4, 1919; the baby passed away four days later.² He remarried in 1921 to Elizabeth (Bessie) Neal, widow of civil engineer John W. Neal.³

Jarrett first ran for deputy sheriff of Honolulu as a Democrat in 1906, seeking office against an established assistant sheriff when Democrats were relatively unpopular across Hawaii. When reviewing candidates across the political spectrum during the lead-up to the race, the *Evening Bulletin* labeled Jarrett “The Fearless Deputy.”⁴ He was a shoo-in as sheriff of Honolulu in 1908 and was nominated by acclamation. Republicans labeled him as too soft, which his Democratic cohorts reveled in, saying,

“It’s an awful charge against a man to say that he is kind hearted, isn’t it?”⁵ Jarrett admitted he was a poor speaker early in his campaigns but “when it came to action he believed he could say he was there with the goods.”⁶ Jarrett served as the popular sheriff of Honolulu for three terms.

In 1914, during Jarrett’s third term as sheriff, Democrat Lucius E. Pinkham was appointed territorial governor of Hawaii by President Woodrow Wilson. Pinkham, the first Democratic governor, hurried to sweep Democrats into administrative positions across the island. Caught up in that wave was Jarrett, who received an appointment to the position of high sheriff, the head of law enforcement for the territory and warden of Oahu Prison. Jarrett’s appointment came as part of Pinkham’s effort to recognize and incorporate Native Hawaiians in his administration.⁷

Jarrett immediately set about reforming prison life. He instituted an honor system, created a central committee of inmates organized to make their own laws, and set prisoners to work mostly unguarded. Under his direction, the prisoners built their own new prison to replace the decrepit jailhouse known as the “Reef.”⁸ Jarrett served two four-year terms as high sheriff, during which his popularity soared across the islands. Inmates reportedly wept when Jarrett resigned his position at the end of his two terms.⁹

Jarrett’s popularity outside Oahu helped him secure a position as a Democratic national committeeman from Hawaii over a rival subset of Democrats led by island party co-founders Lincoln McCandless and John H. Wilson. In the 1916 race for committeeman, McCandless’s group originally declared victory for their candidate, Wilson, based on his strong support in Oahu. They were shocked to receive a letter from Jarrett demanding they issue his certificate of nomination after results poured in from the other islands handing him landslide victories. Jarrett accused his opponents of fraud in the initial results and





labeled the Oahu and Maui returns “a huge joke.”¹⁰ However, when Jarrett joined Wilson on the trip to plead their respective cases before the national committee, the two got along famously and Jarrett readily conceded to Wilson when faced with his connections on the mainland. This congeniality only endeared Jarrett to Democrats in general and Wilson in particular.¹¹

This rapport paid dividends for Jarrett in 1922, when incumbent Republican Delegate Henry Baldwin quickly tired of Washington and perennial candidate and Democratic Party leader McCandless suddenly decided he had had enough of politics and dropped out of the race. John Wilson, remembering his 1916 traveling companion, recruited Jarrett. Voters found Jarrett’s quiet, responsible nature refreshing in the wake of the wealthy, verbose McCandless. Wilson’s biographer noted, “The less Silent Bill said, the more people cheered.”¹² He opened his speeches simply, “I’m Bill Jarrett” and inevitably paused for a lengthy standing ovation.¹³ The pro-Republican *Maui News* criticized the former high sheriff for his lack of experience compared to Republican candidate and territorial senator John Wise, urging Hawaii not to send a “green horn” to Washington.¹⁴ Republicans, confident right up through Election Day in a very GOP-friendly environment, were shocked when returns showed Jarrett with an approximately 3,000-vote majority. His election marked him as the first Democrat to represent Hawaii nationally since its annexation, and mainland papers repeatedly referred to him as “the most popular man of Hawaiian blood in the Territory,” gleefully reporting big *pake* dinners held in his honor.¹⁵ At one of these dinners, Jarrett urged constituents only half-jokingly to write down what his goals should be and “not to expect him to remember thousands of things he is asked to work for.”¹⁶

Upon arrival at the Capitol, Jarrett was assigned to four committees: Agriculture; Public Lands; Post Office and Post Roads; and the Territories. He left the first two in the 69th Congress (1925–1927) and joined the Committee on Military Affairs instead.¹⁷ During his two terms in Congress, Jarrett upheld his tight-lipped reputation, preferring to extend his remarks in the *Congressional*

Record rather than make speeches either on the floor or in committee. Despite his inexperience and minority status in the Republican-controlled House, Jarrett took to legislating quickly, making friends with fellow Representatives of both parties and testifying regularly before committees, though he remained soft-spoken even then.

Jarrett broke from his typical demeanor in one of the very few speeches he gave on the floor on January 21, 1924, a lengthy lecture on Hawaii’s history and the islands’ interaction with the American mainland. He emphasized Hawaii’s self-sufficiency, which had become difficult to maintain under the restrictions of the Organic Act. He insisted, “Hawaii is an integral part of the United States, not acquired by conquest, but annexed by treaty.” Jarrett launched into this uncharacteristic speech immediately following the passage of his first piece of legislation in the House (H.R. 4121), which extended several appropriations aid laws applicable to states to the Hawaiian Territory, including the Federal Farm Loan Act and the Sheppard–Towner Maternity and Infancy Act. It also included disbursement of funds for the construction of roads and vocational rehabilitation. The bill passed by voice vote and became law only two months later.¹⁸

Emboldened by his legislative success, Jarrett soon introduced another bill (H.R. 6070) providing for federal support and approval of a territorial law providing a nonexclusive franchise to develop infrastructure—particularly electrical utilities—in the district of Hamakua. All franchises had to be approved by Congress under the Organic Act. Jarrett testified before the House Committee on the Territories, emphasizing the need for federal approval despite completion of territorial legislation, but he kept his remarks brief and focused on the mechanical aspects of the bill and its process, letting longtime Washington secretary Bertram Rivenburgh hammer out the details.¹⁹ Jarrett secured more funds to bolster Hawaiian infrastructure in the 69th Congress, when he worked closely with Louis Cramton of Michigan and Fiorello La Guardia of New York to approve a territorial act that provided a franchise to establish electrical power on the island.²⁰



Jarrett spent much of his tenure struggling with the bureaucracy imposed by the Organic Act. He introduced a bill allowing the governor of Hawaii, a federally appointed official, to issue patents of residence to homesteaders in Hawaii, bypassing individual congressional approval. Jarrett defended the right of the residents to retain their homes and said, “These people went in there in good faith and got those lots and built homes, and thought they were doing right, and now they come to find out they have not got title and this is the only way they can get it.”²¹ Jarrett then drew up the report for a bill (H.R. 4985) to repeal a proviso that limited expenditures for “maintenance, supervision, and improvement” in an area of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park that contains active volcanoes. Safe roads around the volcanoes were projected to cost roughly 10 times more than the previously allotted funds. Both bills breezed through the House and Senate and became Private Law 127 and Public Law 68-198, respectively.²²

His ability to pass legislation waned in the 69th Congress as House Republican opposition to his bills increased. Despite having Republican territorial governor Wallace Farrington’s support, joint resolutions (H.J. Res. 240 and H.J. Res. 267) asking the President to call a Pan Pacific Conference on Education, Rehabilitation, Reclamation, and Recreation at Honolulu, Hawaii, went nowhere. Republican Representative James Begg of Ohio called the proposed \$20,000 appropriation for travel merely recreational and “a free trip to Honolulu.” Jarrett argued the conference held educational benefits similar to the Pan-American Union, but he ultimately received little support.²³ He also attempted an alliance with Delegate Daniel Sutherland of Alaska to introduce a bill (H.R. 10432) that exempted Hawaiian public school teachers and territorial officials from federal income tax. Testifying before a subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means, Jarrett argued teachers were being taxed twice. “The teachers believe that they are not being treated right, and that they should be treated the same as the teachers on the mainland,” Jarrett opined, pointing out the difficulty of drawing talent from the mainland.²⁴ The House took no further action, and his successor resubmitted the resolution (H.R. 14465) to no avail.

Jarrett’s reputation bore him through the 1924 election. Republicans ran Phillip L. Rice, a member of the influential Rice family and World War I veteran, to contest the Delegate seat in 1924, but Jarrett outpaced his previous victory with a roughly 4,000-vote majority.²⁵ Two years later, he faced former Navy commander Victor S. (Kaleoaloha) Houston. Jarrett’s personal popularity finally faded, as he was unable to spend enough time in Hawaii to maintain his connections. Island Democrats attempted to discredit Houston by arguing his Navy service had disqualified him as a resident of Hawaii, but without effect. Republicans argued the territory needed a Republican in Congress as tariff policy, a hallmark of the party’s platform, became ever more important. Hawaiians swept Republicans into office at all levels of the government in November 1926.²⁶ Houston prevailed over the incumbent, winning 52.5 percent of the vote.

Bill Jarrett fell ill shortly after returning to Hawaii. The illness lingered for more than a year, and Jarrett died on November 10, 1929. His successor, Delegate Houston, announced his death on the House Floor, saying “He was a true Hawaiian—able, courteous, friendly, hospitable, and dignified.”²⁷

NOTES

- 1 “William Jarrett Dead,” 25 February 1903, *Hawaiian Star*: 4; No Title, 25 February 1903, *The Independent* (Honolulu, HI): 3.
- 2 “Sheriff’s Baby Daughter Dies,” 31 May 1910, *Hawaiian Star*: 1; “Sheriff Jarrett’s Wife Dies—Baby Son Lives,” 5 December 1919, *Maui News* (Wailuku, HI): 8.
- 3 No Title, 26 August 1921, *Maui News* (Wailuku, HI): 2.
- 4 “The Beacon Blue Book—Who’s Who In Hawaiian Politics,” 20 October 1906, *Evening Bulletin*: 5.
- 5 “Democratic Lineup Made,” 24 September 1908, *Hawaiian Star*: 3; “Fern Answers Some Critics,” 22 October 1908, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*: 8.
- 6 “W. A. Kinney at Aala Park,” 27 October 1908, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 1, 10.
- 7 “Slate is Being Picked for Governor Pinkham,” 17 April 1914, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 1; “Henry Resigns; Jarrett Appointed,” 28 April 1914, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 7.
- 8 “Hawaii Boasts Something New in Prison Life,” 25 October



- 1915, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1; “Bill Jarrett Wins Election,” 10 November 1922, *Los Angeles Times*: 13.
- 9 Bob Krauss, *Johnny Wilson: First Hawaiian Democrat* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994): 183; “Bill Jarrett Wins Election.”
- 10 “Jarrett Claims Election; Fraud Shell is Hurlled,” 26 April 1916, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1.
- 11 Krauss, *Johnny Wilson: First Hawaiian Democrat*: 139.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 183.
- 13 “Bill Jarrett Wins Election.”
- 14 “The Optimistic Pessimist,” 24 October 1922, *Maui News*: 4.
- 15 “Delegate-Elect to Congress Hawaii’s Most Popular Man,” 10 November 1922, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: 21; “Hawaii Democrats Eat 7 Tons of Food At Big ‘Luau’ Fete,” 10 December 1922, *Washington Post*: 1.
- 16 “Big Pake Dinner for Bill Jarrett,” 12 December 1922, *The Garden Island*: 1.
- 17 David T. Canon, Garrison Nelson, and Charles Stewart III, *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789–1945*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011): 546.
- 18 *Congressional Record*, House, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (21 January 1924): 1225–1226; Public Law 68-35, 43 Stat. 17 (1924).
- 19 Hearings before the House Committee on Territories, *Electric Light and Power Within the District of Hamakua*, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (31 March 1924): 1–3. H.R. 6070 went into effect as Public Law 68-391, 43 Stat. 853 (1925).
- 20 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong., 1st sess. (19 April 1926): 7769–7770.
- 21 Hearings before the House Committee on The Territories, *Land Patents, Territory of Hawaii*, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (28 January 1924): 2.
- 22 House Committee on Public Lands, *To Repeal the First Proviso of Section 4 of an Act to Establish a National Park in the Territory of Hawaii*, 68th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 442 (3 April 1924): 1–2.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 69th Cong. 1st sess. (21 June 1926): 11706–11708.
- 24 Hearing before a Subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Income Tax on Territorial Employees of Alaska and Hawaii*, 69th Cong., 1st sess. (2 April 1926): 1–2.
- 25 Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/institution/election-statistics/election-statistics/>.
- 26 “Hawaii Goes Republican,” 29 November 1929, *Christian Science Monitor*: 13.
- 27 “Bill Jarrett Passes,” 12 November 1929, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 6; *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (2 December 1929): 7–8.



“HE WAS A TRUE HAWAIIAN—
ABLE, COURTEOUS, FRIENDLY,
HOSPITABLE, AND DIGNIFIED.”

Victor S. (Kaleoaloha) Houston
Honolulu Star-Bulletin, November 12, 1929

Victor S. (Kaleoaloha) Houston

1876–1959

DELEGATE 1927–1933
REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

Victor Houston, a former U.S. Navy officer descended from a prominent Hawaiian family, represented the Territory of Hawaii for six years. His career as Territorial Delegate overlapped with the onset of the Great Depression, an economic crisis that motivated him to steer federal money to Hawaii and weigh in on immigration issues important to the islands' agricultural industry. In a year in which many Republican candidates went down to defeat for overseeing a battered economy, Houston's congressional career ended abruptly, though not primarily for reasons related to the Depression. Rather, to great effect, his Democratic opponent bludgeoned Houston's political position on a sensational murder case that had racial undercurrents.

Victor Stewart (Kaleoaloha) Houston was born on July 22, 1876, in San Francisco, California, to Edwin Samuel Houston, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy and a Pennsylvania native, and Caroline Poor Kahikiola Brickwood, a native of Honolulu. His mother was from one of Honolulu's old and established families; her father, A. P. Brickwood, was the longtime postmaster of Honolulu.¹ Victor had one sister named Edna.² He attended grade school abroad in Dresden, Germany; Lausanne, Switzerland; the Force School in Washington, DC; and Werntz Preparatory School in Annapolis, Maryland.

In 1897 Houston graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. A year later, he served aboard the USS *Iowa*, as it investigated the sinking of the USS *Maine*, which helped to precipitate the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.³ The Navy first assigned Houston to Honolulu, Hawaii, in late 1909 to serve as a lighthouse inspector for the district of Hawaii.⁴ It was during his one-year stint in that position that Houston married his cousin, the former Pinao G. Brickwood, in 1910. The couple raised an adopted daughter, Gwendolyn. Pinao died in 1936.⁵

Houston served 32 years in the Navy and eventually commanded the cruiser USS *St. Louis*. He retired as a commander in 1926, was recalled to active duty during World War II, and advanced to the grade of captain on the retired list in 1943.

Though Houston had declared Hawaii as his residence for nearly two decades, his naval career kept him away at overseas posts nearly all that time. He had very little practical experience in island politics. Therefore, when he decided to make his first run for elective office by entering the GOP primary in early September 1926, he hoped to secure the party nomination for Hawaii's lone Territorial Delegate seat in the U.S. Congress on the strength of connections in Washington that he had built up during his naval service. He argued that he could make the best case for commercial development on the islands that would match, if not outpace, federal appropriations for military installations. "I believe that the greater service we are destined to render is as a commercial base rather than as a military outpost," he declared in a campaign advertisement. To that end, he advocated securing federal money to dredge and enlarge the harbors at Hilo, Kahului, Kauai, and Honolulu.⁶ "Unknown in Hawaiian politics until a bare month ago," the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* observed the morning after the primary, Houston easily topped his nearest opponent, A. L. Louisson.⁷

In the general election, Houston challenged the popular two-term incumbent, Democrat William P. Jarrett, a former law enforcement officer and warden of the Oahu Prison. Democrats attacked Houston as being little more than a carpetbagger, a claim that he and other surrogates actively refuted during the campaign. "I have been a registered voter here and during the last four and a half years have voted in this Territory," Houston said. "Before that I voted for [Jonah] Kuhio. I have claimed my





residence in Hawaii for the last 18 years, as the books of the Navy Department in Washington prove.”⁸

The principal policy issue, however, revolved around commercial development and the tariff. Houston opposed efforts to undermine tariff barriers that protected industries and, ultimately, he argued, wage earners. Of particular concern, he claimed, were Democratic efforts to effect tariff changes that would have lowered or removed supports for Hawaii’s sugar industry.⁹ On Election Day, November 2, 1926, Houston captured majorities on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, and Kauai; only Oahu broke for Jarrett. Territory-wide, Houston prevailed with 18,160 votes to Jarrett’s 16,372, roughly 52.5 to 47.5 percent.¹⁰ The *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* described Houston’s campaign as “clean-cut, clear-cut, straightforward ... free from invective, vituperation and mud-slinging.” The editors congratulated voters “for their foresight in sending him to Congress. They will not regret it.”¹¹

After Delegate Houston was sworn into the House on opening day of the 70th Congress (1927–1929), he was placed on eight standing committees. While eight committees was atypical for most Members at the time, House leaders often assigned Delegates to a range of panels to give them jurisdictional oversight of important issues in their territories.¹² Houston served on three of these committees for the entirety of his House career: Agriculture; Post Office and Post Roads; and Territories. Additionally, he served on the following panels: Military Affairs (70th–71st Congresses, 1927–1931); Naval Affairs (70th Congress); Immigration and Naturalization (72nd Congress, 1931–1933); Merchant Marine and Fisheries (72nd Congress); and Public Lands (71st and 72nd Congresses, 1929–1933).¹³

While Houston delivered relatively few floor speeches during his career—usually less than a dozen in any given session—he spent the bulk of his time testifying before House and Senate committees on a range of bills that affected Hawaiian interests. His legislative wheelhouse was what one would expect, mainly relating to the large military presence on the island, particularly the Navy. He spoke on issues related to pay for officers and retirees, the transfer of

military lands to the territory, military construction, military housing at Wheeler Army Airfield, funding for the Hawaiian National Guard, and federal acquisition of private fishery rights in Pearl Harbor. Houston also weighed in on the need for federal money for infrastructure improvements and public works projects, including dredging Honolulu Harbor and building roadways.¹⁴ Another primary area of focus for Houston was agriculture, including monitoring both tariff rate schedules for produce and the immigration status of Filipinos to meet the labor needs of the islands’ sugar and pineapple industries.

During Houston’s freshman term in the 70th Congress, he tended to local concerns. Testifying before the Ways and Means Committee as it considered a tariff rate adjustment for domestic sugar, he argued that Hawaii should be considered a “domestic” producer and that the rate should be hiked from 2.2 cents per pound to 3 cents. He also argued that coffee growers in Hawaii and Puerto Rico, who tended to be small-scale growers, should be protected by a higher tariff on their product as well (5 cents per pound). Houston noted that Hawaii produced 7 million pounds of coffee per year and Puerto Rico produced more than 25 million. Both territories, he estimated, were capable of producing 200 million pounds per year.¹⁵ In early 1928, Houston testified before the Committee on World War Veterans’ Legislation in support of his bill H.R. 9584, which sought to extend the total and permanent disability rating to servicemen who had contracted leprosy in Hawaii.¹⁶

During his second term in the 71st Congress (1929–1931), Houston’s focus turned to the islands’ economy as the country slid into the Great Depression. Often economic questions intertwined with immigration issues in Hawaii’s multiracial economy. In the second session of the 71st Congress, he testified before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, which was considering legislation to restrict Filipino immigration to the United States. Richard Welch of California, chairman of the Labor Committee, introduced a bill to curb the flow of immigrants, which he described as an “invasion” of the Pacific Coast and a problem that exacerbated the already difficult employment situation in the midst of



the economic crisis.¹⁷ Critics disparaged the suggestion as patently unfair to people already living under the U.S. flag. Delegate Houston agreed with that sentiment, but objected primarily on the grounds that cutting off the Filipino immigrants to Hawaii would devastate the agriculture industry on the islands because those immigrants provided the bulk of the unskilled labor. Houston argued that Hawaii ought to receive an exemption to any such ban.

Under examination by committee members who probed into the history of Hawaii's diverse population, Houston noted, "We in Hawaii have heretofore rather prided ourselves that because of lack of racial prejudice in the islands, and a good bit of that lack of racial prejudice has come about by reason of the attitude of the Native Hawaiians themselves, we have always felt that there is a real melting-pot there and it is working and may possibly serve as an example to the rest of the world."¹⁸ Indeed, Hawaii managed to win an exemption for Filipino laborers not on the merits of Houston's defense of Hawaii's multiracial society, but through the agriculture lobby marshaled by the islands' wealthy planters.¹⁹ Houston also believed the National Origins Act of 1924 ought to be amended to allow U.S. citizens to bring Asian wives into the U.S. and put them on the path to citizenship. Conversely, he recommended amending a loophole in the Cable Act of 1922 that denied women of U.S. citizenship their citizenship rights if they married a non-U.S. citizen of Asian descent.²⁰

Additionally, Houston secured a payment of federal highway funds to Hawaii of nearly \$1 million, money that the Bureau of Public Roads had withheld from the islands from 1917 to 1925 because it had made the administrative decision that the World War I-era law covering such appropriations did not apply to the territory. Houston convinced his colleagues that it had, in fact, been the intent of Congress that Hawaii should be covered.²¹

Houston weighed in on American governance of its other Pacific territories. He testified in the fall of 1930 before the American Samoan Commission, a group created by the President to recommend legislation to Congress on how to organize the ceded territory. Houston believed that

the territory could not be placed on the road to statehood, yet should be given autonomy. He suggested that through an organic act Samoa should create a government with the designation of something like dominion status. "In other words, [Samoans] will govern themselves with an American advisor who will not be a governor but simply an advisor to the governing authority." He also believed that, since Samoans were "under the American flag and cannot owe their allegiance to any other country, it would be only fair to give them an American citizenship status."²²

During the 72nd Congress, Houston introduced a bill (H.R. 5130) "to enable the people of Hawaii to form a constitutional government to be admitted into the Union on equal footing with the states." But it died quietly, being referred to the Committee on Territories, where no action was taken. Nor, apparently, did Houston speak on behalf of the bill on the House Floor.²³ Of even greater consequence was the fact that the influential Hawaiian planter class was unresponsive, given that the act of empowering elected representatives might dilute their lobbying influence in Washington, DC.²⁴

In early 1932, Houston testified before the Committee on Insular Affairs in a hearing about independence for the Philippine Islands, noting in his prepared statement "that I am wholeheartedly in favor of independence for the Philippines because many of the questions that are bound up in [Hawaiian] interest will be solved automatically by such definite action."²⁵ The primary question he was concerned with, however, was an economic one. He favored inserting a provision in the legislation to exempt the Territory of Hawaii from any federal immigration restrictions imposed on an independent Philippines. The free flow of Filipino laborers into Hawaii was critical to the sprawling sugar and pineapple industries on the islands.

