

TAFT'S VIEWS ON "THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE FILIPINOS"

OSCAR M. ALFONSO

IT HAD BEEN A LITTLE LESS THAN A YEAR AND A HALF since his arrival in Manila in June 1900. William Howard Taft, pondering over the necessity for him to return to the United States, reflected upon the reasons. Committees of Congress had to be apprised of the situation in the Philippines. Recommendations from the Second Philippine Commission awaited to be translated into legislation in Washington, D.C. Personal conferences had to be held with the President, the Secretary of War, and leading members of Congress. These would take him away from the Filipinos a good three months or so, perhaps longer. But they would understand. In any case they expected his absence to be temporary, and they expected him back. He wrote Secretary of War Elihu Root: "I think I do not exaggerate and am not misled by flattery when I say that generally the Filipino people regard me as having more sympathy with them than any other member of the Commission and that they would regret anything which would make impossible or improbably [sic] my continuance as the Civil Governor . . ."¹ Taft was thus convinced, after less than two years with them, that he had succeeded in establishing himself as a friend of the Filipinos who had their interests "at heart."²

That Taft had, indeed, won Filipino confidence and affections was demonstrated early in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt wanted him to accept appointment to the United States Supreme Court. Taft expressed a strong preference to stay on as Civil Governor,³ and petitions from the Philippines earnestly urged his retention. They came from officials as well as private citizens, from various organizations, and from different sectors of the Manila press, including the nationalistic *El Renacimiento*. High Filipino officials in the government sent a telegram to President Roosevelt "requesting the continuance of Taft." The petitioners were Commissioners Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, Benito Legarda, and Jose Luzuriaga; Supreme Court Justices Cayetano Arellano, Florentino Torres, and Victorino Mapa; Solicitor General Gregorio Arana; and Arsenio Cruz Herrera, president of the Municipal Board of

¹ Letter from Taft to Root, November 17, 1901. Letters and unpublished material herein cited are all found in the Taft Papers, unless otherwise excepted, and are all in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

² Taft to Root, December 9, 1901.

³ See telegram to Roosevelt from Taft, January 8, 1903, in Roosevelt Papers.

Manila. Their joint telegram stated their belief that Taft's replacement at that time would have "deplorable effects." It described him as "the only man able to count upon the cooperation of all the political parties." The Filipino people, the telegram said, had "absolute confidence" in him and they would be "deeply hurt" by his departure.⁴

A cable to Roosevelt, sent jointly by the newspapers *El Grito*, *El Renacimiento*, *La Fraternidad*, and *La Democracia*, read: "Native press thinks Taft's untimely departure ruinous public order prays he could be retained for preservation peace success American policy here."⁵ A telegram each was received from "Federal Liberals Nationalists" on January 10, 1903; from "Philippine lawyers," January 11; from "International Club"; from Arsenio Cruz Herrera, January 12 ("People Manila in grand demonstration Malacañang yesterday ask for continuance Taft as governor Philippines"); from "Guerrero Luna Generals Malivar [sic] Luyban [sic]," January 12 ("Filipinos not belonging existing political parties consider Taft unchangeable maintenance moral material peace"); from the "Real estate commerce association," January 12; from "Dancil, for provincial municipal officials people Rizal province," January 14; from "Bernardino Monreal, governor, for the provincial and municipal officials and the people of Sorsogon," January 17; and from "Lochin" (Locsin?), for "assembly of presidents" representing Negros province, January 18.⁶

Roosevelt decided to desist from appointing Taft to the Supreme Court. He wrote Taft's brother Henry: "Will [Taft] sprung a surprise on me. He must have given the contents or the purport of my letter to a number of the natives, and I received the most fervid telegrams from them as to the effect on the native mind of his withdrawal . . . I am inclined to feel that as long as this is the tack on which the native mind is working it would be inadvisable to take him away."⁷

Taft became almost indispensable in the estimate of some Filipinos because he endeared himself to them in some ways. Moorfield Storey and Marcial P. Lichauco wrote in their anti-imperialist book:

. . . now came Mr. Taft as Civil Governor to recognize the rights of the Filipino. Mr. Taft brought into that new field something which Filipinos had never seen to any marked degree among the American civilians and military officers with whom they had come into contact. He brought sympathy, courtesy and friendly understanding. He gathered around him those Filipino insurgents in 1901 who, having realized the futility of their efforts to combat the American forces, had bowed to the inevitable and had resolved to dedicate their efforts towards making the best of the situation.

