FOREST—An Important Segment in the Philippine Economy

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Today, forests are a vanishing source of wealth in many parts of the world. Besides the economic losses in shortages of wood supply and far-reaching ill-effects from an eroded soil cover, replacement of forests by artificial planting requires many years of time and large expenditures of money.

We are most fortunate here in the Philippines to have our forest cover still largely intact. And this is due to *under* use rather than *over* use of these valuable resources. It is recognized that throughout Southeast Asia there is no country possessing a greater and more diversified forest wealth than is represented by the forest stands indigenous to the Philippines. The total volume of commercial timber in the Philippines has been estimated at 440 billion board feet and these native forests are made up of hundreds of tree species valuable for a wide variety of uses. What an opportunity for maintaining the sustained growth of these forests when we consider that under good forest management practices it has been calculated that upwards of 14 billion board feet of timber can be cut annually for an indefinite period without over-cutting this growing stock. Today, our forest drain in the Philippines, representing principally timber cut for domestic use and for export, is approximately a billion and quarter board feet per year or only 9 per cent of the amount that can properly be removed each year and still maintain these forests under high standards of management and production. Few nations in the world are so favorably situated as the Philippines in timber supply.

In the United States, we are fully aware of the great inroads that recent national emergencies—two World Wars—have made on our forest capital. The drain on our forests as fires, insects, lumber production, wood for industrial and farm uses, continues to reach an increasing large volume. More and more, in future years, will timber utilization in the United States be dependent on small-sized timber grown on a short rotation period and originating from natural and artificial restocking of cut-over forest lands. That great and seeming endless reservoir of old or original growth timber in the United States which was such an obstacle to land clearing operations by the early settlers two hundred years ago, has now diminished to comparatively small geographical patches throughout the country and by another generation or two will have become in large part only a memory. We are seeing the last of these majestic oaks, yellow poplars, pines and firs that could produce the wide, clear and select grades of lumber upon which so much of our prosperous lumber trade for many years has been based. You still possess in the Philippines a substantial proportion of this class of timber.

Development of the forest resources of the Philippines is an important part of the ECA. We do not wish to see repeated here a certain lack of planning that we experienced in the United States in those earlier days when forest exploitation was to "cut

out and get out." Rather, we want to encourage a strong public opinion appreciative of the forest wealth of this country and supported by a progressive program of "good forest housekeeping" that will contribute so much through the years to prosperity of the people.

It is felt that a forest products laboratory equipped with modern timber testing and research facilities for determining the working character of these native woods will go a long way toward placing these woods in a more favorable marketing position. Inquiries are coming in constantly from local and foreign sources as to the adaptability of our Philippine woods for particular fields of use. Such research as can be provided by this laboratory will stimulate new industries, large and small, and make for positive benefits through wider employment opportunity and larger financial earnings by such industries and the trade they generate. This forest products research program applies with equal force to secondary forest products, bamboo, rattan, natural gums, waxes, tannins, etc., all of which represent a high financial potential through research in stimulating business and trade. The overall program in building plans and equipment schedules for the laboratory are now well in hand and it is hoped by another year this institution will be on a functioning basis.

In the field of forest management, the MSA envisions an opportunity to work in close cooperation with the Bureau of Forestry on timber management programs for concession and other cut-over areas where the restocking of such lands with tree species of high recognized value is needed. Inspite of the abundance of our forest resources it is recognized that Nature should be given a helping hand through expansion of forest nurseries and reforestation so that selected varieties of trees not reproducing themselves naturally and abundantly can be established through planting on permanent forest lands to be administered by the Bureau. This could include large industrial plantations of our native Benguet Pine (*Pinus insularis*) on now non-productive forest lands to provide a softwood timber supply for wood pulp and paper manufacturing, as well as lumber products.

Consideration is to be given by MSA to the establishment of forest experiment stations in several parts of the nation in order that more accurate knowledge may be obtained on the growth, reproduction and silvical characteristics of our Philippine trees. Such studies require much time to make but are essential if forest management and production is placed on a firm foundation. A stock taking or inventory of the Philippine forest cover should also be made to determine the amount of standing stumpage by timber species, their geographical distribution throughout the country and their annual growth increment.

Behind any well-conceived forest management program for the forests of the Philippines stands the need of fire protection. In the mountain areas of Luzon and in Mindanao, fires during the dry season do much damage to forest plantations because of lack of proper facilities for prompt detection and means of suppression. This situation should be remedied through the procurement of suitable fire fighting tools and motorized equipment, also a training program for fire fighting crews.

The College of Forestry at Los Baños has had an enviable record in the preparation and training of professional foresters since its founding some forty years ago. American foresters have long had close association with this institution. Rehabilitation of the buildings at the College of Forestry so seriously damaged in the last days of the war is now an active project in the MSA program. Building plans have already been prepared and approved for the reconstruction of the main college building; a new administration building, a new dormitory, a seed house, three new faculty houses and a guest house. Construction of these build-

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ings is expected to get under way in the near future.

It is realized that the full effectiveness of the work of the Bur. of Forestry is in many ways handicapped through lack of sufficient appropriations. Travel allowances of field personnel are inadequate to safeguard properly the forests from illegal exploitation. Much timber is destroyed without financial benefit to the Government because of itinerant squatters on public forest lands. We in the MSA are cognizant of these conditions and wish to offer every assistance to the Bureau of Forestry in furthering their correction. The Bureau of Forestry has a large responsibility in serving as the official custodian for the protection and wise use and management of the forest wealth of this country. The effectiveness of that 'stewardship' has a most definite bearing on the Philippine economy both today and on down the years. This responsibility, it is believed, could very well be shared in greater degree with the public through special organized channels for dispensing information. The Bureau of Forestry has a "real story to tell" and one that with the help of a better informed public can go far toward alleviating financial anxieties concerned with the bureau's administration activities.

The secret of life is not to do what you like, but to like what you do.

—World Treasury of Proverbs

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If someone betrays you once, it's his fault. If he betrays you twice, its your fault.

—Rumanian Proverb

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He who marries might be sorry. He who does not will be sorry.

—Czechoslovakian Proverb

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material for compost. This has the advantage of the pile not to erode at the sides and scatter but the big drawback is the inconvenience of spading to blend the material and removing the humus once ready for use.

The temperature in the Philippines is fairly high throughout the years to favor the development within the pile of the organisms which are essential in good humus formation. The most important factor to control is moisture within the pile. The pile should be kept moist at all times, a condition which will not only favor the development of bacteria and other organisms but also encourage decomposition. During the rainy season, there is not much need of spraying except of course during the spell of prolonged dry weather. During the dry season, occasional spraying is necessary in order to keep the pile moist.