

and failing to assert his rights... a teacher needs prestige, a good name, moral strength, a certain independence..."⁴

These things—prestige, dignity, a certain independence — the schoolmaster could not have, but he had to sacrifice his pride and go on teaching because "... I must make a living, as I have a mother to support, and I have yielded to my fate as a corpse is tossed about by the rolling waves."⁵

The present day teacher is much happier than the schoolmaster we have just presented. He is not only permitted but even required to use the dialect as the medium of instruction in the lower primary grades and as an auxiliary language in the upper grades. His tenure of office is protected by the Civil Service, and he is forbidden, not required, to use corporal punishment. He is comparatively better paid, although his present salary has not given him and his family a sufficient degree of financial security. Many of his kind still have to sacrifice their sense of dignity and go on teaching because they have a family to support!

The Noli's schoolmaster would find himself happier if he could return to life and to teaching in the present-day schools in the Philippines, but there are a few, fortunately vanishing, forces he would still have to contend with. There are still some parents who think instruction in their days was better than that of the present and who do not believe in soft pedagogy or in the use of the dialect. The Spanish curate is no longer there to make his life miserable and to threaten his security of tenure, but his place has been taken over by some politicians who make a sham of the merit system and make teachers toe the line or face the prospect of banishment to remote places, non-promotion, or persecution for electioneer-

⁴ Ibid p. 174

⁵ Ibid p. 176

ing after an election.⁶ And there are still a few old fashioned school officials, fortunately getting fewer and fewer each year, who interrupt their recitations and find fault with their methods in front of their classes; resent the mere attempt on their part to explain their own sides of a question; transfer them to undesirable stations ostensibly "for the good of the service" but actually due to political pressure or other non-valid reasons; often threaten them with poor efficiency ratings on an efficiency card which many of them have never been permitted to see since they entered the service; etc. This type of school officials have been gradually yielding to a more democratic one, but enough of them are still around to remind the schoolmaster of his unhappy days.

Perhaps the schoolmaster would be happy to find many of his ideas vindicated — the use of the dialect, (Tagalog) as the medium of instruction, the wisdom of which has been demonstrated by the Iloilo experiment; the adoption of functional materials; and the use of visual aids. But it might sadden him to find that the holding power of the schools, though improved, is still weak,⁷ and perhaps he would not be exactly happy to see the products of the new system — the teen-age gangsters in urban centers; the children who seem to have lost the traditional reverence for their elders; and the young people who have come to worship science to the extent of believing that they have no more use for God.⁸

The school master would certainly hate to see the Spanish curate restored to the position he occupied in his days, but he would probably realize that religion, which he once hated because he hated the man who stood for it, has its intrinsic value and its valid place in the education of the child.

⁶ Yay Marking, Lesson Plan for Politicians, Women's Magazine, September 13, 1957, p. 4.

⁷ Ibid p. 11

⁸ We Created God! U.P. Man Says — Headline, Sentinel, Manila, August 31, 1957.

Every Municipality Should Have A PHS

By Pedro T. Orata

(Second Installment)

1. Let's Have More, not Fewer, Public High Schools

IN THE previous article, I tried to show that closing public high schools that do not meet certain standards because of financial difficulties is not the solution to the "crisis in the public high schools." Such a policy will solve the problem by killing the patient. The operation will be successful but the patient dies as a result of it.

As I said, the only ones to profit from it would be the owners of private high schools to which the students will go after the public high schools are closed; furthermore, they will pay more for less education. They will pay, not only for the inferior education that they get, but also the profit of the private school owners who are in the business, not for education, but for the money that they can make on the students. They will get pure academic instruc-



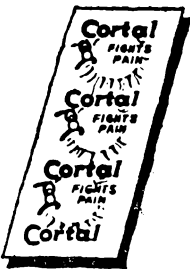
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tion, which is all that can be given with a very high ration between students and staff such as the case in the private high schools which, for more than three times as many schools and nearly twice as many students, employ the same number of teachers as the public high schools with much fewer students. The classes in the private high schools, for the most part, are held in over-crowded rented buildings in noisy environments, compared with the public high schools which, for the most part, have followed standards in such matters — such as requisite site and fairly adequate rooms located in good and quiet environments.