⁴ Telegram to Roosevelt from Manila officials, received 2:45 p.m., January 7, 1903; in Roosevelt Papers.

⁵ Telegram to Roosevelt dated January 9 or 10, 1903, in Roosevelt Papers.

⁶ All in Roosevelt Papers.

⁷ Roosevelt to Henry W. Taft, January 12, 1903; in Roosevelt Papers.

This was a great concession to the Filipinos and they appreciated it. The new governor gained popularity as the days went by, for as each revolting province was whipped into submission Mr. Taft followed in the wake of the army to institute civil government and promise the natives that if they threw down their arms they would have peace and local self-government. . . . the new governor went about quietly conquering the population with words rather than with swords. . . .⁸

Taft won some measure of popularity with Filipinos because of his adherence to a policy of placing Filipinos in government positions. He wrote Root on April 3, 1901 that he believed there should be at least nine members in the Philippine Commission; four of these, wrote Taft, should be Filipinos. "I think we ought to anticipate the charge that we are a small body of Americans engaged in governing the island and that we ought to show our desire to consult Filipino sentiment by the appointment of at least four." He assured Root that the Filipinos to be appointed would be chosen from "men who will be orthodox in matters of importance as we are."⁹ When some Americans manifested strong opposition in Manila when three Filipinos were appointed to the Philippine Commission, Taft wrote that if he could not use the Filipinos in the government and could not depend on them to assist him, he might as well leave the Philippines.¹⁰ He also asserted that he favored a policy of "conciliating the Filipinos, . . . appointing as many [of them] as we can to office, and . . . acting as if we intended to make this an American-Filipino government instead of a completely American government."¹¹ In 1904, as Secretary of War, Taft recalled in a speech: "The Government of the United States went into the Islands under a distinct promise that . . . it would extend self-government to the Filipinos as rapidly as they showed themselves fit for it, and that as many Filipinos as possible would be used in the personnel of the Government. This has always been the attitude of the Government, and never, so far as I know has there been a single step of departure from it"¹²

Taft expediently undertook to place Filipinos in government positions in face of very strong opinions that he had formed, so soon after arrival in Manila, about the Filipino character. His opinions, expressed in private letters sent to American officials, friends, or members of his family in the United States, were likely unknown to most, perhaps all, Filipinos of his time. Less than one month after he had set foot in the Philippines, Taft concluded that the Filipinos were superstitious, ignorant, cruel, and mendacious; that the educated among them were corrupt,

⁸ Moorfield Storey and Marcial P. Lichauco, *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), p. 38.

⁹ Taft to Root, April 3, 1901.

¹⁰ Taft to John M. Harlan, October 21, 1901.

¹¹ Taft to Mrs. E. B. McCagg, October 21, 1901.

¹² Speech delivered by Taft before the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, April 21, 1904. Pamphlet printed in New York.

glib, and self-seeking; and that it would be a century before the Filipinos could be capable of self-government.¹³ The educated *mestizos*, according to Taft, lacked moral character and easily yielded to pecuniary considerations; they considered public office a personal perquisite and an opportunity for a "squeeze." He belittled the Malolos Constitution, adopted by the Filipinos early in 1899, as the work only of two men and as a mere imitation of other constitutions.¹⁴

While Taft favored the early appointment of Filipino members of the Philippine Commission, they were to be in the minority in any case. The majority, with the inclusion of the vote of the Chief Executive, would be American.¹⁵ While he sympathized with the Filipinos, there were limits or restraints beyond which he would not venture to give them positions in the government. He wrote in 1907: "I don't think anyone would accuse me of lacking in sympathy with the Filipinos, but . . . I wish to warn . . . against . . . yielding to the pressure of Filipinos to secure all the places. No one is stronger than I am in extending the Civil Service to the Filipinos as rapidly as they show themselves fit to fill the places, but . . . there are a number of places that it is not safe in their own interests to trust the Filipinos." He emphasized that he thought it better not to go "too far in giving them power and place that in their own interests they are not able as yet intelligently to exercise or fill."¹⁶ The establishment of the all-Filipino Philippine Assembly in 1907 as the lower house marked the limits of Taft's willingness to entrust legislative work to Filipinos. To the end of his presidential term Taft retained an American majority in the upper-chamber Philippine Commission, which served in significant ways as a brake upon the Philippine Assembly.

