

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR THE SCHOOL CHILDREN

DECEMBER 23, 1916

The Governor spoke in part as follows:

Christmas is always a happy time for children. It lives afterwards in their memories as a bright oasis in many wide spread deserts. Old people never forget it. When they cease to remember that they were once young it is time for them to go.

a/s
We new-comers who are used to ice and snow can hardly realize that it is Christmas. But to you it is all very natural. However, when you recite "St. Nicholas" it must seem a little unreal. Santa Claus in a reindeer sleigh is not easy to realize. Perhaps in Guam he comes on a winged carabon.

Your exercises have been most interesting. They show your progress and the good work of your teachers. The small presents that you are now about to receive, which, though left by Santa Claus, must have been inspired by your Island Government, will show you that your Island is not unmindful of your progress and happiness.

Every good Islander wishes to see you profit by your studies and become well educated and useful men and women.

I had occasion last summer to say something about the object of your schooling. It is not simply to give you book learning, but to make you more capable of doing your daily work in after life. It gives you a knowledge of how to make the most of your opportunities as you find them. Try to be good farmers, merchants, carpenters, painters, metal workers, masons, electricians, plumbers, gardeners, foresters; and the girls good nurses, dress-makers, stenographers, cooks, housekeepers. Your schooling helps you in all these directions.

I might also have mentioned boatmen and fishermen. In the old days the natives were very expert in these occupations, but they do not now take to the water. This should be changed. The waters abound in fish, which may be easily taken. Then, too, you could build schooners and trade with the neighboring islands. There is a schooner now due in the harbor, which has come all the way from America for this very purpose. You could do it equally well.

But the highest aim of each one of you should be to make Guam a garden spot. The Island is only 30 miles long and there are 15,000 people on it, or 500 people to the mile. Those 500 people could in a few years turn that mile into a garden, with crops, vegetables, fruits, coffee, cocoanut groves, cattle, and lawns. On their land they could build fine country houses, in which they would live most of the year, and not waste their time going back and forth to and from town. They would have churches and schools in the country, and good roads to travel on and get their copra and coffee to market.

The Island is now overrun with pests, - rats and iguanas, - that destroy the young crops, kill the chickens and birds. These must be kept down. In the last three months over 100,000 rats and 5,000 iguanas have been caught and killed. You school children, with your snares and traps, have aided much in this work. Keep it up.

Do you think that all this is beyond you? It is not. In 15 or 20 years you will be the leading citizens of the Island. That seems long to you. It is not long to me. The Americans came here about that long ago. Many grown people of today were then boys and girls.

You owe much to the Superintendent of Schools and to all your teachers. They have your interest at heart and have labored faithfully, also to good effect. There is an element of sadness in this Christmas celebration, in that you are about to lose Lieutenant-Commander Cook, who has been Head of the Department of Education for the last two years. His efforts have been untiring in your behalf, and his place cannot be filled; but we shall hold him in affectionate remembrance.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and every success in your present work and your future life.

*The
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