

Document: THE FILIPINO GRIEVANCES AGAINST GOVERNOR WOOD

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Transcript:

Filipino Grievances Against Governor Wood

(Approved by the Commission of Independence on November 17, 1926)

More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the Philippines came under the American flag – an emblem of freedom, not subjugation; a symbol of altruism, not of selfishness or greed. American sovereignty was implanted in our country with the avowed purpose of training us in the art of self-government and granting us independence. Our good, not her gain was to be America's aim. Our country was committed to her in trust to be conserved and developed for the benefit of our people. Believing in the sincerity of America's purpose, the Filipinos applied themselves with patient diligence to the task of meeting the conditions exacted of them, anxiously awaiting the day when America would honor her promise.

The first twenty years of civil government were marked by mutual understanding and loyal cooperation between American and Filipinos. At the end of that period, when it seemed that the goal had finally been reached, after the President of the United States had advised the Congress that the time had come for America to fulfill her sacred pledge, Major General Leonard Wood was sent to the Philippines as Governor-General. Cognizant of the part taken by General Wood in the liberation of Cuba, the Filipino people expected that under his administration the spirit of cooperation would be maintained and that the work of political emancipation would be complete. Contrary, however, to our expectations, his conduct of the government has been characterized by a train of usurpations and arbitrary acts, resulting in the curtailment of our autonomy, the destruction of our constitutional system, and the reversal of America's Philippine policy.

This line of conduct recently culminated in the issuance of Executive Order No. 37, by which he has attempted to nullify laws creating the Board of Control and assumed the functions of that body. The gravity of this last step is the more evident when we recall the series of usurpations theretofore committed by him.

He has refused his assent to laws which were the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has set at naught both the legal authority and responsibility for the Philippine heads of departments.

He has substituted his constitutional advisers for a group of military attaches without legal standing in the government and not responsible to the people.

He has reversed the policy of Filipinizing the service of the government by appointing Americans even when Filipinos of proven capacity were available.

He has obstructed the carrying out of national economic policies duly adopted by the Legislature, merely because they are in conflict with his personal views.

He has rendered merely perfunctory the power of the Legislature to pass the annual appropriation law by reviving items in the law of the preceding year, after vetoing the corresponding items of the current appropriation act, in flagrant violation of the Organic Law.

He has made appointments to positions and authorized the payment of salaries therefor after having vetoed the appropriations for such salaries.

He has used certain public funds to grant additional compensation to public officials in clear violation of law.

He has arrogated unto himself the right of exercising the powers granted by law to the Emergency Board after abolishing said board on the ground that its powers involved an unlawful delegation of legislative authority.

He has unduly interfered in the administration of justice.

He has refused to obtain the advice of the Senate in making appointments where such advice is required by the Organic Act.

He has refused to submit to the Senate appointment for vacancies occurring during the recess of the Legislature in contravention of the Organic Act.

He has continued in office nominees whose appointments had been rejected by the Senate.

He has usurped legislative powers by imposing conditions on legislative measures approved by him.

He has, in the administration of affairs in Mindanao, brought about a condition which has given the rise to discord and dissension between certain groups of Christian and Mohammedan Filipinos.

He has by his policies created strained relations between resident Americans and Filipinos.

He has endeavored, on the pretext of getting the government out of business, to dispose of all the companies capitalized by the government worth many millions of the people's money to powerful interests.

He has sanctioned the campaign of insidious propaganda in the United States against the Filipino people and their aspirations.

He has attempted to close the Philippine National Bank so necessary to the economic development of the country.

He has adopted the practice of intervening in, and controlling directly, to its minute details, the affairs of the Philippine Government, both insular and local, in violation of self-government.

He has insistently sought the amendment of our land laws approved by the Congress of the United States, which amendment would open up the resources of our country to exploitation by predatory interests.

Not content with these and other arbitrary acts, the Governor-General has recently promulgated Executive Order No. 37, declaring that the laws creating and defining the powers of the Board of Control which is authorized to vote the stocks owned by the government in certain private corporations, are

absolute nullities. In the same order the Governor-General also announced his purpose to exercise solely and by himself the powers and duties developing upon said board. This executive order is purported to be based on an opinion rendered by the Judge Advocate General of the United States Army and the conformatory opinion of the Acting Advocate General on November 7. Despite this fact, he has found it convenient to withhold the publication of his order until November 10, a few hours after the Legislature has adjourned, this depriving the Legislature of the opportunity to consider the matter.

The laws creating and defining the powers of the Board of Control have been in force and acted upon by the present Governor-General and other officers of the government for a number of years, and they have neither been repealed by the Legislature, annulled by Congress, nor declared unconstitutional by the courts. To hold that the Governor-General by a mere executive order can set them aside, is to subvert the whole system of constitutional government and destroy the theory of separation of powers which the Governor-General has always been so intent in upholding.

In the face of this critical situation, we, the constitutional representatives of the Filipino people, met to deliberate upon the present difficulties existing in the Government of the Philippine Islands and to determine how best to preserve the supremacy and majesty of the laws and to safeguard the rights and liberties of our people, having faith in the sense of justice of the people of the United States and inspired by her patriotic example in the early days of her history, do hereby, in our behalf and in name of the Filipino people, solemnly and publicly make known our most vigorous protest against the arbitrary acts and usurpations of the present Governor-General of the Philippine Islands , particularly against Executive Order No. 37.

The consciousness of our sacred and inescapable duty to our country and our sense of loyalty to the people of the United States constrain us to denounce the foregoing acts of the present Governor-General as arbitrary, oppressive, and undemocratic. We appeal to the judgment and conscience of the American people in justification of our stand and for the vindication of our rights.