In 1903, just after Filipino leaders had so trustingly given demonstration of their kind feelings for him out of blissful unawareness of all his unkind thoughts for them specifically and for the Filipino people in general, Taft took a step which conceivably strengthened his place in Filipino hearts and minds. He articulated the slogan of "the Philippines for the Filipinos." In a speech in Iloilo in February¹⁷ he told Americans and foreigners that the government was being run for the Filipinos, and if the Americans and foreigners found fault with that, they

¹³ See Taft's letters to John M. Harlan and to Howard C. Hollister, both dated June 30, 1900.

¹⁴ See Taft's letters, all written in 1900, to: Elihu Root, July 14, August 18, September 4, and November 6; Taft's wife Nellie, July 22; William R. Day, August 16; Samuel Dickson, August 16; Theodore Roosevelt, September 4; Taft's brother Horace, September 8; Henry M. Hoyt, September 8; and Taft's brother Charlie, November 6.

¹⁵ Taft to Root, April 3, 1901.

¹⁶ Taft to W. Morgan Shuster, February 25, 1907.

¹⁷ February 18, according to a typewritten copy of Taft's speech in the Taft Papers; February 19, according to James H. Blount, *American Occupation of the Philippines 1898-1912* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), pp. 437-438, n. 1.

could leave the Philippines.¹⁸ Taft wrote one of his brothers on September 24, 1903: "While I was in Iloilo . . . I took occasion to say in a speech . . . that we were running the Government for the benefit of the Filipinos; that it was their country, and that people who came here and were disappointed at its being so run did not have to stay. This created a great howl among the extreme Americans and the foreigners and has been made the text for abuse of me."¹⁹

In an address delivered before the Union Reading College in Manila on December 17, 1903, Taft pointed out that the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos" had been enunciated before him:

From the beginning to the end of the State papers which were circulated in these Islands as authoritative expressions of the Executive, the motto "the Philippines are for the Filipinos," and that the Government of the United States is here for the purpose of preserving the "Philippines for the Filipinos" for their benefit, for their elevation, for their civilization, again and again appear, and it is to be noted that these declarations were made, and were continued, while many of the Filipinos were in arms against the sovereignty of the United States. . . .

Some of our young lions of the local press have spoken of the "childish slogan": "The Philippines for the Filipinos." It is unnecessary to comment on the adjectives used, but it is sufficient to say that, whether childish or not, the principle makes up the web and the woof of the policy of the United States with respect to these Islands as it has been authoritatively declared by two Presidents of the United States — for President Roosevelt has followed sedulously the policy of President McKinley — and by the interpretations of the supreme popular will, the Congress of the United States.²⁰

Taft explained further: "Now, what is meant by the principle, 'the Philippines for the Filipinos'?" Only this, that every measure, whether in the form of law or an executive order, before its adoption, should be weighed in the light of this question: Does it make for the welfare of the Filipino people, or does it not? If it does not make for the welfare of the Filipino people, then it ought not to be enacted or executed."²¹

Taft's public pronouncements made him "immensely popular" with the Filipinos, who interpreted them to mean that "ultimate independence was not so far in the dim distance . . ." ²² On November 10, 1904 Wm. H. Carter wrote President Roosevelt from Iloilo that independence had grown to be the subject of conversation even in the schools. Carter believed that the movement looking to immediate independence was

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Blount says that the *Iloilo Times* of February 21, 1903 carried an account (reprinted by the *Manila American* a week later) of Taft's speech.

¹⁹ Taft to his brother Charley, September 24, 1903. For a discussion of Taft's policy, see editorial, "Gov. Taft, Americans and Filipinos," *The Springfield Republican*, July 10, 1903, p. 6.

²⁰ "The Duty of Americans in the Philippines," speech delivered by Taft before the Union Reading College in Manila, December 17, 1903; reproduced in *Official Gazette* (Supplement), December 23, 1903 (Vol. I, No. 68), p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Blount, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

based upon anti-imperialist activity in the United States. But he also believed that much was chargeable to the fact that leading natives had distorted the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos" and turned it into an authorized slogan for independence.²³ Taft himself had explained, however, that the policy did not necessarily mean Philippine independence:

...The doctrine as interpreted in the light of...authoritative declarations assumed that the Filipino people are of future capacity but not of present fitness for self-government....

