

Mountain Farmers and the Mining Prospects

—Letter from Reverend Vincent H. Gowen
of Besao, in the Sagada Mission country

"I was naturally much interested in your article on Mining in Mountain Province, and in your query as to the local situation.

"Besao lies on the extreme western fringe of the pine-forest belt; west of us the mountains taper away into the barren hillsides, such as one sees around Cervantes, until they reach the Abra river at Angaki. These hillsides provide room, however, for extensive systems of rice-terraces wherever there is water—terraces that bear two harvests a year—and they contain many small pockets of tropical hardwood. Immediately north of us are thick forests extending into Abra province and taking on a tropical aspect as they come into the intermediate zone where the eastern and western rainy seasons coincide.

"I have watched our fringes of forest with considerable anxiety during the ten years I have been here, for they provide, of course, not only the local wood supply, but the regulated drainage essential to the vast area of terraces on which the subsistence of the people depends. Only the rice-terrace makes this region habitable; it would be a tragedy to see it depopulated of its sturdy, self-respecting inhabitants and the hillsides which have sustained a picturesque group for so many centuries reduced to wilderness for the temporary advantage of people who are not native to these mountains.

"Unquestionably these forests have been dwindling slowly, but up till now, in this district, we cannot blame the mines. The people themselves have been chiefly at fault in allowing fires to devastate their timber. Many of these fires probably are caused by spontaneous combustion in the cogon which clothes the lower slopes and which, as you know from your own experience, warms up to the temperature of an oven; some are said to be set by the cattle-herders, mistakenly believing this will improve the quality of the grass instead of impoverishing it; but a large number are due to the carelessness of charcoal-burners in the forest itself.

"Furthermore, there is much waste in getting fuel and cutting down trees for lumber. The Bureau of Forestry has never had sufficient means to police this district. In older days, as you wrote, the people were able to preserve the balance between their timber reserves and their needs. In Besao this balance has been disturbed by the steady growth of the population, not because of sanitary measures (as one might think) but because the American regime, by stopping the head-hunting forays of the neighbouring Bontoes, has allowed the people to branch out into many smaller barrios and so to build terraces in places of which they did not dare take advantage when, for safety's sake, they had to remain near the larger, more compact settlements. They have many more fields than they had a few years ago, more than enough to keep pace with the rise in population, and so have obviated the danger of famine, which they faced as recently as 1917, but they have drawn much more heavily on their forests.

"In an indirect way the mines have promoted this deforestation, because a large number of Besao men find seasonal work in the mines around Baguio or at Suyoc—as an indica-

tion of how this number is increasing, I can quote from some of my own figures: each June I canvass, with the help of my Igorot staff, every name in our Register; in 1934 we had 125 temporarily absent in Baguio and its environs; in 1935, 180; in 1936, 260. These men come home with money, and their first act is to build a modern, iron-roofed house instead of the picturesque but uncomfortable huts in which they themselves were born. The old-style hut, often without walls, required little more than a framework of timber; the new houses, even when the walls are iron, take much more lumber; all of it locally hand-sawn and secured, naturally, from the larger trees. But I believe it will not be long before the sawmills along the Mountain Trail will capture this market.

"Since coming here I have neglected no chance to promote reforestation, partly by example, partly by word of mouth. In our school, planting trees is a regular rainy season occupation, and we have converted what was a barren ridge into a flourishing grove. Other private individuals have begun to see the value of planting their land with trees so that in the immediate neighbourhood of the town we see many more trees than we saw ten years ago, trees wisely allowed to reach a sturdy maturity. This, of course, does not redress the wastage of the forest fires. If mining on a big scale were begun here, however, it might soon make this district a barren watershed, so small is our margin of safety.

