

You are earnestly asked to hand this after reading to
some other person who will also give it
careful consideration.

REPORT

OF THE

Third Annual Meeting

OF THE

NEW ENGLAND

Anti-Imperialist League

NOVEMBER 30, 1901.

PUBLISHED BY THE
NEW ENGLAND ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE
44 KILBY STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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REPORT

The meeting was called to order in Wesleyan Hall at half-past two o'clock by the President, the Honorable George S. Boutwell.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT.

I assume to ask the gentlemen who are present to consider the business as it may be presented, and I wish to say a few words, not because they will be useful, but because the ceremony of the occasion seems to require them, and I may say it is an honor to me to see so many gentlemen present who represent an opinion, and, I have no doubt, a very considerable portion of the sentiment of the community in which we are—and I hope I may say of the state as well.

It is an honor to me to welcome you to this, the third anniversary of the first in date of organization of the Anti-Imperialist Leagues of the United States. The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer are to be submitted for your information and judgment. With very limited means in money, the work accomplished may yet command your approval and continuing support. Of results we cannot speak. The policy of the country has not been changed, but the officers of the League entertain the hope and belief that the public mind is disturbed by the thought that the policy of the government in the islands of the Carribean Sea and in the Pacific Ocean is an indefensible policy from which we ought to retreat. It is a noticeable fact that as a policy of wisdom and justice the policy of the government has but a few open and avowed defenders.

My part in the work of the League is so slight that I may speak of the services of its officers with entire frankness. Without compensation and without the inspiration that comes from the assurance of success, they have given themselves to

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the cause that the League is organized to promote.

My associates will not regard it as an invidious distinction when I mention Mr. Winslow, our Secretary, who for three years has given cheerful, constant, valuable service without remuneration or the hope of it except as he may receive compensation in the gratitude of his fellow-men.

The contributions that we have made to the literature of the contest that we are carrying on have related primarily and chiefly to the character, conduct and fortunes of the United States. Incidentally, we have dealt with the course of affairs in the dependencies, as our insular possessions are called, but for purposes of illustration only, and not as the protectors or defenders of those who are the unwilling victims of our authority. If we as a nation can be just to ourselves, there will be no injustice in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico or the Philippine Islands for which the United States can be made responsible; but as long as we are engaged in the exercise of authority against the supreme rule of the Declaration of Independence there can be no injustice in the islands from Hawaii and Samoa to the Philippines, for which the United States may not be made responsible. The book of the future is not open before us, but there is a record of the past in which the future may be read. The nations that have trampled on the rights of men, where are they? What of the empires from Assyria to Spain? At the opening of the 19th century, Spain was relatively a world power, for which the England of today may stand as an equal, but only as an equal: The fate of Spain at the end of the 19th century may be paralleled by the fate of England at the end of the 20th century. We spurn these examples, we denounce them as unworthy of imitation. Let us abide in the belief that the Declaration of Independence is a declaration of truths that are to outlive all empires, truths that will survive every shock or change, and that they constitute the safest foundation on which human governments may be made to rest. Our charge against the administration of our government is this:—It has entered upon a public policy in violation of these fundamental truths.

On motion, the reading of the records of the last meeting was dispensed with.

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY.

I must venture to disclaim such unexpected and undeserved discrimination as you have so kindly made in my favor, and for the Executive Committee of which I have only been the servant in carrying on the work of the League, I ought also to protest against any such flattering commendation of its labor, as unrequited and thankless. At the risk of incurring the popular reproach cast upon all Boston organizations as being mutual-admiration societies, I must be permitted in its name to say that the distinction of being elected to co-operate in the humblest way with such illustrious publicists as have been the standard bearers of constitutional liberty in this crisis of American history has been its own great reward.

It has been a high honor and a sufficing pleasure to follow the lead of Benjamin Harrison and George F. Edmunds and John Sherman and Carl Schurz—but especially to have been brought into association with the single-hearted devotion, the wise statesmanship, the noble patriotism, the youthful, unswerving courage and cheerfulness of our beloved and respected chief, George S. Boutwell.

