

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

---

## **Veto and Repassage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act: A Catalogue of Motives**

Theodore W. Friend

*Philippine Studies* vol. 12, no. 4 (1964): 666–680

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

# Veto and Repassage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act: A Catalogue of Motives\*

---

THEODORE W. FRIEND

ONE of the most crucial weeks in modern Philippine history and in the history of American colonial policy was that in January 1933 when President Herbert Hoover vetoed the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, and the American Congress overrode his veto. Months afterwards the Philippine Legislature would "decline to accept" the terms of independence offered them, and Senate President Quezon would go to Washington and obtain from Roosevelt and a new Congress a new and slightly different measure. The pattern of Philippine-American relations for many years, however, was essentially determined in January 1933 by a lame-duck Congress, against the will of a lame-duck President, in the most severely depressed period in the history of the American economy. Into that period this paper inquires, to clarify the several questions of behavior and motive that have sprung from it. First, I will take up the arguments of the veto and

---

\* This is the fourth and last in a series of articles on the circumstances surrounding and motives behind the passage of the first Philippine Independence Act. The author is Associate Professor of History in the State University of New York at Buffalo. His book, "Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929-1946," will be published early in 1965 by Yale University Press. This series of articles has been conceived and composed separately from the contents of the book.

the arguments of Congress against it; next, Hoover's motives in launching the veto; and last, I will look at the question of the behavior of the Philippine Independence Mission, whose account of its actions differs totally from that given by Hoover.

## 1

In composing his veto message, Hoover called for help from the four cabinet members most involved with Philippine affairs. From Roy Chapin, Secretary of Commerce, came a reply predicting the collapse of the Philippine economy. Arthur Hyde, Secretary of Agriculture, scored a strong and simple point: the American farmer needed relief not in ten years, as the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act provided, and not in five years either, but immediately; of what use was Philippine independence in ten years to a farmer facing foreclosure in ten days?<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Hurley, Secretary of War, fashioned another of his intransigent declarations<sup>2</sup> which went no further than the final report of Henry Stimson, Taft's Secretary of War, had gone twenty years before, on the eve of a previous Democratic descent upon Washington: "Until our work in the Archipelago is completed, until the Filipinos are prepared not only to preserve but to continue it, abandonment of the Philippines . . . would be an abandonment of our responsibility to the Filipino people and of the moral obligations which we have voluntarily

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1926-27.

<sup>2</sup> To a personal overture from Senator Hawes ("We both have a bit of Irish in us, but an Irishman knows how to shake hands after the fight is over") Hurley had replied pleasantly; but to Hawes' plea for the "compromise" bill he yielded no ground. Hawes to Hurley, Dec. 23, 1932, and Hurley to Hawes, Dec. 29, BIA Hurley-P.

Hurley's letter to the president exists in several draft stages which reveal Gen. Frank McCoy to be a strong influence in it and Gen. Frank Parker, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, a weak one; SecWar memo to President, Dec. 22, 1932 (Stimson Mss., IF-2790, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University); BIA 364w-925); McCoy MSS, Box 89; *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1927-29.

assumed before the world.”<sup>3</sup> The author of those words, preparing for his second resignation from a Republican cabinet, was fashioning a more sophisticated argument now. Stimson, as Hoover’s Secretary of State, found Congress oblivious to the distinction between self-government and complete separation from America, and to what Stimson believed was the true Filipino desire for the former—autonomy with American protection. We are in danger, Stimson wrote, of losing “the Philippines as a base for American influence—political, social, economic, and spiritual—and the new basis of equilibrium in the Far East which America’s presence has created.” “Congress,” he believed, “has issued an invitation to chaos.”<sup>4</sup>

Hoover took his Secretaries’ arguments and fused them into a state paper of some eloquence. “We are dealing here,” he wrote, “with one of the most precious rights of man—national independence interpreted as separate nationality.” He reiterated America’s pledge of independence but said that it must be achieved over a period of at least fifteen more years, with increasing autonomy followed by a plebiscite. Independence, he chided, “is a goal not to be reached by yielding to selfish interests, to resentments, or to abstractions.” “Neither our successors nor history,” Hoover warned, “will discharge us of responsibility for actions which diminish the liberty we seek to confer, nor for dangers we create for ourselves as a consequence of our acts.”<sup>5</sup>