"You will gather from this that the mining boom has not affected us greatly. Not in the matter of the forests, at least, but other difficulties, closely related, have caused much trouble. During the stock-market flurry of 1933 there was a rash of claims staked, many of them by Ilokanos, who showed no hesitation in planting their notices on the dykes of ancestral terraces. I was at home at the time; all these notices had disappeared before I got back in April 1934. Just across the ridge, in Fidelisan, near Sagada, the interests did some exploratory work and encountered much resistance from the Fidelisan people, who are Bontoes, trouble

which Mr. Ely, of the Governor-General's office, did his best to settle. The from all I can hear, were very careful to safeguard the interests of the people, but they could not down the opposition. Eventually they withdrew, after crises which came close to bloodshed. Just why they withdrew I do not know, but I have heard that the prospects they found did not justify further workings. But claims in that district—whether their claims or not, I do not know—have been advertised by a Filipino company, stocked with impressive official names, as a basis for soliciting subscriptions, and claims too at Panabugen, twelve miles west of us, which I have visited twice since Christmas without hearing even rumours of work's being attempted.

"At present an American from Manila is running an exploratory tunnel into the mountain above Agawa, the northeasternmost barrio of Besao, just this side of the ridge from Fidelisan. His engineer, an American, has run into all kinds of difficulties

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Study Philippine Mountaineers

Santa Cruz-Mambulao's Position

(Notes Submitted by James M. Robb, of the administrative staff)

The Santa Cruz-Mambulao Mining Company has not been content to devote all of its energies and capital to the development of its 90-odd claims in the Municipality of Mambulao, barrio of Santa Cruz, Paracale, Camarines Norte. Besides copper claims in Zambales, chromite claims in Masbate, and numerous other groups of claims in various portions of the Islands, the Company has acquired all of the Placer claims on the Island of Lahuy, Province of Camarines Sur, and has financed the acquisition of fifty-two lode gold claims in the barrio of Pudaal, Municipal District of Itogon, sub-province of Benguet. The Treasure Island Mining Company will develop the lode claims on Lahuy Island, leaving the rich Placer to the Santa Cruz-Mambulao Com-

pany.

A new company has been formed to continue the development of the Benguet claims, Benguet-Itogon Goldfields, Inc. Taking its name from the location of the property, Benguet-Itogon Goldfields has filed its application with the Securities and Exchange Commission for a permit to sell P450,000.00 worth of stock. Reports on the properties by General Management Company, Inc., and by various members of R. Y. Hanlon & Co., consulting mining engineers and geologists, consulting engineers for the new company, plus progress reports rendered at frequent intervals by D. L. Finley and Barney Finley, in charge of operations, have indicated a real possibility of a commercial mine. Some P65,000 has already been spent in development

work, and ten main tunnels have been driven, ranging in length from 600 meters to 13 meters.

The company's engineers have advised concentrating on 3 of the veins encountered, namely, the "C", "D", and "Valentin" veins.

It is hoped that the lowest adit, the No. 5 tunnel, if driven about 11 meters further from its present 600 meter length will cut vein "D", and, if driven 100 meters further, will cut vein "C". On these veins, assays ranging from a trace to \$16.80 per ton, old price, have been obtained by the General Management Company at higher levels than is expected to be reached by this No. 5 tunnel.

The Valentin vein has also given high values near the surface, and a tunnel has been driven 90 feet along this vein. If the No. 5 tunnel cuts veins "C" and "D", it is planned to drift on both of them, and, possibly, winze or sink a shaft from Tunnel No. 3, which is at a higher level. A serious attempt is being made to determine whether the

Base Metal . . .

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ippines have a keener customer than usual for their iron ore. But Japan will naturally keep the price below parity with scrap plus haulage from ports of supply.

It is interesting to note that England has abolished her duty on iron and cut the steel duty to 10% ad valorem. She is remote from the Philippines, however. All in all, a real supply of coking coal would be an industrial godsend to the Islands. Pig iron would stand a long-haul freight charge and tend to put ore prices more nearly on a level with world demands. But the coal has not come to light. Ore at the best bargain possible with a Japanese customer is the salable product.