In the last annual report it was stated that a meeting of leading Anti-Imperialists would soon be held at a central point to discuss the political situation and to agree upon a policy to be pursued by all the Leagues. The meeting was held in New York on the first of December, 1900, and was attended by representative persons holding our principles, from many parts of the country. It was then supposed that the decisions of the Supreme Court on the Insular Cases might soon be reached, and that they would have such an important bearing upon public opinion and upon administrative action that it was impossible to determine the most forcible method of presenting our case until those decisions had been made known. There was no lack of enthusiasm nor any diminution in the conviction of those present that the cause should be carried on so long as means could be furnished to do so, and it was left to each of the Leagues to continue its correspondence and its distribution of documents containing arguments appropriate to the situation, through its established channels, while it was thought advisable

that an address to the people of the United States should be issued as soon as possible after the Supreme Court had announced its verdict.

It was not until the end of May that the opinion of the Court was rendered—a divided opinion which, whatever its technical force, has really left the law in doubt, and has confused and perturbed public opinion still farther. Another conference was immediately called and a form of an address decided upon, the publication of it being delayed until the Fourth of July, as an appropriate date for such an appeal to the country. It was the more timely inasmuch as this date had been fixed upon for the establishment of what was called civil government in the Philippines, a fact which emphasized our appeal to the Declaration of Independence and to the Constitution of the United States. This address was signed by officials of all the Anti-Imperialist Leagues and by many distinguished citizens representing various sections of the United States:

Among all the able arguments which have been furnished by those whom we may fairly call the leading statesmen and publicists of the country in behalf of our contention, none has equalled in impressiveness the dissenting opinions of Mr. Justice Harlan and his three associates, which fully sustain and justify our position, so persistently maligned and denied for the last three years by the supporters of the colonial policy. As the dissenting opinion in the Dred Scott case became the platform of the Republican Party, it may well be that the dissenting opinions in the Insular Cases will become the most important plank in the platform of the party of liberty. The majority of the Court has given that sanction to political principles which Mr. Justice Harlan characterized, in case it should be made, as “a radical and mischievous change in our system of government.” He added: “We will, in that event, pass from the era of Constitutional liberty, guarded and protected by a written Constitution, into an era of legislative absolutism.” It may be said that our immediate work, therefore, is to put an end to this era before it has been accepted and emphasized as a permanent condition. The popular voice can be manifested through its representatives so that the Congress may be induced to abdicate the prerogatives with which it has been invested by the extraordinary and incom-

patible decision of the Supreme condition of at modifies our p followed the co tion, but they made at the fir 1898. The su organized resis tary strategem Restless and s the United St struggle of a p

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patible decisions of the five justices constituting the majority of the Supreme Court. There has been no change in the condition of affairs in the "possessions" which in the least modifies our position or our duty. Events have not only followed the course predicted by the members of our organization, but they are distinctly shadowed forth in the speeches made at the first liberty meeting held in Faneuil Hall, June 15, 1898. The superior armies of the United States have subdued organized resistance. Aguinaldo was entrapped by an unmilitary stratagem. Mabini, the heroic patriot, is exiled to Guam. Restless and sullen acquiescence and guerilla warfare beyond the United States lines have succeeded the brave but hopeless struggle of a people fighting for liberty in the Philippines.

The opinions of visiting Congressmen and of various impartial observers justify the conviction that there is a very large class in the Philippine population perfectly capable of self-government, and far more able to control the disorderly elements in the archipelago than any foreign power. Its leaders had pledged themselves, for instance, to do away with slavery in the Sulu Islands, an institution which the authorities of the United States have felt themselves obliged to condone and to support, while the Igorrotes and the Macabebes had been effectually subdued by the Malolos government during the short period of its authority.

The contention of the Anti-Imperialist Leagues, however, is based upon the interest of our own people in preserving constitutional government and in avoiding those complications which under the specious pretext of our responsibilities as a "world-power" we are called upon to assume. American labor and American agriculture are threatened by the open door of the eastern possessions, and warring interests are aroused by the tariff questions created by the new conditions. Between the dilemmas of a government, democratic at home and imperial abroad; or of the statehood of tropical territory which may be forced upon us by political exigencies, there is little to choose. They will be equally repugnant to the sense of the people as they come to be understood.

