
PHILIPPINE SCHOOL OF COMMERCE.

By CHARLES H. STORIS, Principal.

No longer is it true that the demand for stenographers exceeds the supply. At best, this statement is only a half truth. It may better be said that the demand for good stenographers, good bookkeepers, and men with the fundamentals of an all round business education greatly exceeds the supply, and that too, at a time when the opportunities for such workers are far greater than they have ever been before. The period of fairly good office assistants is rapidly passing in the Philippines, and a common belief that a stenographer does not have to study very hard to master his craft or work very hard to obtain his salary must pass with it if the friends and advisers of young Filipinos are faithful to their friendship.

Selecting at random fifty papers handed in by seventh-grade applicants for admission to the Philippine School of Commerce in June, the following may be given as a summary of the answers to the question, "Why do you wish to study stenography?"

Ten—It offers good opportunities for advancement in business and professional life.

Fifteen—It offers a short preparatory course for work.

Twenty—It offers an easily obtained position at a good salary.

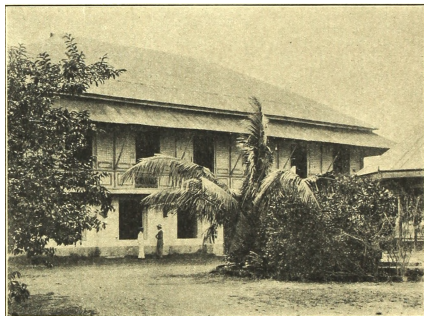
Five—Not classified.

It will be noted that 10 have ambitions to become stenographers as a stepping-stone to something better; 15 regard a stenographer's position as an ultimate goal; 20 would accept any work which is not too hard.

By their answers, these students have divided themselves into two classes usually represented in the School of Commerce. Those in the first class have a definite goal in sight and have worked out, with the assistance of friends and teachers, a well-defined program leading toward that goal. As graduates, they have usually brought credit to the institution, many of them a few years after graduation occupying positions paying from ₱80 to ₱250 a month. That these men continue to advance from year to year is evidenced by the fact that many Filipinos who began life as clerks, a few years ago, are now ranking high in governmental and commercial spheres.

Those comprising the second class are simply hunting an

education as an easy means of obtaining a livelihood. Students of this class compose the majority of the repeaters and of the ultimate failures in the school. As seventh-grade graduates, they are not mature enough to devote themselves to specialized studies. The time they spend in school causes an economic loss, both to the Government which supports the institution and to the students themselves who are wasting money and valuable time which could better be spent in some other place. The majority of them should spend from one to four years in a regular secondary school and a few should never attempt the higher specialized



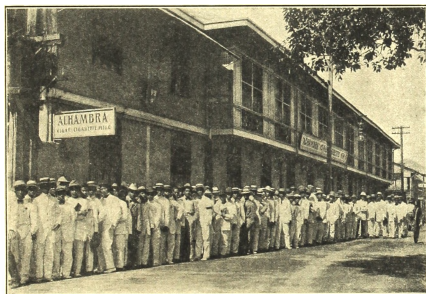
The main building of the Philippine School of Commerce.

work at all. To give instruction in a commercial school economically and effectively, it is necessary that parents, friends, and teachers of students in the lower grades cooperate with faculty of the School of Commerce in selecting for admission only students who may readily profit by the courses offered.

This school was not planned to teach stenography and book-keeping alone, but general commercial branches as well. The rapidly increasing commercial activity in the Islands indicates that the time is ripe to seek for more students who want to be stenographers and bookkeepers in order to prepare themselves for more responsible positions later in life.

Few people will question the existence of latent business

instincts in the inhabitants of these Islands or fail to observe the keen delight taken by the average Filipino in making a trade. These facts, however, seem inconsistent with the often repeated statements that 99 per cent of the production of the Islands is by Filipino labor and that 90 per cent of the commerce, both foreign and domestic, is controlled by foreigners. However true these statements may have been in the past, there are many indications of a changing commercial status of the Filipino people. Many specific examples could be cited. The expanding business of a certain tienda in Manila has for some months been

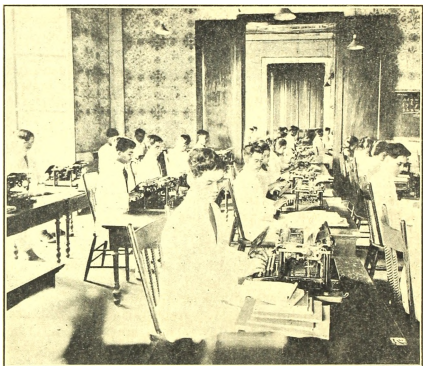


One of the frequent and instructive excursions taken by the students at the Philippine School of Commerce, for the purpose of studying business methods.

a matter of interest to observing neighbors. At first the stock consisted of the usual cheap candies, bottled goods, cigarettes, and a box of Londres. At the present time, however, a telephone and a fairly complete stock of groceries may be seen in the store; the proprietor converses with his customers in any of three languages; he is prompt, painstaking, obliging, and energetic. In all fairness, it must be said that he has been detected selling some things at about 25 per cent of their market value while other wares have been priced in excess of current rates because he was not familiar enough with them to know just what they cost. His ultimate success or failure seems to depend, in a large measure, on his ability to keep in close touch with the wholesale markets and to install a suitable

system of bookkeeping. At present he is at the mercy of anyone to whom he may apply for necessary information.

The Philippine School of Commerce is available for students of the type represented by this young man. The principles of salesmanship, the importance of accuracy even in petty details; the development of ideals; the explanation of methods, and the rules of conduct which should govern the alert business man are important matters to young men of this class and are well worthy of their careful study.



A class in typewriting at the Philippine School of Commerce.

Classes in this institution are organized on the following basis: two years for the study of stenography or bookkeeping, or one year in stenography for those with advanced standing in English, and three years for covering one or both of the two courses first mentioned with additional allied subjects. Instruction is given in both the English and the Spanish languages, in commercial law and business methods, and special attention is devoted to a study of the requisites of a good business letter. Opportunities are offered from time to time to visit the leading commercial and manufacturing establishments of the city, thus

permitting the students to gain first-hand information of methods used by successful business men. A new departure this year has been the organization of a commercial club for the purpose of studying the interesting situation manifested in the business world at the present time. This club holds monthly meetings and takes the place of the usual literary society.

Practically 100 per cent of the students in the night classes and over 25 per cent of those attending the day sessions are financially independent in that they are working their way through school. These young men are making sacrifices to obtain an education and the school management tries to coöperate with them wherever possible. Some of the most promising students belong to this class.

It is hardly fair to omit mention of the young women graduates, who are numbered among the most successful workers sent out by the school. While it is true that some young women appear unable to master stenography, those who are adapted to the work seem to develop a greater degree of accuracy and skill than do the average young men. Without doubt, the best interests of the business world would be served if more young women were to engage in this occupation.

Since June, 1916, over three hundred applicants for admission to the school have been turned away, largely because of lack of room. Since the beginning of the school year, applications for stenographers have come from the East Indies, from near by provinces, and from several business and Government offices in Manila. Not all of these have been filled. These positions offer a fair entrance salary and definite promises of advancement. The demand for good stenographers and men with good business ability is large and the salaries are satisfactory, but the qualifications of applicants must measure up to a higher standard than ever before.