The Secretary of State, who went over the message with the President the day before it was delivered, thought that he should not have ruled out the possibility of a permanent Philippine-American relationship. According to Stimson, Hoover told him that “he [Hoover] differed with me radically on our views of the Philippines and that discouraged me a

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1912*, quoted in Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, Harper & Bros., 1947), p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Stimson twice thought through his whole experience of and views on the Philippines, before completing his letter to Hoover of Jan. 3, 1933; Stimson Mss., IF-1128, 3F-1292; letter printed in *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1925-26.

<sup>5</sup> “President’s notes in the Philippine Bill,” Stimson Mss., IF-2806; quotations from printed version, *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1759-61.

good deal after my association with him for four years." But Stimson did not press the matter: he felt the veto was basically constructed on the correct ground, a strategic one. That same day he warned Japanese Ambassador Debuchi that whatever happened to the bill, American policy in the Far East would not be changed.<sup>6</sup>

## 2

"This legislation puts both our people and the Philippine people not on the road to liberty and safety...but on the path leading to new and enlarged dangers to liberty and freedom itself." The clerk had barely finished reading the concluding sentence of Hoover's veto message when the House took a roll call on it, and voted 274 to 94, almost three to one, to override it.<sup>7</sup>

The strategy of Senator Harry Hawes and other managers of the bill had been to act quickly. They had been confident of the results in the House, but not in the Senate. A delay would allow time for a swelling cry from the national press, and for the administration and the farm lobbies to apply pressure. Hoover, upon hearing the news of the House vote, laughed "the mirthless laugh that meant fight." Joining his administration in an unaccustomed alliance were the farm lobbyists, who after leading the movement for an independence act, now found it unsatisfactory; they entreated legislative leaders to uphold the veto. William Randolph Hearst jumped in to help the cause and personally called more than twenty key senators to ask their support of the President.<sup>8</sup> On January 17 the Cabinet met, and awaited news by telephone of the approaching vote in the Senate.

If the administration was in a fighting mood, so was the Senate. Most of the speakers were for overriding the veto; they avoided discussion of specifics, and took a high ground of anti-imperial principle which had barely been occupied in

<sup>6</sup> Stimson diary, Jan. 12, 1933 (Stimson Mss.).

<sup>7</sup> *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1761-69.

<sup>8</sup> OsRox Report; Theodore Joslin, *Hoover Off The Record* (Double-day, Garden City, 1934), p. 338.

earlier debates. Some of them were clearly for disentanglement from the Orient too, such as Borah of Idaho. He would strike out the neutralization clause if he could; and he "would vote tomorrow to return them their naval base"; but on the whole the bill was a good compromise. There would always be storm clouds over the Orient, and as for Stimson's argument about a base of American influence, Borah was "not sure . . . that it is well for the Filipinos, or well for the United States, to have an island of Western culture in the midst of an Oriental ocean, unless we are prepared in some way to transform the nature of that Oriental ocean." This task, said the veteran Senator, "I have no desire to undertake." Although the beet-sugar growers of Idaho wanted him to uphold the veto, Borah would not. "Whatever may be the virtues of a democracy—and they are many," he concluded, "one of them is not the capacity to govern or rule another people."

After Borah had raised the pennant of anti-imperialism, others recalled its defense in 1898, and saluted it in the name of the American Revolution. Bronson Cutting of New Mexico recalled the aftermath of the war with Spain: "The ultimate force behind this legislation is the force which had been behind it ever since the late Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. Hoar, protested in this body against the imperialistic adventure on which the United States entered in his time." Then Robert LaFollette Jr. closed the debate by declaring that "if we are to maintain the principles upon which this government was founded, we must in truth take this step now to give independence to the Philippine people." If we do not take the step, "then we should no longer profess to adhere to the fundamental principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States." In a moment the question was put, the roll call taken.<sup>9</sup>

