

once assembled would choose the delegates to represent them at Washington.

It is certain that my opinion will not to-day receive the approval of the majority; but I will not forget that, though the policy I advocated three years ago was then generally considered absurd, it is as generally accepted to-day as just, rational and patriotic.

T. H. PARDO DE TAVERA.

II.

The political conditions of the Archipelago, notwithstanding that we are now in a period of transition, have changed considerably for the better, when compared with the tyrannical colonial system of Spain. The autonomy now enjoyed by the *pueblos* organized under the provisions of the Municipal Code, promulgated by the United States Philippine Commission, could not be more liberal; never have the Filipinos enjoyed such equal rights, neither under Spanish rule nor during the time of the short-lived Malolos government. The right of suffrage as exercised to-day is an entirely new thing to the Filipinos. So also is the exercise of all of the individual rights which they enjoy under the American flag, and it is only those who obstinately refuse to see what is taking place under their very eyes, those incorrigible obstructionists who oppose all civilization and progress and systematically find fault with every measure that the American government has purposed to carry out in these Islands, who will deny the rapid advance that has been achieved here in so short a time—not by restricting liberty, but by extending it; not by limiting public instruction nor by supporting religious fanaticism, but by fostering everywhere public education, purifying and strengthening religious convictions, and requiring respect towards all forms of worship.

All of the above mentioned advantages, coupled with the added value which necessarily pertains to all rights guaranteed by a strong and stable government, we in this Archipelago have enjoyed since the day that it pleased Providence to plant the American flag on our soil. Even though many Filipinos cannot for the present appreciate these advantages for the reason that the ravages of the war, now happily drawing to a close, and which was cruel and bloody in some of the districts of the Archipelago, are still too obvious, it is hoped that in time these evils will be

forgotten and they will then be convinced of the sincerity of the American government.

The customs tariff recently promulgated completely satisfies for the present the aspirations of Philippine industry and commerce. Great benefits would accrue from the establishment of mortgage loan banks, which would facilitate the development of the great sources of wealth which are to-day completely at the mercy of usury; but it would be well to remember that in order to accomplish this successfully, it will be necessary so to modify the existing laws as to guarantee property titles, so that they would become unquestionable before the law. Equal benefits would result from the building of good roads and railways, which would furnish transportation for the people and for the products of this rich soil and its industries. They would increase production and open up immense fields and rich lands, which are to-day untilled on account of the lack of means of transportation. The same thing may be said of the regulation of the sale and the development of public lands, which would encourage a large immigration of American laborers and farmers, who would teach the Filipinos the inadequacy of their primitive system of agriculture. This would indeed be a step in the right direction for the Archipelago. Other benefits would be gained by the establishment of experimental agricultural stations similar to those in the United States.

The change proposed by the government in the monetary system and the adoption of the gold standard, now universally established in the commercial centers of the world, as well as the issue of a special coinage for this Archipelago, at a fixed ratio to that of the United States, would place commerce on a safer basis. The regulation of the granting of concessions for the working of the mines of all kinds with which this country is blessed, would give us an opportunity of freeing ourselves from the large importations of coal and other minerals which to-day makes us tributary to other countries.

Although there are powerful reasons for believing that a more autonomous government would be very beneficial to the moral and material reconstruction of this Archipelago, they are no less weighty than those held by people who are of the opinion that the *status quo* of the existing provisional government ought to prevail for the period of two years. This time is considered indispensa-

ble to allow the Filipinos to become conversant with their individual rights and their use, and to become familiar with the right of suffrage, which, as has been said before, is an entirely new thing to them. The most powerful argument to be found in favor of the latter view is based on the results of the municipal elections in some provinces, where the voters, instead of considering the common good, have allowed themselves to be influenced by the dominant *casiquism* or by the party passions and puerile reactionism which not long ago incited the war. There is no doubt that the Filipino people must purge themselves of these vices inherited from their former rulers and which are to-day deeply rooted in them, before they can fully enter upon the exercise of their rights. When this has been brought about, it will be well to remember that sudden changes are seldom beneficial and that a gradual development is always more advantageous.

The hope of the Filipino people would be to have a Legislative Chamber of Representatives who were elected from each province, though such elections should be limited and restricted, in that the electors would have to combine the qualifications of fitness and capability as well as the elected; and these conditions should be made also to apply to the powers of the Chamber, to the extent that its acts might be set aside whenever the executive government thought that measure necessary for the common good.

It would also be well to allow a delegation, composed of several persons elected from within the Chamber, to represent it in an informative character in Congress at Washington, so that the Filipinos might have an opportunity of learning and later exercising political functions; but this, I believe, will only be possible when all of the provinces are able to be represented in the Chamber. In short, I believe all of this will be possible only when the hostility which still exists against the constituted power shall have ceased.

BENITO LEGARDA.

III.

Taking up the subjects in the order placed in the interrogatory, I begin by stating that the presence of United States government in these Islands has undoubtedly produced immense changes for the better in the political conditions of the Filipino people. Indeed, it could not be otherwise, as the Filipinos have rid themselves from the theocratic yoke and placed themselves