

- A strong argument against the use of Tagalog (Pilipino) in Philippine Schools.

## PILIPINO IN SCHOOLS

There are moves to make Pilipino the language of instruction in the first years of school. This is something that should not be done without concrete proof that our educational system will be improved. Some people mistake the waving of a flag with being right. Some people think that Pilipino, being something they have mastered in their political campaign speeches, is therefore a language truly broad and communicative; but the blunt truth is that it is not breadth they reveal but their limited brain size. Their use of a language rotates on small talk. The fact remains, if only we are allowed to see, hear and reason above the blare of the national anthem played by compulsion over loudspeakers, that Pilipino is much too parochial a language. When it comes to the mere fundamentals and beginnings of such diverse subjects as art, science, philosophy, economics, and so on, its vocabulary is much

too inadequate. Our nationalists and our Pilipino exponents will resent this statement, but there nevertheless remains the incontrovertible fact. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we have yet to see Pilipino used as a vehicle to express excitingly new ideas, highly technical innovations, or rich, imaginative literature. No significant work in Pilipino has yet been written and published in any field of learning.

At present there are studies existing to prove that even the use of the vernacular of the community where the school is in the first years of schooling has not advanced the learning capabilities of students as compared (in pilot studies in the same area) to students who learned English as a medium of instruction right from the start. It is difficult to talk about the effects of English as a medium of instruction in schools on the nation without defi-

nite specific studies, sociological and psychological. But there are nations extremely nationalistic such as Switzerland and Mexico, where a non-indigenous language has become the national tongue. One can hardly say that Jose Rizal was less nationalistic and less expressive in his "Ultimo Adios" simply because he chose his last words in Spanish.

What should be changed, to our mind, are the books in English used in many schools. Even if the medium

is English, it would be best that these primers be written by Filipinos, reflecting Filipino values and ideas. It is in this area where change and improvement is needed. Confusing un-Filipino values such as love for winter's snow or Western consumer goods, could be responsible for our so-called "blue-seal mentality." English could be more meaningful if our primary textbooks were written by Filipino writers and educators. — *By Alfredo Roces in Manila Times, June 18, 1968.*