Houston had won easy re-election in 1928 against Democrat Bertram Rivenburgh, capturing 72 percent of the vote. Two years later, after the onset of the Great Depression, he claimed a narrower victory over Democratic stalwart Lincoln McCandless with 53 to 47 percent of the vote.²⁶

A longtime rancher and farmer and a former member of the Hawaii territorial house and senate, McCandless,



one of the islands' wealthiest landowners, was again Houston's Democratic opponent in the general election of 1932. Republicans nationally were on the defensive as the Great Depression deepened and Democratic presidential candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt swept down-ticket Democrats into Washington. But Houston's biggest hurdle was a contentious local campaign stirred by a sensationalized, racially charged murder case in which he had intervened.

McCandless attacked Houston for tinkering in what became known as the Massie case, in which five nonwhite men were charged with raping Thalia Massie, the wife of a naval officer, in the fall of 1931.²⁷ The alleged perpetrators stood trial, but the jury was deadlocked. Afterwards, the alleged victim's husband, Thomas Massie, her mother, and several other white U.S. Navy personnel kidnapped and shot one of the alleged rapists.

Houston spent time testifying before congressional committees to defend the Hawaiian judicial system in the wake of the hung jury.²⁸ When another Hawaiian jury found Thomas Massie and his codefendants guilty in April 1932, Houston urged Governor Lawrence Judd to pardon them, which he did, commuting their sentences to an hour shortly after the judge handed down a sentence of 10 years. Houston had advised Judd, "Since justice seems to have been served by the recent findings, may I as an individual urge you to exercise your pardoning powers at the appropriate time? I also recommend that you allow the present defendants to remain in the custody of the Navy until the matter is finally disposed of. I am convinced the Hawaiian interests will be best served by the suggested action."

Houston believed that pardoning the defendants was the surest way to preserve home rule and prevent Congress from imposing harsh restrictions already percolating their way in committee on the territorial government.²⁹ McCandless, according to the *New York Times*, called that position "an act of treachery to the Hawaiian race."³⁰ Shortly before the election, on the campaign stump, McCandless pilloried Houston. "How did the delegate show his love for Hawaii?" he asked an audience. "He telegraphed from the other side to let the navy men go.

And back they went to the man of war. . . . I want you people to remember that. Send him back to the man of war where he comes from."³¹

McCandless also capitalized on the economic crisis to score political points against Houston. He criticized Houston's advocacy on behalf of Filipinos seeking to immigrate to Hawaii to serve as agricultural laborers, insisting that the work they performed on sugar and pineapple plantations ought better be left to citizens of the island. He further suggested that Houston served an "invisible government" dominated by Hawaiian planters.³²

Houston countered the charge by noting that Hawaii was unable to supply the necessary native labor force and that, once it had a sufficient homegrown pool of labor, he would favor immigration restrictions. He also suggested that Democrats in Congress were leading efforts to rein in home rule on the islands and that McCandless's claims to the contrary were spurious.³³ Houston, the *Star-Bulletin* editors reminded readers, "has always stood while Hawaii was under fire. He was out in front defending Hawaii's name." His experience and knowledge of DC would prove crucial, the editors insisted, in the campaign to retain self-government on the islands. By contrast, McCandless was "completely inexperienced in the work of government . . . absolutely untried in Washington and would be without experience and friends when Hawaii's affairs came up for consideration in the legislative halls and executive departments."³⁴

But the headwinds against Republicans nationally, combined with the charges that the incumbent had betrayed Native Hawaiian interests in the Massie case, created an electoral wave that McCandless rode to victory. McCandless racked up more than a 4,000-vote lead in Oahu and narrowly won Kauai. When the votes were tallied from across the islands, McCandless prevailed with 29,431 to Houston's 27,017 (52 to 48 percent).³⁵

Aside from his World War II naval service, Houston largely retired from public life after leaving Congress. From 1935 through 1941, Houston served in an appointed position on the Hawaiian Equal Rights Commission. From 1945 to 1951, he was a member of the Hawaiian Homes Commission. He also served on the islands' Territorial



Loyalty Board in the early 1950s.³⁶ He died in Honolulu on July 31, 1959, less than a month before Hawaii formally became the 50th U.S. state.

On the House Floor, Delegate John A. Burns of Hawaii memorialized Houston by recalling his reaction just months earlier to Hawaii's admittance into the union. "It's not a time for whooping it up," Houston said. "It's time for sober happiness, for really enjoying the situation. We have the same rights as the citizens on the mainland."³⁷ It was that fidelity to Hawaiian culture and his workmanlike attitude, Burns observed, that made Houston such an asset to the island's constituents. "Victor Houston was sincerely dedicated to the advancement of Hawaiians of Polynesian ancestry. Every available opportunity to stimulate their pride in themselves and their traditions and to encourage the Hawaiians to hold and work for the highest possible aspirations was made by him," Burns said. "His contributions to the institutions of Hawaii were substantial and material. Hawaii is a better place for his having lived and worked."³⁸

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Hawaii State Archives (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1877–1940, circa 21 feet. The papers focus primarily on Victor Houston's time as Territorial Delegate.

NOTES

- 1 "Is in the Navy," 1 July 1898, *Hawaiian Gazette* (Honolulu, HI): 2; "Admiral Houston's Wife an Island Girl," 9 March 1905, *Hawaiian Star* (Honolulu, HI): 5.
- 2 "Victor S. K. Houston, Former Delegate, Dies," 1 August 1959, *Honolulu Star Bulletin*: 2.
- 3 "Sticks to Hawaii Defense Despite His Navy Heritage," 18 January 1932, *Baltimore Sun*: 1.
- 4 "Changes in the Light House Rule: Lt.-Cmdr Houston Goes Back to Navy and Civilian Will Succeed Him," 21 October 1910, *Hawaiian Gazette*: n.p.
- 5 Local newspapers indicate that the couple was married in the summer of 1910, but no news articles cover the marriage announcement or the wedding ceremony. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (20 August 1959): 16551.
- 6 Campaign ad, "Hawaii Destined to Become Great Commercial Base Rather than a Military Outpost," 1 October 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 3.
- 7 "G.O.P. Delegate Foretold By Vote, Republicans Say," 3 October 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 1.
- 8 "Republicans Hear Ticket Headliners," 19 October 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 2.
- 9 See Houston's election advertisements: 29 October 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 3; and 30 October 1929, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 2.
- 10 "Election Statistics" maintained by the House do not carry results for Hawaii from this era—other than what appears to be an incomplete set for the 1926 election. Instead, these figures are taken from Houston's biographical entry in the *Congressional Directory* editions of the 70th through the 72nd Congresses. See also "Republican Landslide Registered," 3 November 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 1.
- 11 "Victor Houston, Hawaii's Next Delegate to Congress," 3 November 1926, *Honolulu Advertiser*: n.p.
- 12 A leading source on congressional committees indicates no committee assignments in the 71st Congress for Houston; the *Congressional Directory* for that Congress, however, indicates that Houston did serve on Agriculture; Military Affairs; Post Office and Post Roads; Public Lands; and Territories. See David Cannon et al., *Committees in Congress, 1789–1946*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2002): 518.
- 13 Cannon et al., *Committees in Congress, 1789–1946*, vol. 3: 518.
- 14 Hearings before the House Committee on Rivers and Harbors, *Honolulu Harbor, Hawaii*, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (23 December 1932): 1–9.
- 15 Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Tariff Readjustment—1929*, 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (20–22 January 1929): 3235–3242, 8413–8423.
- 16 Hearing before the House Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation, *World War Veterans' Legislation, H.R. 10160*, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (13 March 1928): 223–229.
- 17 "Urges Filipino Exclusion" 26 March 1930, *New York Times*: 20; "Filipino Exclusion," 11 April 1930, *Wall Street Journal*: 17.
- 18 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Exclusion of Immigration from the Philippine Islands*, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (10–12 April, 7–8 May 1930): 238–248, quotation on p. 245. See also Houston's testimony in Hearings before the Senate Committee on Immigration, *Suspension for Two Years of General Immigration into the United States*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (15–16, 18 December 1930): 63–66.
- 19 Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984): 56.
- 20 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Wives of American Citizens of Oriental Race*, 71st



- Cong., 2nd sess. (4 March 1930): 578–585; Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Amendment to the Women's Citizenship Act of 1922, and for Other Purposes*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (17 December 1930 and 23 January 1931): 18–21.
- 21 Hearings before the House Committee on Territories, *Payment to Hawaii of Federal Road Funds*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (20, 22 January 1931): 1–20; *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (11 February 1931): 4626–4627.
- 22 Hearings before the Commission Appointed by the President of the United States in Accordance with Public Res. No. 89, *American Samoa*, 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (18–20 September 1930): 30–33, 90–91.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (9 December 1931): 265.
- 24 Bell, *Last Among Equals*: 56.
- 25 Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Independence for the Philippine Islands*, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (12 February 1932): quotation on p. 450, full testimony from p. 450–457.
- 26 See Houston's entries in the *Congressional Directory* for the 71st and 72nd Congresses. *Congressional Directory*, 71st Cong., 1st sess., 1st ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1929): 129; *Congressional Directory*, 1932, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1st ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932): 127.
- 27 Douglas O. Linder, "The Massie Trials: A Commentary," <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/massie/massietrialsaccount.html> (accessed 17 March 2015).
- 28 "Delegate Defends Justice In Hawaii," 12 January 1932, *New York Times*: 3; Hearing before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, *Proposed Investigation of the Government of the Territory of Hawaii*, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (16 January 1932): 42–46; Hearing before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, *Hawaiian Situation*, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (11–14 January 1932): 327–330; Hearing before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, *Administration in Hawaii*, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (16 January 1933): 14–28.
- 29 Russell Owen, "Judd Frees All in Massie Case," 5 May 1932, *Boston Globe*: 1. See also "Massie Case Issue in Hawaiian Primary," 3 October 1932, *Baltimore Sun*: 14; "Massie Pardon Demanded by Congressmen," 3 May 1932, *Baltimore Sun*: 1.
- 30 "Hawaiians Choose House Candidates," 3 October 1932, *Washington Post*: 5; "Democrats Sweep Hawaiian Elections," 10 November 1932, *New York Times*: 13.
- 31 "Houston Again Attacked By Democrats," 1 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 2.
- 32 "Democrats Sweep Hawaiian Elections"; "Protest Guides Hawaii's Choice," 10 November 1932, *Los Angeles Times*: 5.
- 33 "Houston Turns on Democrats and Home Rule," 2 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1; "Houston Looks for Citizens to Man Industry," 2 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 13.
- 34 "Hawaii Needs Houston," 5 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 6. See also "Send Houston Back," 7 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 6.
- 35 For election results, see *Congressional Directory*, 73rd Cong. (June 1933): 128. See also "Kauai, Oahu, Swing Victory to M'Candless," 9 November 1932, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1, 3.
- 36 Hawaii State Archives Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.hawaii.gov/greenstone3/library/collection/governm1/browse/CL1/8> (accessed 27 September 2017).
- 37 *Congressional Record*, House, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (20 August 1959): 16551.
- 38 Ibid.



“HIS CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE INSTITUTIONS OF
HAWAII WERE SUBSTANTIAL
AND MATERIAL. HAWAII
IS A BETTER PLACE FOR HIS
HAVING LIVED AND WORKED.”

John A. Burns
Congressional Record, August 20, 1959

Camilo Osias

1889–1976

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1929–1935
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

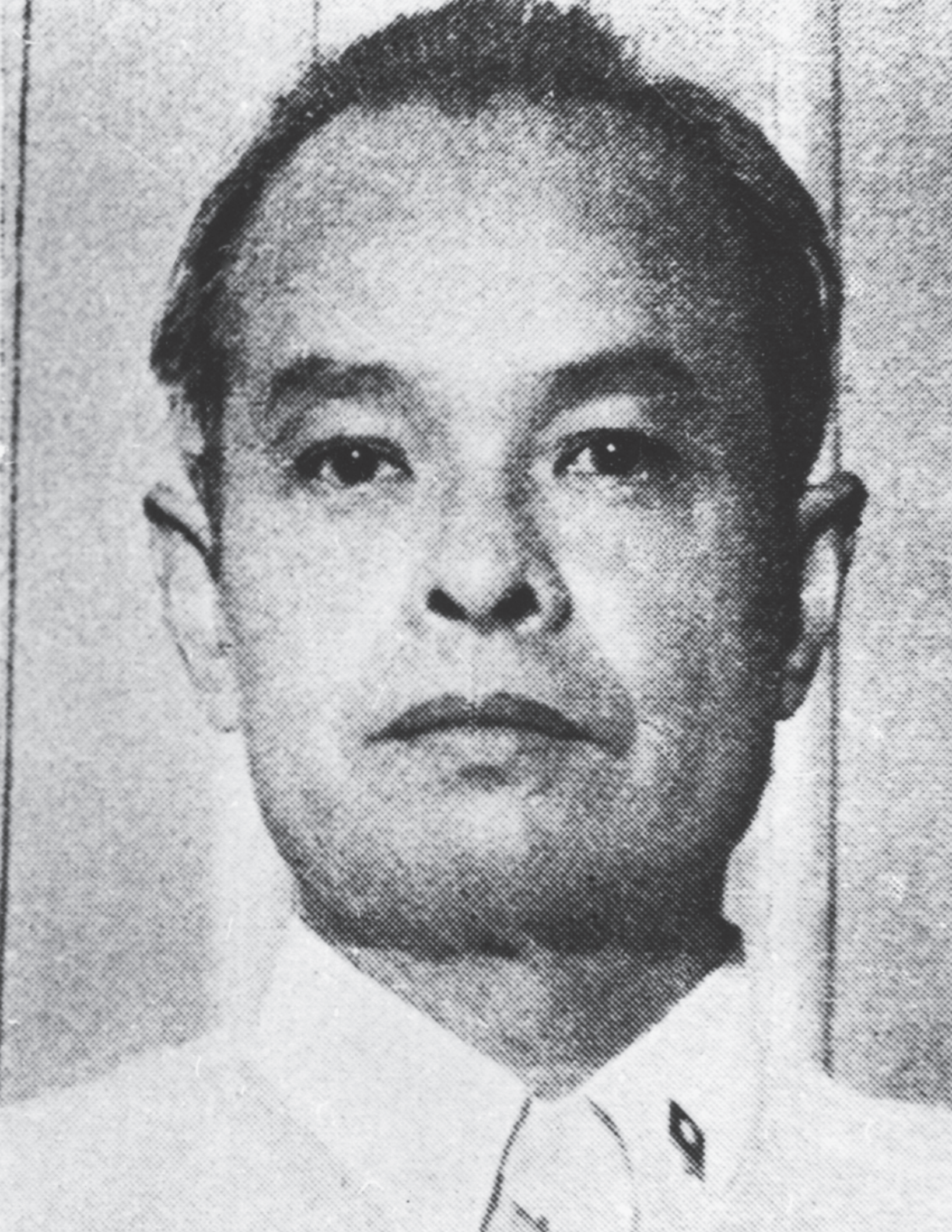
After starting his career as an educational reformer in the Philippines, Camilo Osias moved into politics in the 1920s, first as a Philippine senator and then as a Resident Commissioner in Congress. His colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives widely admired Osias for his eloquent oratory and his fervent support of immediate independence, quickly dubbing him “Mr. Philippine Freedom.”¹ His persistent advocacy paid off in 1932 with the passage of the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act, which would have put the Philippines on the road to complete independence had not a struggle for power in Manila derailed it. Osias admitted that American rule came with certain benefits, “but ... precisely because we are pleased to recognize that America has been so successful in her work in the Philippines, we now come to you and say that the greatest manifestation of gratitude that we can show you is no longer to tie ourselves to the apron strings of a benign guardian but to ask that you set us free.”²

Camilo Osias was born in Balaoan, a small town in the Philippines’ La Union Province a few miles inland from the South China Sea, on March 23, 1889. His father, Manuel Osias, was a farmer and clerk for the local justice of the peace, and his mother, Gregoria Olaviano, was a homemaker. Osias was the second youngest of four surviving siblings, two boys and two girls. Four other siblings had died in infancy. The family led a simple, modest existence, supplementing Manuel’s income by harvesting fruit from trees on their lot and repairing fishing nets. “Like most families in our community,” Osias wrote years later, “our family in hardships tilled the soil to obtain additional sustenance, worked on watery fields or in the streams for additional food, and performed chores to gain some coins to satisfy our limited wants and needs. The neighborhood was a happy and quiet place in which to lead [a] simple and frugal life.”³

As a young boy, Osias planned to become a priest, but when the Philippine Revolution erupted in 1896, he studied in San Fernando, where he quickly mastered Spanish. During the American military occupation of the Philippines, Osias became proficient in English while attending high school in Balaoan.⁴ In 1905 he was selected as a *pensionado* (a government-funded student) to study in the United States. He moved to Macomb, Illinois, to attend the Western Illinois State Teachers College, earning recognition as a stand-out public speaker and graduating in 1908. Two years later, he earned a bachelor of science degree in education from Columbia College of Columbia University in New York City. He also received a graduate degree from the Columbia University Teachers College with a specialty in school administration and supervision.⁵

After returning to the Philippines, he married Ildefonsa Cuaresma, a former public school teacher from Bacnotan, near his hometown, in 1914. The couple raised seven children, Camilo Jr., Salvador, Victor, Apolinario, Rebecca, Benjamin, and Rosita. Ildefonsa, who had headed the Philippine Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and campaigned widely for her husband in his early career, was herself a political power and formidable public speaker. “Tales of her exploits as a stump speaker during the electoral campaign when Mr. Osias was running for senator from the Second Senatorial District are, to this day, tea table bon mots,” explained a *Washington Post* profile.⁶ After more than 20 years of marriage, Camilo divorced Ildefonsa and married Avelina Lorenzana in Reno, Nevada. That marriage produced no children.⁷

When Osias first returned to the Philippines in 1910, he established himself as one of the islands’ leading educators. For several years, he taught in La Union Province before moving to Manila, where he served as the academic supervisor of city schools. From 1915 to 1916,





he worked as the first Filipino superintendent of schools in Bataan and Mindoro. He next held several high-ranking jobs in the Philippine bureau of education, including as assistant director, where he endeavored to hire more Filipino teachers and administrators.⁸ In December 1921, Osias left government service to become the first president of the private National University in Manila. During his 13-year tenure, Osias imposed curriculum reforms and raised academic standards. He was also a prolific author and traveled widely in Japan and China, speaking about educational reform.⁹

Filipino political leaders took notice of Osias early on. In 1919 Manuel L. Quezon, the islands' former Resident Commissioner who became president of the Philippine senate, invited Osias to join the first independence mission to the United States. While on Capitol Hill, Osias testified with the independence delegation before a joint hearing of the House Committee on Insular Affairs and the Senate Committee on the Philippines about how improved education has "contributed materially and greatly to the economic growth of the Philippines."¹⁰ Afterward, Ohio Senator Warren G. Harding pulled Quezon aside and told him, "If you have half a dozen men like your Osias, you are entitled to your independence."¹¹

Working with Quezon elevated Osias's profile and drew him further into politics.¹² In 1922 he returned with another independence delegation that included Quezon and pro-nationalist leaders Emilio Aguinaldo and Sergio Osmeña.¹³ While campaigning for Quezon's ticket a year later, Osias recalled, "People many a time privately told me that they would vote for me if I were the candidate."¹⁴

They had that chance in 1925, when the local Partido Nacionalista (Nationalist Party) faction nominated Osias as its candidate for the Philippine senate. As a Nacionalista, Osias was committed to the principle of "independence, immediate, absolute, and complete." For Osias, the campaign against Alejandro de Guzman for the second senatorial district "was long and arduous." He recalled, "I was on the move night and day, attending conferences, meeting leaders and voters, delivering from five to 10 speeches daily at public rallies." On Election Day, Osias

swept his way to an overwhelming majority, claiming by his own estimate the largest margin of victory ever won by a Filipino political candidate.¹⁵

Osias served in both the seventh and eighth legislatures, where his interests centered on education initiatives and infrastructure projects.¹⁶ He chaired the senate's committee on education and led a joint panel that reviewed the Philippine school system.¹⁷

On February 7, 1929, when one of the Philippines' two Resident Commissioners, Isauro Gabaldon, resigned his seat in Washington, the territorial legislature elected Osias to succeed him.¹⁸ His election had wide support, but was not without detractors mostly from the Partido Democrata (Democratic Party) who did not agree with the pro-independence agenda of the Nacionalistas. Others questioned if he was sufficiently versed in business and economics to represent the islands on vital trade questions. After a failed attempt by the opposition to challenge the constitutionality of his appointment, Osias took his seat in the House at the opening of the 71st Congress (1929–1931) during a special session called by President Herbert Hoover in April 1929.¹⁹

In most aspects, his service deviated little from the pattern established by other Philippine Resident Commissioners over the last few decades. Per House Rules, he had no vote on the House Floor, nor did he serve on any committee. Without votes to trade, he acted more like an ambassador than a legislator, lobbying key committee members and executive department officials on Philippine interests pending before the federal government.