Your Executive Committee, a few weeks ago, issued a statement outlining its views of the future policy of the organization. In this statement, the Committee believed that it was speaking for all the members of the League in

declaring that they "not only deplored the 'crime of crimes' perpetrated at Buffalo, like all good citizens of the United States, but with a special horror and indignation because it violated the fundamental principle of the League—the right of nations to order their own government and to choose their own rulers." Absurd and wicked accusations of criticisms of the late President's policy as in some degree responsible for his assassination were made by hysterical speakers and writers, some of them, it must be acknowledged with shame and regret, in high places. They have probably long before this been repented of. Already many of those who have always expressed the deepest affection and respect for President McKinley have taken occasion to make known their continued and increased disapproval of that which they characterize as his Philippine policy. Grief for the dead cannot make us forget our duty to the living. The public policy of the late President can now be treated without prejudice and without acrimony. It is certainly a legitimate function of an organization such as ours, composed of persons who believe that policy to be wrong, to do all that is in its power to affect the complexion of the next Congress so that it may be reversed. That is our programme.

The Executive Committee has held stated fortnightly meetings during the year. We have lost two of our vice-presidents, the Hon. James W. Bradbury, in the ripeness of his age, but to the last a staunch and zealous supporter of constitutional liberty, and Dr. Lewis G. Janes, who was cut off in the midst of a career which promised great results for the many ethical and philanthropic causes for which he labored so zealously and effectually. Your committee was deprived of the services of Mr. Fiske Warren when he severed his connection with it in order that he might be free to make his investigations in the Philippines as a private citizen, and that the League might not be compromised by the accusation of having an emissary there.

The most important documents published and circulated by the New England Anti-Imperialist League during the year have been: Report of the annual meeting of November 24, 1900; "The Tribes in the Philippines," by Sixto Lopez; "The Army Bill," a speech in the House of Representatives, December 5, 1900, by the Hon. Samuel W. McCall; an article

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by Mr. Lincoln O'Brien in the "Boston Transcript" of December 12, 1900; "The Predominant Issue," an article reprinted from the "International Monthly" of November, 1900, by Prof. W. G. Sumner; "Our New Departure," a letter and speech by the Hon. Moorfield Storey; "Philippine Independence," a speech in the United States Senate by the Hon. Charles A. Towne, January 28, 1901; "Army Organization Bill," a speech in the United States Senate by the Hon. R. F. Pettigrew, January 31, 1901; "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," by Mark Twain, reprinted from the "North American Review" of February, 1901; speech of Senator George F. Hoar in the United States Senate on the Spooner Amendment, February 27, 1901; Extract from the speech of the Hon. Seth W. Brown, House of Representatives, February 9, 1901; "Free America, Free Cuba, Free Philippines," report of a meeting held in Faneuil Hall, March 30, 1901; "The Philippine Problem," by Sixto Lopez, from the "Outlook" of February 13, 1901; "Benevolent Assimilation," an extract from an interview with General Bell, from the "New York Times," May 2, 1901; a new pamphlet, "The Unlawful and Unjustifiable Conquest of the Filipinos," by Francis A. Brooks, of which the author generously gave 50,000 copies to the League; "The Porto Rican Cases," a discussion by the Hon. Samuel W. McCall, taken from the "Boston Evening Transcript"; "Shall the United States Have Colonies?," an address delivered by Mr. Edwin Burritt Smith at Detroit, Mich., June 29, 1901; The Anti-Imperialist Address of July 4th; The Cambridge Phi Beta Kappa Address of the Hon. Wayne MacVeagh; Discussions of the Insular Decisions by the Hon. George S. Boutwell and the Hon. George F. Edmunds, from the "North American Review"; "The Supremacy of the Constitution," the opinion of Chief Justice Harlan in the case of Downes vs. Bidwell, May 27, 1901; an article by the Hon. John F. Shafroth, of Denver, "Are the Filipinos Capable of Self-Government?" from the "Rocky Mountain News." We have also circulated many of the documents on hand and previously published, of which the titles have been enumerated in previous reports.

The Secretary has prepared, as he was authorized and

directed to do, a "History of the Philippine Acquisition," from the beginning down to the present time. It is not generally known at what an early period the possibility of the acquisition of the Philippines had suggested itself to the Administration. Our record commences with a statement on the highest authority that "Admiral Dewey was not sent to command the Asiatic Squadron when the war broke out, by mere accident. He was sent to command it in the fall of 1897, because, to use the very words employed at the time, 'it was deemed wise to have there a man who could go into Manila if necessary.'" The record is compiled almost altogether from official sources. Publications of official documents have been made by another organization, but it is needless to say that, as in science so in history, the observation and record of facts, to be of value, must be made upon an hypothesis. Our hypothesis was formulated very early in our work, and the logical progress of events in our history will, we think, demonstrate the correctness of it to every impartial reader, when it is made public. This paper is yet in manuscript.

