

OUR FAR ISLANDS PRESENT NEW PROBLEMS

Scattered Over Two Great Oceans, They Are Assailed by Political and Economic Storms and Are Also Perplexed by Racial Issues



Left—
The Philippines
—“Beautiful,
Verdant Islands,
but the Crown
of Thorns of
America’s
Colonial
Possessions.”

Ewing Galloway.

Oriental heredity and of their Western education.

The islands on which these people—whose cries for independence stare so boldly from American headlines—live, are verdant jewels, rearing steeply and contorted from the South China Sea. They are “new” lands in the long life of nature; they are still shaken by earthquakes and riven by volcanoes, and their great mountains are still being formed and builded. There are large coastal plains where sugar cane, the principal product, grows; swampy rice plantations and irrigated mountain terraces cultivated by carabao, dense jungles where are found flowering orchids of bewildering beauty, fibers, rattans, bamboos, coconut palms, abacá (from which manila rope is made) and hundreds of other tropical products.

The “green hell” of the jungle sweeps down to the blue lips of

of the tariff will be placed against their products (some \$91,314,000 worth of exports to the United States in 1933—little to us, but everything to the islands); and the Philippines will be left (presumably) to their own devices, to protect themselves as best they can against foreign aggrandizement and to struggle against economic locked doors and rigid immigration restrictions.

The Commonwealth Government has not yet been set up, though it is scheduled to start functioning in November. It is, in any case, not the final disposition of the situation; it is merely an experiment. The problem of the Philippines—the solution of which is important not alone to the United States but to the world—remains unsolved.

Some 4,800 miles east of Manila, at a crossroads of the Pacific, the Hawaiian Islands, land of the lotus

apples stretch across fields where once jungles flourished, thundering rollers break into surf against encircling reefs.

Here East meets West, and few think anything of it. Kimono-clad Japanese mince down Honolulu’s streets, Chinese women barbers shave Hawaiian chins, cut Portuguese hair, sing the whistles of men of many races and nations. Here the tourist lives in a fantastic and well-advertised “paradise”—and pays for it; while soft and fragrant leis—gardenias, yellow plumeria, white ginger blossoms—are hung about his neck, and awkward malinis (newcomers) struggle in Waikiki’s breakers with heavy surfboards. The very language is poetry—Waikiki, “Spouting Waters”; Honolulu, “Fair Haven”; Haleakala, “House of the Sun”—and the life is pleasant and glamorous.

HAWAII is, nevertheless, an ambitious, progressive and prosperous land. With an area one-eighteenth that of the Philippines and its small population (380,000), it exports to the United States a total of \$91,598,040 worth of produce—more than that of all the Philippines—and imports some \$62,000,000 worth of machinery, foods and textiles. The climate is healthful and suitable to the white man; more Americans live here than in any of our other island possessions; unemployment is not a problem, and there seems little need of a planned economy, thanks to

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

POLITICAL and economic storms are swirling today about Uncle Sam’s overseas dependencies. Once again our scattered territories and insular possessions have engaged the attention of Congress and the nation; the “lovely isles” that Columbus named after St. Ursula and her Eleven Thousand Virgins are in the headlines, and Puerto Rico and the Philippines strain against the bonds that bind them to the Stars and Stripes.

From the pin-pricks on the Pacific’s map—Howland, Baker, Wake, Christmas, Palmyra—that are America’s coral-fringed, sunlit atolls, to the tidy streets of the Canal Zone and the 7,000 islands of the Philippine Archipelago, problems of government and of defense, problems of the purse strings and difficulties caused by racial and national intermixtures complicate and perplex our colonial administration.

Many of these burdens of empire were lifted from the shoulders of other nations when the United States commenced her overseas expansion; they are old and virulent illnesses inherent in the lands or the people—poverties of natural resources, economic insufficiency, retarded development, unfavorable climate and depressed standards of living. Still, others are the natural consequences of race impinging upon race, nationality upon nationality in those little sea-bound islands of the Pacific which are, at one and the same time, our stepping stones to the Orient and—from the defense viewpoint—the Achilles’s heel of America.

STILL others are concerned with more easily solved questions—problems of administration and government, problems in strategy which interest and annoy the admirals and the generals. Yet another difficulty for Uncle Sam is caused in several of our island possessions by the burgeoning into power of the passion for liberty, a flower carefully cultivated and encouraged by the United States these many years, though the final blooming seems to have surprised and shocked many Americans.

Such is the problem of the Philip-

pinos, largest of our overseas possessions, for the administration of which the Bureau of Insular Affairs of the War Department is responsible.