Mountain Farmers and the Mining Prospects

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with the people. They have pulled down his timbering as fast as he put it up. I have not met him, as we live considerably beyond where he turns off to reach his diggings, but he has stopped off in Sagada frequently, and he apparently thinks he has a good thing. A friend of mine from Balatoc, who visited us last year, took a busman's holiday by sampling some of the ore which had been dug up in a nearby tunnel, and did not think it worth much.

"The resistance to . . . has been raised on the same grounds as against his forerunners, interference with the supply of water to the fields. I inquired closely about this today from an intelligent and educated Igorot. I had assumed that the people feared diversion of their water supply, but I find that what they fear is contamination of the water by chemical changes. They have heard that this results from mining. My guess is that the results they dread are caused in the mill rather than in the mine. The Igorot to whom I spoke seemed to think the people were acting on unfounded hearsay. But the prejudice is stubbornly ingrained and may well lead to serious trouble. I believe this present enterprise has done all it could to placate the people and, by assigning shares (in just what form I would not care to state offhand) to some of the Agawa people, has enlisted a number of supporters. It seems to be a private enterprise with legitimate aims; whether it will find its claims worth pursuing I doubt.

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Mountain Farmers

(Continued from page 22)

"From the Bontoc region come many ugly and apparently authentic stories of lowlanders' staking claims and registering titles to lands which have been the traditional mainstay of whole villages. Until now the Igorot has not realized that his land could be taken from him by entirely legal processes. He has assumed that because his fathers built and cultivated the terraces they were his; he has not seen the necessity of securing his title by a foolish piece of paper. In consequence he has been exploited, and—if my information is reliable, which I have every reason to believe it is—by men whose duty was to guard his rights. (I could be plainer, but you understand the need of being wary in such statements!) These people will resist their expropriation—and they will be shot down. Other villages, spurred on by their

educated younger generation, are taking warning in time and registering their holdings.

"That is the situation, so far as I can learn. The legitimate, responsible mining companies I have no quarrel with, though my love of the Igorot and my anxiety to help him preserve all the best features of his native life make me hope that gold will not be found in paying quantities round Besao. Much that made his life so admirably distinct has gone beyond the hope of recovery; this includes, I regret to say, his costume. Perhaps I had better qualify this by saying that his costume is going; vestiges still remain, but the gee-string and the tapis and the beautifully worn blankets, all of them so attractively designed and coloured and so sensibly adapted to local conditions, are yielding to cheap cotton imports from Japan. The Twentieth Century is in these mountains, whether we like it or not, and I look on it as my job to help ferry the Igorot across the three to four thousand years

of human history which he must cover in a single generation or period. In the process I try to see that he retains the many admirable features of his own culture and shows some discrimination in what he picks up from the West.

"But the mines, as you pointed out, produce bewildering social changes, and the prosperity they bring also fetters a retinue of harpies, whose object is to separate the Igorot from his earnings. I will close with just one instance to show how vulnerable the Igorot's own customs name him. I refer to the system of trial marriage promoted by what we call locally the 'ebgan' though it is better known by its Bontoc name of 'ulag.' Whether this system was advantageous in the past I cannot say; I do believe that the lack of adequate and livable homes made it practically inevitable, and I think that the family life which the new and better houses

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Non-Status Sugar for Army

One bidder for the U. S. army sugar contract this year, May-June delivery, was the Domestic Sugar Administration. This is the set-up of the Philippine Commonwealth for administration of domestic-consumption and quota-reserve sugar. The army calls for 12,000 bags of sugar 100 lbs. to the bag, a total of 1,200,000 lbs., half to be delivered May 15, half June 15. Bids were as follows:

	Per 100 lbs. net bag
Domestic Sugar Administration (P.I. Government)	P3.56
Juan Ki Cho, foreign sugar, c.i.f. Pier, without sales tax, and without import duty	3.83
Victorias Milling Co., Inc.	5.82
Insular Sugar Refining Corporation	5.75
Fresh Food, Inc., foreign sugar: c.i.f. Pier, with 1/2% cash discount for payment in 10 days	4.28
The Domestic Sugar Administration's	

less 2% cash discount \$0.096

or a net U. S. current price of per 100 lbs. \$4.704

Philippine sugar bid by Insureco, equivalent to, per 100 lbs. \$2.925

Philippine sugar bid lower than the U. S. current net market price (per 100 lbs. net bag) by P3.558, or U. S. \$1.779

Canadian Pacific

The Canadian Pacific liner *Empress of Japan* that left Manila for Vancouver April 12 via China and Japan took from this port the largest number of passengers ever booked for a single departure, 435, the agents report. The Pacific passenger trade could spell prosperity in capital letters with consistent trade of that calibre.