Osias brought his wife and five children as well as a small army of staff to Washington. But unlike some of his predecessors who had amassed independent fortunes, he found the transition—traveling halfway around the world and acquiring new housing—a burden on a government salary. He embarked with just \$1,000 to help establish his entourage in the federal capital. But on the long ocean voyage to Seattle, he won \$14,000 in a poker game, which helped to ease the burden. After arriving in the capital, the Osias family bought a house once owned by Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette.²⁰



Once ensconced in Washington, Osias wasted no time designing a plan to secure complete independence for the Philippines, “the first and foremost mission expected of me by the Filipino people,” he said. It was a “complex and many-sided” issue, he acknowledged, and it “meant intensive and extensive fighting and campaigning in and out of the American Congress.”²¹

The same day he took the oath of office, Osias, his colleague Pedro Guevara, and leaders of the Philippine legislature visited Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, former governor general of the islands, to state their case for independence.²² Only months later Osias and Guevara visited President Herbert Hoover to apprise him of the warm welcome for the islands’ new governor general, Dwight F. Davis.²³

Osias quickly identified three different attitudes in Congress when it came to Philippine issues. The first group was composed of Members who supported independence for any number of reasons. The second group opposed independence either on the grounds that Filipinos were ill-prepared for it or because they favored imperial rule. The final group was simply “uninformed, uninterested, or apathetic.”²⁴

Osias spent the bulk of his time trying to win Members over to his side and build support for Philippine issues. This included lobbying each category of Member—for, against, or ambivalent—as well as delivering speeches to clubs, civic groups, churches, universities, and business groups. Osias also recalled that the process involved endless hours of committee testimony: “Guevara and I, through various means befriended members of Committees that had the remotest relations to insular affairs.”²⁵

Osias often camped out on the House Floor to follow debates, looking for opportunities to talk in support of independence, sometimes on subjects far afield from the Philippines. Once, when the House considered an appropriations bill for indigenous Indians in the territories of Alaska and Hawaii, Osias jumped to his feet and highlighted how Congress often categorized the Philippines differently than it did America’s other territories.²⁶

Afterward, a Congressman found Osias at his seat. “That speech of yours is going to cost me money,” he

ribbed the Resident Commissioner. “I just lost a bet for dinner, because I thought you cannot possibly bring in Philippine Independence in the course of your remarks on the Bill that had nothing to do with your country. And I’ll be darned if you didn’t.” “Well, for listening,” Osias replied, “I’ll foot the bill.”²⁷

With the onset of the Great Depression, Osias used the opportunity to suggest that immediate Philippine independence would reduce costs for the federal government. As the 71st Congress entered its second session and the economic crisis deepened, he became ever more strident on that issue. When competition for jobs led to violent conflict between Filipino and white workers on the West Coast, there was discussion about banning foreign laborers.

In late January 1930, Osias condemned the proposed immigration ban, pointing out that the Filipinos were still under U.S. rule. American shipping interests had recruited young Filipino men as a cheap source of labor by portraying America as a “land of opportunity and promise,” he said, before criticizing Congress for faulting Filipinos who chose to come. “But so long as we are under that flag,” he shouted, motioning to the Stars and Stripes hung behind the Speaker’s rostrum, “we will continue to enjoy its most priceless heritage—citizenship. But for the sake of our independence we are willing to become a foreign country and take our place among the foreign nations.”²⁸

Biding his time, Osias listened with “religious attention” as California Congressman Richard Welch explained his bill “to exclude certain citizens of the Philippine Islands from the United States.” When Welch finished his statement, Osias obliterated it. The bill was “violative of the spirit of justice,” “makeshift,” and “unnecessary,” he said. “What is necessary is to set us free,” Osias thundered to loud applause from the galleries. “If we are to be treated as a foreign people for purposes of immigration, we must first be given the category of a free and independent nation.”²⁹

Late in the 71st Congress, Osias went before both the House Rules Committee and the Senate Committee on Immigration to vigorously oppose a proposal to ban immigration from the Philippines. “What are we?” he



asked the somewhat hostile Senate panel. “I would like to say that the Congress of the United States can not well afford to let another generation of Filipinos go without a definite citizenship.”³⁰

Much of the debate around citizenship and independence was inextricably linked to the unique economic arrangement between the United States and the Philippines. In mid-June 1929, in some of his earliest committee testimony, Osias argued against restrictive quotas and new taxes on coconut oil and sugar in what would become the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act. He prodded the United States to live up to the ideal of free trade and argued that, by hampering the Philippine economy, the United States was hurting the robust import business of its own producers. “What America does in the Philippines is the basis of interpretation of America’s motives and principles by the peoples in the Pacific borders,” he told the Senators. “It is therefore a business and a moral asset for America to see to it that nothing that she does or omits to do ... will result in shaking the faith and confidence or lessening the friendship of the peoples in the Orient.”³¹

A month later, again before the Senate Finance Committee, Osias urged Congress to limit restrictions on Philippine trade. After lobbyists for U.S. cotton, dairy, and meat interests asked the committee to impose duties on competitive Philippine products, Osias railed against the suggestion, asking the committee for more equitable trade terms.³² Approved and signed into law in June 1930, the final Smoot–Hawley Tariff bill retained many of the existing trade provisions, as Osias had wished, but it also included a provision restricting the amount of foreign material in Filipino products.³³

By the time the 72nd Congress (1931–1933) convened in December 1931, the movement for independence had gathered supporters in Congress, and in early 1932, a bill named for Butler Hare of South Carolina, chairman of the House Insular Affairs Committee, began to move through the House. It permitted the Philippine legislature to immediately call a constitutional convention, provided for a plebiscite on the draft constitution, kept import and immigration quotas low, and implemented a full

tariff schedule on Philippine products after an eight-year transition period.³⁴ Osias believed the Hare bill was not perfect—certain provisions for a long-term U.S. military presence rankled him, for instance—but he got the sense that it was passable on Capitol Hill. He, along with senior Philippine legislators, appeared before the House Committee on Insular Affairs in early February 1932 to press for its passage.³⁵

Speaker John Nance Garner of Texas maneuvered the bill onto the floor by bringing it up under suspension of the rules, requiring a two-thirds vote after just 40 minutes of debate. This tactic prevented the powerful farm bloc from inserting amendments that would have implemented harsher tariffs and granted immediate independence.³⁶

At the end of the House debate on the Hare bill, Osias took to the floor and provided an oratorical flourish that punctuated the debate. Referencing the portraits of the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington hanging astride opposite ends of the Speaker’s rostrum, he beseeched colleagues to approve the measure. Watching from the public galleries was a large contingent of Filipinos, including Philippine house speaker Manuel Roxas and Philippine senate president Sergio Osmeña, both of whom supported the independence bill. “The thought uppermost in my mind and my fervent prayer in this hour of solemn decision is that the Members of this body may incarnate in themselves the spirit of Lafayette and Washington,” Osias declared to an ovation, “and, by their wisdom and statesmanship, bring into being another starry banner that shall symbolize sovereignty in the Philippine republic that is to be and enable the Filipino people to consummate their own glorious destiny.” With Osias watching, the House approved the Hare bill by a large majority, 306 to 47.³⁷

A separate, but similar, measure had been introduced in the Senate in early 1932 by Harry B. Hawes of Missouri and Bronson M. Cutting of New Mexico. But in a presidential election year, with opponents pushing hard to kill the bill, the Senate did not pass its version until mid-December 1932. A conference committee swiftly settled the few differences between the Hare bill and the



Hawes–Cutting measure, changing the transition period before independence to 10 years.³⁸ On December 22, the Senate approved the conference report, passing the newly named Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act; the House followed six days later without even a quorum of its members present, in a division vote of 171 to 16. “In the light of colonial records this Philippine bill, on the whole, is just, fair, and reasonable,” Osias judged.³⁹

On January 13, 1933, President Herbert Hoover vetoed the Hare–Hawes–Cutting bill, but the House quickly overrode him, 274 to 94. “A law granting us independence,” Osias reminded the chamber, “would be a crowning glory to America’s stewardship of the Philippine Islands.”⁴⁰ The Senate followed the House four days later, overriding the veto 66 to 26.⁴¹

Importantly, the final version required the Philippine legislature to approve the independence act. Insular politics immediately came into play as Manuel Quezon, concerned that Osmeña, who had helped negotiate the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act, might challenge him for political supremacy on the islands, set out to thwart the independence bill.⁴² For much of 1933, the Partido Nacionalista fractured into pro and anti factions, and on October 7, 1933, Quezon presided over a lopsided Philippine senate vote, rejecting the independence bill 15 to 4.⁴³

When Quezon began negotiating a nearly identical second independence bill, what would become the Tydings–McDuffie Act of 1934, Osias blasted him in the press for the maneuvering. In late December 1933, when Quezon led a new mission to Washington and received a chilly reception from the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the Resident Commissioner was not surprised. “It was a colossal blunder not to have accepted the bill, and then worked for a better bill later,” Osias told the *New York Times*. “Acceptance would not have jeopardized our chances to obtain a modified measure.”⁴⁴

As a result of their divergent positions on the first independence bill, Quezon pulled his support from Osias, imperiling his chances for re-election by the Philippine legislature as Resident Commissioner.⁴⁵ Osias did not take that act of political revenge quietly. He had thrown himself

unconditionally behind the Hare–Hawes–Cutting bill so fervently that he had damaged his political prospects on the islands. “This Osias is a bridge burner, all right,” one observer noted. “No matter how precious and costly a certain bridge may be, if it is his bridge he burns it. That is all a part of the Osias urge. That is in his nature. That is in his blood.”⁴⁶

Seeing the writing on the wall, Osias campaigned in the spring of 1934 for his old senatorial district seat. The controversy around the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act dominated the election, pitting those for the bill against those who opposed it, though Osias maintained that the internecine warfare over the independence act had been “wasteful, divisive, and unnecessary.” But he was on the losing end of the fight, noting that his former constituents “sacrificed” him: “My two terms as Commissioner away from the Philippines cooled the affection of the electorate toward their former Senator.”⁴⁷ Voters rejected him in the June 5 election, with Quezon actively campaigning against him.⁴⁸ The antis, under Quezon’s leadership, swept to electoral victory.

In an unusual move, Osias’s supporters in the U.S. Filipino community circulated a petition, eventually signed by more than 140 Members of Congress, requesting that the newly elected, decidedly “anti-Philippine” legislature re-elect Osias.⁴⁹ But in late August 1934, Philippine legislators backed lawyer Francisco Delgado to succeed Osias, who refused to resign his position and stayed on until the conclusion of the official end of the term of the 73rd Congress (1933–1935) in early January 1935 (the House had actually adjourned *sine die* in mid-June 1934 ahead of the fall elections).⁵⁰

After his House career, Osias continued in politics, winning election as one of the more than 200 delegates chosen to serve at the constitutional convention provided for under the terms of the Tydings–McDuffie bill. Shortly after the constitution was ratified, Osias was elected to the first national assembly, at that point a unicameral legislature in which he chaired the committee on public instruction.⁵¹

During World War II, Osias served under the KALIBAPI, the Japanese-dominated, single-party occupation government.



The Japanese later imprisoned him for his suspected pro-Americanism. He was also briefly held after the war by U.S. occupation forces on suspicion of treason, but a court later cleared him of collaboration with Japanese occupiers. After the war, Osias served two more stints in the Philippine senate, the first from 1947 to 1953 as minority floor leader, majority floor leader, and president. And the second from 1961 to 1967. In 1953 he ran for the presidency of the Philippines, but lost the nomination. Osias died in Manila on May 20, 1976, at the age of 87.⁵²

FOR FURTHER READING

Bananal, Eduardo. *Camilo Osias: Educator and Statesman* (Quezon City, PI: Manlapaz Publishing Co., 1974).

Osias, Camilo. *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks* (Quezon City, PI: Manlapaz Publishing Co., 1971).

NOTES

- 1 Camilo Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks* (Quezon City, PI: Manlapaz Publishing Co., 1971): 191–192.
- 2 *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (29 January 1930): 2649–2650.
- 3 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 17–18.
- 4 Eduardo Bananal, *Camilo Osias: Educator and Statesman* (Quezon City, PI: Manlapaz Publishing Co., 1974): 1–5.
- 5 Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 5–10; *Congressional Directory*, 73rd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1933): 129. See also “Camilo Osias,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=O000118>.
- 6 “Political Flair of Mrs. Osias Is Asset Here,” 14 October 1929, *Washington Post*: 7; “Dinner for Mrs. Osias,” 22 April 1930, *New York Times*: 34.
- 7 Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 129; *Congressional Directory*, 73rd Cong., 1st sess.: 129.
- 8 Fernando A. Bernardo, *Silent Storms: Inspiring Lives of 101 Great Filipinos* (Pasig City, PI: Anvil Publishers, 2000): 63–65.
- 9 Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1932): 50; Bernardo, *Silent Storms*: 64; “Filipino Returns to United States as High Official,” 12 April 1929, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3.
- 10 Hearings before the Senate Committee on the Philippines and the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Philippine Independence*,

66th Cong., 1st sess. (2–3 June 1919): 57–72, quotation on p. 57–58; Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 147–152; “Envoys Speak for the Filipinos,” 21 April 1919, *Christian Science Monitor*: 9.

- 11 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 149.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 147–152; Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 24–27.
- 13 Charles Edward Russell, “Delegates Coming to Urge Independence for Filipinos,” 20 March 1922, *Christian Science Monitor*: 5.
- 14 Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 26–27; Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 169–171.
- 15 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 170–171.
- 16 For a listing of the Philippine senate in the 1920s, see the Philippine senate’s historical tables at https://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/senlist.asp#sixth_leg (accessed 13 January 2016).
- 17 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 172, 176; “Filipino Returns to United States as High Official.”
- 18 “Philippine Legislature Elects Commissioners,” 8 February 1929, *Washington Post*: 9.
- 19 Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 28–30; Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 181–182.
- 20 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 181, 183–184.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 191.
- 22 “Filipinos See Stimson,” 16 April 1929, *New York Times*: 33.
- 23 “Filipinos Visit Hoover,” 22 August 1929, *New York Times*: 22.
- 24 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 191.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 191–192.
- 26 *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (13 December 1929): 626–630. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (20 December 1929): 1022–1025.
- 27 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 192–193. See also “House Applauds Philippine Appeal: Representatives Cheer Speech of Osias, Urging Immediate Independence,” 14 December 1929, *New York Times*: 4.
- 28 “Free Philippines Put Before Rights,” 30 January 1930, *New York Times*: 4. See also *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (29 January 1930): 2649–2650.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (25 March 1930): 6110.
- 30 Hearings before the House Committee on Rules, *Immigration*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (5, 10 February 1931): 69–75; Hearings before the Senate Committee on Immigration, *Suspension for Two Years of General Immigration into the United States*, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (15, 16, 18 December 1930): 50–62, quotation on p. 52.



- 31 Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Finance, *Tariff Act of 1929*, 71st Cong., 1st sess. (14–15, 17–18 June 1929): 263–271, quotation on p. 269.
- 32 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance, *Tariff Act of 1929*, 71st Cong., 1st sess. (16 July 1929): 262–263; “Protest by Filipino,” 17 July 1929, *Wall Street Journal*: 2; “Three More Tariff Protests Received,” 17 July 1929, *Washington Post*: 3.
- 33 Tariff Act of 1930, Public Law 71-361, 46 Stat. 590 (1930).
- 34 Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929–1946* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965): 90.
- 35 Hearing before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Independence for the Philippine Islands*, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (9 February 1932): 352–371, quotation on p. 352.
- 36 “House Votes to Free Philippines in 1940; Stimson Is Opposed,” 5 April 1932, *New York Times*: 1; *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (4 April 1932): 7401–7412.
- 37 *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (4 April 1932): 7411. Osias also delivered a longer address the day after the vote. See *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (5 April 1932): 7480–7484.
- 38 Friend, *Between Two Empires*: 96.
- 39 For the House debate, see *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (29 December 1932): 1075–1095, Osias quotation on p. 1095.
- 40 *Congressional Record*, House, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (13 January 1933): 1764.
- 41 Friend, *Between Two Empires*: 106–108; “Hail Defeat of Veto: Filipino Commissioners Call Independence Grant Unprecedented,” 18 January 1933, *New York Times*: 2.
- 42 Nick Cullather, “Philippines,” in *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, ed. Donald C. Bacon, Roger H. Davidson, and Morton Keller (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 1543; Friend, *Between Two Empires*: 131–132. For Hare–Hawes–Cutting, see Public Law 72-311, 47 Stat. 761 (1933).
- 43 Friend, *Between Two Empires*: 129–130.
- 44 “Filipinos in Dispute on Independence,” 26 December 1933, *New York Times*: 5; “Filipino Leaders to Ignore Osias,” 27 December 1933, *New York Times*: 8.
- 45 “Osias Will Return to D.C. Tomorrow,” 22 December 1933, *Washington Post*: 12; “Filipinos Reappoint Guevara, Drop Osias,” 21 August 1934, *Christian Science Monitor*: 5.
- 46 Juan A. Cabildo, “What of Camilo Osias?,” 22 August 1943, *Philippines Herald Magazine*: 10, 19, 21, quotation on p. 21.
- 47 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 220–221.
- 48 “Filipinos Reappoint Guevara, Drop Osias,” 21 August 1943, *Christian Science Monitor*: 5.
- 49 James G. Wingo, “141 Congressmen Want Osias Back,” 25 August 1934, *Philippine Free Press*: 38.
- 50 “Osias Will Not Resign Position,” 23 August 1934, *Philippine Herald*: 3.
- 51 Osias, *The Story of a Long Career of Varied Tasks*: 222–227.
- 52 “Osias, Statesman, Dies at 87; FM Pays Tribute,” 21 May 1976, *Philippines Bulletin Today*: 16; “Osias, 87, Dies,” 21 May 1976, *Philippines Daily Express*: 3; Bananal, *Camilo Osias*: 53–86, 108–120.

Francisco A. Delgado

1886–1964

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1934–1936
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Francisco Delgado served little more than a year as the Philippine Islands' Resident Commissioner, bridging the brief period between passage of the landmark Tydings–McDuffie Act of 1934 and the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1936. Delgado spent his time in Washington mostly as a caretaker, protecting Philippine interests by criticizing tariffs and taxes that threatened to restrict economic growth. “There is a fine market in the Philippines for American goods, provided that the buying capacity of the Filipinos is not reduced,” Delgado told a House committee. “But every time that you pass legislation which in any way hampers, or is liable to hamper, the economic situation out there, wages are affected, values go down, and, of course, when the laboring man earns less, he has less money, no matter what you do in the way of tariff legislation, he cannot buy anything but what he can afford, whether he likes it or not.”¹

Francisco Afan Delgado was born in Bulacan, Bulacan Province, Philippines, on January 25, 1886, to Nemesio and Manuela Afan Delgado. His mother hoped that he would become a priest, but Delgado was drawn toward a career in law after serving as a stenographer for a judge. He studied at San Juan de Letran and Ateneo de Manila schools for his primary education. He also attended Colegio Filipino, a law school. As a *pensionado* (a student sent by the government to study abroad), he attended Compton High School in Compton, California, for his senior year. He later recalled that his motto as a student was “Industry and Concentration.” He was among the first group of Filipino students to study in the United States and “a member of the brain aristocracy of his times,” according to a later observer.²

Delgado moved to Bloomington, Indiana, and earned a bachelor of laws degree at Indiana University in 1907. He

then attended the University of Chicago and Yale, earning a master of laws degree at the latter school in 1908. After graduation, Delgado passed the Indiana state bar and briefly worked in an Indianapolis law firm. According to one source, he was the first Filipino to serve as an active member of the American Bar Association. He eventually led the Philippines Bar Association and directed the International Bar Association. Delgado married Rosario Montenegro in 1915, and the couple had three children, Rosario, Concepcion, and Arturo.³

When Delgado returned to the Philippines in 1908, he was employed as a law clerk and later as chief of the legal division of the executive bureau. In 1913 he left government service to start his own law firm, where he worked for the next two decades building a reputation as one of the islands' top lawyers. During World War I, Delgado served in the Philippine national guard and was a member of the islands' national council of defense.⁴

In June 1931, Delgado won popular election to the Philippine house of representatives, where he represented Bulacan, his home province. He was re-elected to a second term in June 1934.⁵ Delgado chaired the committee on external relations, a panel specially created by the legislature to help in the transition from colonial rule to independence.⁶

In the legislature, Delgado often won arguments by combining his natural charisma with sheer willpower. He was “handsome ... with an aristocratic moustache,” the *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine* said in 1934. Colleagues respected him and often bent to his forceful, lawyerly arguments. “When he is discussing important bills and wants them to be approved, he ... pounds the table, and issues forth arguments after arguments, and delivers the goods home.”⁷

On August 22, 1934, by unanimous resolution, the Philippine house of representatives, with the senate





concurring, elected Delgado as Resident Commissioner to the post being vacated by Camilo Osias.⁸ On the same day, the senate, with the backing of President Manuel L. Quezon, chose Pedro Guevara to another term in the other Resident Commissioner post.⁹ The *Herald* welcomed the selection of Delgado, calling it an “appointment that inspires the confidence that our case in the United States will be in safe keeping.”¹⁰ Delgado’s work on the external relations committee made him familiar with the issues and ensured he would follow the legislature’s instructions. Moreover, the *Herald* observed, “he knows the peculiar American psychology.”¹¹

But for a man used to being in the center of things, there was concern that Delgado would “feel homesick in Congress.” On Capitol Hill, the *Herald* noted, “he will be expected to discuss only matters that pertain to the Philippines, and only when some congressman implores the speaker that the privilege of the floor be extended to him.”¹²

Delgado headed to Washington during a unique, uncertain period in Philippine history. When Congress passed the Tydings–McDuffie Act in April 1934, the very nature of the Philippines’ relationship with the United States changed: as a first step toward independence, the islands quickly drafted and approved a constitution creating the commonwealth of the Philippines. As a result, Delgado inherited a responsibility devoid of what had traditionally been the Resident Commissioner’s foremost political concern.¹³

With the establishment of the commonwealth, many Filipinos began focusing on other issues. Moreover, Congress had grown less hospitable to Philippine concerns now that the islands were on the path to independence. As a result, Delgado faced strong headwinds delivering his message in Washington. The vocal isolationist camp on Capitol Hill was unreceptive, eager to wash their hands of U.S. entanglements in the Pacific, and commercial interests, especially the powerful southern agriculture sector which had for decades competed with Philippine exports, looked to stifle trade and regain to expand its market share.