The Philippines, with nearly 14,000,000 brown-skinned peoples, their 7,083 islands with a coastline longer than that of the United States, their profuse and flowering beauty, are the crown of thorns of America’s colonial possessions.

The Filipino’s differences in religion and in dialect have been publicized out of measure. But there are, as various students of the islands have stated, no tribal distinctions, rather a “racial solidarity,” with the brown-skinned, shortish, slight but quick and wiry Malay as the most important and far preponderant basic stock. About 500,000 are Moros or Mohammedans; perhaps another 500,000 are pagans, some of them aborigines like the Negritos, or people caught in some backwash pocket of the scattered islands. Nearly all the rest, probably well over 12,000,000, are Christians. Preponderantly they are an agricultural people, but in Manila, a metropolis of the Orient, and in other cities and towns in the principal islands, you will find Filipino physicians, lawyers, professors, scientists, professional men—men of splendid intellect and superior character, product of their

the Eastern seas and up the steep slopes of craggy mountains to the white canopy of the clouds. It is a land of beauty—wild beauty, much of it; but it is also a land of heat, sometimes of fever and disease—in places of drought, in others of drenching downpours—not a white man’s climate.

SINCE first the power of Spain broke rudely into the Malays’ island seclusion more than 100 years ago, the white man has held a firm foothold on the land that has brought to him little besides disease and death. Now the Filipinos, as they hope, are about to achieve freedom.

The Tydings-McDuffie act, passed last year by the American Congress and accepted by the Philippine Legislature on the thirty-sixth anniversary of Dewey’s victory at Manila Bay, “provides for the recognition of Philippine independence after a ten-year transitional commonwealth government with a Filipino Chief Executive.” At the end of the ten-year period the United States is to abandon its army posts in the islands, negotiations about the two naval bases there are to be conducted, and American sovereignty is to be withdrawn.

At the same time the Filipinos will lose their “rights and privileges” as quasi-American citizens; the bars

Ferment in
America’s
Dependencies—
Demonstration
in San Juan.

Right—
Puerto Rico—
“Distressed
Economically,
It Is Restless
Politically.”

Times Wide World
and Remie Lohse.



eaters, picture of contrasts, rise out of the mid-Pacific. They are, perhaps, the best known of our island possessions, stretching in a tapering line of smiling, sunlit isles and atolls from Hawaii, the largest, northward to coral-circled Midway and little Kure Island, just east of the International Date Line.

Lofty peaks, some of them capped with “tropical snow,” rear volcanic craters, pits of fire and spouting geysers toward the skies, the green cane ripples down pocketed valleys to the sea, great plantations of pine-

an abundant nature, American capital, the tourist trade, and labor drawn from many countries of the globe.

The problem of Hawaii, a territory administered by the Interior Department, is probably less difficult for these reasons than the problems of the rest of our dependencies. Out of the medley of races have arisen the chief difficulties in the past. In ten—or twenty—years or more, with immigration restrictions, the melting pot of the Pacific will have done its work; the racial



Ewing Galloway.
Hawaii—"America's Bulwark Against Aggression From the East."

question will find its own solution, and with this solution will come an increase in the growing demand for statehood.

The Hawaiian Islands are America's bulwark against aggression from the East; they are considered by naval strategists our most important base. The problem of their defense, therefore, is of the utmost importance. Recent improvements to Pearl Harbor, the Oahu naval base, and planned development of that base and extensions of the army's defenses will, however, do much to make the islands almost impregnable—an American Pacific Gibraltar.

FAR to the south and east, where the purple bougainvillea blossoms on cool cottages on Anson Hill and Balboa Heights, the Stars and Stripes float above the "ditch dug between continents." The Panama Canal, triumph for American sanitation, product of the best of our engineering skill, is another vital link in our national defense, enabling the quick shift of our fleet from ocean to ocean. Thus, any of the Canal Zone's problems are inevitably interwoven with the problems of operating the canal and of defending it.

The zone, administered by a military government under the War Department, is a ten-mile strip of land, forty miles long, bisecting the Republic of Panama. Defenses bristle at Fort Amador; fighting planes whirl above Gatun Lake, while through Pedro Miguel and Miraflores and Gatun are locked from sea to sea all the ships of the world—freighters from Chile with nitrates and ore, tankers from Los Angeles, ships with deck loads of timber from Oregon, Japanese merchantmen with silk and textiles, passenger liners plying between our coasts.