In somber meeting the Cabinet heard the news by phone: 66-26 to override. "We are in a pitiful position," Hoover said. "Whatever the subject, there are not thirty senators we can depend upon. It's a rout." A switch of five votes would have upheld the veto, but, Stimson commented, "all the weak-

<sup>9</sup> *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1859-67, 1909-24.

kneed veterans went back on us at the last moment, including old Borah, who apparently made a pretty bad speech. He had been counted as on our side."<sup>10</sup>

## 3

Thus ended the Republican policy of Philippine retention, and thus Hoover was overcome in the last defense of a crumbling citadel. One is moved to ask why the President took the stand he did, holding out against much reasonable persuasion from others and certain strong dispositions within himself.<sup>11</sup>

During the weeks before and after the original passage of the bill in December 1932, Hoover was "bombarded" with pressure, advice, and inquiry. The AFofL asked him to give the bill his signature; its President, William Green, found the bill "reasonably satisfactory" with respect to the interests of American labor.<sup>12</sup> Keeping the AF of L incongruous company were two exponents of the original Republican Philippine policy, Elihu Root, the architect, and Cameron Forbes, a builder. Both asked Hoover to sign the bill; Root presumably on the principle that the best exercise of democracy was to exorcise imperialism; Forbes on the candidly admitted ground that the bill removed the irritants to Philippine-American trade without seriously impairing that trade itself. Furthermore, Forbes said, it left the door open still for an indefinitely prolonged relationship should the Filipinos eventually so choose.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Joslin, p. 339; Stimson diary, Jan. 17, 1933 (Stimson Mss.).

<sup>11</sup> Joslin, p. 338, declares that Hoover, for whom he was private secretary, began composing a veto before the bill was passed. Cameron Forbes saw Hoover three times, in December, January, and February, and records his attitude in the first instance as impassive, in the latter two as inflexible; Forbes Journals, Second Series, 4, 504-06; 5, 115-16 (Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division).

<sup>12</sup> OsRox Report.

<sup>13</sup> OsRox Report; Stimson diary, Jan. 3, 1933 (Stimson Mss.); Forbes Journals, 4, 352, 361-64 (LCMD). Neither Stimson's belief that the bill precluded the possibility of a prolonged or permanent relationship, nor Forbes' opposite belief that the bill guaranteed it, was precisely justified by the text of the bill itself. Both men were reading future events according to their own nature, Stimson pessimistically, Forbes with optimism.

Each of these arguments might have reinforced certain of Hoover's own feelings earlier expressed. He was, first of all, against colonies in principle. He was also opposed to large navies, and was therefore particularly averse to the manner in which the Philippines was used by American officers and navalists as an argument for an expanded fleet. He did not care to protect Philippine sugar, and during his campaign in beet-sugar country he had suggested a smaller quota for the Philippines than the most lobby-minded congressmen had done. As for Filipino immigration, his feelings may be deduced from a remark made to Stimson about Puerto Ricans: Hoover expressed regret that the United States was shutting out "Nordics" while letting in "undersized Latins."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Hoover had unhappy relations with the independence mission, which could only have made him the more glad to end American responsibility for the Philippines. The great surprise is that despite these many objective and subjective reasons for signing the independence bill, Hoover vetoed it instead.

Why? Because, it might be said, the farm lobbies, prime movers for the bill, had turned around against it in the end. The strongest and most active of them all, the American Farm Bureau Federation, even asked Hoover formally for a veto on the grounds that the bill did not adequately protect the American farmer. Hoover, however, was no more susceptible to farm pressure against the bill than he was to labor pressure in its favor. He had made up his mind long before. Clearly the bill was a badly constructed piece of legislation, and possibly should have been vetoed on that ground alone. Hoover's major objection to the bill, however, was that it would recklessly disturb the balance of power in Asia, a proposition of which he had been convinced by Stimson and the British in 1930, and to which he had clung tenaciously even after the Japanese conquest of Manchuria in 1931-32. At the London Naval Conference of 1930 the British might have refused to