There are many other considerations than cost and quality of education. Close the public high schools and there will be more intellectual unemployment. Will the teachers prefer to be without jobs altogether or to go without vacation salary (or with delayed vacation salary) occasionally? It is true that many of them will probably be hired by the private schools, but will they be better off (or worse off) there? If the experience of my father-in-law who has been teaching in a private school in Urdaneta for several years is a fair example — he never received any vacation salary and oftentimes he and the other teachers did not get paid or got very little after the owner from Manila came and helped himself with the fees first — then, one has to think twice before jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

Then too, because the costs will be more, enrollment at the secondary level will decline, the consequence of which will be more youth out of school, greater social problem, and educational degeneration. And, as a result of the parents finding out that academic education does not pay, our present enthusiasm for education will gradually deteriorate until many will look at education, school or school teacher with suspicion if not disdain. And that would be a catastrophe indeed, and when we reach that stage, which is not remote, considering the very low quality of education offered in commercialized private secondary schools, the race between civilization and catastrophe will be decided in favour of catastrophe.

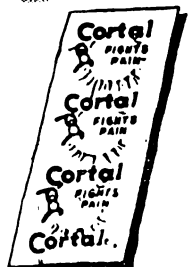
And, once again, the problem will be solved by killing the patient. We take great pride in the fact that Filipino parents are willing to go into all kinds of sacrifices in order to send their children to school. But, as Congressman Enverga told me a year ago, many parents are now skeptical about education especially in normal schools because after making the sacrifices, their children came home empty-handed and less able and willing to help on the farm than before. We must not underestimate the mentality of our people, or overestimate their enthusiasm for something that gives nothing in return but a headache. There are limits even to stupidity, and we are not stupid as a people.

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We must open more public high schools. Certainly, we must fight against any attempt to close the public high schools without a corresponding weeding out of private high schools whose curricula and standards of education are very much lower. For, upon what reasoning in the name of common sense do the proponents of the closure of public high schools base their claim that better standards of education could be obtained in schools operated for profit than in schools where the profit motive does not enter in at all? Certainly, a school with, say 1,000 students, can have a better standard of education if operated as a public enterprise than if established as money-making business, assuming that the sole support comes from tuition fees.

2. One Standard for Public and Private High Schools

If there is to be any closing of high schools — which I am not advocating — it should begin with the private schools. Standard for standard, I am quite willing to bet that, with very few exceptions, the majority of the private high schools would be closed before any of the public high schools. But there should not be double standards — one for the private high schools, which is very lax and flexible, and another for the public schools, which is stiff and inflexible.

I have never argued for lowering of standards, but I would fight to the last ditch any effort of injustice against helpless parents and students and in favour of profit-making school executives who are in the school business not primarily for educational service but for the money that they can make for themselves. By all means, let us raise the standards of education in both the public and private schools, but let us not kill the ones with the higher standards first or, put it this way, leave the ones with lower standards to stay.

The Director of Public Schools is right in his insistence upon good standards of education at all levels of education. Obviously, many public high schools are operating on deficit spending, which cannot last long. But, the solution is not to close such high schools, but to find ways and means to improve the finances so that standards can be maintained or improved. There are such means in our country with its unlimited resources and even funds being spent for less worthy causes. I shall deal with this in the next article, but in the meanwhile students and staff members in the public high schools should start organizing against any effort placed upon the closing of their schools. In a true democracy, such as ours is claimed to be, the people must rule, not overruled. I am very certain that it is the will of the people of the Philippines that secondary education should be universal, not selective. And it can be.

3. A Public High School in Each Town Possible

I am not for the closing of any high school — public or private. I am for maintaining and improving existing ones and opening still more until every boy and girl of secondary school age is given the opportunity to develop their capacities and abilities to the utmost. This can be done, as it is being done in many countries, some of which I have already mentioned. Following are only a few of the ways that I can think of at the moment. Others on the spot can name more, and it is hoped that this series of articles will stimulate interest enough among our teachers, students, parents, and other lay groups. The high school problem like the educational problem, is always with us and it is everybody's duty to help find an adequate solution.