The 40,000 people who live in the 361 square land miles of the zone face are concerned primarily with the operation of the canal, its maintenance, future plans for expansion of its facilities, its adequate defense, and the relationships of the zone, usually cordial, with the Republic of Panama.

ON Puerto Rico and on our neighboring islands of Culebra and Vieques live more than 1,700,000 people, about 450 to the square mile. Mainly of Andalusian ancestry (although there is a sizable minority of Negroes and mulattos), after centuries in the tropic sun, they are small and dark, not very ambitious, perhaps, but persistent and generally obedient workers. They were—when the Americans under General Miles conquered the island in 1898—bowed down by centuries of repression and disease; they were uneducated, anemic and half-starving. American energy and am-

bition have changed much of this doleful picture, but the problems of Puerto Rico are by no means solved.

In the fertile valleys, in the well-watered lands to the north and along the central ridge of mountains rising as high as 3,750 feet above the sea live a people who are still—despite American education—about 40 per cent illiterate, who are the victims of hookworm, sprue and other tropical diseases, and whose homes are ravaged by hurricanes.

In San Juan and Ponce, the principal cities, you will find lovely promenades and picturesque beauty, Latin culture, soft Spanish music and intense and gesticulating orators—some of the material conveniences and comforts of the Western world mingled with the leisure and romance of the Old. The island is a strange contrast of old and new—ox-carts and automobiles, squalor and dreamy enchantment.

Puerto Rico's problems, the Interior Department has found, are serious, for it is the most congested and overcrowded of Uncle Sam's possessions, and its population is steadily increasing. Most of the island is agricultural; the sugar market is glutted and there is much unemployment. The Roosevelt work relief program has staved off starvation for many thousands; modern improvements have been built and the government is planning some large-scale projects aimed at mitigating the island's misery.