<sup>14</sup> Hoover, on his principles, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover* (New York, MacMillan, 1951), 2. 359; Stimson diary concerning Hoover on navy, on immigration. Aug. 28, 1930, Mar. 30, 1931 (Stimson Mss.); Hoover speech concerning sugar reprinted in *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1912.



continue naval limitations had not Hoover's administration promised to hold on to the Philippines, and thus remain a makeweight in the Asian balance. In December of 1932, Winston Churchill had written for American consumption an article exhorting the United States to keep the burden that Kipling had entreated it to take up in 1899.<sup>15</sup> Even if Hoover did not read the essay, he already agreed with its major assumptions: that law and order in the Philippines and political stability in the Pacific would surely crumble if the United States withdrew.

Out of this pessimistic conviction flowed his veto message; and the tone of it was the firmer, the more declarative, for his being repeatedly frustrated by Congress in the past. Before he yielded office to Franklin Roosevelt, of whom he was sharply suspicious,<sup>16</sup> Hoover was in a mood to fight, with an appetite to show his power where it still could be shown—in the negative form of a veto. The message survives as an eloquent coda to a presidency that had long since declined to minimal effectiveness. In it Hoover achieved the particular clarity and cogency that sometimes attaches to causes already lost, defined by men already beaten.

## 4

In addition to this lucid state paper, however, Hoover's legacy to history concerning the Philippine question is a particularly disturbing and confusing recollection published in his memoirs. Therein he asserts that the Philippine Legislative Mission asked him to *veto* the independence bill. The Mission states the contrary: that it asked him to *sign* the bill. Since Hoover's story has already been accepted by at least one American historian, the charge deserves repeating in Hoover's own words, which follow a description of the passage of the bill itself:

<sup>15</sup> On Hoover and the London Naval Conference, see Forbes, *Journals*, 3, passim (LCMD); Churchill, "Defense in the Pacific," *Collier's*, Dec. 17, 1932.

<sup>16</sup> Stimson diary, Jan. 3, 1933 (Stimson Mss.); Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933* (Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1957) pp. 443-46.

Quezon and Osmeña, the Philippine independence leaders... came to see me at the White House while this bill was being debated in Congress and stated that they hoped I would veto it; they said the Philippines were not economically prepared for independence, and if they stood alone they would be in jeopardy from either China or Japan. I was utterly astonished and said so. I asked why they were lobbying with Congress to pass the bill and why they were carrying on propaganda to that end in the United States in cooperation with our sugar producers. They replied that independence was their political issue in the Philippines, and that unless they promoted it their political leadership would be lost to more dangerous elements. I was disgusted and said I would call in the entire press at once and repeat their statements. To which they replied that they would say that I had entirely misunderstood their remarks. I told them I hoped they would never come into the White House again. When I discussed this incident with Secretary Hurley, he stated that they had said the same thing to him; but he agreed with me that a dispute unsupported by evidence would only make the situation worse.<sup>17</sup>

If this allegation is true, the Filipino mission was guilty of prolonged acts of hypocrisy toward the American government, and toward the Philippine government and people. If it is true, the whole of their conduct in 1932-33 boils down to a pair of gigantic hoaxes: first secretly trying to strangle a bill which they had been deputed to obtain, and second, campaigning afterwards in the Philippines for the same bill, which they had secretly tried to kill. If, however, the allegation is false, Hoover is responsible for darkening the reputation of the Filipino leaders either with a vindictive fabrication or with reprehensibly sloppy recollections.

What casts doubt upon Hoover's story from the start is the fact that Quezon and Osmeña were not in Washington *together* at any time during Hoover's entire administration.<sup>18</sup> But if one assumes that Hoover's memory slipped only in substituting the name "Quezon" for Roxas, who was actually Osmeña's companion at the time, a case can be drawn up in support of his recollections. Chiefly, the case rests on a conversation recorded by Cameron Forbes in February 1933, in which Hoover registered his "shock" at the "hypocrisy" of Filipino

<sup>17</sup> Hoover, *Memoirs*, 2, 361.