The secretary has also compiled, with the assistance of the officials of other leagues, an account of the movement in the United States, and is preparing such a bibliography as is in his power to make. The number of titles already exceeds 300. The number of documents circulated by the New England Anti-Imperialist League is over 1,200,000, and the whole number of documents circulated by the Leagues of the United States exceeds 3,000,000. This history also is still in manuscript.

The committee has circulated three statements containing an outline of its work and appeals for support in carrying it on.

The only public meeting in Boston during the year was that in Faneuil Hall, March 30th, which was the most successful and enthusiastic ever held under our auspices. The call for the meeting gave for its object "a protest against the imperial policy of the administration at home and abroad." Col. Charles R. Codman presided and made the opening address. Other speeches were made by the Hon. George S. Boutwell, Mr. George G. Mercer, of Philadelphia, Señor Sixto Lopez, the Hon. Robert M. Morse, and the Rev. A. A. Berle,

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and letters were read from Mr. Edwin Warren Guyol, of "La Lucha," Havana, Prof. W. G. Sumner, the Hon. Albion A. Perry, [Mr. Richard Harding Davis,] the Hon. Samuel W. McCall, Mr. Edwin Ginn and Mr. Edwin Burritt Smith.

The attitude of President Roosevelt toward the Philippine question is not known, but it may be mentioned as an incident of hopeful augury that in answer to an appeal recently made to him that he would intervene to prevent the issue of a proposed edict by the authorities in the Philippines, making peaceable native political organizations treasonable and their promoters punishable as traitors, the President promptly and courteously replied that he had himself called the personal attention of the Secretary of War to the matter.

We are assured that the opinion of many leading Republicans, beside those who have already joined our organization, is in accordance with our attitude, which is wholly unpartisan and consistent with whatever party or personal position on other questions may be held by our supporters. The correspondence of the office contains continued assurances of zeal and courage, and we believe that we can absolutely and indubitably rely, whatever the changing conditions of the moment may be, upon that sound, if homely, axiom, that nothing is ever settled until it is settled right.

Our appeal lies to the American people that the questions which have arisen concerning the possessions which have come under our control in consequence of the Spanish War shall be rightfully settled in obedience and in conformity to the Constitution of the United States. Even the Supreme Court with its tremendous power must heed the mandate of the Constitution. Congress has no existence except by virtue of the Constitution. It has no power which that instrument has not granted expressly, or by necessary implication. The people have decreed that it shall be the supreme law of the land at all times. If our government needs more power than is conferred upon it by the Constitution, that instrument provides the mode in which it may be amended, and additional power thereby obtained. The people of the United States who ordained the Constitution never supposed that a change could be made in our system of government by mere judicial interpretation. In the language of Chief Justice Marshall: "To what purpose

are powers limited and to what purpose is that limitation committed to writing if these limitations may at any time be passed by those intended to be restrained? The distinction between a government with limited and unlimited powers is abolished if those limits do not confine the persons on whom they are imposed and if acts prohibited and acts allowed are of equal obligation."

The fatal mistake which has been made must be repaired, even if made by those in the highest places who have treated the Constitution as an instrument to be obeyed or disobeyed, as the circumstances of a particular crisis in our history may suggest the one or the other course to be pursued. Could any proposition be more dangerous to the form of government under which we live, and which it is believed that the great mass of our fellow-citizens are passionately desirous of preserving, than that, under any circumstances, in the alleged hope of benefiting alien races by extending to them Anglo-Saxon institutions, any concessions whatever should be made to the principles established by the Constitution to limit the full effect of its provisions? Is not this anarchy at the very heart of the government? We believe that the people are prepared to maintain the impregnable position established by Mr. Justice Harlan, that "the Constitution is supreme over every foot of territory, wherever situated, under the direct jurisdiction of the United States, and its full operation cannot be stayed by any branch of the Government in order to meet what some may suppose to be extraordinary emergencies. If the Constitution is enforced in any territory, it is enforced there for the purpose embraced by the objects for which the government was ordained."

It will be an encouragement to the League to hear a few of the responses from those whom we have invited to become our officers, which accompanied permission to use their names:

"I would rather be hooted and hanged for keeping such company than crowned with the chief spoilers."

"My ardor in the cause of Anti-Imperialism is unabated, and I trust unabateable."

"My convictions in regard to the proper treatment of the Philippines have not changed since the election last year."

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