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RAIL COMMODITY MOVEMENTS

By LEON M. LAZAGA

Traffic Manager, Manila Railroad Company

The volume of commodities received in Manila during the month of March 1937, via the Manila Railroad Company, are as follows:

Rice, cavans.....	249,354
Sugar, piculs.....	837,066
Copra, piculs.....	27,478
Desiccated Coconuts, cases.....	31,280
Tobacco, bales.....	93
Lumber, board feet.....	150,509
Timber, kilos.....	1,431,000



The freight revenue car loading statistics for four weeks ending March 27, 1937, as compared with the same period of 1936 are given below:

FREIGHT REVENUE CAR LOADING

COMMODITIES	NUMBER OF FREIGHT CARS		FREIGHT TONNAGE		PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OR DECREASE	
	1937	1936	1937	1936	Cars	Tonnage
Rice.....	791	551	10,713	6,699	240	4,104
Palay.....	233	112	2,882	1,252	121	1,630
Sugar.....	1,713	869	52,928	14,991	1,250	37,937
Sugar Cane.....	7,768	1,112	143,562	29,093	6,556	123,467
Copra.....	150	525	987	3,733	(375)	(2,746)
Coconuts.....	35	91	832	950	(8)	(118)
Nolava.....	128	66	3,967	1,365	82	2,592
Hemp.....	13	—	68	—	13	68
Tobacco.....	—	5	—	38	—	(38)
Lavender.....	35	8	123	—	17	106
Mineral Products.....	338	277	3,973	3,465	61	570
Lumber and Timber.....	96	156	2,278	3,788	(60)	(1,510)
Other Forest Products.....	19	11	79	197	(13)	(177)
Manufacturers.....	147	167	2,111	3,236	(39)	(415)
All others including L.C.L.....	2,759	2,827	17,128	20,229	(88)	(3,097)
Total.....	11,284	6,351	240,769	78,161	7,935	162,608

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Mountain Farmers

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(built from money earned in the mines) are promoting is superior. My criticism of the 'cban' is pragmatic rather than moral, and concerned with the present rather than the past; whatever one may think of its promiscuity—and one can see the subject fairly only through native eyes—it is a system which can endure only where there is no taint of venereal disease. Venereal disease was unknown to the Igorot until very recently (certainly unknown in modern times), and even now its risks are a closed book to much of the Mountain Province. The expected sequence is occurring. We have

more and more cases, all of them traceable to Baguio—again I should qualify: the Constabulary has spread its share, and I know of cases contracted in the new training camps. But the majority certainly originate in Baguio, while the 'cban' is a fertile field for disseminating the contagion. The virulence of some of these cases of gonorrhoea (not surprising, I suppose, in a people who have built up no degree of immunity) is ghastly. When you add to the picture the fact that the older people look on western theories of germs as arrant superstition and scorn any prophylactic practices, you can see the threat this single group of general diseases presents. Fortunately the Igorot can stand blunt speech and has no prudish reticence about

the facts of the body—some of my sermon topic in Besao would get me tarred and feathered at home!

"I must apologize for the length and weariness of this letter. I doubt if I have said anything that can be of value to you; I have let my typewriter ramble. But you have the same hope which I hold to, that these mountains may continue to be inhabited by the people who, against such formidable obstacles, have made a home on their steep hillside. I wish you could get here one of these days so that we might have a talk; Manila is too bustling—I like the remoteness, the quiet evenings, of Besao. You would see, I am sure, much to interest you."

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a message from
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