<sup>18</sup> The last occasion had been at the time of Coolidge's appointment of Stimson as Governor General, at the end of 1927. The next would be in late April 1933, to confer with Franklin Roosevelt.

kneed veterans went back on us at the last moment, including old Borah, who apparently made a pretty bad speech. He had been counted as on our side."<sup>10</sup>

## 3

Thus ended the Republican policy of Philippine retention, and thus Hoover was overcome in the last defense of a crumbling citadel. One is moved to ask why the President took the stand he did, holding out against much reasonable persuasion from others and certain strong dispositions within himself.<sup>11</sup>

During the weeks before and after the original passage of the bill in December 1932, Hoover was "bombarded" with pressure, advice, and inquiry. The AFofL asked him to give the bill his signature; its President, William Green, found the bill "reasonably satisfactory" with respect to the interests of American labor.<sup>12</sup> Keeping the AF of L incongruous company were two exponents of the original Republican Philippine policy, Elihu Root, the architect, and Cameron Forbes, a builder. Both asked Hoover to sign the bill; Root presumably on the principle that the best exercise of democracy was to exorcise imperialism; Forbes on the candidly admitted ground that the bill removed the irritants to Philippine-American trade without seriously impairing that trade itself. Furthermore, Forbes said, it left the door open still for an indefinitely prolonged relationship should the Filipinos eventually so choose.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Joslin, p. 339; Stimson diary, Jan. 17, 1933 (Stimson Mss.).

<sup>11</sup> Joslin, p. 338, declares that Hoover, for whom he was private secretary, began composing a veto before the bill was passed. Cameron Forbes saw Hoover three times, in December, January, and February, and records his attitude in the first instance as impassive, in the latter two as inflexible; Forbes Journals, Second Series, 4, 504-06; 5, 115-16 (Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division).

<sup>12</sup> OsRox Report.

<sup>13</sup> OsRox Report; Stimson diary, Jan. 3, 1933 (Stimson Mss.); Forbes Journals, 4, 352, 361-64 (LCMD). Neither Stimson's belief that the bill precluded the possibility of a prolonged or permanent relationship, nor Forbes' opposite belief that the bill guaranteed it, was precisely justified by the text of the bill itself. Both men were reading future events according to their own nature, Stimson pessimistically, Forbes with optimism.

Each of these arguments might have reinforced certain of Hoover's own feelings earlier expressed. He was, first of all, against colonies in principle. He was also opposed to large navies, and was therefore particularly averse to the manner in which the Philippines was used by American officers and navalists as an argument for an expanded fleet. He did not care to protect Philippine sugar, and during his campaign in beet-sugar country he had suggested a smaller quota for the Philippines than the most lobby-minded congressmen had done. As for Filipino immigration, his feelings may be deduced from a remark made to Stimson about Puerto Ricans: Hoover expressed regret that the United States was shutting out "Nordics" while letting in "undersized Latins."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Hoover had unhappy relations with the independence mission, which could only have made him the more glad to end American responsibility for the Philippines. The great surprise is that despite these many objective and subjective reasons for signing the independence bill, Hoover vetoed it instead.

Why? Because, it might be said, the farm lobbies, prime movers for the bill, had turned around against it in the end. The strongest and most active of them all, the American Farm Bureau Federation, even asked Hoover formally for a veto on the grounds that the bill did not adequately protect the American farmer. Hoover, however, was no more susceptible to farm pressure against the bill than he was to labor pressure in its favor. He had made up his mind long before. Clearly the bill was a badly constructed piece of legislation, and possibly should have been vetoed on that ground alone. Hoover's major objection to the bill, however, was that it would recklessly disturb the balance of power in Asia, a proposition of which he had been convinced by Stimson and the British in 1930, and to which he had clung tenaciously even after the Japanese conquest of Manchuria in 1931-32. At the London Naval Conference of 1930 the British might have refused to

---

<sup>14</sup> Hoover, on his principles, *Memoirs of Herbert Hoover* (New York, MacMillan, 1951), 2. 359; Stimson diary concerning Hoover on navy, on immigration. Aug. 28, 1930. Mar. 30, 1931 (Stimson Mss.); Hoover speech concerning sugar reprinted in *Cong. Rec.* 72:2, 1912.

leaders who professed a desire for independence and then asked that it be vetoed.<sup>19</sup> If memoirs written twenty years later might be faulty, how explain the appearance of this evidence only a month after the event?

