

# *National Economy and Forestry\**

By  
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I welcome this opportunity of saying a few words to you who, in choosing forestry as a career, will be responsible for the wise use and maintenance, in the national interest, of the great and increasingly important forest resources of the Philippines. It is particularly appropriate to discuss forestry here in this beautiful Makiling National Park which, in view of its history, should be an inspiration to all foresters and potential foresters. I am informed that this area was developed, through the vision and efforts of Dean Tamesis and his associates, from a deteriorated cogonal area into its present flourishing condition. This is dramatic proof both of the recuperative potential of your forest soil, and the results which good forest management can achieve.

You young foresters are entering the forestry scene at a very opportune moment, and your influence will be effective during a period which will determine whether the forest resource will continue to be a national asset or whether it will deteriorate to a point when its poor condition or complete absence will constitute a serious national handicap. Your predecessors have built well and achieved much, but there are some severe tests coming, some real tough problems which will not permit you to relax and coast on the existing momentum. It is in connection with a few of the more obvious problems with which you will be faced, indeed with which you are already faced, that I would like to center my discussion on this morning. The solution to these and other problems will be principally your responsibility and will large-

ly determine the future course of the forest resource.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind this group that forests have two basic aspects. There is the protective aspect and there is the productive aspect. I feel that in the necessity of managing the forests from the viewpoint of a balanced perspective as between these two aspects lies one of the important problems with which you will be faced.

The increasing shortage of commercial timber in the more intensively developed areas of the free world is creating heavy pressure on the great tropical forest areas which are less intensively industrialized and still timber surplus areas. As an indication of this trend the United States, a heavy timber producing country, has recently and for the first time in its history, changed from a net exporter to a net importer of forest products. Add to this the fact that increasing industrialization and increasing population in the existing timber surplus areas, including the Philippines, will also raise the domestic consumption, and it becomes evident that strong exploitive pressures will result. Thus, you will have to solve the problem of how to increase forest production in a commercially feasible way without resorting to the destructive types of exploitation with their resultant damage to both timber and soil resources. It will involve more than a matter of paying attention to the more obvious physical protective aspects of the forests, all of which are well known to you. Such matters as watershed protection, and protection against soil erosion are elementary to you, if not to

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the general public. But included in the protective aspect of forests, is the matter of national economic protection as well. It is not enough simply to avoid over-cutting or of maintaining a vegetal cover sufficient for soil and watershed protection. The quality of the forest capital must be protected as well as the quantity. In the United States large areas were cut over with insufficient attention paid to the effect on the quality of the succeeding stand. Each cutting cycle simply removed the best of what was left. It was frankly a process of plain ordinary "high grading." The result was that, in many places the minimum physical requirements for soil protection were maintained, but at a tremendous economic loss due to impaired quality. I hope you will not repeat our mistakes in the Philippines.

I mentioned that the necessity of soil and watershed protection, and the role forests play therein are well understood by foresters if not by the general public. That is a very big and important "if not", and it brings up another very tough problem, one which is being faced right now and in which you also will be involved when you start to practise your profession. It is my impression that the vital relation of forests to soil and watershed protection are not too well appreciated by the general public here, especially by the important rural public. Too many people regard forests not as national assets, but merely as handicaps to agriculture. That is one of the penalties paid by a country rich in forest resources. In the United States, until only fairly recently, the same philosophy prevailed. The realization of the value of forests both for protection and production comes only after the effect of their loss becomes evident. Because the Philippines has not yet sustained serious loss, we have the sad spectacle in many places here of kañingins on steep slopes and true forest soils, with the timber burned and wasted and the soil deteriorated and eroded. Legislation and coercion can lessen to some extent such illegal destruction. However, experience all over

the world, and especially in democracies, has shown that desirable measures can be applied to the land only very little faster than the people are willing to accept them. You will therefore have to be salesmen as well as technicians. You will have to take every opportunity of making all the people regard the forest resource as you are taught to regard it here. Only when the necessity of forest protection is absorbed in the value systems of the people and becomes traditional will this problem be completely solved.

This leads directly to an additional although a desirable burden which is placed on the foresters of the Philippines. Practically all of the Philippine forests, 97.5 percent in fact, are publicly owned. All of the citizens, therefore, have a stake and a direct interest in their use. That means that the national interest must be paramount in all decisions made with respect to their management. That is a very simple statement to make, but frequently a very difficult one to apply. I could spend an entire day on a discussion of this one point without exhausting its possibilities. Suffice it to say that with respect to managing the forest resources its application requires a broad and balanced perspective, one in which all individual, group and society interests can be properly weighed and evaluated. And it requires that decisions be made objectively with all pressures of various interests proportionately resisted. You cannot acquire too early this broad perspective which will give you a consciousness and a concept of the public interest which should be paramount in your professional work. Fortunately, you have here a tradition to help you. The excellent record of the Bureau of Forestry in operating in the public interest will be of tremendous assistance.

The problems I have mentioned by no means exhaust the list. I am sure you yourselves can visualize many more, and certainly your professors can add to the list if your own imagination fails. In discussing these problems it is by no means my intention to introduce pessimism, but rather to point them

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# Trees, Man's Best Friends\*

Prof. EUGENIO DE LA CRUZ  
*Chief, Div. of Forest Management, B.F.*

*Mr. Canciller*—Why do you consider the trees as Man's best friends?

