

# Commercial Possibilities of Ramie Fiber Production in the Cagayan Valley

Julio Jamias

Reliable parties and natives of the upland districts of the Cagayan valley bring the information that the ramie plant is one of those fiber producing plants grown in their backyards from which they obtain materials for weaving into waist apparel, bow strings, fish and game nets and harp strings. The utilization of the ramie fiber into such commodities is a good sign that ramie thrives well in the Cagayan valley. This is further verified by the writer during his sojourn in the Apayao regions and in the other regions in the valley. The Kalingas, Ifugaos and the Aetas of Palanan, Isabela know the plant and value it for household necessities and know a crude way of extracting the fiber. Whether the ramie plant is endemic in the Cagayan valley or introduced by the followers of Limahong from Southern China could not be answered for certain by these primitive peoples except that ramie was already growing in their localities from time immemorial, as the habitat of the ramie plant was on the wind protected valleys of the Sierra Madre and Cordillera ranges. The ramie thrives well in the valley, therefore, needs no further trial planting in the valley and this fact opens a new venture for cold cash by small and big investors on this particular crop.

The introduction and extensive use of decorticating machines and big decorticating mills about a decade ago in Mindanao has practically solved the much prejudiced remarks of ramie investors that the preparation of the fiber for market is quite crude and slow, and the finished product is very inferior in quality although the soil and climatic conditions in the archipelago are suitable. It has already been shown that the industry jumps by leaps and bounds since 1937 and there is no reason why the ramie fiber would not be one of the premier export crop in the valley.

The climate and soil of Cagayan valley is suitable for the commercial production of ramie fiber but the topographical condition of the land need some precaution in the selection of sites. There are regions fitted for small and big investors.

There is in the valley a very short period of dry season of about two

months, March and April. The largest rainfall is in October, not because of typhoons and depressions but because of the beginning of the northeasterly wind. The rainfall in June, July, August and September almost comes up to that in October.

The Weather Bureau in Manila according to its pluviometric observations in the valley give an annual mean rainfall (1908-1937) of its most important weather stations as follows:

Aparri, Cagayan: 2,269.8mm or 87.7 inches.

Tuguegarao, Cagayan: 1,801.2mm or 70.9 inches.

Iligan, Isabela: 1,991.4mm or 78.4 inches.

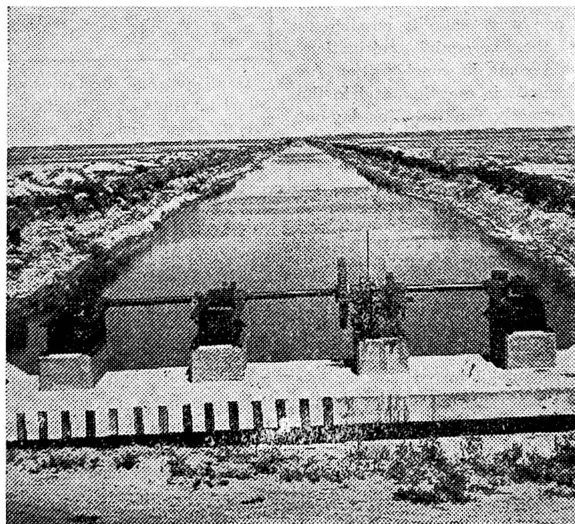
Echague, Isabela: 1,790.5mm or 70.5 inches.

While Davao of Mindanao where the ramie industry had its birthplace has an annual mean rainfall of 2,087.7mm or 78.83 inches, the Cagayan valley has also Iligan of Isabela comparing favorably to that of Davao.

## SUITABLE LOCATIONS FOR RAMIE REGIONS

Frequent hunting trips in the Cagayan Valley during the adventure days of the writer and information gathered from the natives of their respective regions enables him to present the following classification for ramie plantation sites for the small and big investors. Ramie plantation sites for the small investors of the Cagayan province may locate sites in the idle lands of Claveria, Sanchezmira, Pamplona, Abulug, Ballesteros, and Allocapan, and those in the Itawis region comprising of Rizal, Faire, Piat and Tuao. In the province of Isabela small investors may locate sites in the idle lands of Echague and Cawayan. Now for big investors the extensive tract of virgin lands of San Mariano, Cawayan, Jones and Palanan must be given serious considerations.

Small investors as used in this classification means those individual prospectors  
(Continued on page 28)



(USIS cut)

Modern irrigation gate that regulates flow of water — urgent in the Cagayan Valley.

# In Lighter Vein

(R. R. A.)

## TEACHERS AND PUPILS

So many arguments have been said, published, talked about the great sacrifice of the teacher, the unjust pay they receive for their work, etc. Some teachers are for strike against the existing rate of pay, nowadays being strike boom days, so some teachers believe they are out of fashion by not striking. A few faint voices have reached the newspapers and lately a few teachers, as the papers say, have made formal bid to higher wages but so far no teacher has struck yet.