Some aspects of the conduct of the mission also suggest that they might have done as Hoover declares, and as Forbes's diary seems to intimate. On the 11th of January, 1933, the day of their crucial interview with Hoover at the White House, they sent not one, but two telegrams to Quezon.<sup>20</sup> The first said only that "a frank exchange of views took place," but the second stated that "we informed him of our desire that he approve Philippine bill. . . . Previous indications that he will veto bill. . . seem to be confirmed." That two telegrams were sent where one would have sufficed might indicate a decision, after the first, a neutral message, to tell a deliberate falsehood in the second—a falsehood to which there would have been no Quezon follower as witness, because none but Osmeña, Roxas and their sympathizers were present.<sup>21</sup>

Can one construe motivations on the part of the mission to make these fragments of evidence cohere more plausibly? One can only if one assumes that the mission changed its mind sometime after December 30, when they learned from Manila that legislators there had granted their request to ask Hoover to sign the bill.<sup>22</sup> What could have made them change their

<sup>19</sup> Forbes, *Journals*, 5, 115-16 (LCMD).

<sup>20</sup> Hoover to Forbes, Jan. 11, 1933, saying that the mission was coming "this afternoon"; Forbes *Journals*, 4, 360 (LCMD). OsRox to Quaqual, both "strictly confidential," Jan. 11 (Quezon Mss.).

<sup>21</sup> All of the mission plus one Resident Commissioner, Osias, saw the President; but the other Resident Commissioner, Guevara, did not. Guevara had remained, for the most part, a trusted Quezon man, but Osias, once a Quezon protégé, had changed leaders on this issue.

<sup>22</sup> OsRox to Rep. Francisco Varona, Dec. 25, 1932, in Spanish; OsRox to Quaqual, Dec. 27; Aquino to Quezon, Dec. 27, in Spanish; Quaqual to OsRox, Dec. 30; (Quezon Mss.). On December 30, the "Independence Commission," in reality a gathering of such legislators as could be found when the Legislature was not in session, had voted, against Quezon's wishes, to ask for Hoover's signature. They wanted the Philippine Legislature to be able to decide whether to accept the bill or not, as provided in its terms.

minds? On January 2, 1933, Quezon sent them the longest cable of the whole exchange between Washington and Manila. In it he derided the bill "as the work of the National City Bank" and as "a joke that is unfair and harmful to us, but profitable to American manufacturers and exporters, to Cuban sugar and beet sugar interests, without compensation of real freedom and independence." He called the measure "a tariff bill against Philippine products and immigration" which would assuredly be defeated in the Philippines. "I shall not therefore be sorry if the President vetoes the bill [first]," for then a better one would be obtained from the Democrats.

When the mission replied, after four days, they said they would certainly work in the event of a veto for a new bill under the Democrats, and they asked Quezon to join them to make clear the attitudes and unite the work of Filipinos for independence. Quezon replied that although he was not needed, he would come to demonstrate their unity of purpose.<sup>23</sup> In view of this exchange, completed four days before the mission saw Hoover, it is conceivable that the mission might have considered it statesmanlike to ask for a veto in order to obtain a better bill from the Democrats. It is also conceivable that out of fear of Quezon and of defeat at his hands, threatened by his message of January 2, they preferred unity with him behind a new bill to schism and possible defeat over the pending one. But how does one then explain the second cable of January 11, in which they told Quezon that they had asked Hoover to approve the bill? One cannot assume both that they feared Quezon enough to obey him, and that simultaneously they feared a loss of face with their followers enough to tell Quezon that they had *disobeyed* him.

