

SEEKS TO IMPEACH OUR JUDGE IN CHINA

Lawyer from Shanghai Brings a
Petition Charging Judge Wil-
fley with Improper Conduct.

A MOVEMENT BY CATHOLICS

Petitioners Allege Head of American
Court Has Slandered Their Church
—Resent Taft's Refusal to Act.

Lorria Andrews, ex-Attorney General of Hawaii, and for the last few years a resident of Shanghai, China, where he is a member of the American bar, has arrived in this city on his way to Washington to apply to the next Congress for impeachment proceedings against Judge Lebbeus R. Wilfley of the American Court in Shanghai. Mr. Andrews brings with him a petition signed by some Americans now living in China in which it is charged that the Judge is not only incompetent and reckless in his judgments, but that his acts are compromising our prestige in China.

Mr. Andrews says he has the evidence to support all of these charges with him and that he is prepared to present it in full to Congress when it meets. Among other things it is charged against the Judge that when he was transferred to Shanghai from Manila when he was Attorney General he made all the lawyers, some of whom had been established in practice in this country for many years before going East, take an examination in the rudiments of the law, and then arbitrarily disbarred nearly all of them.

He is also charged with utterances against the Catholic faith from the bench which have stirred the foreign colony of the East into a turmoil of dissension and discontent. These utterances are the chief burden of the petition which Mr. Andrews brings with him to this country, one clause reading:

"In violation of the duties and the oath of his high office, he has condemned the Catholic clergy as the Popish clergy, guilty of robbing the poor, the widows, and orphans under the name of the Church, which slanderous statements, if made in print, other than in the decision of one of the courts of the United States, would be a criminal libel."

The petition is several pages long and closes with the appeal that, "on account of his slanderous, violent, and uncalled-for attack upon the Roman Catholic Church, be it resolved, that the facts be presented to Congress and his Excellency the President of the United States who are hereby petitioned in the interests of justice, that a fairminded and unprejudiced Judge be appointed as Judge of the United States Court for China, and that Mr. Wilfley be removed from his high office which he has so plainly shown he is unfit to occupy."

The petition is signed by C. E. Roach, manager of the Shanghai Pulp and Paper Company; W. W. Dowdell, a leading architect and President of the Catholic Sodality of Shanghai; Henry O'Shea, proprietor of The China Gazette, the leading Shanghai daily; T. McLaughlin, manager of the Oriental Press, the leading printing house; J. S. Blount, Secretary of the Standard Life Insurance Company; Frank L. Britton, an importer; Louis Auber, a retired merchant; Les Myner, a wealthy American resident, and Capt. Frederick Davis, a retired naval officer.

"It is not only the business and commercial interests of Americans in China which are being jeopardized by the demoralization which has ensued from the new practices introduced into our only high American court," said Mr. Andrews to a TIMES reporter, "but American prestige is being lost in every way. Much as we may admire Secretary Taft for what he did in the Philippines and Cuba, the sentiment against him is unanimous among the Americans who count in Shanghai, for his support of Judge Wilfley."

"Capt. J. P. Roberts, an American, died in China leaving a will. This was offered for probate in the United States Court, no legal contest being involved. No opinion was required; nevertheless the Judge filed a long decision on the right of the Court to admit a will to probate, in the course of which he made an attack on the Catholic clergy, including such remarks as this: 'The Popish clergy take to themselves, under the name of the church and poor, the whole residue of the deceased after the two-thirds of the wife and the children are divided, without even paying his debts or other charges thereon. The trust thus vested in the prelates in the course of time has been grossly abused.'"

"It is by such acts as this that Judge Wilfley has destroyed his usefulness in the Shanghai field."