One teacher the other day in her class, was so enraged by her pupils that she started expounding to them the role of the teacher in moulding the life of the nation's children, the sacrifice they are doing to serve the country and finally the humiliation they get by not being supported and paid decently by the government.

"What would happen to the youth if teachers all over the country started a strike?"

A youngster stood up bravely and answered, "Teacher, if you strike we would all back you up and the longer you strike the more we will cheer for you."

"Sit down," the teacher ordered but she inwardly smiled. "So you could all loaf," the teacher added,—"No, you cannot have fun while we are having no fun."

A faint voice from the rear seat was heard, "Let's strike for the teacher."

## DOWNTOWN

I was walking downtown the other day and as I passed by each bar or cafe or any drinking joint, I peeped in to satisfy my curiosity about what people say that business with the G.I.'s is over, bars are going to die a natural death. True enough there are less G.I.'s now who drink but, still they keep drinking. A lot of G.I.'s still think much about coconut wine and many Yankee boys still believe in a scrap as part of the sport of drinking. It may break up the joint or more often, a few chairs, glasses and bottles. To humor these boys bar owners paint the walls of their places with wizzy

girl figures or write jokes on them. In one of them I saw this writing on the wall entitled, "When You Go Drinking."

"If you cannot drink with your stomach and do it with your head, my man—stay home and sleep, my son."

In another joint, I saw this little twisted poem:

"Why fight in Bars, GI Joes?

If you are out for a good time

You are out of the firing line;

Well, Joe, forget fighting

And have some coc'nut wine."

This is the best of the lot I saw, entitled, "A Thought About Americanos."

"Shoulder to shoulder we stand with you

In love and war, business and tar—

If you break-up the joint,

You'll break us to the point!

But surely it'll bounce back at you

'Cause, Americano, you're liberator Joe."

## RAMIE FIBER . . .

(Continued from page 7)

tors who can afford to invest a working capital of about 3,500 pesos on a four hectare land. This amount of capital enables the investor to acquire a 3-H.P. gas engine, a decorticating machine of 3/4 piculs of dry fiber capacity per day of 9 working hours and few farm implements and equipments. Such size of a plantation shall also need at least 5 permanent laborers who will do nothing, year in and year out but attend to the care of the plantation, continuous stripping of matured ramie plants and other odd jobs in the plantation.

Big investors are meant those legally organized corporations or trust companies who would go into the venture of mechanized labor and production of fiber in big scales. There shall be a need of a big decorticating central of about 1,000 to 3,000 tons capacity of dry fiber on a 24 hours working time with 3 shifts. Regions for this venture are available in the province of Isabela.

## CAGAYAN RAMIE REGIONS

Although the northern coastal towns of Cagayan province like those of Cla-

veria, Sanchezmira, Pamplona, Abulug Ballesteros and Allocapan had been mentioned, the extensive growing of ramie could not be strongly recommended in the open land of those regions because of the strong northwinds which occur during the months of October, November and December. However there are fairly big valleys between ranges shielded from northwinds and are suitable for ramie fiber production, but the problem of port entries and exits and transportation facilities are difficult. These coastal towns take their products by trucks on the national highway or on flat bottom boats by waterways to Aparri and sent to Manila either by ships or big trucks. But countless difficulties are often encountered especially during floody months. Moreover, on excessive floody days the mouth of the Cagayan river is clogged by sandbars and big steamers are forced to wait outside the port until the sandbars is completely dredged. Eventually the farm produce is delayed and freight rates become exorbitantly high. Occasionally accidents occur when the river boats are washed away by strong currents to the sea, shattered to pieces and totally destroyed.

In the Itawis region suitable idle lands are available and are located between ranges shielded from strong winds, but the finished produce will involve heavy expenditures during its transportation to Tuguegarao or Aparri. By waterways the boat travels on the Chico and Cagayan rivers and partly on the national highway on badly damaged macadam roads. Moreover, there are times when the ferry is hardly available. This handicap increases handling charges and thereby reduces net profit.

## ISABELA RAMIE REGIONS

As mentioned elsewhere in this report thousands of uncultivated fertile lands abound in Isabela. These lands are suitable for ramie growing and available for big investors. There are however idle lands in Cagayan and Echague where small investors have opportunities to produce ramie fiber. In the virgin lands of San Mariano, Palanan, Angadanan and Jones which are almost limitless, the lands are suitable for ramie fiber production and are awaiting big investors. The exit of finished products is always Manila through the national road. But when shiploads could be produced, Port Bicobian on the Palanan Bay may be resorted to.