Delgado also did not have much time to pursue an agenda in the House: He and Guevara were the last

Resident Commissioners elected by the territorial legislature. For the previous 30 years, the Philippines had sent Resident Commissioners to Congress in pairs, one elected by the assembly and the other by the commission. Under Tydings–McDuffie, however, the new Philippine Commonwealth agreed to a change limiting the islands to only one Resident Commissioner appointed by President Quezon. Delgado’s term, like Guevara’s, was set to expire once a constitutional convention had been held and the new form of government ratified. The compressed legislative schedule for the 74th Congress (1935–1937) also worked against Delgado. The House adjourned *sine die* in late August 1935 and did not come back until early January 1936 for the next session, about a month before Delgado’s term in office lapsed.

Delgado’s first significant statement as Resident Commissioner, given in an interview with the *New York Times*, revealed that he and Guevara were not on the same page. Both hoped to maintain the strong commercial relationship with the States, but the two disagreed about Japan’s goals in the Pacific.¹⁴ Even as Japan bolstered its navy, Delgado downplayed the threat of Japanese expansion, claiming that it had no “immediate intentions” toward the Philippines or its resources, and rejected the idea that the United States should boost its military presence. He went on to suggest that the Philippines could become “the Switzerland of the Far East”—a neutral country without a military, he added. “Our strength will lie in our weakness.”¹⁵

The unevenness of that approach—rejecting the U.S. military while pressing for a preferential economic relationship with Washington—seemed to contradict Quezon and Guevara, who accepted that the price of maintaining special access to U.S. markets would be an ongoing political relationship. Otherwise friendly observers in Manila looked dimly on Delgado’s statement. “Such sophistry and naïveté on the part of the new resident commissioner reminds one indeed of Osias in his first days on Capitol Hill,” declared the *Philippines Free Press*. “The more Delgado talks the more he sounds like his predecessor.”¹⁶



When the 74th Congress opened in January 1935, Delgado took the oath of office and settled into his office in the House Office Building (now the Cannon building). Since House Rules prevented Delgado from serving on committees or voting on the House Floor, he treated his role in much the same manner as his predecessors, more like a diplomat than a legislator. Delgado made connections with prominent Filipinos living in the States, including Vicente Villamin, an economist and the head of the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce. He testified before congressional committees and lobbied key lawmakers and administration officials in the War and Treasury Departments. For a legislator without any actual legislative power, he worked to build personal relationships and expected to entertain colleagues at his home in Washington. “We have to do this to make up for our lack of a vote in Congress,” he explained. “I don’t want to be a four-flusher but I don’t want to be called stingy either. I will stay within my means and do my best.”¹⁷

The first time Delgado appeared before a congressional committee was on February 5, 1935, when he testified before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry to address the precipitous decline in Philippine imports of finished U.S. cotton products and the massive inroads made by Japanese exporters in 1934. After the United States raised rates on Philippine exports, he noted, the purchasing power of the average Filipino plummeted. But Japanese goods were cheaper and, by 1935, accounted for more than half the textile imports.¹⁸

Delgado struck a theme he repeated throughout his tenure, that Filipinos could only be good consumers of U.S. products if they had money in their pockets.¹⁹ If U.S. agricultural interests “look at the commerce between our two countries in its entirety and from a national viewpoint,” he told the committee, “they will reach the conclusion that it is as much to their best interests, as it is to ours to maintain and reinforce the purchasing power of the Philippine people by encouraging their material development and refraining from advocating legislation that might blight or blast their economic life.”²⁰ It was not enough for the Philippines to simply hike tariff rates on Japanese goods, he said. America

and the Philippines needed a long-term deal to keep supply up and prices down.²¹

The same day he offered his inaugural testimony, Delgado appeared as a witness before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization to testify on a repatriation program for unemployed Filipinos living in the United States. While he understood why the United States would want to send the jobless back to the Philippines, he encouraged the committee to make repatriation voluntary and to allow repatriates to later return to the United States, arguing in both cases that this would encourage Filipinos to return to the islands.²²

But the overwhelming bulk of Delgado’s legislative emphasis concerned tariffs, taxes, and quota reductions that adversely affected the Philippines’ primary agricultural exports. In May 1935, for instance, Delgado testified before a special House subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee, protesting the implementation of a special 10-cent-per-pound tax on U.S.-produced oleomargarine that used unprocessed imported fats or oils as ingredients.²³ That excise tax would have doubled the rates set by the Revenue Act of 1934 (H.R. 7835).²⁴

According to Delgado, the taxes in both the existing law and the new bill—H.R. 5587, authored by Richard Kleberg of Texas—encouraged American oleomargarine makers to replace Philippine coconut oil with domestic cottonseed oil to save money.²⁵ Delgado cast the Kleberg bill as an especially egregious “violation of the covenant and trade agreements” established in the Tydings–McDuffie Act. Moreover, he said, the high taxes threatened to ruin America’s reputation in the Philippines and “mar the high plane and moral value” that previous policies had helped create.²⁶

The Kleberg bill never cleared committee, but the 5-cent coconut oil excise tax that had been inserted into the 1934 revenue bill was included in the annual revenue bill in the summer of 1935. When the Revenue Act of 1935 (H.R. 8947) came to the House Floor for consideration in late August, Delgado again denounced the coconut oil tax as “a flagrant violation of the trade compact contained in the Tydings–McDuffie Act.”²⁷ Several days



later, after passing both the House and Senate, the revenue bill, complete with the new tax, was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

During the 74th Congress, Delgado also attacked the Jones–Costigan Act of 1934 as especially injurious to the Philippines’ sugar industry, particularly since federal officials had persistently urged Philippine sugar producers to increase their crop for more than a decade. But now that yearly production had been ramped up to about 1.5 million long tons, Jones–Costigan limited duty-free entry of Philippine sugar to the United States to just 850,000 tons, leaving the islands with a huge surplus. “What perplexes us is that you virtually tell us in this law of March 24, 1934, to make preparation to enter the competitive markets of the world, on the one hand, and on the other you set up barriers in that same law that would render such preparations impossible of realization,” he said.²⁸

Delgado also sought to secure a nearly \$24 million line of credit for the Philippines through the U.S. Treasury that Congress had authorized in the 73rd Congress (1933–1935). The act was intended to offset losses incurred by the commonwealth’s reserve fund in the United States when Treasury officials failed to convert a nearly \$56 million Philippine deposit into gold. When the price of gold increased a short while later, the Philippines missed out on millions in profit. The line of credit at the Treasury Department was meant to cover the difference.²⁹

Congress, however, had only authorized the Treasury credit and had yet to appropriate the funds to pay for it, and, by the time Delgado arrived in Congress, the Senate was considering whether to repeal the credit altogether.³⁰ In early January 1935, Delgado and Guevara appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee to try and convince it to approve the necessary funds to cover the credit. In oral and written testimony, the Resident Commissioners pointed out that not only did the credit have the backing of the White House and the Treasury and War Departments, it had also been codified into law.³¹ Despite their impassioned plea, the issue remained unresolved by the end of Delgado’s term. The Senate eventually passed a measure to repeal the credit, and Delgado’s successor, Quintin Paredes, took up the cause again in 1936.

In the fall of 1935, Delgado ushered a large congressional delegation trip to the Philippines to attend the inauguration of Manuel Quezon as commonwealth president. It was a lavish, around-the-world junket funded by the commonwealth, which Delgado called a necessary “gesture of goodwill” and demonstrated “the profound gratitude and friendship” between the United States and the Philippines. Nearly 50 Members of Congress joined Vice President John Nance Garner in attending the inauguration.³² This was, in some aspects, part of a larger lobbying and diplomatic effort by commonwealth officials to convince key members of Congress to revise harmful trade provisions in Tydings–McDuffie and other bills.³³

On February 14, 1936, when the Philippines inaugurated its commonwealth government, Delgado’s term of service in the House came to an end. Earlier the *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine* had predicted the islands would call on Delgado for some other service, “knowing that whatever task is assigned or sacrifice demanded of him, he will always be at the service with the best that there is in him.”³⁴ President Quezon appointed Delgado to serve as an appeals court justice in the Philippines, where he remained for about a year.³⁵ For much of the next decade, he worked as a private attorney.

In 1945 President Harry Truman appointed Delgado to the Philippine War Damage Commission. Confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Delgado served in that capacity for five years. He also served as a delegate to the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco in 1945. Delgado was elected to the Philippine senate and served there from 1951 to 1957.³⁶ From September 1958 to January 1962, he served as the Philippines’ ambassador to the United Nations. Delgado died in Manila on October 27, 1964.³⁷

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (30 July 1935): 12127. This is part of Delgado’s testimony before a House Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Agriculture, which he inserted into the *Record*. The full transcript is on pages 12122–12131. See also Alfonso Ponce Enrile, “An Appraisal of F. A. Delgado,” 27 November 1935, *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine*: 5.



- 2 Francisco Delgado, Box 46, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress* Research Collection, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives; Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Co., 1932): 197–199; “Our Resident Commissioners,” 25 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: n.p.
- 3 *Congressional Directory*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935): 130; Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines*: 197–199.
- 4 “Francisco A. Delgado,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000218>.
- 5 *Congressional Directory*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess.: 130.
- 6 Eugenio E. Santos, “Within The Committee Rooms,” 22 August 1934, *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine*: 7, 23.
- 7 Santos, “Within The Committee Rooms”: 7.
- 8 Creed F. Cox (War Department) to South Trimble (Clerk of the House), 12 October 1934, House Committee on Elections, 74A-J1, Record Group 233, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC; President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Speaker Joseph Byrns, 3 January 1935, House Committee on Elections, 74A-J1, Record Group 233, NARA.
- 9 “Solons Select New P.I. Envoys to Washington,” 21 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 10 “A Happy Choice,” 22 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: 4; “Guevara, Delgado Elected to Congress Posts by Legislature,” 22 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 11 “Our Resident Commissioners”; “Delgado Promises to Abide by Legislature And Heads,” 23 August 1934, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 12 “Our Resident Commissioners.”
- 13 Enrile, “An Appraisal of F. A. Delgado”: 5.
- 14 “Philippine Plots by Japan Scouted,” 30 December 1934, *New York Times*: 15; *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (6 February 1935): 1617.
- 15 “Philippine Plots by Japan Scouted.”
- 16 James G. Wingo, “Delgado Doings; Immediate Withdrawal Proposal,” 16 February 1935, *Philippines Free Press*: 9.
- 17 Wingo, “Delgado Doings; Immediate Withdrawal Proposal.”
- 18 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, *Causes of the Loss of Export Trade and the Means of Recovery*, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (5 February 1935): 457–463.
- 19 “Philippines Seek a Trade Exchange,” 25 December 1934, *Washington Post*: 2.
- 20 *Causes of the Loss of Export Trade and the Means of Recovery*: 461.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 462.
- 22 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Extending the Time for Voluntary Return of Unemployed Filipinos to the Philippines*, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (5–6 February 1935): 26–30.
- 23 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (30 July 1935): 12122–12131; Hearing before a Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture, *Oleomargarine*, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (May–July 1935): 92–96.
- 24 Revenue Act of 1934, Public Law 73-216, 48 Stat. 680 (1934).
- 25 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (30 July 1935): 12125.
- 26 Hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture, *Trade Relations with the Philippines*, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (28 May 1935): 303–304.
- 27 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (24 August 1935): 14636–14637.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 14638.
- 29 “Monetary Issue Tangles Affairs of Philippines,” 15 February 1936, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; Public Law 73-419, 48 Stat. 1115 (1934).
- 30 “From Across the Sea,” 20 March 1936, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 16; Vicente Albano Pacis, “After the Ball,” 16 March 1936, *Washington Post*: 9; “Monetary Issue Tangles Affairs of Philippines.”
- 31 Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, *Second Deficiency Appropriations Bill for 1935*, 74th Cong., 1st sess. (June 1935): 90–101.
- 32 “Philippines to Be Host,” 11 September 1935, *New York Times*: 5; “Garner Acclaimed by Seattle Throng,” 16 October 1935, *New York Times*: 18.
- 33 Enrile, “An Appraisal of F. A. Delgado”: 5.
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 “Francisco A. Delgado,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000218>.
- 36 Philippines Senate, “Francisco A. Delgado,” Former Senators’ Profiles, http://www.senate.gov.ph/senators/former_senators/francisco_delgado.htm (accessed 21 December 2015).
- 37 “Francisco A. Delgado,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000218>; “Delgado, Former UN Envoy, Dies,” 28 October 1964, *Manila Chronicle*: 1.

Samuel Wilder King

1886–1959

DELEGATE 1935–1943
REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

Samuel Wilder King dedicated his life to Hawaiian statehood, but he died shortly before his dream was realized. King had long advocated for his home to become an equal and vital part of the American nation, consistently characterizing the Hawaiian people as being quintessential American citizens. A veteran of both World Wars and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he fought both literally and figuratively for Hawaiians' democratic freedoms for more than 40 years. In a 1937 congressional hearing for statehood, King proudly noted that the "agitation for statehood is more my responsibility than that of any other individual."¹

Samuel Wilder King was born in Honolulu on the island of Oahu, in the Kingdom of Hawaii, on December 17, 1886. He was the son of James A. King, a shipping magnate and minister of the interior for the Republic of Hawaii, and Charlotte Holmes Davis, part-Hawaiian descendant of Oliver Holmes, chief and governor of the island of Oahu. Samuel attended St. Louis School in Honolulu and graduated from Honolulu High School. King's generation came of age during the turbulent period in Hawaiian history that saw the overthrow of the Native Hawaiian monarchy and the establishment of the white-dominated republic that preceded American annexation. King embraced his new nation. In 1905 he was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy by Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, one of the earliest Native Hawaiians to enter the academy after Victor S. (Kaleoaloha) Houston.² After graduation in 1910, King entered the Navy and served in World War I. In 1912 he married Pauline Evans, and together they had five children, Charlotte, Samuel P., Davis, Evans, and Pauline.³ He retired from the Navy in 1924 as a lieutenant commander, remaining in the Navy Reserve until 1928. After his retirement, King settled into the real estate business in Hawaii.

King began speaking out for Native Hawaiians nationally as early as 1924, when he wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* titled "Lo, the Poor Nordic," passionately defending them against mainland stereotypes and lifting up his former patron, the late "Prince Kuhio," for his support of the Hawaiian Homes Act, designed to encourage modern farming on the island.⁴ King campaigned actively for the Republican Party, serving as a precinct worker in Oahu for several years. In 1932 he was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the Honolulu board of supervisors, now the city council, and later that year won election to a three-year term. He also served on the three-member Home Rule Commission, which visited Washington, DC, in 1933 to blunt any efforts to revise the Organic Act of the territory to replace government officers with nonresidents.⁵

Following his 1932 re-election loss to Democrat Lincoln McCandless, respected Republican Delegate Victor Houston mulled his political future, leaving the party in limbo heading into the 1934 elections. Houston refused to officially comment on his future plans until the summer of 1934. In the meantime, King returned from Washington, DC, disheartened by Congress's casual response to Hawaiian concerns. In an action that seemingly sidelined Houston, King immediately declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination. "Upon my return from Washington last November, I felt so deeply the false position Hawaii had been put into in Washington," he said, "that I expressed my willingness to be a candidate for delegate from Hawaii."⁶

Running unopposed in the Republican primary freed King to campaign almost exclusively on the cause nearest his heart: achieving statehood for the islands.⁷ Meanwhile, McCandless narrowly won the Democratic primary, fending off charges that he had placed personal ambition





before the needs of the electorate.⁸ On the campaign stump, King pointed to congressional Republicans' support for the sugar industry and recent opposition to a 1933 bill seeking to supplant the territorial governor with a mainland appointee as proof that the GOP was friendlier to Hawaiian interests.⁹ The *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* endorsed the Republican and his argument that islanders owed a debt to the GOP. The *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* also hastened to point out King's naval service and his relative youth compared to the 75-year-old McCandless.¹⁰

In the November election, King won 51 percent of the vote, defeating McCandless by fewer than 2,000 votes out of the roughly 61,000 cast. McCandless contested the election, but his protest did not prevent King's seating at the opening of the session. Ultimately, the House committee overseeing the election found no evidence of the fraud and voter intimidation that McCandless had alleged. The committee faulted King for failing to file timely reports of his campaign expenditures, violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Corrupt Practices Act. The Elections Committee, however, decided "that a strict interpretation of the requirements of the law ... might result in a wrong and injustice to the contestee and cloud a distinguished and honorable career." McCandless's case was dismissed in May 1936.¹¹

King arrived in the capital in late December 1934 to the welcome of many former Navy friends.¹² He prioritized securing important territorial rights for Hawaii, with the ultimate goal of statehood. To that end, King requested to be placed on eight committees, all, he explained, "which have matters of vital interests to the Territory of Hawaii before them."¹³ In the 74th Congress (1935–1937), leadership granted his request and he took seats on all eight committees: Agriculture; Immigration and Naturalization; Merchant Marine and Fisheries; Military Affairs; Naval Affairs; Post Office and Post Roads; Public Lands; and Territories. He later joined the Committee on Rivers and Harbors in the 75th Congress (1937–1939) and the Committee on Insular Affairs in the 76th Congress (1939–1941).

One of the first bills King submitted sought to grant Hawaii a constitution, state government, and admission

to the Union. The bill quietly died after field hearings in Honolulu in October 1935. Frustrated, King took a different tack. In conjunction with Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland, who submitted S. Con. Res. 18, King introduced a concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 20) to form a joint committee on Hawaii primarily to investigate the possibility of Hawaiian statehood. In debate over the resolution, King insisted, "There is no argument against Hawaii as to size, as to numbers, as to wealth, as to its capacity to maintain a republican form of government, nor as to the historical obligation of the United States to at some time grant it statehood."¹⁴ The committee, chaired by Utah Senator William H. King, organized in the fall of 1937 aboard the USS *Malolo* headed towards Honolulu. During the month of October, the committee held 17 hearings on the islands on Hawaii's potential for statehood.¹⁵ Despite King's personal popularity and his continued lobbying as a member of the committee, it ultimately recommended in early 1938 that the question of statehood be deferred until the "sentiment of the people" could be decided.¹⁶ King was critical of the process. "A period of 16 days is really not enough time in which to get the whole picture of Hawaii," he lamented on the final day of hearings.¹⁷

In response to the joint committee's report, King waged a two-front campaign for statehood. The statehood plebiscite that he had urged at home on the islands eventually reached the ballot in 1940. Fearing the sudden ascendant militarism in Japan, Hawaii avoided the question of "immediate" statehood on the ballot. Many politicians viewed the sizable population of Japanese immigrants on the island as a security threat. Intolerance simmered in the months prior to the plebiscite as Japanese-American citizens were terminated from defense jobs and rumors spread of the immigrant community's support for the Japanese military. In the last push before the plebiscite, King returned home to personally campaign for statehood in an attempt to distract from the narrative of barely contained racial conflict. The plebiscite ultimately succeeded with 67 percent of voters confirming a preference for statehood. However, the vague wording scuttled any momentum King had hoped to wrest from its passage.¹⁸



In Washington, at the beginning of the 76th Congress, he once more reintroduced a bill for Hawaiian statehood. Addressing concerns that Hawaii was populated by a large number of noncitizens, King sponsored measures designed to create pathways to citizenship for these inhabitants. Both of his immigration bills were reported out of the Immigration and Naturalization Committee without amendment, and King's bill (H.R. 159) to naturalize all Hawaiian women born prior to Hawaiian annexation passed both chambers by unanimous consent and became law in July 1940. King continued to offer bills expanding citizenship for inhabitants of Hawaii, viewing each bill as a stepping stone to statehood.