In carrying out the principle, "the Philippines for the Filipinos," in respect to any measure, the question is: Is it for the welfare of the Filipino people? The doctrine does not include, necessarily, the independence of the Filipinos, nor any particular degree of autonomy. It is entirely consistent with the principle to object to an immediate extension of popular government on the ground that we are going too fast for the political digestion of the people and that it is not, therefore, for their good. Whether an autonomy or independence or quasi-independence shall immediately follow in these Islands ought to depend solely on the question, Is it best for the Filipino people and their welfare?...²⁴

Taft anticipated that the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos" could mean the indefinite, or even permanent, retention of the Philippines by the United States. "It is my sincere belief that when America shall have discharged her duty toward the Philippines, shall have reduced the tariff, and made the commercial bonds between the two countries close and profit-giving to both, the Filipinos will love the association with the mother country and will be the last to desire a severance of those ties."²⁵ As Storey and Lichauco put it: "... [Taft] began a new program which meant, when carefully analyzed, a permanent colonial system, maintained by the absolute power of the United States until the Filipinos became contented subjects. It meant . . . Philippine independence — never." The Filipinos were to be made contented by the introduction to them of education, sanitary improvements and other good things, all of which were to be paid for by themselves. As much liberty was to be given them not inconsistent with American interests, but the policy would be tantamount to indefinite retention by the United States.²⁶

Taft repeatedly invoked Filipino welfare as an objective of his administration. He sought justification of American presence in the Philippines in terms of material benefits, along with political tutelage, to be derived by the Filipinos from their association with the United States. But from an early time he was alive to the opportunities available in

²³ Wm. H. Carter to Theodore Roosevelt, November 10, 1904; in Roosevelt Papers. The writer, who used official stationery of "Headquarters Department of Visayas, Iloilo, Panay," was probably an army officer.

²⁴ Taft's speech before the Union Reading College, December 17, 1903, pp. 3, 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁶ Storey and Lichauco, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 41, 44.

the Philippines for American capital and American business. This is readily seen from the reply written by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge in November 1900 to a letter sent him by Taft. Lodge wrote him that he was glad to get confirmation from him about the character of the Islands and the opportunities in the Philippines for development. He firmly believed that the Philippines would not only become an important market for finished goods but would furnish a large opportunity for the investment of American capital. He pointed out that surplus capital in the United States was tending to lower considerably the rates of interest and to create needless competition because of the establishment of plants which could not hope to earn any decent return. Lodge therefore wanted the Philippines to furnish a new field for American capital and enterprise.²⁷

Taft's letters and public utterances showed that he fully shared Lodge's views. While he envisaged "the development of the islands, the moral improvement and the education of the people," he held that these could only be "greatly aided by the investment of American capital in the Philippines."²⁸ He believed that "the happiness of the Filipinos and their prosperity [were] dependent on a tremendous investment of capital here in railroads, steamship lines, agriculture and in manufacturing and mining." Within ten years he expected "a marvelous change in these islands," and he expressed the hope that "I may live to return to these islands after ten years and see what a change Yankee ingenuity, Yankee enterprise and Yankee freedom of thought can bring about."²⁹ Taft averred that "the chief object of the Americans in these Islands must be the welfare of the Filipinos and not the exploitation of the Islands for the benefit of the Americans."³⁰

But Taft also expected the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos" to produce results which were "certainly to make the Philippines useful for the Americans." To his mind, it was the *only* policy which could make the Philippines useful to Americans. He was mindful that there were in the Philippines only around eight thousand Americans as against some eight million Christian Filipinos. "If business is to succeed here, it must be in the sale of American goods to the eight millions of Filipinos." He therefore regretted the presence of Americans in the Philippines who, "with a blindness that could only come from besotted ignorance," attacked the Filipinos and did so with "dreadful virulence." One would think, Taft wrote, that "a child in business might

²⁷ Lodge to Taft, November 22, 1900.

²⁸ Statement of Taft before the Committee on Insular Affairs, February 26, 1902, in R.B. Compton (comp.), *Committee Reports, Hearings, & Acts of Congress Pertaining Thereto: Committee on Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Fifty-Seventh Congress, First & Second Sessions, 1901-1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 108.

²⁹ Taft to Theodore Roosevelt, May 12, 1901.

