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Tobacco

BY THE CONDE DE CHURRUCA
President, Manila Tobacco Association

FOR the first time since liberation, the corn crop of Northern Luzon has been saved and harvested by the farmers. It is a big crop, amply sufficing their needs. As a consequence, farmers will be prepared to plant a larger amount of tobacco, and if the weather plays no tricks, we can expect a proportionately big crop. A few years of good weather would be the real basis for the rehabilitation of the tobacco industry.

It is much too early to make any guesses as to the next crop, but tobacco seed is being distributed in large enough quantities to enable the farmers to plant many seedbeds.

EXPERIMENTS with Virginia seed (that has not been changed for 4 years) have given good results as to quality but have proved very expensive in comparison to the results obtained. It will not be possible, because of the high wage cost, to produce this tobacco by administration, but if the farmers would be willing to cooperate and the Government and private entrepreneurs would build a large enough number of curing sheds, very good results could be obtained in certain regions of the Philippines as this tobacco could be sold to factories at better prices for the farmer than the native type, and it would be cheaper for the factories than the better grades of imported Virginia.

To promote this matter, it would be necessary, in the first place, that some local type of Virginia cigarette be manufactured and accepted by the public. It would have to be made, at the beginning, from imported Virginia leaf, and little by little this would be blended with the local Virginia. In time, by progressive improvement, a minimum of imported leaf would be needed.

It would not be too easy for the factories to hit upon the right type of cigarette, one which will be appreciated by the public, for it would have to be both cheap and good. But this would be the only way to procure a market for native Virginia leaf.

Once a locally manufactured Virginia cigarette is well introduced, it would not be hard to progressively change the blend to the native Virginia.



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It is out of the question, however, to encourage our farmers to produce Virginia tobacco instead of native in quantity at once, for if it were produced in any volume, there would be no buyers prepared for it.

The factories have first got to produce a good cigarette (even at a sacrifice), one which local smokers will indeed prefer to the imported type.

All this would therefore involve a parallel process that would take time, but it would produce an important business and keep many millions of dollars from leaving the the country.

Chemicals

BY HERBERT FISCHER

*Philippine American Drug Company
(Botica Boic)*

IMPORTS of chemicals into the Philippines have reached a level which is being steadily held, indicating that the supply is meeting the demand and that consumers are buying by the week or month instead of stocking up months in advance to be assured of a sufficient supply.

Increased sales in certain items have offset decreases in others which were subject to speculation. Philippine industry, which is the heaviest direct consumer of chemicals, demands a certain flow of imports and this flow will increase with the development of local industry. The present import control over luxury items which restricts the import of ready-made preparations, will act an incentive toward the establishment of new industries, though some restricted items, well and favorably known, will continue in demand.

Some of the largest American soap, dentrifice, cosmetic, and perfume manufacturers are reported to be preparing to manufacture locally, and while they will no doubt import most of their raw materials and their containers, they will certainly purchase some of their raw materials, such as alcohol, here. Ultimately, most of the containers, — bottles, cardboard boxes, and labels may also be made here.

It is too early to make any definite statement with respect to the effect of the sterling devaluation on local prices of chemicals. There may or there may not be a shift to European suppliers, depending upon availability and prices.

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