King often pointed to the obstructive nature of the Organic Act in managing Hawaiian affairs when the territorial government found its progress stymied by federal law. He submitted bills to allow for the reapportionment of Hawaii's legislature in 1939 and 1940, insisting that reapportionment had "lagged behind" the population shifts on the islands. He cajoled the House to release the bills from the Committee on Territories, where they languished, in order that Hawaiian citizens of "each economic group" would receive "proportionate membership in the legislature" rather than be controlled by the more densely populated island of Oahu.¹⁹

King also prioritized the needs of the key Hawaiian agriculture industry. He criticized a provision in the 1937 sugar bill (H.R. 7667) that prohibited Hawaii from refining sugar and placed a quota on the importation of the islands' sugar, the primary crop in the territory. President Franklin D. Roosevelt initially promised to veto the measure unless the provisions limiting Hawaiian imports were stripped from the bill. When challenged on the quota, the bill's proponents cited poor working conditions in Hawaii, which King rejected out of hand. The Members making these claims "have never been to the islands and have never seen the community," he insisted. He leaned on the Texas delegation, many of whom were longtime allies of Hawaiian Delegates in Congress. Backed by Majority Leader Sam Rayburn, Agriculture Committee Chairman John Marvin Jones submitted a cursory amendment to

remove the offending quotas, but they confined their speeches largely to praise of the Roosevelt administration for the expected veto. The amendment predictably failed, and, worse, Roosevelt's promised veto never came. Attempting to make the best of a frustrating law, King admitted that the bill at least offered "recognition of our status as a domestic producer."²⁰

King ran unopposed in the 1936 primary and went on to win the general election against Democrat Bertram Rivenburgh with nearly 70 percent of the vote.²¹ In 1938 he defeated Democrat David Trask with 59 percent of the vote. King then ran unopposed in 1940, the same year he shepherded a plebiscite on statehood to passage by a margin of 2 to 1. King declared himself "deeply gratified" with Hawaiian voters heading into the 77th Congress (1941–1943), hoping to generate support in Congress off the strength of the vote.²²

In the wake of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Oahu, King urged full-scale war on Japan to "destroy her as a military power."²³ The Delegate spent much of his time traveling to and from his home territory to report on the situation and aftereffects of martial law. He praised the Hawaiian people who helped fight off the Japanese assault and assisted in the rebuilding. Japanese aggression had inspired "a deep anger and unity of purpose," King remarked, "which might otherwise have been more slowly acquired."²⁴

On October 8, 1942, King abandoned his candidacy for a fifth term, despite receiving more votes in the primary than any Hawaiian candidate of either party combined, and instead re-entered the Navy Reserve as a lieutenant commander. "I cannot remain in civil life when the training I received as a naval officer may better serve our country's present needs in active service," King declared in a radio address to the islands, announcing his decision.²⁵ "Now, with a war on," he remarked in the closing days of his final term, "I feel that Uncle Sam deserves to realize something on the four year investment he made in me many years ago."²⁶

King joined a select group of Representatives who left the House for military service.²⁷ During World War II, he was stationed in the Pacific, where he helped



coordinate the attack on Saipan. He retired from the Navy permanently in 1946, having attained the rank of captain. Returning home, he once again took up the banner of statehood, serving as a charter member of the Hawaii Statehood Commission from 1947 to 1953 and as chairman beginning in 1949.²⁸ In 1950 delegates to the Hawaiian constitutional convention unanimously voted him president of the proceedings.²⁹

In 1953 King was nominated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve as territorial governor of Hawaii. In his nomination hearing before the Committee on the Interior and Insular Affairs, he was enthusiastically recommended by his longtime friend and ally, Delegate Joseph Farrington. “The people of Hawaii believe,” said Farrington, “that Samuel Wilder King is better equipped than any other man in the Territory to meet the unique responsibilities of that office at the present time.”³⁰ The committee unanimously approved his nomination, making him the first territorial governor of Hawaiian ancestry. His appointment coincided with the Democratic revolution of 1954 that swept Republicans out of elected office in the territory. During his governorship, King made liberal use of his veto, which prompted Democrats in the legislature to propose a more gradual approach to statehood, beginning with the right for Hawaiians to elect their own governor.³¹ King served as governor until his abrupt resignation on July 31, 1957, when he was passed over for a second term.³² Afterwards, King resumed his real estate business. He then won election as a Republican to the territorial house of representatives in 1958.

Though King long stated he hoped to be the first governor of the state of Hawaii as soon as statehood was achieved, he fell ill and died of a heart attack on March 24, 1959, following major surgery. Only a week prior President Eisenhower had signed the Hawaii Admission Act, and Hawaii entered the Union as the 50th state on August 21, 1959.

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Hawaii State Archives (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1905–1959, 40.3 linear feet. The Samuel Wilder King papers primarily document his service as Hawaii’s Delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives, but also include

material on his business career and his service in the U.S. Navy. The collection includes correspondence, subject files, speeches, campaign and bill files, and covers such topics as Hawaii statehood, agricultural issues, and public works projects.

NOTES

- 1 *Congressional Record*, House, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (21 August 1937): 9624–9627.
- 2 Rod Ohira, “King Refused ‘2nd-class’ Citizenship for Hawaii,” 27 September 1999, *Hawaiian Star-Bulletin*: n.p.
- 3 “Islanders Pay Their Last Tribute to King,” 31 March 1959, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1.
- 4 Samuel Wilder King, “Lo, the Poor Nordic,” 13 April 1924, *New York Times*: 19.
- 5 Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984): 59.
- 6 “Samuel Wilder King to Seek Delegate Office,” 8 July 1934, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 1.
- 7 Bell, *Last Among Equals*: 62.
- 8 “Wilson-Wright Combine, Claim Of McCandless,” 21 September 1934, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 7.
- 9 “Bitterness Enters Campaign Finale,” 4 October 1934, *Honolulu Advertiser*: 1.
- 10 Editorial, “Samuel Wilder King for Delegate,” 10 October 1934, *Honolulu Advertiser*.
- 11 House Committee on Elections No. 2, *Contested Election Case of Lincoln Loy McCandless, Contestant, Versus Samuel Wilder King, Contestee, from the Territory of Hawaii*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 2736 (1936): 1–3; *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 June 1936): 8705.
- 12 “Samuel W. King To Arrive Soon From Hawaii,” 1 December 1934, *Washington Post*: 13.
- 13 Arguments and Hearings before the House Elections Committee No. 2, *Lincoln Loy McCandless v. Samuel Wilder King*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (2–3 March 1936): 129.
- 14 *Congressional Record*, House, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (21 August 1937): 9624–9627.
- 15 Hearings before the Joint Committee on Hawaii, *Statehood for Hawaii*, 75th Cong., 2nd. sess. (6–22 October 1937): v, 1–3.
- 16 Edward C. Krauss, “Statehood for Hawaii?,” 20 March 1938, *Los Angeles Times*: A4.
- 17 *Statehood for Hawaii*: 555.
- 18 Bell, *Last Among Equals*: 67–74.
- 19 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 76th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 April 1940): 1816–1821.



- 20 “Sugar Bill Voted; House Defies Veto,” 7 August 1937, *New York Times*: 1; “Approves New Sugar Act,” 4 September 1937, *New York Times*: 27.
- 21 “Voting Heavy in Hawaii,” 4 October 1936, *New York Times*: 44; *Congressional Directory*, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1937): 129.
- 22 Radford Mobley, “Hawaii Looks Toward Statehood,” 2 November 1940, *Christian Science Monitor*: WM7; “Hawaii Votes For Statehood in Plebiscite,” 7 November 1940, *Atlanta Constitution*: n.p.; Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977): 603.
- 23 Robert C. Albright, “Joint Session Will Get War Message Today,” 8 December 1941, *Washington Post*: 1.
- 24 “Sees Pearl Harbor Gains: Hawaiian Delegate Says Anger of U.S. Spurs War,” 3 January 1942, *New York Times*: 3.
- 25 *Congressional Record*, Appendix, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 October 1942): A3845; “King, Hawaii Delegate, Won’t Seek Reelection,” 9 October 1942, *Washington Post*: B17.
- 26 Hope Ridings Miller, “Finishing Fourth Term in Congress, Delegate King Looks Forward to New Assignment—In the Navy,” 20 November 1942, *Washington Post*: B12.
- 27 “Samuel Wilder King,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000214>.
- 28 Ohira, “King Refused ‘2nd-class’ Citizenship for Hawaii.”
- 29 “King Led in Political, Military, Civic Fields,” 25 March 1959, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*: 1A.
- 30 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Nomination of Samuel Wilder King*, 83rd Cong., 1st sess. (19 February 1953): 2.
- 31 “Hawaii Studying New Plea to U.S.; Territory May Ask for Right to Elect Own Governor—GOP Against Plan,” 13 May 1956, *New York Times*: 46; Bell, *Last Among Equals*: 230.
- 32 “Hawaii Governor, Denied 2nd Term, Resigns Suddenly,” 26 July 1957, *Los Angeles Times*: 6.

Quintin Paredes

1884–1973

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1935–1938
NACIONALISTA FROM THE PHILIPPINES

As the first Resident Commissioner to represent the Philippines after it became a commonwealth of the United States, Quintin Paredes worked to revise the economic relationship between his native archipelago and the mainland. Paredes championed Philippine independence, constantly reminding policymakers of his home's history as a valuable and vital trading partner. In testimony before congressional committees and in speeches on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Paredes countered common misconceptions about Filipinos and worked to place the islands on stable economic footing as they moved toward independence.

One of 10 children, Quintin Paredes was born in the northwestern town of Bangued, in the Philippines' Abra Province, on September 9, 1884, to Juan Felix and Regina Babila Paredes. Around the time of Quintin's birth, Juan Felix opened a primary school in Bangued and earned a reputation as a strict and uncompromising educator. Quintin attended his father's school until he was about 11 years old, at which point he began studying at a satellite campus of the University of Santo Tomas and later at the Colegio de la Purissima Concepción in the coastal city of Vigan.¹

In the late 1890s, the Spanish-American War interrupted Paredes's education, and he returned home from school as the American military advanced up the islands. At one point, his family housed two U.S. troops who had been captured as prisoners of war, and because of the close quarters in the Paredes family home, the GIs taught Quintin how to speak English. When U.S. forces finally captured Bangued, the military made Quintin and his brother, Marin, interpreters even though neither brother was proficient. "The truth is," Quintin later remembered, "I had to learn English from the barrel of a gun!"²

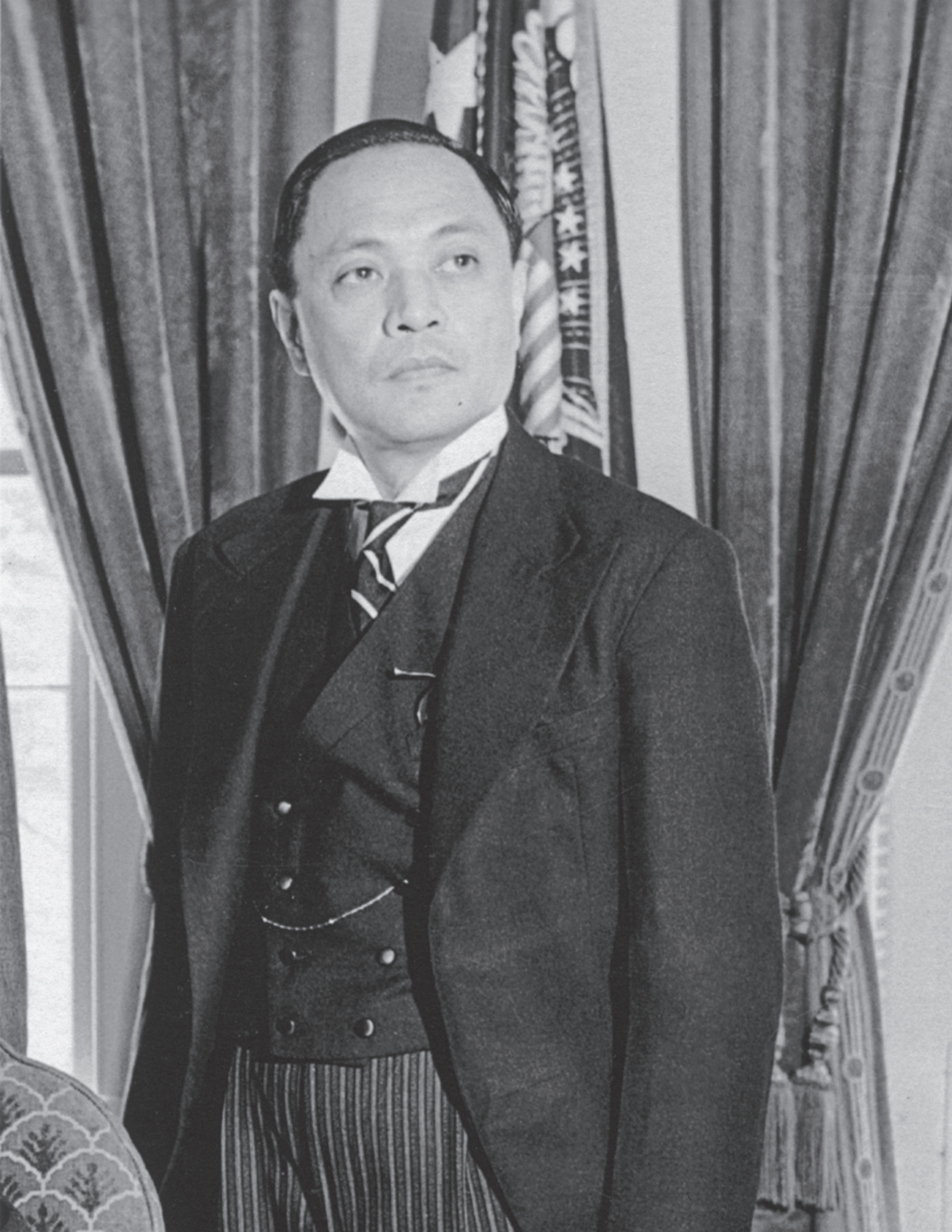
After the war, Paredes served as deputy treasurer of Abra, collecting taxes from all corners of the province.³ He

eventually moved to Manila and studied law under the direction of another of his brothers, Isidro. He worked during the day, studied at night, and after passing the bar exam, Paredes briefly took a job with the Filipino government in Manila before moving to the private sector.⁴ Paredes married Victoria Peralta, and the couple had 10 children.⁵

In 1908 Paredes joined the solicitor general's office in Manila as a prosecuting attorney and rapidly rose to the solicitor general post in 1917. The very next year, Paredes accepted the job as attorney general, becoming the Philippines' top lawyer. Within two years, he became secretary of justice in the cabinet of Governor General Francis Burton Harrison, a former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York. President Woodrow Wilson nominated Paredes to serve as an associate justice on the Philippine supreme court, but Wilson's administration ended before the confirmation went through. Paredes also served as an officer in the Philippine national guard during the mobilization for World War I.⁶

After 13 years as an attorney for the government, Paredes resigned as secretary of justice ahead of the administration change in Manila and formed his own law firm in 1921. As Paredes's daughter would later write, "The courtroom drama fascinated him more than anything else."⁷

In 1925, after four years of private practice, Paredes fell into political office by something of an accident. While stumping for his nephew's assembly campaign in Abra, local leaders asked Paredes to run for the seat instead. His nephew agreed to the plan, dropped out, and threw his support behind Paredes. Paredes won and eventually served four terms in the territorial legislature. His early career in the Philippine house was ambitious. He chaired the rules committee and led a revolt against house leadership, challenging Manuel Roxas, the sitting speaker, in an effort





to empower the rank and file. “If the Chair does not have the full support of the substantial number of the majority,” Paredes reportedly said, “trouble is bound to brew and the program of legislation cannot be carried out effectively.”⁸ The coup attempt failed, but Paredes won the position of speaker pro tempore after Roxas went on a trade mission to the United States and immediately used his new power to quicken the legislative pace.⁹

Elected speaker pro tempore again in 1931, Paredes led the Philippine house’s opposition to the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act, in which the U.S. Congress promised the Philippines its independence after a phase-in period of 10 years. But the new act needed the approval of the Philippine legislature to go into effect.¹⁰ And as Paredes understood the law, the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act would have crippled the islands’ economy and imposed severe immigration quotas for Filipinos going to America.¹¹ In many respects, the controversial independence bill became a litmus test in the Philippine house. Eventually, opponents of the measure generated enough support to oust Roxas, the speaker, who backed the bill, and install Paredes in his place.¹² During this period, Paredes and senate president Manuel L. Quezon became close allies. Quezon had smoothed Paredes’s move up to the speakership, and, by 1934, the *Philippines Herald* described Paredes as Quezon’s “mightiest political general.”¹³ But Paredes’s deft handling of the house, combined with his growing national profile, also set him on a collision course with Quezon over control of the islands’ future.¹⁴

Despite his outsized role in the debate surrounding independence, Paredes, according to one description, was “quiet, observant, and thoughtful, the very figure of efficient activity and erudition.”¹⁵ He was cool under pressure, calculating, patient, and obsessed with legislative details, further straining his relationship with Quezon.¹⁶ For Paredes, it was not enough to simply achieve independence for the islands; the legislation granting independence needed to give the archipelago every chance to thrive as an autonomous nation. “If you want to do anything,” he once said, “always do it well. Then perhaps luck will come.”¹⁷

In 1934 Congress revisited Philippine independence and passed the Tydings–McDuffie Act, which made the Philippines a commonwealth of the United States and addressed some of the criticisms that had doomed the Hare–Hawes–Cutting Act. Per the new agreement, after 10 years and the adoption of a new constitution, the Philippines would officially become an independent country. The change in insular status injected a new dynamic in the islands’ politics. With Tydings–McDuffie in place, the main issue dividing the ruling Partido Nacionalista—the terms for an independent Philippines—no longer dominated the debate. In the assembly, Quezon decided the reunited majority party now needed a speaker who could appeal to everyone, not just to those who opposed the earlier independence bill. Quezon was the clear head of the ruling party, but Paredes had been a strong, independent speaker, and his popularity had skyrocketed. Quezon considered Paredes dangerous on two fronts: Paredes, with his loyal following, directly threatened Quezon’s personal authority; and, constitutionally, Paredes’s authority as speaker might limit the president’s power, motivating Quezon to decentralize power in the legislature by empowering the committees.¹⁸

Quezon quickly convinced a number of assembly members to support his committee overhaul. When the majority party named Paredes to the weakened speaker’s office, he rejected the nomination. “Paredes wanted the position of speaker to be strong, so that the system of checks and balances as practiced in the U.S. government could function in the Philippines,” wrote an historian of the controversy. For his part, Paredes preferred to serve in the rank and file rather than stand as “a puppet Speaker.”¹⁹

Even with Paredes out of leadership, Quezon still considered him a political threat. Unable to fully dilute the former speaker’s influence, Quezon did the next closest thing: he offered Paredes a job more than 8,000 miles away as the Philippines’ Resident Commissioner to the U.S. Congress. Paredes knew that if he took the appointment in Washington, he would likely lose power back home. At first, he rejected the post, but after Quezon questioned his commitment to public service, Paredes accepted on December 21, 1935.²⁰ “I



consider it my duty to counteract all reactionary measures in Congress prejudicial to the Philippines,” he said after being sworn in by Philippine officials.²¹

Paredes sailed for the United States on January 11, 1936, devoting his short time at home to studying the economic relationship between the commonwealth and the United States. He pledged to revise sections of the Tydings–McDuffie Act that he believed would both hinder trade and impede the Philippines’ economic growth.²² Tariffs on Philippine goods exported to the United States were set to rise gradually in 1940 so that, by the time the commonwealth became independent, Philippine businesses would have to pay the taxes in full. Many observers expected Congress to renegotiate the terms of the deal, but by the time Paredes arrived in Washington, nothing had been finalized.²³

Shortly after noon on Friday, February 14, 1936, Paredes walked to the well of the House and took the oath of office as a Member of the 74th Congress (1935–1937). The day before, he had met briefly at the White House with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of War George Dern, and Creed Cox of the Bureau of Insular Affairs. Paredes also revealed that Quezon had asked him to open an embassy in DC.²⁴

As Resident Commissioner, Paredes focused on two main objectives. First, he remained committed to revising the tariff rates in Tydings–McDuffie. For an island nation that traded almost exclusively with the United States, “the [law’s] provisions will wreck our economic structure,” he said in an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor* in May 1936, and he feared the restrictions in Tydings–McDuffie would “breed discontent and unrest, and perhaps disorder in the islands.”²⁵ Paredes hoped certain changes would buy the Philippines’ economy enough time to hold its own on a global playing field. Secondly, he sought to convince Congress to protect a nearly \$24 million line of credit at the Treasury Department after a reserve fund the Philippines stored with the United States missed out on an easy chance to gain in value with the gold standard.²⁶

In the House, Paredes also addressed a handful of other, more immediate issues that affected Filipinos living

in the United States. After the Merchant Marine Act of 1936 forced shipowners in the New York area to fire nearly 3,000 Filipinos because they had been classified as “aliens,” Paredes threw his support behind a measure introduced by Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana to allow the sailors who had legally lived in the United States before the passage of Tydings–McDuffie to get their jobs back.²⁷ Similarly, Paredes lobbied the Senate Appropriations Committee to remove discriminatory language against Filipino government workers in a funding bill for the Treasury Department and U.S. Post Office.²⁸

A month before Paredes arrived in Washington, Democratic Senator Alva Adams of Colorado introduced a bill to overturn an earlier law that authorized the Treasury Department to set aside nearly \$24 million in credit for the Philippines. The government had opened the line of credit after the commonwealth’s reserve fund housed in the United States failed to earn value following an increase in the price of gold. The controversy dated back to 1932, when the Philippine government followed the advice of American officials and stored roughly \$56 million in U.S. banks. Almost from the start Philippine leaders had asked to convert that cash deposit into gold, but Treasury officials never followed through. After the price of gold increased, the Philippines lost out on substantial profit, and the \$24 million credit was meant to cover the difference of the Philippines’ investment.²⁹

Unfortunately for the Philippines, Congress had only authorized the Treasury credit and had never appropriated any money for it. Moreover, a number of Members supported Senator Adams’s effort to repeal the credit altogether.³⁰ Seeing as how Paredes had been in Washington for only a few days when he first went before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee to discuss the currency issue, he admitted that he was “not very familiar with the technical questions involved.”³¹ The committee agreed to reschedule, giving Paredes time to prepare over the next week.