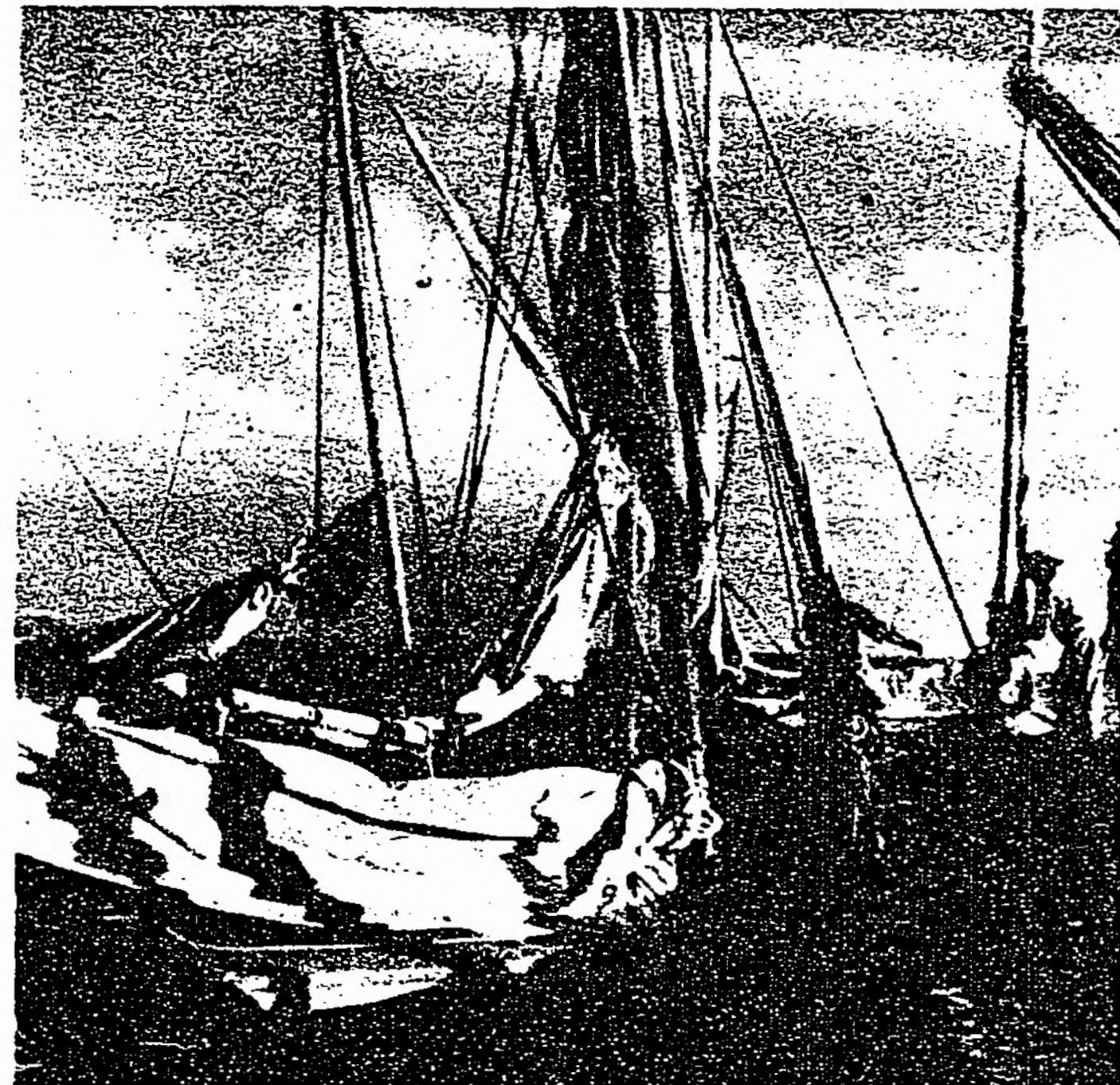


Ewing Galloway.
A Memorial to Balboa in the Panama Canal Zone.

But the problem will require many, many years to solve, and it is already being complicated by a growing demand from the island's populace for greater autonomy, for statehood, or for complete independence.

NEAR Puerto Rico lie the lovely but arid Virgin Islands, whose political and economic difficulties have monopolized much space in the newspapers within recent months. There are about fifty islands in the group (all under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior), but only three of them—St. Thomas, with its port of the same name; St. Croix, the agricultural island, and St. John, the unspoiled wilderness, are important.

They are inhabited by some 25,000 people, between 90 and 95 per cent of them wholly or partly Negro. Rugged hills dip down to lush valleys, slender palms lean gracefully above white sand beaches, and the prickly soursop, the guava fruit and the almond tree grow with other sub-tropical flora in untended pro-



Bucher From Nesmith.
The Virgin Islands—"Picturesque Subject of a Great Experiment."

fusion. Despite Danish and American education and sanitation, the fears of the jungle still find expression in "obeah" practices, and St. Thomas, once the "emporium of the West Indies," is today only a sleepy and picturesque town, which looks northward to the tourist trade in hope of a renaissance of its past glories.

Long before the United States purchased the islands from Denmark in 1917 they had been economically insufficient, with a dwindling population, and nothing the United States has been able to do, first under a naval government, then since 1931 under a civil governor, has checked this trend. The death rate has been vastly decreased, health and sanitation improved, but only a start has been made on the problem of providing an adequate water supply. The natives, encouraged under Governor Pearson (who was a short time ago transferred and replaced by his Lieutenant Governor, Lawrence W. Cramer) to hope for a greater degree of local self-government, are economically and politically dissatisfied.

Here the government is undertaking a great sociological and economic experiment—a planned economy in a land with little economy to plan. Only indisputable success over a period of years of the government's rum distillery, home-steading and other projects, together with increased tourist inter-

est in the Virgin Islands, can permanently relieve distress.