³⁰ Taft to his brother Horace, October 26, 1903. See also, of the same tenor, Taft's letter to his brother Charley, September 24, 1903.

understand that the worst possible policy in attempting to sell goods is to abuse, berate and vilify your only possible customers."³¹

Taft made public avowal of the importance of the Philippines to American manufacturers and merchants, in a speech delivered in Manila in December 1903. Elaborating on the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos," Taft said: "Does the doctrine exclude the encouragement of American enterprise, the American investment of capital in these Islands? No, emphatically no." He believed that there was nothing that the Americans could bring ("and I do not except education or a free form of government") which could do more for the "elevation and civilization" of the Filipinos than the "investment of American capital in the development of these Islands." He added: "If the construction of railroads, the inauguration of steamship lines, the construction of highways, or building of port works comes under the definition of 'exploitation,' then that kind of exploitation is wholly consistent with the principle of 'the Philippines for the Filipinos,' and is indispensable in carrying out that principle as properly understood." The only kind of exploitation which he would properly term selfish, Taft said, and which he would consider inconsistent with the policy of "the Philippines for the Filipinos," was the kind "which takes wealth out of the country or produces a condition of profit for Americans or others in the country at the expense of the people of the Philippines and without conferring any benefit." Taft envisioned benefits for Americans in this manner:

. . . The demand of the Filipino people [for American goods] will be a demand, when created and encouraged, of seven and one-half million persons. The only hope, the only possible source of real business and of real trade that can be dignified by the name, which the United States or any of our merchants, whether living in the United States or in these Islands, can have is with the Filipino people. The promotion of their material and intellectual welfare will necessarily develop wants on their part for things which in times of poverty they regard as luxuries, but which, as they grow more educated and as they grow wealthier, become necessities. The carrying out of the principle, "the Philippines for the Filipinos" in first promoting the welfare, material, spiritual, and intellectual, of the people of these Islands is the one course which can create any market here among the people for American goods and American supplies that will make the relation of the United States to the Philippines a profitable one for our merchants and manufacturers.³²

Taft underscored in his speech of December 1903: "Why should we not rub our eyes a little bit and awake to the facts that are so plainly before us, that the only possible policy from a political standpoint is the one the Administration is carrying out and that from the most sordid and 'dollar and cents' standpoint we must secure for the Fili-

³¹ Taft to Howard C. Hollister, September 21, 1903.

³² Speech of Taft at the Union Reading College, December 17, 1903, pp. 3-4, 7.

pinos increased wealth and instill in him increased wants and good will if we would build up a profitable market here." He ended his speech thus:

I am not insisting that merchants who come here and invest their little or their great capital shall, at a loss to themselves, support the policy of the Government from altruistic motives or on the ground that the honor of the nation requires such policy. I urge it upon them chiefly because it is the only method that I see by which the American trade in these Islands can be made profitable and the American merchants who have ventured here can be made rich. The policy will in fact be carried out because it is a national obligation; but it is most fortunate that we find moving toward the same end both honor and profit. I am confident the Americans in these Islands will realize this before it is too late.³³

Taft hoped, as Storey and Lichauco construed his position on the Philippines, that the United States would learn to value its association with the Philippines while the Filipinos, permitted such "civil liberties" as Congress might choose to allow them, would lose in due time their desire for independence. The two authors remarked in their book that the Taft policy created a serious obstacle to independence, for during the period of education of the Filipinos it called for the investment of large amounts of American capital in the Islands, hoping that in that manner the Americans would, as the years went by, learn to value truly "this pearl of the Oriental tropics." As Taft would have it, according to Storey and Lichauco, the United States was to keep the Philippines for generations, aiming to "plant there in the meantime American citizens and American capital."³⁴

Bringing in American capital was a major continuing concern of Taft. This showed in his correspondence, personal as well as official, and in his public statements. It showed, for example, in 1900 when he manifested great interest in the enactment by the United States Congress of a law which would authorize the government in the Philippines to grant franchises, sell public lands, and issue mining claims.³⁵ When the Spooner Bill embodied provisions to that effect, Taft expressed the hope that it would be passed, "for it would be like running on one wheel to attempt to develop this country without power to offer investments to capital."³⁶ He was much apprehensive when several weeks passed without word from the United States about the fate of the Spooner Bill in Congress, and he asked those who were "materially interested in having the bill pass" to send telegrams to Congress from Manila. "We are all on tenter-hooks of expectation as to the passage of the Spooner Bill . . .," he wrote Root on February 24, 1901.³⁷

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁴ Storey and Lichauco, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41, 44.

³⁵ Taft to Root, October 21, 1900.

³⁶ Taft to Root, November 30, 1900.

³⁷ See Taft to Root, December 14, 1900, and January 13, 18, 29 and February 24, 1901.