First, Dr. Aldana suggested that all the present public high schools need as subsidy from the National Government is ₱4,000,000 a year. That is a little amount compared with the ₱120,000,000 in the national budget for education. And yet, it will make considerable difference in educational standards in our 350 public high schools, and furthermore, that little amount will save from half going to waste the 120 million pesos which are spent to maintain elementary classes. That amount should be doubled, in fact, in order to open 350 more public high schools, and it will mean only ₱8,000,000. We spend ₱10,000,000 in order to have a bi-election, with is an unnecessary expense, not to mention many other undesirable effects of the practice of having a general election every two years instead of once every four years. But even without doing away with the bi-election, it is a mighty poor financial officer, who cannot find a way to save or provide such little amount which is only chicken feed, to use a term that reminds us of the occupation when we were all richly poor — loads of money that bought little.

Second, if no funds could be found from unappropriated amounts or by cutting down unnecessary expenditures, new sources of funds should be devised. The Public Schools Foundation Act of 1955 has been suggested after a study of the economic and financial conditions of the Philippines by a Unesco expert, an American, Dr. J. Cayce Morrison. Its purpose is "to give the people of the respective provinces, chartered cities, municipalities and municipal districts a more direct opportunity through local governments, to participate in the improvement of their public schools." The Foundation programme will restore to these local entities taxing powers which were taken away from them by the infamous Educational Act of 1940. It is patterned after modern school legislation in progressive countries, and it should work even more successfully in the Philippines because of our traditional attitude towards education. In 1947, the people of the Philippines in thousands of open forums in every nook

and corner of the country, voted in favour of more taxes "provided that they will be exclusively for the maintenance and improvement of the schools."

Third, I would improve the curriculum of the secondary schools so as to provide opportunities for gainful work experience. By subsidizing the secondary schools with little money they can be made self-supporting in the long run. The subsidy may be in the form of land, equipment, and revolving fund for capital to establish work projects. Given the very poor conditions of our homes and communities, our roads and bridges, not to mention sanitary facilities, the more than one million students and would-be students in our secondary schools — public and private — can be mobilized to make the necessary improvements if they are paid good money for the work. Besides earning, when they are learning, they will acquire habits of work, thinking, and thrift which will prepare them, better than all the facts that they can learn from books, for better living in whatever homes and communities they may find themselves after school. There are examples to show that this can be done not only abroad but at home also. We can learn from the experience of others and we must learn from our own experience.

We now budget for the elementary schools in the huge amount of ₱120,000,000 a year; for the institutions of higher learning — the University of the Philippines, Philippine Normal College, Philippine College of Commerce, the C.L.A.C., the many agricultural colleges all over the Philippines, not to mention others — we probably spend a total of from ₱25,000,000 to ₱50,000,000 a year. Why, in the name of *adequate and complete educational system* as provided in the Constitution of the Philippines, is the middle stage—the secondary level — not given even one centavo. Are not the young people Filipinos, and is not their education important enough for the Central Government to provide and maintain at a high standard consistent with the value that such education could mean to the social amelioration of the Philippines? Why is the secondary school the most neglected institution of the Philippines, when the fact is that in most countries more public funds are given to it than the institutions of higher learning.

4. Mobilize Public Opinion for More Public High Schools

Why? Why? These are the questions that our students and teachers in the public high schools and the parents that support such schools should be asking during this election campaign. Let me suggest a way to make our voice heard by our President, the members of Congress, and our voters everywhere.

Let public high schools organize in every province to demand, by due and orderly process of petition, that the Executive and the Congress provide

funds to subsidize the public high schools in amounts that should be adequate to supplement what the parents can pay to help maintain such schools.