When Paredes testified before the Senate committee again on March 5, 1936, he implored the panel to fund the back payment, arguing that U.S. officials had never



acted on the Philippines' request to convert its deposit into gold.³² Despite his appeal, the Senate committee went ahead with the repeal measure, claiming that Congress misunderstood the situation when it first authorized the credit line.³³ The Senate passed Adams's repeal bill on May 18, 1936, which Paredes called both "surprising" and "most unfair." When the House received the bill, however, the Committee on Insular Affairs took no action on it during the legislative session.³⁴

Although Congress had taken the lead on the Treasury issue, it more or less deferred to the President on the tariff, and the House spent little time revisiting the scheduled rate hikes in Tydings–McDuffie during Paredes's time on the Hill. Nevertheless, Paredes made the Philippines' trade relationship the first thing he spoke about on the floor. He commended Congress for paving the way for the Philippines' full political independence but cautioned the House against ending America's open economic ties to the Pacific. Paredes sympathized with Congress's efforts to combat the Great Depression, but he didn't want to see a similar financial catastrophe hit the islands. He pointed out that, in the short while since Tydings–McDuffie went into effect, Congress had already gone after the Philippines by lowering the sugar quota, capping cordage exports, and levying new taxes on coconut oil. While he did not expect special treatment for the Philippines, Paredes wanted Congress to follow the "spirit" of the independence agreement, urging the House to lift some of the new fees.³⁵

A month later, in May 1936, Paredes again spoke on the House Floor about the U.S.–Philippine trade partnership, pointing out that Congress, not the Philippines, dictated the terms of the relationship which had started out "on the basis of free trade." Imposing new taxes to protect American farmers, he argued, would undercut that foundation. "Fair treatment for our Philippine sugar industry will not injure a single beet-sugar or cane-sugar producer in the United States. . . . All we ask is that, while under the American flag, we be treated fairly and equitably with other Territories and possessions of the United States," he said defiantly.³⁶

In March 1937, during testimony on sugar quotas

before a House Agriculture subcommittee, Paredes drove home his point. He knew that domestic sugar producers would call for higher tariffs to protect their product, "but it is a fact that in the case of the Philippines there exists an implied contract derived from the independence law not to impose taxes. . . . By subjecting our sugar to excise taxes provided in the bill this preference is wiped out and the spirit of the independence law violated." The main problem, Paredes noted, was that the Philippines had little influence in Washington. He reminded the subcommittee that he couldn't vote on tariff bills, "which makes the imposition of excise taxes on Philippine sugar sound like taxation without representation."³⁷

During Paredes's House career, isolationist Members who wanted the United States to pull out of the Pacific, regardless of the impact on the commonwealth's economy, appeared to have a controlling interest in Congress. The *Washington Post* noted in a separate article that such thinking also permeated public opinion. As early as the summer of 1936, Paredes reported renewed "prejudices" against the Philippines. Both Democrats and Republicans, the *Post* said, accused the commonwealth of "[forcing] America to grant independence out of ingratitude." The paper also suspected that the public relations campaign by "American labor, sugar, dairy, cordage and other industries" to cast the Philippines as a direct competitor likely helped sour the mood on the Hill.³⁸

The Roosevelt administration took a less drastic approach, however, and in 1937, after President Quezon suggested moving Philippine independence up to as early as 1938, he and FDR agreed to create the Joint Preparatory Committee on Philippine Affairs in order to study trade issues affecting the two countries, specifically tariff rates.³⁹ "If and when independence does finally come," Paredes wrote to the editor of the *Baltimore Sun* in the spring of 1937, just two months after being assigned to the joint committee, "I hope that the American people will find no necessity for ending the mutually beneficial United States-Philippines trade relations." Paredes pointed out that exports from his commonwealth did not so much compete with America's domestic industries as they complemented



the United States' existing markets for "sugar, coconut oil, tobacco, [and] cordage." Moreover, he wrote, higher tariffs would discourage the Philippines, already one of the United States' largest customers, from importing American goods.⁴⁰

Paredes was the only Member of the House to sit on the joint committee, which held hearings in Washington, San Francisco, and Manila and included a three-month investigation in the Philippines. After a year of work, the members of the committee agreed to keep the date of Philippine independence set at 1946, but they decided to slow down the rise in tariffs affecting Philippine exports. With an agreement in principle, the committee recommended that the full rates go into effect by 1960, giving the commonwealth's economy an extra 15 years to adjust to independence.⁴¹

Paredes resigned from the House before Congress took a close look at the Joint Preparatory Committee's recommendations.⁴² His initial reluctance to accept the position as Resident Commissioner, combined with some later remarks he made in the summer of 1937, suggest that he had set his sights on returning to the Philippines as quickly as he could. On August 18, 1937, just days before he left for Manila to participate in the Joint Preparatory Committee hearings, Paredes used the "Extensions of Remarks" section of the *Congressional Record* to deliver a speech titled "United States-Philippine Affairs." What started out as a summary of the Joint Preparatory Committee's agenda soon had the feel of a farewell address. After applauding the House for "making the newcomer feel comfortable," he continued, "I have nothing but thanks for all the many courtesies extended to me here. I appreciate the privilege of having served with you in this I consider the greatest legislative body in the world." He even touted his likely successor, Joaquin M. Elizalde.⁴³

In case there was any doubt about Paredes's desire to return home, mainland newspapers began reporting in April 1938, months before Paredes formally announced his resignation, that Elizalde, "who, authoritative sources said would succeed Quintin Paredes as resident Philippine commissioner in the United States," had already sailed for

Washington. Three months later, after Congress adjourned for the year, Paredes set off for home in order to leave enough time to campaign for his old seat in the Philippine legislature. He officially resigned from the House on September 29, 1938.⁴⁴

Despite their earlier rivalry, Quezon complimented Paredes. "There is no gainsaying the fact that you are entitled to a great amount of the credit for assisting in the passage of many pieces of legislation favorable to the Philippines and vigorously fighting unjust and adverse bills which embodied threats of harm to us economically as well as politically," Quezon told him.⁴⁵

Once back in the Philippines, Paredes reclaimed his seat as a representative of the Abra Province, serving as floor leader in the assembly. He later won election to the Philippine senate, serving from 1941 to 1945. With the outbreak of World War II, Paredes did not flee the islands, but served in the Japanese occupation government as a commissioner of public works and as secretary of justice, "motivated by a patriotic desire to protect the Filipinos when he took the Cabinet position," his defense lawyers would later argue.⁴⁶

In the spring of 1945, U.S. military forces arrested Paredes, and the commonwealth government later charged him with 21 counts of treason as an active collaborator.⁴⁷ Despite these accusations, voters elected Paredes, who was out on bail, to the Philippine house a month later in 1946.⁴⁸ After courts acquitted him in 1948, Paredes returned to serve in the Philippine legislature throughout the 1950s.⁴⁹ In 1952 the Philippine senate elected him as its president.⁵⁰ He also resumed his law practice and was later president of a bank. He died in Manila on January 30, 1973.⁵¹

"An admiring nation will remember him for his untiring labors on behalf of Philippine independence," said former Resident Commissioner Carlos Peña Romulo. "He may well be the last of this fearless breed, the versatile group of men of wide learning and deep human concerns who passionately devoted their lives to the cause of their people."⁵²



FOR FURTHER READING

Paredes-San Diego, Lourdes. *Don Quintin of Abra* (Quezon City, PI: L. Paredes-San Diego, 1985).

NOTES

- 1 Lourdes Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra* (Quezon City, PI: L. Paredes-San Diego, 1985): 7, 9, 11–12.
- 2 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 14–16.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 19–23. Paredes’s brother held lessons in his home in Manila and called his informal law school the “*Escuela de Leyes*.”
- 5 *Congressional Directory*, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1905): 129–130; Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 8–21; Zoilo M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1932): 268–270.
- 6 *Congressional Directory*, 75th Cong., 1st sess.: 129–130; Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 22–36.
- 7 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 37.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 42.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 45–47.
- 10 H. W. Brands, *Bound To Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 149–155.
- 11 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 50–51.
- 12 Robert Aura Smith, “Roxas Fights Back at Manuel Quezon,” 27 August 1933, *New York Times*: E2; Estrellita T. Muhi, “The Philippine Legislature, 1916–1935,” in *Philippine Legislature: 100 Years*, ed. Cesar P. Pobre (Quezon City, PI: Philippine Historical Association, 2000): 136–137; Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 52–54.
- 13 Eugenio S. De Garcia, “The Man Quintin Paredes,” 5 September 1934, *Philippines Herald Mid-Week Magazine*: 3.
- 14 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 69–77.
- 15 Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines*: 270.
- 16 De Garcia, “The Man Quintin Paredes”: 18, 22.
- 17 Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines*: 270.
- 18 Stephen W. Stathis, *Landmark Legislation, 1774–2012*, 2nd. ed. (Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2014): 244; Richard T. Jose, “The National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth, the National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth, 1935–1946,” in *Philippine Legislature: 100 Years*, ed. Cesar P. Pobre (Quezon City, PI: Philippine Historical Association, 2000): 142–148.
- 19 Jose, “The National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth, the National Assembly of the Second Philippine Republic and the Congress of the Philippine Commonwealth, 1935–1946”: 148. See also Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 76–77.
- 20 Jose, “The National Assembly of the Philippine Commonwealth, the National Assembly of the Second Philippine Republic and the Congress of the Philippine Commonwealth, 1935–1946”: 148; Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 77; *Congressional Directory*, 75th Cong., 1st sess.: 130.
- 21 “Paredes Promises to be Faithful to New Trust,” 21 December 1935, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 22 “Free Trade with U.S. Must be Continued, Paredes States,” 10 January 1936, *Philippines Herald*: 3.
- 23 Erwin D. Canham, “New Philippines Delegate Finds Problems Facing Him,” 13 February 1936, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.
- 24 “President Greets Philippine Official,” 14 February 1936, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 9; “Paredes Calls on President Roosevelt,” 14 February 1936, *Philippines Herald*: 1; “Parades Here to Plan Philippines’ Legation,” 14 February 1936, *Washington Post*: 1; “A Man in the News: Favorable Tariff Rates Sought for Philippines,” 6 May 1936, *Christian Science Monitor*: 6.
- 25 “A Man in the News: Favorable Tariff Rates Sought for Philippines.”
- 26 Canham, “New Philippines Delegate Finds Problems Facing Him”; “Monetary Issue Tangles Affairs of Philippines,” 15 February 1936, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1. See also “A Man in the News: Favorable Tariff Rates Sought for Philippines.”
- 27 “Asks Aid for Filipinos,” 27 January 1938, *New York Times*: 14.
- 28 “Filipinos to Lose Jobs With U.S., Paredes Says,” 12 February 1938, *Washington Post*: X2.
- 29 “Monetary Issue Tangles Affairs of Philippines.”
- 30 “From Across the Sea,” 20 March 1936, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 16; Vicente Albano Pacis, “After the Ball,” 16 March 1936, *Washington Post*: 9; “Monetary Issue Tangles Affairs of Philippines.”
- 31 Hearing before the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, *Philippine Currency Reserves*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (27 February and 5 March 1936): 16.
- 32 *Philippine Currency Reserves*: 19–41.
- 33 Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, *Philippine Currency Reserve on Deposit in the United States*, 74th Cong., 2nd sess., S. Rept. 1702 (1936): 1, 3.
- 34 “Assails Philippine Bill,” 7 August 1937, *New York Times*: 13; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 May 1936): 7414–7419.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (15 April 1936): 5526–5528. See also “Philippines Seek Modification of Coconut Oil Tax,” 15 April 1936, *Christian Science Monitor*: 6.



- 36 *Congressional Record*, House, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 May 1936): 8215, 8217.
- 37 Hearings before a Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture, *Sugar*, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (19 March 1937): 251.
- 38 Vicente Albano Pacis, "Forsaken Philippines," 29 July 1936, *Washington Post*: X7.
- 39 Franklyn Waltman, "U.S.-Philippine Group Named to Study Trade," 19 March 1937, *Washington Post*: 2; "Experts Ponder Economic Liberty for Philippines," 15 April 1937, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; Erwin D. Canham, "Philippines: Dare U.S. Set Isles Adrift?," 22 November 1937, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; Pacis, "Forsaken Philippines."
- 40 Quintin Paredes, "Letters to the Editor: The Philippines, A Source of Needed Products and a Profitable Market," 14 May 1937, *Baltimore Sun*: 14.
- 41 *Report of the Joint Preparatory Committee on Philippine Affairs* (20 May 1938) part I: 1–4, and part VII: 1–14, <https://archive.org/details/JointPreparatoryCommitteeOnPhilippineAffairs> (accessed 26 May 2016); "Gradual Duty Rise Asked for Filipinos," 6 April 1938, *New York Times*: 10; "U.S. and Philippines Seek to Extend Transition Period," 7 April 1938, *Christian Science Monitor*: 2; William V. Nessly, "Report Urges Tariff Stay For Filipinos," 29 November 1938, *Washington Post*: X1; "U.S. Keeps Grip on Philippine Trade Till '60," 6 April 1938, *Baltimore Sun*: 1.
- 42 President Roosevelt sent the report of the Joint Preparatory Committee to Congress in late January 1939, four months after Paredes resigned from the House. See "Proposed Delay in Philippine Independence Up to Congress," 24 January 1939, *Christian Science Monitor*: 4; "Philippine Issue Faces Congress," 25 January 1939, *Atlanta Constitution*: 20; "Philippine Report," 25 January 1939, *Wall Street Journal*: 6.
- 43 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (18 August 1937): 2152.
- 44 "Reported Successor to Paredes en Route," 25 April 1938, *Washington Post*: X3; "Philippine Leader Sails for States," 25 April 1938, *Los Angeles Times*: 6; "Paredes to Leave Post Here to Seek Seat in Assembly," 8 September 1938, *Washington Post*: X9.
- 45 "Elizalde Named P.I. Commissioner," 29 September 1938, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 46 "Filipinos Will Try Paredes for Treason," 16 June 1947, *Atlanta Constitution*: 3.
- 47 "M'Arthur Frees 7,000 Civilians in Luzon Drive," 18 April 1945, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 5; "Six Members of Filipino Puppet Cabinet Seized," 23 April 1945, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 5; "Foreign News Briefs: Filipinos Indicted," 15 March 1946, *Los Angeles Times*: 5.
- 48 "Poll Nearly Conceded," 26 April 1946, *Christian Science Monitor*: 7.
- 49 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 95–101.
- 50 "Philippine Senators End 35-Day Deadlock," 6 March 1952, *New York Times*: 4.
- 51 Paredes-San Diego, *Don Quintin of Abra*: 83–93, 95–101.
- 52 "Paredes, 'Old Guard,' Dies," 31 January 1973, *Bulletin Today* (Manila, PI): 1.

Joaquin M. Elizalde

1896–1965

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1938–1944

NO PARTY AFFILIATION, FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Joaquin Miguel (Mike) Elizalde, a wealthy businessman, won appointment as Resident Commissioner from the Philippines in 1938 as war clouds converged in the Pacific.¹ In the U.S. House of Representatives, he threaded the needle between preparing his home islands for independence while assuring the United States of Philippine allegiance in the face of imminent conflict with Japan. He displayed remarkable skill as a diplomat, protecting business interests and Filipino laborers in the United States and serving as an articulate, widely admired spokesman for the commonwealth. He was, said one colleague during the war, “the leading spirit of bracing up the morale of his conquered and ill-treated people.”² Elizalde transformed the Resident Commissioner’s office into the functional equivalent of the Philippine Embassy, an office he later held as the islands’ first ambassador to the United States in 1946. Representative Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, who served with Elizalde in the House, attributed Elizalde’s success to his personable, even humble, approach that complemented his steadfast devotion to the islands: “He is as plain as an old shoe and is a real friend of his people.”³

Joaquin Miguel Elizalde was born on August 2, 1896, in the Philippine capital of Manila to José Joaquin Elizalde and Maria del Carmen Diaz Moreu Elizalde. The family was of Castilian Spanish descent; Joaquin Elizalde was a Spanish citizen until the 1930s. Sources vary, but the most reliable suggest that he became a Philippine citizen in 1933.⁴ He was schooled in Spain, in Switzerland at Dr. Schmidt’s Institute in St. Gallen, and in London, England, at St. Joseph’s College and the London School of Economics. According to at least one source, Elizalde also served in the Spanish army for a year.⁵

As the scion of one of the islands’ most respected families, Elizalde moved easily among the Filipino elite

and, by his early 30s, had positioned himself as one of the Philippines’ captains of industry.⁶ From 1918 to 1934, he was a managing partner of Ynchausti y Cia, a trading company that his family founded in the mid-19th century. When Elizalde took over as president in 1934, it became Elizalde & Company, Inc. At various points in his career, he also was a leading figure in a web of interconnected companies that ranged from insurance sales to steamships and in other companies producing or trading in rope, gold, iron, cattle, lumber, paint, sugar, and distilled spirits.⁷ Elizalde was an avid golfer, director of the Manila Polo Club, and a member of a championship polo team comprising his brothers in the 1930s. He married Elena von Kauffmann in Manila on May 17, 1924. That marriage produced two daughters, Cecilia and Elenita. The couple divorced in 1957. Elizalde remarried to Susan Magalona Ledesma, and the couple had two children, Maria Theresa and Juan Miguel.⁸

Like many Philippine Resident Commissioners before him, Elizalde was propelled by business success into public service. In 1934, as the islands began to ready for independence, he was appointed president of the National Development Company of the Philippines. Three years later, President Manuel L. Quezon tapped him as an economic adviser. He also had a seat on the National Economic Council, which he held until 1941 and then again from 1952 to 1953.

When Quintin Paredes resigned as Philippine Resident Commissioner, President Quezon appointed Elizalde his successor on September 29, 1938, several months after the 75th Congress (1937–1939) had adjourned *sine die*.⁹ Elizalde, whose “right hand quivered like a leaf when he was taking the oath,” was sworn in as Resident Commissioner by a clerk in the War Department in the presence of Secretary of War Harry Woodring on October





1, 1938.¹⁰ In a prepared statement, Elizalde pledged to devote his office to protecting the rights of Filipinos living in America and noted, “Friendship with the United States stands as the cornerstone for the perpetuation of American ideals and democratic institutions established in the Islands.”¹¹ He retained the office for the next six years.

Due to the outbreak of World War II, controversy accompanied Elizalde’s elevation to the post. Filipino laborers working in the United States, as well as other expatriates, doubted that Elizalde would effectively represent the Philippine people and felt that his loyalty would tilt toward big business. They also groused over his Spanish ancestry. Several weeks after his swearing-in, a New York-based businessman, Porfirio U. Sevilla, publisher of the *Philippine-American Advocate* magazine, filed a lawsuit in DC district court, claiming that Elizalde lacked the citizenship qualifications to serve as Resident Commissioner and had not been appointed legally. The suit was dismissed in 1940 when the court refused to hear it.¹²

Over the course of his first year in office, however, Elizalde won over many of his critics. Even as the United States restricted its trade with Japan, he worked to protect the islands’ economy in the run-up to independence and became a vocal advocate for Filipinos living and working in America, particularly on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

Elizalde’s policy positions and legislative activities tended to reflect his business background. As a firm supporter of independence, he believed the colonial system had depressed the Philippine economy. He believed that only by giving the island territory the freedom to set the terms of its own international commerce would the situation improve.

Elizalde wanted to see the United States and the Philippines gradually unwind in such a way that necessary trade between the islands and the mainland would not be disrupted. In November 1938, in one of his first acts as Resident Commissioner, one that would typify his tenure, he spoke at the National Foreign Trade Council convention in New York City, urging the United States to implement a reciprocal free trade agreement and avoid protectionist legislation.¹³

He carried that message onto the House Floor a year later, calling for an amendment to the Philippine Independence Act to keep tariffs from rising against the islands’ major exports, including coconut oil, cigars, pearl buttons, and embroidery. “Mr. Speaker,” Elizalde said in one of his rare floor speeches, “I must repeat that what we ask here is, to us, emergency legislation, which will benefit not only the Filipinos but the Americans in the Philippines who, over the past 40 years, have devoted their energies, in partnership with us, to build up a flourishing Philippine–American trade.”¹⁴ The bill, H.R. 268, which kept in place many of the favorable trade policies between the United States and the Philippines through independence, scheduled for 1946, passed that day under suspension of the rules.¹⁵ Elizalde also later successfully opposed changes that would have cut the quota on Philippine sugar exports in 1940.¹⁶

As often as he pushed for big trade interests in the Philippines, he also looked out for the interests of Filipinos working in the United States and its territories. It became a common refrain during Elizalde’s career. In 1939, for instance, the Resident Commissioner’s office intervened on behalf of 6,000 Filipino asparagus pickers in California who went on strike to protest wage cuts. Elizalde managed to restore their salaries and won plaudits for his efforts.¹⁷

That same year, Elizalde backed a bill (H.R. 3657) sponsored by Representative Caroline O’Day of New York to extend U.S. citizenship to any Filipino serving on a merchant or fishing ship who had legally been admitted to the United States for permanent residence before 1934. Appearing before a somewhat hostile House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Elizalde argued that, based on their years of service and the fact that Filipinos were denied the right to serve on flagged U.S. ships by the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, the thousand or so sailors affected by the bill ought to be granted citizenship in order to get their jobs back or apply for new ones.¹⁸ Despite his forceful protests, the bill appears to have died in committee.