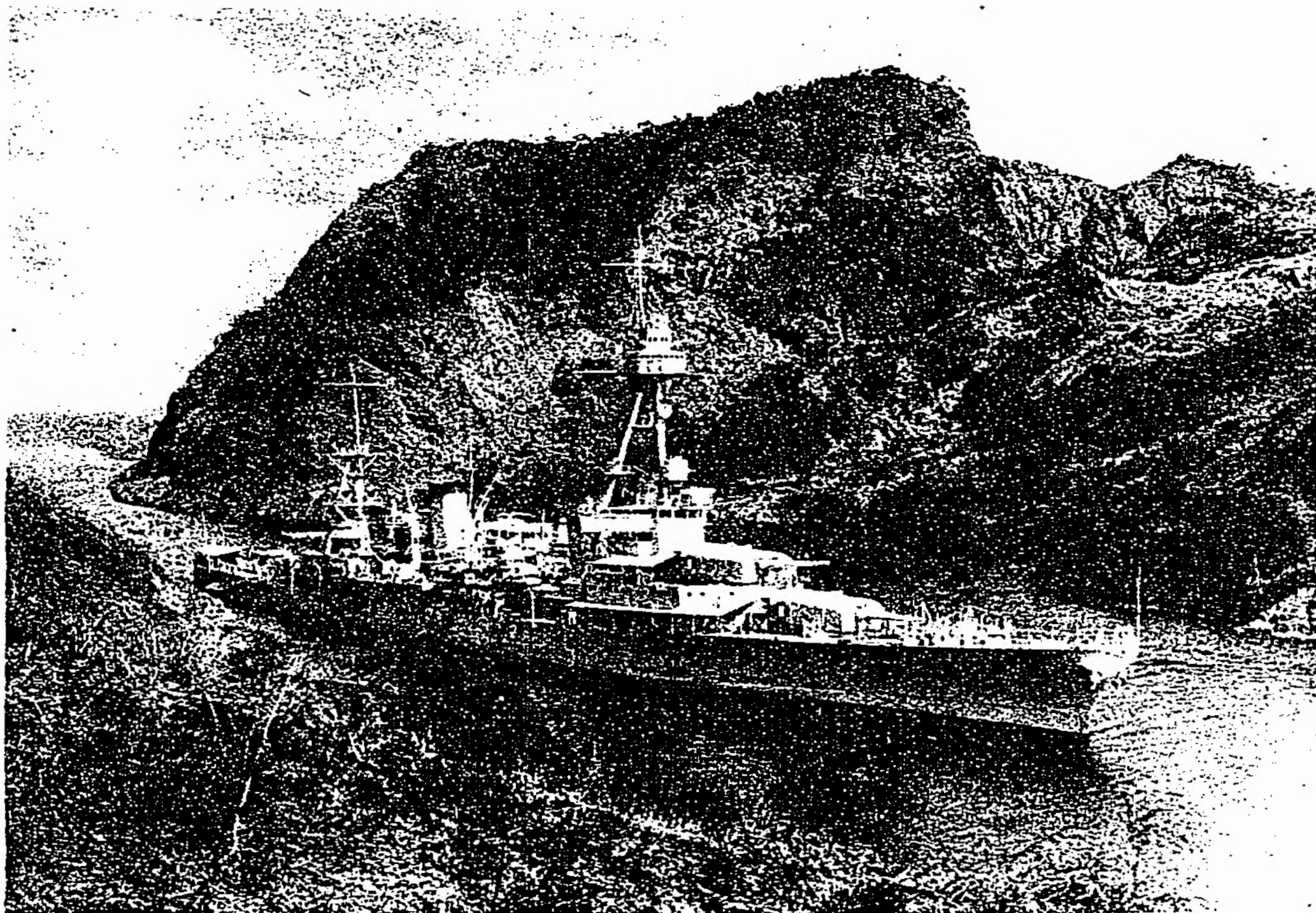
OF our lesser insular possessions, Guam and American Samoa are the better known and the more important. Both are under naval rule and are of importance only as naval stations or occasional stopping places for travelers who seek a South Seas atmosphere. Guam, largest of the Marianas, is 1,506 miles east of Manila, on the route from Honolulu to the Philippines. Its population of 19,000 (there is a naval governing establishment of 1,118) are a mixed race, who call themselves Chamorros. Under naval rule they live peacefully out of the current of world affairs.

There are few problems for Guam except the necessity of a recurrent appropriation by Congress for the government and support of the island, and the ever-worrying possibility of war. Guam is unfortified and by the terms of the Washington Treaty cannot be fortified for the present; she lies in the midst of Japanese mandated islands and many thousands of miles from the United States.

American Samoa and Swains Island present a problem of defense somewhat similar, though their isolation in the South Seas makes them less vulnerable to attack. These, too, are quiet and smiling islands—seven in all—with the splendid port of Pago Pago, a potential naval base of importance. The 10,000 natives, all literate, are considered the "highest type of the Polynesian race," and the government has rigidly adhered to a policy of "Samoa for Samoans." The islands have been largely self-supporting, and of all American possessions they have probably, in recent years, presented the fewest problems.

IN addition to the better-known American insular possessions, there are at least 200 other little islands (including the Aleutians)—most of them uninhabited—scattered in the Pacific, over which the United States claims sovereignty.

Christmas, Baker, Howland, Kingman Reef, Wake, Palmyra and a host of others—pinpricks on the map of the Pacific; they have been in the past of little importance in our colonial scheme of things. But with aviation's giant strides and the growing tension in the Pacific, they have become—even the smallest of them—of increasing account in recent months. To Jarvis, Baker and Howland, all on the air route between Honolulu and Samoa—we have recently sent out a colonizing expedition to strengthen our claims, disputed by Great Britain. In all of these our problems are the same—determination of sovereignty where doubtful and development of air and naval bases.



United States Navy.
Panama Canal Zone—"Its Problems Are Interwoven With the Problems of Defending the Canal."