

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 1907.

THE PHILIPPINES

THE agitation started by the *New York Herald* for the sale of the Philippines, presumably to Japan, seems to be making some headway in the States. A recent Berlin message stated that out of 162 members of Congress approached by the *New York* paper on this question, only 30 declared themselves in favour of retaining the islands. From this it might be inferred that the opinion in influential circles in America was overwhelmingly in favour of giving up this costly possession in the Orient. Such a conclusion, however, seems unwarranted in view of the well-known preponderance of sentiment in favour of keeping those islands under the American flag. The telegram announcing the result of the *New York Herald's* canvassing, is vague and unsatisfactory. It is, to begin with, not at all clear how many out of the 162 Congressmen approached actually expressed their opinion one way or the other. Even supposing that the balance 132 actually answered more or less favourably to the *New York Herald's* proposal, there is no means to know the attitude of the remaining 224 Congressmen. For aught we know, they may all be against the proposed sale; it is at least not unreasonable to suppose that those likely to favour the idea would be approached rather than those known to be opposed to it. It is thus evident that the information contained in the recent Berlin telegram already referred to, is decidedly misleading. It cannot, however, be denied that the movement is gathering some strength, at all events it seems to receive increasing attention among the American people. We do not believe that this agitation will ever acquire a sufficient momentum to thrust the proposal into the arena of the coming presidential campaign. The proposal, we believe, does not commend itself to the level-headed Yankees who are awakening to the supremely important part their country is destined to play in the domain of international politics and commerce. Admiral Dewey probably expresses their sentiment correctly when, as reported in a telegram printed this morning, he strongly condemns the proposed parting with their island possession in Asia. At all events we honestly hope and trust that such is the case. Japan has not unnaturally been usually represented as

secretly coveting the possession of those islands. The fact, however, is quite otherwise. We would certainly not decline the present if it were tendered willingly and spontaneously. But it is highly problematical whether Japan will consent to pay anything to be saddled with fresh trouble and responsibilities, and as for seeking to wrest the Philippines from the Americans by force or diplomacy, there is absolutely no foundation whatever for the allegation. Failing independence—and the Filipinos are evidently not yet fit for it,—the occupation of the islands by the Americans is unquestionably best conducive to the interests of the native population and of peace in the Far East. Such was the view unequivocally expressed by the leading organs of opinion in Japan at the time the Philippines came into American possession, and such remains to-day the opinion entertained in responsible circles. It would be otherwise if we believed that the Americans were a conquering nation. Strong and aggressive as they certainly are in pursuit of gain and power, we believe they are less under the influence of land grabbing fever than most of their European cousins. Their presence in Asia is, therefore, regarded by the more intelligent classes in Japan as a strong factor in favour of peace and progress. We consequently hailed their acquisition of the islands with genuine satisfaction, and with equal sincerity we hope they will stay there as long as they think it necessary for their own interests and those of the Filipinos. Those who say otherwise speak either from ignorance or with some purpose best known to them.