A year later, Elizalde spoke out in favor of New York Representative Vito Marcantonio’s bill (H.R. 7239) to



extend naturalization to Filipinos who were legal residents of the United States prior to 1934—a much broader category that encompassed agricultural laborers on the West Coast and in Hawaii as well as individuals who worked in shipping—roughly 75,000 individuals in total. While Elizalde’s official position was that the Philippine government was doing its utmost to convince these individuals to return to the islands, the reality was that they had established lives in the United States and had children who were legal citizens. “They are practically men without a country,” Elizalde told the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. “They cannot be blamed for their plight; they are innocent victims of circumstances.”¹⁹

Elizalde pointed out that, since the Independence Act, Congress increasingly had treated Filipinos residing in the United States as aliens. He argued that both governments ought to find a solution for the “Filipinos who can no longer return to their country, who have dedicated the best years of their life to the United States only to see themselves considered in the same category as aliens. . . . Invariably they have assimilated completely the philosophy of the American life.”²⁰ The committee, especially its West Coast members, met this with thinly concealed contempt, and the bill died in committee. A nearly identical bill authored by Marcantonio in 1942, to which Elizalde gave his full-throated support, suffered a similar fate.²¹

In late 1939, when he returned to the Philippines for the first time since he took office, Elizalde was greeted at the airport by an official welcoming party and received an “ovation” like those reserved for Quezon.²² The *Philippine Free Press* named him its “Man of the Year” for 1940: “Mike Elizalde began a new era of U.S.-Philippine goodwill in Washington. He has cultivated and impressively won the friendship and confidence not only of Federal officials but also Washington correspondents (who broadcast the news from the world’s No. 1 news center), the American people (upon whose attitude will depend the extent of help the U.S. will give to his country’s aspirations for an independent existence), and U.S. Filipinos (whose interests he has championed more effectively than any of his predecessors because he sees in them not the

Philippines’ lost generation but potential assets of the future independent republic).”²³

Perhaps just as important, the newspaper explained, was that Elizalde’s “shrieking success” had transformed the Resident Commissioner “into possibly the most glamorous Philippine office next to the Commonwealth presidency.”²⁴ It was all the more remarkable, since he had very little legislative power in Washington. As per House Rules, Elizalde never served on a committee. He spoke sparingly on the House Floor, but, like his predecessors, he spent far more time testifying before House and Senate committees. In large measure, he combined the roles of publicist and diplomat. “In every possible way, Elizalde drives home the problems of the Philippines,” noted one observer. “He takes them to officials in Government departments by direct dealing. He gives an occasional party to which those who manage to get things done in Washington come, not just the possessors of big names on the social surface. He makes an occasional radio speech and his staff gets out a magazine to acquaint Americans in general with island problems.”²⁵

Elizalde, who insisted on being called “Mike,” was often found socializing in neighborhoods dotted with embassies and peopled by diplomats. He had extensive contact with the press and appeared regularly in profiles and in the society page. “He is of medium height, has friendly brown eyes that peer out through his glasses, smiles easily, likes shirts with blue stripes, runs to American slang which sometimes bobs up in the middle of his Spanish,” said one description.²⁶ A piece from early 1942 in the *Boston Globe* noted, “He is a snappy dresser, with a liking for somewhat striking patterns in haberdashery, likes to throw big parties and has been quick on moving into a first-name acquaintance even among Washington’s most imposing citizens.”²⁷ Elizalde “seems to like everybody,” the *Globe* went on, and everyone seemed to like him: “his big old mansion [on] Massachusetts [Avenue] is the haven of friendly and gregarious citizens.”²⁸

It was not all just socializing for Elizalde, however, as the war in the Pacific magnified the diplomatic aspects of his job. After the Japanese invaded the Philippines in late 1941, President Quezon and many other officials



fled the islands. They set up a satellite government in the States, and on February 5, 1942, Elizalde was sworn into the Commonwealth government cabinet-in-exile in Washington.²⁹ For a time, Elizalde was his country's principal spokesman. When Japanese broadcasts claimed that the Philippine government had fled Manila ahead of a Japanese offensive, Elizalde bristled, "The Philippine people are prepared to resist to the last."³⁰

On December 17, 1941, Elizalde delivered a shortwave radio broadcast, which he would do periodically during the war, to urge his countrymen to defend the islands, stressing full U.S. support in the effort: "Every heart in the United States beats for our welfare. . . . Everything possible is being done here to give us strength and support. Our faith in America is justified. Have courage and perseverance." He exhorted Filipinos to fight back against Japanese aggression with "cold revenge," and he supported a revision to the Selective Service Act in late December 1941 that allowed Filipinos residing in the United States to join the Army.³¹

For Elizalde, the occupation was personal, as several immediate family members, his estate home, and his businesses were all held by the Japanese. There was a certain amount of chivalric symbolism to Elizalde's actions in the early months of the war. In 1942 he took a leave of absence from the House to take command of the *Limbis*, a 70-foot yacht that President Quezon offered to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on behalf of the islands for the patrol service of the U.S. Coast Guard. Elizalde and his all-Philippine crew plied the waves on local patrol.³²

The crisis of war and the arrival of Quezon's government-in-exile in early 1942 funneled much of Elizalde's attention to constructing a diplomatic apparatus in the United States. In anticipation of planned independence in 1946, Elizalde had overseen the purchase of a mansion on Sheridan Circle along Massachusetts Avenue's Embassy Row in November 1941.³³ It became the hub of the Philippine mission in the United States, centralizing previously scattered offices. Elizalde ran it like an embassy, moving his offices into the renovated building in 1943. He had a personal staff of 28 people, many of whom worked in the Elizalde businesses back home. It

was an embassy-in-waiting, one correspondent observed: "When independence comes, the resident commissioner's office can be transformed into a smoothly-functioning embassy or legation without a hitch."³⁴

During the early part of the war in the Pacific, prior to U.S. intervention, Elizalde walked a tightrope trying to protect key industries while also supporting America's economic and military policy toward an increasingly hostile Japan. On May 10, 1941, he pledged "unqualified approval" of the U.S. decision to include the Philippines in a system that restricted exports that might hurt the defense of the United States or the islands.³⁵ Elizalde echoed that statement in a hearing before the House Military Affairs Committee the following day, supporting H.J. Res. 183, which extended controls to the Philippines and other U.S. dependencies. "Control of exports of the Philippines entails future far reaching and profound economic problems to us," Elizalde conceded. "But regardless of the sacrifices we may be called upon to make . . . the Philippines will accept its share of the burden. . . . We feel that the spiritual values involved in the present conflict transcend all material considerations."³⁶

Even if Elizalde's efforts did not always succeed or even if they required major concessions, they were not "wasted," one observer noted. Instead, "they served to spotlight the status of the Filipinos, loyal nationals of the U.S.," and demonstrated Elizalde's "watchfulness over Filipinos' political rights."³⁷ In the years before the war erupted in the Pacific, Elizalde squelched rumblings in Congress that a thoroughgoing investigation be launched into the loyalty of the Philippines. "As far as our cultural inclinations are concerned, our entire national life is founded and maintained on American principles and democratic ideals which are so fundamentally instilled that they will be maintained," Elizalde assured his colleagues. "Any influences alien to democracy and free government do not thrive and are not encouraged in the Philippines."³⁸

Even in wartime, with manpower sapped by military conscription, Elizalde found himself having to advocate on behalf of Filipino nationals residing in Hawaii who faced employment discrimination. One week after the United



States declared war on Japan, he supported a wartime measure to allow Filipinos to work on public works projects in Hawaii. While the legislation contemplated directly recruiting workers from the Philippines, it simultaneously included sunset provisions on the contracts for the many Filipinos who already lived and worked in Hawaii. The legislation, Elizalde told the House Committee on Territories, would clearly take advantage of Filipinos who would be working in dangerous conditions without the employment protections given to their American counterparts.³⁹

Elizalde also cast an eye toward shaping the post-war peace in Asia and the Pacific, free from Japanese occupation and European colonial systems. In a radio address in March 1942, Elizalde urged U.S. officials to consider making a “Pacific charter” that mirrored the principles set forth in the Atlantic Charter to win the hearts and minds of Asian peoples under the yoke of Japanese oppression. “In Asia there is a great mass of colonial subjects who today merely stand on the sidelines,” Elizalde noted. “The world must offer Asia something better than the cold comfort of superior protection and patronage.”⁴⁰

Elizalde gave very few floor speeches during the six years he served in the House. In fact, the *Congressional Record* records him speaking on the floor only on three occasions. One of those moments occurred on November 10, 1943, when he voiced his support of Senate Joint Resolution 95 to extend President Quezon’s term in office beyond November 15, 1943. The proposal stipulated that Quezon remain the Philippine president until the President of the United States “shall proclaim that constitutional processes and normal functions of government shall have been restored in the Philippine Islands.” The alternative was a potentially disruptive wartime transition to Vice President Sergio Osmeña, who would automatically succeed Quezon. Elizalde had worked personally with Secretary of War Stimson and others in the administration to convince FDR to invite Quezon to set up a government-in-exile in Washington, DC. He argued that, because Quezon was elected prior to the onset of the war, the term should be extended “strictly on the basis of war necessity” and

government continuity. The measure passed the House by a vote of 181 to 107, with 143 members not voting.⁴¹

President Quezon’s death in the summer of 1944 precipitated a shakeup in the government-in-exile cabinet. When Osmeña ascended to the presidency, Elizalde resigned abruptly as Resident Commissioner on August 8, 1944, a little more than a week after Quezon’s passing. He also was dropped from the war cabinet at that time. Reportedly, tensions had simmered between Elizalde and Osmeña for years when the Resident Commissioner first staffed his office with Spanish elites like himself rather than indigenous Filipinos.⁴²

Elizalde’s departure from the House evoked an outpouring of praise for him that was highly unusual for a colleague who could not trade votes and who had little direct influence. But his colleagues clearly appreciated his powers of persuasion. “Throughout the membership of the House, he had an entrée which assured the cooperation of his colleagues in any problem in which he was interested,” Emmet O’Neal of Kentucky observed. “Many of us have envied him as to his ability to accomplish that which he undertook to do. His fine intelligence, persistence, and sound sense are great assets, but his personality and his understanding of human nature are even rarer.”⁴³

Elizalde’s departure from DC was brief. In July 1946, he returned as the independent Philippines’ first ambassador to the United States. On the day he presented his credentials to President Harry Truman, Elizalde asked that the United States swiftly enact legislation to grant loans to help the Philippines rebuild after the war left its infrastructure and its economy in ruins. “The future is dark but by no means hopeless,” he said. “The Philippines is capable of developing a self-sustaining economy.”⁴⁴

During his tenure, which lasted until 1952, the embassy on Sheridan Circle was celebrated as “one of the liveliest gathering places in the city.”⁴⁵

Elizalde’s public service also included a term on the board of governors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank from 1946 to 1950. He was appointed the Philippine secretary of foreign affairs from 1952 to 1953. Later he represented the Philippines at



the United Nations in a variety of capacities, including chairman of the Philippine delegation (1953 and 1955) and economic adviser to the Philippine Mission, with the rank of ambassador, from 1956 until his death.

Elizalde, who for years lived in Adamstown, Maryland, just outside Frederick, died after a long illness on February 9, 1965, at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC. He was interred at St. Joseph's Church Cemetery in Carrollton Manor, Maryland.⁴⁶

NOTES

- 1 Elizalde was appointed by Quezon, and House Records indicate no discernable party affiliation.
- 2 Quotation is from Texas Congressman Albert Thomas. See *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (6 September 1944): A3897–3898.
- 3 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (19 September 1944): A4123–4124.
- 4 “Joaquin Elizalde Dead; Manila’s 1st U.S. Envoy,” 10 February 1965, *Washington Post*: C8. Another source suggested that he changed citizenship for purely pragmatic reasons, “to protect the family business.” See “The Philippines: Commissioner Mike,” 10 October 1938, *Time*: n.p. The 1933 date of citizenship also seems to be corroborated by James G. Wingo, “Honorable Mike Starts New Era,” 22 October 1938, *Philippines Free Press*: 19–21.
- 5 Zilio M. Galang, ed., *Leaders of the Philippines: Inspiring Biographies of Successful Men and Women of the Philippines* (Manila, PI: National Publishing Company, 1931): 290.
- 6 Galang, *Leaders of the Philippines*: 289.
- 7 Biographical survey, Box 53, Joaquin Elizalde, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress* Research Collection, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives.
- 8 *Philippines, Select Marriages, 1723–1957*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, <http://search.ancestrylibrary.com> (accessed 24 June 2014); “Joaquin Elizalde Dead; Manila’s 1st U.S. Envoy.”
- 9 “Joaquin Miguel Elizalde,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=E000108>; “Elizalde Named P.I. Commissioner,” 29 September 1938, *Philippines Herald*: 1.
- 10 Wingo, “Honorable Mike Starts New Era.”
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 “Elizalde Called ‘Unqualified’ in Court Suit,” 18 October 1938, *Washington Post*: X7; “Court Refuses to Consider Elizalde Case,” 16 April 1940, *Washington Post*: 23. For some background on Porfirio Sevilla and another Elizalde critic, Teddy de Nolaseo, by a critical observer, see Wingo, “Honorable Mike Starts New Era.”
- 13 “Problem in Little,” 7 November 1938, *Baltimore Sun*: 8.
- 14 *Congressional Record*, House, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (31 July 1939): 10598.
- 15 For the floor debate and passage, see *Congressional Record*, House, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (31 July 1939): 10594–10601. For Elizalde’s testimony for the Senate version of this legislation, see the hearing transcript on S. 1028, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, *To Amend the Philippine Independence Act*, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (7 March 1937): 197–208.
- 16 See a transcript of his testimony before the House Agriculture Committee which he later inserted into the *Record: Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 76th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 June 1940): A4057–4059. In October 1941, Elizalde supported a bill to amend the Independence Act of 1934 so that all sugar excise tax funds would be used for a defensive military buildup in the Philippines. The bill died in that Congress. See Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Amend the Philippine Independence Act of 1934*, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (9 October 1941): 17–24.
- 17 In an article from 12 April 1939 printed in the *Manila Tribune* and inserted into the *Record* by John Z. Anderson of California. See *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (19 September 1944): A4142.
- 18 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *H.R. 3657—To Confer Citizenship on Certain Aliens Serving in Any Capacity Upon Any Merchant or Fishing Vessels of the United States*, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (5 May 1939): 1–14, quotation on p. 9. Representative O’Day spoke up at one point: “My purpose in introducing this bill is merely to clarify the situation of the Filipinos. They are not American citizens. They are not aliens. For that reason they are not allowed to take on these jobs again; but they are not aliens. Now, what are they?” Quotation on p. 13.
- 19 Hearing before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *H.R. 1844—To Authorize the Naturalization of Filipinos Who Are Permanent Residents of the United States*, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (21 January 1942): 21–27.
- 20 Hearing before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *H.R. 7239—A Bill To Authorize the Naturalization of Filipinos Who Are Permanent Residents of the United States*, 76th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 March 1940): 50–53.
- 21 *H.R. 1844—To Authorize the Naturalization of Filipinos Who Are Permanent Residents of the United States*: 21–27.
- 22 “Manila Hails Elizalde,” 10 December 1939, *New York Times*: 46.
- 23 James G. Wingo, “Joaquin Elizalde: Free Press Man of the Year for 1940,” 4 January 1941, *Philippine Free Press*.



- 24 Wingo, "Joaquin Elizalde: Free Press Man of the Year for 1940."
- 25 W. B. Ragsdale, "Island Commissioner Here: Philippine Freedom Is Aim of Elizalde," 28 September 1941, *Washington Post*: 18.
- 26 Ragsdale, "Island Commissioner Here: Philippine Freedom Is Aim of Elizalde."
- 27 Lemuel F. Parton, "No More Siestas for Mike," 5 January 1942, *Boston Globe*: 12. See also Hope Ridings Miller, "Implications Team Around Report that Col. Romulo Will Succeed 'Mike' Elizalde," 11 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 10.
- 28 Parton, "No More Siestas for Mike."
- 29 "Elizalde Takes Over New Philippine Post," 6 February 1942, *New York Times*: 4. Earlier, on September 29, 1941, President Manuel Quezon had appointed Elizalde a member of the Philippine cabinet (without portfolio). He had, since 1936, been a member of the council of state.
- 30 "Government Fleed? No, Says Official Here," 2 January 1942, *Washington Post*: 6. Here is the reporter's description: "He blasted [the report] with his eyes, his short-clipped words and expressive shrugs of his shoulders calling it 'Japanese propaganda' and an effort to dispirit the Philippine population and soldiers."
- 31 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (17 December 1941): A5642; "Filipinos in U.S. May Enlist in Army," 3 January 1942, *New York Times*: 3. The revision was included in Public Law 77-360, 55 Stat. 844 (1941).
- 32 "Elizalde Soon to Take Leave," 24 July 1942, *Washington Post*: 16.
- 33 Philippines Embassy, "History of the Embassy of the Philippines in Washington, D.C.," <http://philippineembassy-usa.org/philippines-dc/embassy-dc/> (accessed 24 July 2015). The 1617 Massachusetts Ave. NW location remained the embassy until the 1990s, when it moved just a few doors away to number 1600.
- 34 Wingo, "Joaquin Elizalde: Free Press Man of the Year for 1940."
- 35 "Philippines Accept Export Controls, Elizalde Says," 11 May 1941, *Washington Post*: 15.
- 36 Hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs, *Philippine Export Control*, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (12 May 1941): 5–7, quotation on p. 6.
- 37 Wingo, "Joaquin Elizalde: Free Press Man of the Year for 1940."
- 38 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (19 May 1939): A2114. He made similar expressions in radio broadcasts and public speeches in the U.S. For examples, see *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (21 August 1941): A4045; and an Elizalde speech to the Women's National Democratic Club which Representative Mike Monroney of Oklahoma inserted into the *Record*. See *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (24 March 1942): A1180–1181.
- 39 Hearing before the House Committee on Territories, *Employment of Nationals in Hawaii*, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (16 December 1941): 7–13.
- 40 "Filipino Warns Oppressed Asia May Turn on Us," 10 March 1942, *Chicago Tribune*: 3. For the full text of the speech, see the insertion into the *Record* by Representative James Shanley of Connecticut, *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 77th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 March 1942): A926–928.
- 41 *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 1st sess. (10 November 1943): 9376–9397, see especially 9383. See also the debate and Elizalde's answers to questions on the floor from the *Congressional Record*, House, 78th Cong., 1st sess. (9 November 1943): 9352–9356.
- 42 Ridings Miller, "Implications Team around Report that Col. Romulo Will Succeed 'Mike' Elizalde," 11 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 10.
- 43 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (1 September 1944): A3844–3845.
- 44 "Elizalde Presents Credentials, Seeks Philippine Loan," 26 July 1946, *Washington Post*: 9.
- 45 Quotation from "Joaquin Elizalde Dead; Manila's 1st U.S. Envoy."
- 46 "Joaquin Elizalde Dies; First Philippine Envoy," 10 February 1965, *Washington Evening Star*: n.p.; "Elizalde, 68, Dies; Philippine Envoy," 10 February 1965, *New York Times*: 41.

