

Philipino's Labor Strength Grows in Spite of U. S. Imperialism

By JAY LOVESTONE.
(Special to "The Worker")

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In a special interview given to "The Worker," Mr. Vincente G. Bunuan, the director of the Philippine Press Bureau, outlined the growing strength of the labor movement in the Philippines. It should be of particular interest to the workers of the United States to know what their brethren in the Philippines are doing in view of the present crisis in the Islands involving the campaign of American imperialists to exploit and oppress the Filipinos.

The situation in the Philippines was never so critical for the independence movement as it is now. Military Governor General Leonard Wood is using all the influence in his power to fortify himself in his unjustifiable position in the Islands.

In this interview, granted exclusively to "The Worker," Mr. Bunuan, who is one of the leading journalists of the Philippines and an ardent worker in the movement for Philippine independence from American imperialism, supplies the much needed information as to the likely role of the Philippine workers in their struggle for freedom from the Wall Street controlled government in Washington.

Labor Unions in the Philippines.

Mr. Bunuan went on to say: "There are two labor organizations in the Philippines: the Labor Congress and the Federation of Labor. Both aim to protect the laboring classes organized into unions affiliated with either one or the other.

"The only difference between them lies in their zeal, vying with each other in this respect, in looking after the interest of their respective constituents, especially in connection with attempts on the part of capital to encroach upon their interests as a class and as individual workingmen.

"While the leaders of both organizations belong to separate political parties, the former to the Coalition Party headed by Senate President Manuel L. Quezon, and the latter to the Democratic Party led by Governor Ruperto Montinola, they are one, absolutely one, in their desire to see their country immediately, completely, and absolutely independent, as in fact all Filipinos are."

Labor Ready to Fight.

"The labor element is not slow to assert its rights and to go to the extreme when driven to it, as shown by the strike of hundreds of employees—conductors and motormen—of the Manila Electric Company, a corporation owned and managed by Americans, due to refusal of the management to increase wages and to accede to other reasonable demands made by the laborers.

"Other comparatively important strikes were those by the members of the crew of inter-island vessels and cigar makers employed in cigar

factories. They were adjusted, however, soon after the declaration of the strikes to the satisfaction of all.

Labor Strength Growing.

"These two labor organizations meet in annual conventions on Labor Day, which is an official holiday in the Philippines. Recommendations to the Philippine legislature embodied in resolutions all looking toward improvement of labor conditions, are adopted during the meetings. One of the important recommendations of the two organizations was enacted into law last year, Senate President Quezon himself, fathering the bill. It gives better protection and facilities to women and children employed in factories. Passage of an accident insurance law, of an eight-hour labor act, and of a law making full observance of Sunday compulsory are among their important recommendations.

"There are about 60,000 workingmen in the Philippines affiliated with the two organizations. They belong to various unions, such as the Cigar-makers' Union, the Farmer Tenants' Union, the Shoemakers' Union, the marine unions, and others.

"Politically and socially the labor element in the Philippines is getting stronger and stronger. While as yet Philippine workingmen are not strong enough to organize themselves into a political entity sufficiently strong to launch their own candidates at elections, the time is not far distant, when as in other countries, they will be a separate power, politically, to be reckoned with."

Congress to Act.

The Philippine question will be one of the most important matters acted upon in the Sixty-Eighth Congress, opening on December the third. The charges made against General Wood and the exposure of the financial interests controlling his policies in the Philippines as printed in the September issue of the Liberator having evoked much interest among several congressmen who promise to air the whole, scandalous situation on the floor of the House.