But the Spooner Bill, approved as an amendment to the army appropriation bill on March 2, 1901, proved to be disappointing to Taft. It provided that "no sale or lease or other disposition of the public lands [in the Philippines] or the timber thereon shall be made" It also provided that no franchises were to be granted without the approval of the President of the United States. They were not to be granted if, in his judgment, they were not "clearly necessary for the immediate government of the islands and indispensable for the interest of the people thereof," or if they could be postponed until the establishment of civil government. All franchises granted under the authority of the Spooner Amendment were to terminate "one year after the establishment of such permanent civil government."³⁸ Taft wrote Root and Roosevelt to say how very much disappointed he was over the limitations imposed by Congress.³⁹

When hearings were conducted on the Philippine Bill of 1902 (which, enacted as the Cooper Act or the Organic Act of 1902, provided for the establishment of civil government in the Philippines), Taft reiterated his belief in the need for American investments. He told the Senate Committee on the Philippines that "in order to develop the country in agriculture, to which the country is best adapted, there ought to be large tracts open to purchase which will attract capital." Taft cited the sugar industry as an example. "We hope that may be largely developed, but it needs a very heavy investment of capital, and unless it can control large tracts capital will not come in." He emphasized: ". . . we want to attract capital. We want to make it profitable for men to go there, so that they shall invest capital and develop the country." He added, however, that he did not want "to give to corporations or to any set of men such control over the available land of the Islands that they shall own not only the land, but shall own the people on it; and that is the danger in the Philippine Islands."⁴⁰

When the Organic Act of 1902 set limitations upon the size of landholdings that could be acquired by individuals and corporations in the Philippines, Taft was again disappointed. As Secretary of War, he wrote Luke E. Wright, who had succeeded him in the Philippines, that there were many provisions put in the law by "theorists" whose ideas were applicable in a developed country like the United States but not in the Philippines. He lamented: ". . . such theoretical limitations are little adopted to the necessities of a country like the Philippines, which is making loud calls for the investment of capital . . ." Taft suggested

³⁸ Text of Spooner Amendment in *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1901* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), pp. 53-54.

³⁹ Taft to Root, March 17, 1901, and to Roosevelt, May 12, 1901.

⁴⁰ Testimony of Taft before the Senate Committee on the Philippines, February 8, 1902. U. S. Congress, Committee on the Philippines, *Affairs in the Philippines, Hearings Before the Philippine Committee*. Senate Document No. 331. 57th Congress, 1st Session, 1902. Part I, pp. 252, 253.

to Wright that it would be "unwise" for the Philippine government, in enacting corporation laws, to go farther than the limitations prescribed by the Organic Act. "Capital is frightened enough as it is at these limitations, and in the laws which we frame we ought to show that we invite capital and are anxious that capital should have the prospect of safe and large returns of income upon that which is invested." He therefore asked Wright to consider carefully a corporation bill that had been drafted in the Philippines, and to "eliminate therefrom the threats that lurk in many of the sections against the security and comfort of those whose money it is to be put in island enterprises." He confided that he had been visited "by all the persons who either have investments there, or are likely to have investments in the islands," and that they were "protesting against the restrictions of your proposed corporation bill"41 In 1906, a year after his letter to Wright, Taft also wrote Henry C. Ide, Wright's successor as governor-general:

I wish to say a word to you and to Judge [James F.] Smith with reference to the wisdom of being as liberal as possible, consistent with the interests of the government, with capital which comes to the Islands, whether in corporate or individual ownership. It is of the utmost importance that the first investments which are made in the Islands should be profitable, in order that other capital may freely come. The truth is that capital finds itself so profitably employed in this country [the United States] that it is only after the greatest effort that it can be induced to go as far as the Philippine Islands. I should advise therefore that no severity be exercised toward the enterprises which are being carried on, except where it is absolutely necessary in order to protect the rights of the Government, and I wish that you would convey the same idea to Judge Smith. Indeed I have no objection to your showing him this letter if you choose.⁴²

Taft repeatedly showed thus that he was much preoccupied with attracting American capital to the Philippines as a means, according to him, of promoting the material welfare of the Filipinos and extending to them other benefits that were to come from economic development. Clearly, "the Philippines for the Filipinos" as a working policy and as Taft would always have it, was intended to benefit not alone the Filipinos but also the Americans equally, if not more — though the slogan did not mention the Americans by name.

⁴¹ Taft to Wright, January 21, 1905.

⁴² Taft to Ide, January 22, 1906.