Carlos Peña Romulo

1899–1985

RESIDENT COMMISSIONER 1944–1946

NO PARTY AFFILIATION, FROM THE PHILIPPINES

As the last Resident Commissioner from the Philippines, Carlos Peña Romulo helped lead the island territory through the brutality of World War II and into an independent future. A former journalist whose “Voice of Freedom” radio broadcast went live during some of the heaviest combat in the Pacific theater, Romulo was a tireless advocate for the commonwealth.¹ A chief aide to General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific and a brigadier general in the Philippine army, Romulo was appointed to the House in the summer of 1944, where he helped secure Congress’s support in rebuilding the Philippines. Known as the “General” among his colleagues on the Hill, Romulo was a champion of global democratic reforms and later served as president of the United Nations General Assembly.² In the House, Romulo pushed Congress to invest in the islands. “Mr. Chairman, when we are for a free Philippines as a part of this world government,” he told the Ways and Means Committee in 1945, “we are for a Philippines that is a product of the United States, that has the ideals of the United States, and that will be spreading the American gospel in the Far East[,] the spearhead so to speak of American democracy.”³

Carlos Peña Romulo was born on January 14, 1899, to Gregorio and Maria Peña Romulo.⁴ The third of six children, Romulo grew up in a prosperous family in Camiling on the island of Luzon, about 100 miles north of Manila. He described his childhood home as a blend of “Malay and Spanish” influences. His grandparents lived across the street, “and there would be times as I grew,” he said, “that our town seemed like one large family group, for everyone seemed related to me in some fashion.” Outside his neighborhood, rice fields stretched far and wide. “I learned early that all we had had come to us from the land,” he wrote as an adult.⁵

As a boy early in the new century, Romulo grew up

amid a regime change in the Philippines. His father was a guerrilla fighter against American occupation forces after the War of 1898, and when U.S. troops reportedly hanged one of his neighbors at a nearby park, Romulo resolved to “hate [the Americans] as long as I lived.”⁶

His father eventually surrendered and years later even became mayor, but the younger Romulo’s lingering resentment toward the United States did not dissipate until he was in high school.⁷ After he completed his studies at the University of the Philippines at Manila in 1918, he moved to New York City to attend Columbia University, graduating in 1921. He later received a degree from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, in 1935.⁸ He married Virginia Llamas in 1924, and together they had four boys, Carlos, Bobby, Ricardo, and Gregorio. Virginia died in 1968, and Romulo married his close friend, Beth Day, 11 years later.⁹

At the age of 16, Romulo started as a junior reporter for the *Manila Times*. The newspaper paid him only in streetcar tickets, but it gave him the start to what would become an award-winning career in journalism.¹⁰ When Romulo returned to the islands after college, he went back to work as a writer and an editor in Manila. From the early 1920s to about 1941, he thrived in what the *New York Times* called “the hurly-burly Filipino newspaper world.” During that period, he grew close to Philippine President Manuel L. Quezon and became increasingly active in the territory’s political future, meeting with U.S. officials six different times (1921, 1924, 1928, 1929, 1933, and 1937) to discuss the possibility of an independent Philippines.¹¹

During the early stages of World War II, Romulo kept a close eye on the military movements in the Pacific. In 1941 he wrote a series of articles that ran in Manila and the United States, envisioning the arc of the war in his section of the world. His articles won the Pulitzer Prize and caught





the attention of high-ranking officials in the U.S. military who agreed with his take on the approaching conflict.¹² “War is coming, Carlos,” General Douglas MacArthur told Romulo, “and when it breaks out I shall ask President Quezon to commission you in the Philippine army and induct you into the United States Army in charge of Press Relations on the Philippine side.” “If war breaks,” Romulo replied, “there’s no place I’d rather be.”¹³

Romulo worked closely with MacArthur, dealing directly with the press and bolstering public morale. “Croaking away into the mouthpiece of my phone and into the mike [*sic*] of the radio, I was the voice of both the Philippine and American Armies.”¹⁴ Despite his distance from combat, his work was exceptionally dangerous. Japanese bombers routinely flew overhead. “At times I felt like a condemned prisoner in a death cell, sitting in my little room while the Japanese executioners roamed overhead.”¹⁵

As the fighting intensified in the Philippines, Romulo, along with thousands of American and Philippine troops and civilians, hunkered down on a small peninsula west of Manila called Bataan. After months of suffering, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered General MacArthur to withdraw to Australia. A short while later, the Allied forces surrendered. Thousands died in Japanese custody either during the forced march to the prison camps or in the camps themselves. Romulo, however, had narrowly escaped, defiantly writing “I was the last man out of Bataan.”¹⁶

Romulo remained in exile in the States for two years, completely separated from his family with no way of knowing where they were or if they survived.¹⁷ He used his time away to educate people on the conditions in the Pacific and embarked on a remarkable speaking tour throughout America. By late October 1943, he had traveled an estimated 60,000 miles and given 364 speeches in 289 cities all across the country. He was soon appointed secretary of public instruction for the exiled Philippine war cabinet.¹⁸

Along with his public speaking duties, Romulo assumed additional responsibility after Philippine President Quezon died on August 1, 1944, followed by the quick resignation of the sitting Resident Commissioner, Joaquin M. Elizalde. The new exiled president, Sergio Osmeña, looking to give

the Philippines a stronger presence in Congress, appointed Romulo to the seat.¹⁹ A day later the *Washington Post*’s editorial team touted the appointment, given Romulo’s recent history “as an emissary between the Filipino and American people,” but did not expect him to stay in Washington very long. “His abilities will undoubtedly be needed in spreading the gospel of democracy in the Philippines once more as soon as the liberation in that part of the world gets under way.”²⁰

Two months after being appointed Resident Commissioner, Romulo returned home for the first time in two years. On October 20, 1944, American forces landed at Leyte Bay, captured the island, and established an Allied beachhead in the Philippines.²¹ Romulo was there to act as a “liaison officer” between his old friend General MacArthur and President Osmeña.²² As brigadier general, Romulo wanted to fight and avenge what he experienced on Bataan, but, as Resident Commissioner, he hung back and landed with MacArthur, calling the day he returned home “the greatest in my life.”²³

After reuniting with his family, Romulo returned to Washington. For much of his first year in the House, while still serving as the Philippines’ secretary of public instruction, Romulo led a public education campaign to inform Congress about the living conditions on the war-ravaged islands.²⁴ His reports were shocking. By the time the fighting ended, much of the Philippines had been reduced to ruins, and what remained needed to be rebuilt. As bad as the Philippines’ physical state was, the war’s human toll was even more devastating. A staggering number of people, both civilians and soldiers, had died during the conflict, and those who survived were left destitute. At Leyte, Romulo remembered seeing residents “clothed with the pounded bark of trees.”²⁵ In the territory’s capital he had seen the bodies of his friends and neighbors “pushed into heaps on the Manila streets, their heads shaved, their hands tied behind their backs, and bayonet stabs running them through and through.”²⁶

Beginning in September 1945, Romulo began pushing what would become his signature issue: rebuilding the Philippines using the islands’ trade partnership with the



United States. He had studied the situation as a member of the Philippine Rehabilitation Commission, which Congress created in 1944 to investigate “all matters affecting post-war economy, trade, finance, economic stability, and rehabilitation of the Philippine Islands.”²⁷ In many respects, the Philippines had to rebuild both its economy and society from scratch.²⁸

To start, Romulo wanted Congress to extend an existing preferential trade deal with the Philippines for at least another 20 years. The current agreement was three decades old but was set to expire in a matter of months, as soon as the commonwealth gained its independence. In October 1945, during hearings on the trade extension (H.R. 5185), Romulo told the House Ways and Means Committee that the archipelago’s existing trade arrangement was something of a double-edged sword. Although the Philippine economy had become virtually dependent on trade with the United States, the results, Romulo said, could not be ignored: trade with mainland America generated a huge economic boom, complete with better schools, health care, and public services. Relying on one trading partner, however, was dangerous, and operating in the shadow of America’s mammoth economy had its drawbacks. Like other Filipinos before him, Romulo worried that, without time to expand its trade portfolio, the Philippines would struggle once the previous agreement ended and America began levying higher rates.²⁹ “The plan,” he said, “is to diversify so that our economy will not be geared entirely to the American economy.”³⁰

Romulo’s goal explained why he supported quota levels on certain products, like sugar, below what the Philippines might actually be able to export. Although supporting quota levels would have been an unusual position for his predecessors, Romulo kept the long-term interests of the archipelago squarely at heart. “The quota,” he said, “must be limited to discourage the production of sugar, so that at the end of 20 years our sugar industry will not have to depend on the American market.” Romulo’s plan would have the islands spread its financial risk over multiple industries. That way, if one failed, the whole economy would not collapse.³¹

Romulo saw federal stimulus as merely a short-term solution, and he wanted to make sure the archipelago’s economy could support the far-reaching goals of an independent nation.³² He promised that, if his commonwealth could rebuild its infrastructure, Philippine businesses “will be able to stand on their own feet” once the 20-year grace period ends.³³

The trade issue, however, also highlighted the limitations of Romulo’s influence in Washington. When one Member seemed cool to the proposal, Romulo reminded him that Congress would be “deciding the fate of 18,000,000 people who have practically no voice in the determination of their destiny except my very weak voice before this committee.”³⁴

The bill that followed, H.R. 5856, the Philippine Trade Act of 1946, made it out of the Ways and Means Committee in a unanimous vote and was reported to the House in late March 1946.³⁵ The legislation also had the support of the Harry S. Truman administration, which called it “vital to the welfare of the Philippines,” reminding the committee that they all agreed “at least in principle, with the legislation.”³⁶

Moreover, it seemed, especially on the surface, as though Romulo’s testimony had the desired effect. Writing in its report, the committee admitted, “In the course of hearings ... it was made abundantly clear that the Philippines, in order to reestablish a normal economy and to develop resources for sustaining its independence, will require the assurance and stability in its trade with the United States.”³⁷ As described by the committee, the bill seemed to fulfill Romulo’s wishes—incentivizing the Philippines to diversify its economy—but there was much he disliked about it.³⁸

The measure was a unique piece of legislation: a trade bill without the constitutional requirements of a full treaty. Although the Philippines would gain its independence in a matter of months, at the time it was still technically part of America’s geopolitical orbit, and, therefore, the trade talks did not fall under the same requirements as those between the United States and other sovereign nations. Normally, the president would have negotiated the details, and the



Senate would have approval authority. For the Philippine Trade Act, however, both the House and Senate needed majority votes, giving the White House more of a behind-the-scenes role.³⁹

The day the bill made it to the floor, Robert Doughton of North Carolina, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, said it was the product of “earnest, painstaking, and careful consideration, both as to its objectives and the manner in which it was drafted.” The chairman then thanked a number of his colleagues and a host of federal officials for their work on the bill; nowhere, however, did he mention Romulo.⁴⁰ In fact, it wasn’t until later in the day that the bill’s author, Representative Jasper Bell of Missouri, even acknowledged Romulo’s “distinguished and far-seeing statesmanship.”⁴¹

When the debate manager finally recognized Romulo on the floor, the Resident Commissioner, suffering from a prolonged bout of malaria, spoke honestly about what he saw as the bill’s shortcomings. “If I had written this bill as I would have wished,” he told the chamber, “it would provide for perpetual free trade” rather than the “graduated tariffs” that would go up each year after an initial grace period. “If I had written it,” he went on, “the rights assured to the United States would not appear in the bill at all. They would be assured by a treaty entered into on a basis of a complete equality between our two sovereign nations.” Nevertheless, Romulo knew his political limitations and gave the bill his support, calling it “legislation written for reality. . . . It represents the spirit of realistic compromise which is democracy at its best.”⁴²

The next day, as debate wound down, Romulo delivered an elegant appeal to the House in favor of the legislation. He hoped the bill would be passed unanimously in order to “bolster the wavering morale of the Filipino people who live today amid the shambles of postwar devastation.”⁴³ He argued that the trade bill would be seen around the world as proof of America’s leadership. “At a time when there is too much suspicion rife among the nations of the earth, you will be demonstrating that the greatest force for true world peace and security is the force of friendship, of harmony, of understanding.”⁴⁴ A few moments later, the Philippine Trade Act cleared the House.⁴⁵

When the bill went to the Senate, Romulo employed many of the same arguments in his testimony before the Committee on Finance that he had used during the House committee markup.⁴⁶ After the Senate approved the bill and the two chambers worked out their differences in conference, the Philippine Trade Act became law on April 30, 1946, two months before the archipelago gained its independence.⁴⁷

As with trade, Romulo acted as the moral compass for the Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1946 (S. 1610), which, unlike the trade bill, pumped capital directly into the war-torn commonwealth. During the initial Senate hearings in late October 1945, Romulo reminded the Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs that the sooner Congress acted, the sooner the archipelago could start the healing process. As with the trade bill, Romulo worked to ensure that the Philippine government was an active partner in developing the legislation. He offered a series of amendments, including one that raised the cost of one section of the bill tenfold, but the Resident Commissioner did not want Congress to simply “gift” funding to the islands. Instead, Romulo sought to cast the bill as “compensation” for the islands’ suffering during the war and cited the Treaty of Paris as precedent.⁴⁸ After visiting the islands, the Senate committee estimated the total cost of the damage there at roughly \$800 million. “Factories, homes, government and commercial buildings, roads, bridges, docks, harbors, and the like are in need of complete reconstruction or widespread repairs,” the committee reported.⁴⁹ After being cleared by the committee in late November, the full Senate passed the bill unanimously on December 5, 1945.⁵⁰

The House sat on the rehabilitation bill until late February, when the Committee on Insular Affairs finally took it up. Romulo had twice petitioned the House for action and finally testified before Insular Affairs on March 2, 1946, when he revealed that the bill had the full support of the Philippines.⁵¹ The legislation approved compensation for both public and private property destroyed in the war, cleared the way for transfer of raw materials, and provided technical and job training during



the reconstruction. “Taken together with the pending Philippine trade bill—and it would be unrealistic to think of Philippine rehabilitation in terms of one bill without the other—this bill represents an integrated approach to the problem of putting the Filipino nation back on its feet,” Romulo said. Filipinos’ sacrifices and their wartime loyalty deserved nothing less, he reiterated.⁵²

Ultimately, the House committee agreed. The rescue bill, it wrote in its report, “recognizes the obligation of the United States to help rehabilitate the economy and physical properties of a people who will become an independent nation July 4, 1946, and whose land was ravaged by participation in the war of the United States against Japan.”⁵³ As reported, the half-billion-dollar bill was meant to kick-start the rebuilding process rather than cover the full cost of the islands’ redevelopment.⁵⁴

When the rehabilitation bill went to the floor, Romulo was the first to speak. In a long and moving address, he described the destruction on the islands and the war’s human toll, telling the chamber, “The whole future of the Philippines depends upon the help we get from you.”⁵⁵ The bill, he said, would represent “a rock of strength for American prestige in the Far East, and therefore it is a force for enduring peace throughout the world.”⁵⁶

For Romulo’s work on the trade and rehabilitation bills, Majority Leader John McCormack of Massachusetts credited him for his “distinguished service.” “The position of General Romulo in the hearts and minds of all of the Members is one of extreme closeness; we all have a very high regard for him, and the people of the Philippines are indeed fortunate in having such an outstanding gentleman representing them in this body.”⁵⁷ A short while later, the House passed the rehabilitation bill and quickly conferenced with the Senate. A week later, the House agreed to the conference report, and the President signed the measure into law on April 30, 1946.⁵⁸

With the success of the trade and rehabilitation bills, Romulo wanted to address one last issue before the Philippines celebrated its independence. In mid-June 1946, he helped manage a bill providing military assistance to the archipelago over the next five years (H.R. 6572). The

war had devastated the Philippine armed forces and left the islands’ national security infrastructure in disarray, threatening the entire rebuilding enterprise. Moreover, as Romulo reminded the chamber on the day of the vote, the U.S. government had armed a huge number of Philippine guerrilla fighters in the war against Japan. The Resident Commissioner estimated that there were “more than 300,000 firearms in the hands of people who have no right to hold them,” to say nothing of potential outside threats. “I regret to say, however, that the ravages of the recent conflict have so depleted our resources that we will not be able, until our economic rehabilitation is under way, to discharge our responsibility in preserving, in cooperation with the armed forces of the United States, the peace of the Far Pacific, without the material assistance” provided in the bill. The military assistance measure sailed through Congress. Introduced on May 27, 1946, the House passed it by unanimous consent on June 14, and the Senate cleared it four days later. The President signed it into law on June 26, 1946.⁵⁹

Romulo addressed the House for the final time on June 21, 1946. In a lengthy and emotional address, the last Resident Commissioner from the Philippines delivered a broad accounting of the relationship between the archipelago and the mainland, everything from America’s imperial ambitions to the Philippine backlash, to the push toward the Philippines’ independence. From an institutional stance, he offered an honest assessment of his limited role in the House. “As an insider who is nevertheless an outsider,” he said, “I have seen something which it is possible that you yourselves have overlooked. It is this—in the heat of controversy, in the fervor of partisanship, in the bitterness of debate, you have inevitably demonstrated your faith in the ways of democracy.”⁶⁰

House Members responded warmly to that farewell speech with a long standing ovation. “It is with the greatest regret that the Members of the House of Representatives take leave of General Romulo’s wise counsel, his brilliant logic, his impassioned eloquence [on] behalf of the people whom he so ably served,” Republican Representative Karl Stefan of Nebraska said, capturing the mood of many in the chamber.⁶¹



Although independence dissolved the Philippines' insular relationship with the United States, Romulo was not gone long, and he remained remarkably active on the international stage. In 1945 Romulo had told a House committee that everything changed with the advent of the atomic bomb. "The only permanent things are the intangible things—friendship, good will, faith, justice, right," he said, stressing the need for a central global authority. "I have always believed that humanity is evolving into that goal—hemispheric solidarity; oceanic solidarity; federation and world government."⁶² Fittingly, he twice served as ambassador to the United States (1952–1953 and 1955–1962), but he made his biggest mark in his work with the United Nations, which he helped charter. On July 9, 1946, the Philippine president appointed Romulo as the new republic's permanent delegate to the United Nations. The former Resident Commissioner went on to serve as president of the UN General Assembly in 1949 and 1950.

Late in his life, Romulo was criticized for supporting the dictatorial policies of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, but he never lost his fighting spirit. When the Soviet Union's leading voice in the UN General Assembly called Romulo "just a little man from a little country," Romulo admitted the delegate was correct about his physical stature and the size of his homeland. But, he said, "It is the duty of the little Davids here to fling pebbles of truth between the eyes of blustering Goliaths—and make them behave."⁶³ Romulo died in Manila on December 15, 1985.

FOR FURTHER READING

Romulo, Carlos P., *The Romulo Reader*, edited by Liana Romulo (Makati City, PI: Bookmark, Inc., 1998).

NOTES

- 1 "Voice of Freedom," 21 October 1941, *New York Times*: 16.
- 2 Hearings before the House Committee on Ways and Means, *Philippine Trade Act of 1945*, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (17 October 1945): 111.
- 3 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (19 October 1945): 130.
- 4 Parents' names from Carlos P. Romulo, "I Walked With Heroes," in *The Romulo Reader*, ed. Liana Romulo (Makati City, PI: Bookmark, Inc., 1998): 140–141.
- 5 Romulo, "I Walked With Heroes": 137–139, 144.
- 6 Romulo, "I Saw the Fall of the Philippines," in *The Romulo Reader*: 16–17; "Carlos Romulo, Was U.N. Founding Father," 16 December 1985, *Sun Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale, FL): B10.
- 7 Romulo, "I Saw the Fall of the Philippines": 19.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 11, 22–23.
- 9 Romulo, "I See the Philippines Rise," in *The Romulo Reader*: 111; "Carlos Romulo, Was a U.N. Founding Father"; "Carlos P. Romulo, 86, One of the UN's Founding Fathers," 15 December 1985, *Chicago Tribune*: 18.
- 10 Romulo, "My Brother Americans," in *The Romulo Reader*: 35.
- 11 Eric Pace, "Carlos Romulo of Philippines, a Founder of U.N. Dies at 86," 15 December 1985, *New York Times*: 1; "Carlos Peña Romulo," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=R000419>.
- 12 For more on his Pulitzer Prize, see <http://www.pulitzer.org/awards/1942> (accessed 10 September 2015); Pace, "Carlos Romulo of Philippines, a Founder of U.N. Dies at 86."
- 13 Romulo, "I Saw the Fall of the Philippines": 12.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 16 Col. Carlos P. Romulo, "Col. C.P. Romulo Tells Story of Bataan's Fall," 28 February 1943, *Chicago Tribune*: 1; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 527–531.
- 17 Romulo, "I See the Philippines Rise": 93, 108.
- 18 "Party Given for Colonel Romulo," 30 October 1943, *Washington Post*: B3.
- 19 "New Philippine President Reorganizes War Aides," 11 August 1944, *Atlanta Constitution*: 11; "Osmena Appoints His War Cabinet," 11 August 1944, *New York Times*: 6; "Filipino Chief Reorganizes War Cabinet," 11 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 5.
- 20 "Filipinos Get Ready," 12 August 1944, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 21 Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*: 822.
- 22 Romulo, "I See the Philippines Rise": 88.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 24 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (24 September 1945): 8924.



- 25 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (17 October 1945): 113. See also Romulo, “I See the Philippines Rise”: 80–81.
- 26 Romulo, “I See the Philippines Rise”: 102.
- 27 House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Establishing the Filipino Rehabilitation Commission*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1507 (23 May 1944): 2. The Filipino Rehabilitation Commission became law on June 29, 1944, as Public Law 78-381, 58 Stat. 626 (1944).
- 28 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (15 October 1945): 49.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 30 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (24 September 1945): 8925.
- 31 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (17 October 1945): 116–117.
- 32 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (19 October 1945): 124.
- 33 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (15 October 1945): 52.
- 34 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (17 October 1945): 112.
- 35 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 March 1946): 2753.
- 36 House Ways and Means Committee, *Philippine Trade Act of 1946*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1821 (26 March 1946): 5.
- 37 *Philippine Trade Act of 1946*: 5.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 1.
- 39 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (28 March 1946): 2754.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 2759.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 2762.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 2768–2769.
- 43 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 March 1946): 2854.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 *Ibid.*, 2856.
- 46 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance, *Philippine Trade Act of 1946*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (1946): 47–48, 141–142.
- 47 Conference Committee, *Philippine Trade Act of 1946*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1955 (17 April 1946); Public Law 79-371, 60 Stat. 141 (1946).
- 48 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, *Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1945* (30 October 1945): 143–144, 151.
- 49 Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Rehabilitation of the Philippine Islands*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., S. Rept. 755 (20 November 1945): quotation on p. 1, total damage estimates on p. 3.
- 50 *Congressional Record*, Senate, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (5 December 1945): 11470.
- 51 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (18 December 1945): A5619; *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (23 January 1946): 261.
- 52 Hearings before the House Committee on Insular Affairs, *To Provide for the Rehabilitation of the Philippine Islands*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 March 1946): 121–122.
- 53 House Committee on Insular Affairs, *Providing for the Rehabilitation of the Philippines*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1921 (9 April 1946): 8.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 9; *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 April 1946): 3438.
- 55 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (10 April 1946): 3436.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 3437.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 3439.
- 58 Conference Committee, *Providing for the Rehabilitation of the Philippines*, 79th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Rept. 1957 (17 April 1946); *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 April 1946): 3987. The Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1946 became law as Public Law 79-370, 60 Stat. 128 (1946).
- 59 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (14 June 1946): 6967; Public Law 79-454, 60 Stat. 315 (1946).
- 60 *Congressional Record*, House, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (21 June 1946): 7319.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 7321.
- 62 *Philippine Trade Act of 1945* (19 October 1945): 129.
- 63 Pace, “Carlos Romulo of Philippines, A Founder of U.N., Dies at 86.”