---

<sup>23</sup> Quezon to OsRox, Jan. 2, 1933; OsRox to Quezon, Jan. 6; Quezon to OsRox, Jan. 7. Even as OsRox was requesting Quezon's presence, however, Aquino was trying to convert Sen. Elpidio Quirino from a pro-veto stand, which suggests that the mission if it changed its mind at all, did not do so immediately following Quezon's blast of Jan. 2; Aquino to Quirino, Jan. 6, 1933, in Spanish, telephoned by Quirino to Quezon; (Quezon Mss.).

## 5

In short, the assumptions required to believe Hoover's story overtax the imagination. And on behalf of the mission's story there are two creditable witnesses very close to the event. Marcial Lichauco, who was then secretary to the mission, takes sharp issue with Hoover's account, and states as an eye-witness that the mission presented Hoover with a signed appeal for passage.<sup>24</sup> Even if one were to discount Lichauco's evidence as coming from an interested party, how could one explain the cable from Vicente Bunuan to Quezon on January 15, saying that the mission was working to have the veto over-ridden?<sup>25</sup> Bunuan was Quezon's seeing eye in Washington at the time, and would surely have reported any irregular behavior on the part of the Osmeña-Roxas mission. It would appear that they behaved consistently, asking for the President's signature, and when he refused, working to overthrow the veto.

Hoover's account, furthermore, stands defective in several particulars. Firstly, he misidentifies Roxas as Quezon. Secondly, the Filipinos visited Hoover in January, two weeks after the bill had been passed out of conference, but Hoover says the bill was "being debated" when they saw him. Thirdly, Hoover says that he "discussed the incident" afterwards with the Secretary of War, but Filipino cables state that Hurley was present at the time. Even so, Hurley, the only American

---

<sup>24</sup> Marcial Lichauco, *Roxas* (Manila, 1951), pp. 93-95. Lichauco admits (p. 98) that the mission wavered in the face of Quezonian opposition, but says that they were persuaded to continue by Democratic Senators Key Pittman, Millard Tydings, and Joseph Robinson. In the coming administration, these three were expected to become, respectively, Chairman of Foreign Relations, Chairman of Territories, and Majority Leader.

<sup>25</sup> Benigno Aquino, who was trying to get Senator King to over-ride the veto, suspected that Bunuan was revealing his actions to Quezon, as indeed he was. Bunuan, however, wrote a cable to Quezon in Aquino's presence, in which he denied having sent any information; and Quezon in turn supported him in this untruth. Bunuan to Quezon, Jan. 15, 17 (twice), 1933; Aquino to Quezon, Jan. 17, in Spanish; Quezon to Sen. King, Jan. 16; to Sen. Wheeler, Jan. 16; to Bunuan, Jan. 16, 18; to Aquino, Jan. 18; (Quezon Mss.). King finally gave no one his vote; he abstained.

in a position to confirm and pinpoint Hoover's account, did not do so with any memo in 1933, nor could he when asked about the incident many years later.<sup>26</sup>

The only apparent inconsistency in the mission's behavior is the sending of two different telegrams on January 11. But they do not, in the delay between the two, seem to be weighing the risk of lying; the more likely explanation is that they were weighing the risk of telling the whole truth—that they had gone against Quezon's wishes as expressed in his long telegram of January 2. Otherwise their behavior is all a piece: having worked for over a year for an independence bill, they believed it to be the best possible compromise, and so they persuaded Quezon's emissary of December, Benigno Aquino. Over Quezon's opposition they succeeded in obtaining legislative sanction to ask for Hoover's signature, in order that the Filipinos themselves might have "full liberty to accept or refuse." Even if the bill dealt imperfectly with the long range interests of a Filipino nation, it might fit nicely into the long range political ambitions of Osmeña and Roxas: to dispossess Quezon of paramount power. They could have no stronger platform upon which to run against him than an independence act, whatever its defects.