In particular, the student council of each public high school should organize a meeting of all the students in which the facts be aired so as to show the need for help, the possible sources of funds, and the determination of the students to continue their studies. Then, a resolution to be signed by the students and their parents be sent to the President and to every Senator and Congressman in the province.

Here is a chance for the National Federations of PTA's to organize local PTA associations all over the Philippines on behalf of more adequate financial support of secondary education by the provinces and municipalities, and of financial aid to such schools from the central government. If the PTA's all over the country pass resolutions in support of the move and send to the President and members of the Congress, I am most certain that action will be taken to provide the funds. Our public officials are very sensitive to such public demands, especially from students and parents.

Then, I would suggest that public high school teachers organize in the same manner and make a similar approach. This is one time they can and should write to the powers that be about the matter and suggest what can be done to solve the high school crisis.

We have been very successful in getting appropriations and funds for extension classes through this method — "No money for high schools, no vote next time." If the Congressmen and Senators listened to the pleas of parents on behalf of little children, they will be more apt to listen to them speaking on behalf of young people who would soon be old enough to vote. If the young people, themselves, make their voice heard, too, I can well imagine the consequences.

If we organize this year in the manner I have suggested, I believe that we will get funds for high schools in the next budget or that measures will be passed to raise the necessary funds.

We have the money to spend on unnecessary things like a bi-election for which ₱10,000,000 is set aside by Congress. There is money to establish more colleges. There is money to finance industries, which must depend upon an educated labour force to succeed, why isn't there money for the education and training of one million youth who are old and strong enough and willing enough to work and help develop the country economically if given longer and better training? Let the students and parents speak their minds, and the money will be provided by the Congress, which never failed to do so when pressed to do so by organized public opinion.

Concluding Statement

Should public high schools be closed for lack of funds? I have tried in the two articles to analyse this problem, to give my answer to it, and to show the reasons for my position. The latest trend in the world today being to make secondary education universal, it would be a backward step for the Philippines to close the municipal high schools, which are maintained by tuition fees and contributions from the parents, on the ground that such fees and contributions are not sufficient to maintain high standards of instruction and to pay teachers' salaries.

Such a step would be unfair to the students, whose schools will be closed, because they will either have to stop or continue their studies in the private schools where they will pay more for less education. Besides, the curriculum in the private secondary schools being predominantly if not purely academic, to distinguish it from the general curriculum in the public high schools which is 25 to 40 per cent vocational, to place the 200,000 public high school students in the private schools would aggravate still more the already precarious situation that we face because of bookish training that the majority of our student population now receive in schools, colleges and universities.

The only ones to profit from the closing of municipal public high schools would be the educational businessmen who are in trade primarily for the profit

that they can make from the students. It would be tragic for both the young people and the country to close the public high schools and leave the private high schools, the great majority of which have lower standards to offer to continue operating for profit only to their owners.

It is ironic, to say the least, that while in other countries, England, France, Thailand, to name only a few, secondary education is free and compulsory (in England and France, within a short time), meaning the Government assumes all financial and other responsibilities, in the Philippines where the parents are willing to pay for such education and even put up buildings on sites purchased by them, the Government which 'pays not a single centavo for secondary education threatens to close public high schools which the parents are unable to maintain according to standards prescribed by it. The very least that the Government can do in the circumstances, it seems to me, is to aid such high schools, being thankful that the parents of the school children are willing to foot most of the bill.

The fact is that there is money to aid even double the number of public high schools now, and I daresay even including the private high schools whose counterparts elsewhere receive such aid. The Congress will, no doubt, provide it if public opinion is mobilized, as in the past, in favour of national aid at least to public secondary schools. They never failed before, and they will not fail this time.

There are no idle rumors. Rumors are always busy.

—Irving Hoffman

Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you're doing, but no one else does.

—Bandleader Phil Harris

I don't think there is a single person in the world who doesn't covet freedom and peace, but those of us who work for freedom or peace must think of it not only for us but also for others.

—Ichiro Hatoyama
(Prime Minister of Japan)

If people in each village worked in cooperation and unison, no miserable person would be found in it.

—Acharya Vinoba Bhave
(Indian land reform leader)