

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes

The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes expands steadily as a financial support for a number of important Commonwealth charities headed by the Anti-Tuberculosis Society whose sanatorium for care of perilous cases is in Sta. Mesa, Manila. It is a lottery, but there is sport in it with a wide public appeal, and there could probably be no more satisfactory means devised of providing funds badly needed for the charities these funds support. Few tickets find sale outside the country, traffic in the tickets is illicit in the United States, Japan is out of the question, other countries in the Far East have their own sweeps, so it falls out that for the present at least the Philippine sweeps is a local affair.

By this means, the public readily pays a sort of voluntary tax far above that it formerly paid by way of poll taxes for roads and public schools. The legislature is in charge of the law in the matter, and may when sweeps funds increase as they probably will, provide other public uses for the profits.

By courtesy of Auditor C. Ticman of the sweeps office, we have copies of the compiled data beginning with the first drawing and closing with the one in August. Here is what had been done with funds other than prize money and expenses:

Anti-Tuberculosis Society	P1,020,441
Amateur Athletic Federation	838,954
Associated Charities	517,000
Gota de Leche	22,000
Federation of Women's Clubs	26,000
Hospitals	227,347
Asociación de Damas Filipinas ..	70,000
Other charities	144,338

Total (not including August) .. P2,866,080

This derived from collections on seven sweeps summing P11,531,472. The August collections, that derive from sale of tickets, summed P1,906,439 and time in which the distribution of net proceeds will be made has not yet elapsed. Under the present law, the report says, for every peso received from ticket buyers some 16½ centavos goes to the seller as commission, 54 centavos go to prize funds, 21 centavos go to the charity fund, and 8½ centavos go for operating expenses. The seven sweeps prior to August turned nearly 25% of the total from tickets into the support of charities listed above, so it is evident that the management does more in this respect than the law requires.

The sweeps is a new institution. The first sweeps was held September 8, 1935, when the take was P975,332. The second was held December 22, 1935, when the take was P1,936,362. The third took place July 26, 1936, when the take was P1,948,372. Three in 1937, May 16, September 19, and December 19 summed a take of P5,123,783. Thus far this year two have taken place, the take on May 15 was P1,541,423 and that on August 21 was P1,906,439. The largest single take pertained to the sweeps of December 19, 1937 and was P2,033,231; no other had topped the two-million mark.

From proceeds of the first seven sweeps, 64½% or P8,683,798 was paid out in prizes. Two first prizes in the August sweeps were P100,000 each. Two second prizes were P50,000 each, two thirds, P25,000 each. Twenty-two fourth prizes were P5,000 each. Fifty fifth

prizes were P3,000 each. A hundred sixth prizes were P1,500 each, and 200 seventh prizes were P1,000 each. One special prize was P1,000. A so-called charity prize was P716, while 50 extra prizes were P346.06 each.

A full ticket costs 2 pesos, a dollar.

There is now a drop to small prizes and many of them: Eighth prizes numbered 1,199 of P100 each. Four approximation prizes were P1,000 each, 4 P500 each, 4 P250 each, 44 P100 each, and 100 P50 each, a total of 156 approximation prizes. Tickets whose last two digits were identical with the same two digits in the ticket winning the charity prize won P16 each and numbered 11,999.

Thus there were 12,984 prizes among 1,215,789 tickets tossed and drawn in the drums of chance, where it is seen the odds against winning were 94 to 1. Judge Servillano Platon of the Tayabas (province) court of first instance certifies as chairman of the sweeps board of judges that, the August drawing was "kosher" in all respects, and the public auditors certify the take, P2,026,826 from 1,215,789 tickets sold, the total distribution in prizes, P1,307,302.98, together with P506,706.58 set aside for the accredited charities already listed and P212,816.76 for expenses. The whole official report of the August sweeps is in dollars, and below the certifications appear advertisements of the December 1938 and February 1939 sweeps in the same money, making it clear that aim begins to be made toward the American sporting purse.

No little might come of this.

Two first prizes of P150,000 each are announced for December this year, two of P60,000 each for February next year, when under new legislation there will be six sweeps during the year or one every two months.

The sweeps office has a quarter-million pesos in fixed assets, chiefly the University Theater building on Taft avenue opposite the University campus that when remodeled for the sweeps offices and ready for occupancy will stand at about P300,000. The very purchase of this property for such a purpose indicates the permanency of this method of raising funds for public and quasi-public uses. Another considerable fixed asset is the mechanical equipment for effecting the drawings. Races are at the Sta. Ana track, and some revenue accrues to the sweeps administration from them, some P13,000 a meet, since the first seven brought P93,757 from this source.

Prizes estimated for December this year and February next year are based in expectations of P1,500,000 worth of tickets sold for each meet, which certainly seems conservative. There is wide patronage of the saints in connection with the purchase of tickets, while schools of parasites, mainly relatives and fellow townsmen, set upon the winners as soon as they are known. As weird an appeal to omniscience as is known was associated with the August drawing, a man in Leyte, who won a first prize, won with a ticket buried in a graveyard after incantatory ceremonies. Hunchbacks, of course, are the better patronized venders, while it is regrettable that children of the tenderest years are put to this employment in downtown Manila, where their treble appeals are pitiable and annoying. Some may dismiss this, saying *no gain without some loss*, others may hold that the sweeps administration should stop it. If the sweeps grows rich enough, perhaps all such children can be put to school.