## 6

The weight of the evidence, then, bears out the honesty and constancy of the OsRox mission in pursuing the Philippine question to a successful compromise, and one is disposed to attribute the defects of Hoover's story to a shifting and elliptical memory. Nevertheless one must account for Hoover's telling Cameron Forbes, in February of 1933, how shocked he was at Filipinos asking the United States for a *veto*. He may have been referring to Quezon, who *did* want a veto; or he may have been referring obliquely to news reports that the Philippine Legislature, though requesting passage, was itself opposed to the bill; in any event, he could not have been

<sup>26</sup> The mission mentioned the presence of the Secretary of War in their first cable of Jan. 11 to Quaqual. Hurley, however, left no memo of the meeting for the BIA files; nor could he recall it specifically later (Hurley to the author, Mar. 30, 1961).



referring to the Filipino mission itself in December, 1932, or January, 1933.

Hoover probably did have a serious dispute with Osmeña and Roxas, but at a much earlier occasion during the many months they spent in Washington in 1930 and 1932, a dispute which his memory may have transposed to the climax of the Philippine question. Thirty years later, he still had "an indelible picture of two Filipino leaders who sat in front of my desk," and whom he "removed...for such dishonesty." Hurley corroborates Hoover "fully to the effect that the Filipino representatives in Washington during that period were privately telling the officials of the Executive Department that they were opposed to independence at that time...and having arguments on that subject in my office and with President Hoover."<sup>27</sup>

Such split conduct is understandable, for it was consistent with the behavior of the Filipino leaders over both the Clarke Amendment in 1916 and the Fairfield Bill in 1924. Henry Stimson<sup>28</sup> and Cameron Forbes understood the Filipinos' asking for independence while fearing economic and military insecurity. Both knew that the Filipino leaders suffered from a colonial dilemma only partly of their own making, and both accepted, as a cultural and diplomatic datum, any deviousness which appeared on the leaders' part. But a tendency to abstract moralism made Hoover and Hurley unable to appreciate the Filipino predicament. Forbes wrote of the President's attitude as early as the spring of 1930. "Mr. Hoover was not very tolerant of this degree of duplicity among the Filipino leaders and was fairly frank in expressing his dislike

---

<sup>27</sup> Hoover to the author, Dec. 23, 1960; Hurley to the author, Mar. 30, 1961.

<sup>28</sup> During Congressional hearings on independence in 1932, Stimson wrote: "The poor Filipinos themselves have at last realized their danger, and are almost pathetic in their desire to escape, but of course they are tied hand and foot by their previous slogans and they do not dare to change for fear of political death in the Islands. So it is rather a sad thing for me that way." *Diary*, Feb. 10, 1932 (Stimson Mss.).

of them as a result."<sup>29</sup> If the Filipinos again and later gave the President righteous shudders, it was certainly not when the moment for truth had arrived in December and January of 1932-33. Forbes, who worked closely with the Philippine Mission for the passage of the independence bill, on his own part recorded no hint of reluctance or change of attitude in them.

## 7

The passage, veto, and repassage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act represent a turning point in American imperial and in Philippine national history: the United States thereafter retreated from the mission and commitment undertaken in 1899, and the Philippines advanced more readily towards the goal sought since 1896. Japanese expansion would later impede American retreat and impair Philippine advance, but the essential decision had been taken.

The climactic weeks in the discussion of the act revealed, as climaxes do, the strange situations in which colonial politics, like all politics, can put individuals. Not the least strange was that of Herbert Hoover, who found himself against colonies, against large navies, against Philippine sugar, against Filipino immigration and, as a paradoxical climax, against the Philippine Independence Act. Hoover also left to history a record of animus against Osmeña and Roxas, and a specific charge of betrayal of their mission, but the record does not bear out the charge.

Others besides Hoover played paradoxical roles at the end: the American Farm Bureau Federation, which had led the pack of farm lobbies for independence, turned about and asked for a veto; so did Manuel Quezon, who had been for a decade the leader of the independence movement. Both lost in the short run, but Quezon won in the long. After the bill was repassed by the American Congress, he mustered enough votes in the Philippine Legislature to supply, in a sense, his own veto. Then he returned to Washington and obtained another act, very little different, which left the farm lobbies dissatisfied, Hoover presumably disgruntled, Osmeña and Roxas defeated, and himself triumphant.

---

<sup>29</sup> From a long footnote added by Forbes in rereading, sometime later, his Journals, 3, 13-14 (LCMD).