*Prof. Cruz*—In the course of man's adaptation to his environment, he has continuously been the recipient of manifold benefits afforded by the forest. It is inconceivable how man could have attained the life and progress he now enjoys were it not for the services which the trees kindly and ungrudgingly gave him.

*Q.*—Will you please elaborate on the services the trees have rendered and are still rendering to mankind for the benefit of our radio audience?

*A.*—With much pleasure. The fundamental needs of man have changed little since pre-historic times. Indirectly, the forest as home and breeding place of wild animals and birds afforded food supply to primitive man and pioneer communities. In addition, direct products from the forest such as berries, fruits, roots, buds, leaves, and saps are easily available at any time.

Besides food, man's need for clothing was easily provided by the simplest fashion of wearing a fig leaf and later wearing a more complicated article of tree barks or beaten bast fibers. He learned, no doubt that out of the skins of wild animals he hunted in the forest, a better and more durable clothing could be made. Today which is a far cry from the fig-leaf era, man uses rayon silk which is made from viscocised wood pulp and wool from wood.

Man's next need is shelter. We were taught that a cave was his first probable dwelling, but to protect himself from enemies he had to live in trees. He finally learned

how to build wooden houses. As a matter of fact, wood has served man's need for shelter through the ages till the present. While it is true that substitutes were developed with the intention of replacing wood, it is beyond any shadow of a doubt that one can hardly find a house or building where wood does not form a major part of the construction.

*Q.*—Truly the trees are the best friends of man. In their humble way they were and still are providing man food, clothing and shelter. Could you tell us some more of the services of these faithful friends, the trees?

*A.*—They are varied and numerous that I am afraid we shall run out of time to attempt to enumerate them here. Take the humblest of all, firewood. One can hardly conceive the degree of benefit it has rendered to man from the time he learned to use fire. We have plenty of cause for rejoicing that our country enjoys the blessing of plenty when it comes to fuel wood. Yet if I were to ask one of you here today what type of forest product forms the greatest consumption of our people, the answer will be invariably lumber. This is far from the truth as it can be easily seen; our people besides quite a number of our local industries largely depend on wood as fuel for cooking.

From the time of the primitive man to the present day wooden articles continue to play an important part in the household. The only difference perhaps is the remarkable increase of these articles and their transformation from the crude and simple designs to more elaborate finish as characterized by the advance in civilization. In place of the twigs used as pot-hook, the twig broom, the crude

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\* Radio interview over DZFM, August 30, 1953, 7 p.m.

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out as a challenge. I can think of few other fields where the exercise of professional skill and high personal qualities will be more rewarding in national betterment.

We of the F.O.A. recognize quite well the importance to continued well being of the Philippines, of the wise use of the forest resources. We are cooperating to the extent permitted by our policy and our means in measures designed by the Bureau of Forestry to facilitate some of the approaches to solving the immediate problems and to assist in the longer range aspects. Some of these measures, such as the important matter of land classification, are already being applied. Others, including additions of your College facilities, expanded silvicultural and forest products research, and assistance in vital protection and reforestation are close to actuality. You probably are quite well aware of the details of this matter. Indeed, I recall a certain recent article in "Forestry Leaves" which indicates that you are extremely well aware of what is going on. I hope you will maintain an equally questioning attitude in all of your work.

Such cooperation as we may be able to extend, however, merely helps you to acquire some of the tools you will need in accomplishing the task ahead of you. And this applies to technical advice even more than to material things. That is why we have given research a prominent place in our planned cooperation. The practice of forestry is an art based on several sciences. It can not be formed into a stencil for application in different places in the same way. A new pattern must be developed for each new set of conditions. The early foresters in the United States were inclined to attempt applying European stencils to American conditions with unfortunate results. When we threw away the stencils but retained the principles to develop techniques suitable to American conditions, we began to make progress. That is why I expressed the

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both made torches and set fire to the whole grove. And as those exquisite flowers were eaten by the flames, a heavy load seemed to be lifted from my heart and my conscience was eased, for I knew that we had done the right thing for the lesson of the rattan was still fresh in my mind.

Well, after all, who would value orchids if they were as common as weeds? Like Mickey's rattan these orchids would have flooded the market, disturbing the balance between supply and demand and resulting in disastrous consequences to the orchid business. Don't you agree with me?

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### FORESTRY IN THE . . .

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"This achievement speaks highly of your ability not only to rehabilitate an industry that was all wiped out by the war but also to rise to the occasion and meet our urgent national requirements for wood and other forest products," he added.

Secretary Mapa called the attention of the lumbermen to the tendency among some lumber companies to produce more logs and less sawn lumber in view of the high prices for logs offered by Japan.

*Manila Times, August 12, 1953*

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Be unselfish. That is the first and final commandment for those who would be useful and happy over their usefulness. If you think of yourself only, you cannot develop because you are choking the source of development which is spiritual expansion through thoughts of others.

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hope that you will maintain a continually searching and questioning attitude as you relate advice or knowledge from all sources to your own specific problems.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that although the problems confronting you foresters are great, the opportunity to make important contributions to the good of the Philippines is even greater. It represents a real challenge, and one which will require the best in professional skill and personal qualities to meet successfully.