The potentialities of Paanan town are never heard nor sung by our Filipino

writers. This is now the time to expose the economic possibilities of Palanan. This silent town is famous for its historical gifts, being the last stronghold of General Emilio Aguinaldo and the spot where the last Japanese soldier ended his military career. Why Palanan is always selected as the last stronghold of Oriental militarists is perhaps due to the peace loving inhabitants who are self sufficient in rice, meat and dairy, poultry, especially cockfighting roosters, fishes, coconuts, nipa and buri products, forest products and guano deposits. What is lacking in Palanan are good roads, steel bridges, ships and tractors.

Palanan is a place where drought is not known because of its numerous springs and waterfalls. In spite of its seclusion from the rest of the world, the inhabitants are satisfied with their economical life. Of course they long for the day to come when Port Bicobian shall be open to the big seaport and airport of the world. Port Bicobian being shielded from tidal waves and storms shall become the exit of ramie fiber produced by big investors direct to San Francisco, New York, London, Marseilles and Hongkong.



#### FACTS ABOUT RAMIE FIBER PRODUCTION IN OCCIDENTAL NEGROS

Abstracts from the 1941 SUGAR NEWS as written by Mr. Carlos Loecin of Victorias, Occidental Negros gives us the following data:

- 1—A ton of deleafed stalks 5 feet tall can be cut by 4 to 5 laborers
- 2—By contract, a ton of deleafed stalk 5 feet tall costs ₱3.00 yielding 0.79 picul of dry fiber.
- 3—Yields are in the order of 25-30 piculs of dry fiber per hectare per year.
- 4—Harvesting by hand costs around 4 pesos per picul of dry fiber. Stripping, washing and drying costs around 4 pesos per picul when decorticated on a 3/4 picul capacity machine.
- 5—The proportions by percentage from different products in the fresh deleafed stalks decorticated in a 3/4 picul capacity machine are as follows:
  - Fresh Stalks 100%;
  - Bark and Fibrous Tissue, 30%;
  - Wet stripped fiber, 12%;
  - Dry fiber, 5%
  - Degummed fiber 3.7 (74% yield from dry crude fiber);
  - Wood, 70%;
  - Machine waste, 18%;
  - Moisture, 7%;
  - Gums, 1.3%.

#### FARMING AND COOPERATIVES

#### My Alma Mater . . .

(Continued from page 5)

it might well be applied to Agronomy 2 (Philippine Field Crops) which carries 5 units to make it 7 units. Because this is a very broad subject and is a direct farm concern, it is justified to carry more units. However, this 2 extra units should be emphasized on truck gardening work. There is emphasis on Chemistry when farm work has very little problem along this field and if Chemistry problems occur, they are seldom if ever analytical in nature and extent. Should it occur, one does not have the facilities on the farm anyway so he takes it to the Bureau of Science or Bureau of Plant Industry. But sad to say, truck gardening is not taken up by Aggie graduates unless one majors in Agronomy. Yes, it is mentioned as a passing work in Agronomy required subjects. But truck gardening alone is an industry and requires special study and should be given more ground preparation in our College Curriculum. It is important now more than ever, to a farmer whose major produce is rice or sugar cane, or any main agricultural crop which require big areas to be profitable. He is in need of carabaos and implements for these major crops to be made as profitable as before. To them and to poultry farms, to hog farms, to fish farms, gardening is indeed a big help as a source of animal as well as human food and a good and quick source of extra income. And for those who have small parcels of land intensive truck gardening is more profitable than most main staple crops of the Philippines, as gardening can earn more per inch of land. It is therefore obvious, that truck gardening be given more attention and study at present.

In the third year, 1st semester,

again is another Chemistry subject. This time Agricultural Industrial Chemistry or Chemistry 15, carrying 5 units. At the same time, Entomology I or Introductory Economic Entomology, study of insects in other words, is taken up carrying 5 units. These two subjects no doubt have their importance but they carry too many detailed chemistry experiments and too many insect breeding experiments and insect field collections necessitating a lot of paper work. The time allotted to these two subjects is not enough to finish the entire requirements. A student has to devote many extra Sunday hours and spare time during regular days to be able to complete breeding and collecting insects. If 2 units could be clipped off Entomology I and 2 units from Chemistry 15 by minimizing experiments and paper work, it is believed that the student will not be less educated on the principal objectives of these two important subjects.

The 4 units saved could be very wisely applied to practical Engineering work which is not taken up in the offered regular engineering subjects. During the third year, the student has opportunity  
(Continued next page)

R/

**Never  
Fails!**

Prescription Dept.

**FARMACIA BALINTAWAK**

E. M. del Rosario & Sons, Inc.  
1144-1146 Rizal Avenue

IMPORTERS  
OF  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
PRODUCTS  
DRUGS &  
CHEMICALS

