

"The Teachers' Melting Pot"

By Carlos G. Beltran

NESTLED closely among the pine-clad hills of Baguio and exclusively set off by itself in an atmosphere that bears the lasting imprint and unerring marks of the hand that moulds the young mind, is the Baguio Vacation Normal School...an educational mecca come summer time. Nowhere in the country than at the Teachers Camp is there an educational institution that offers unlimited opportunities for personal growth, professional advancement, and physical rejuvenation while giving life and substance to the tenets of group dynamics and social competence within its folds.

The Teachers Camp has emerged to be a perennial melting pot of rich personal and social contacts, a brimming reservoir of progressive educational ideas, and a proving ground of dynamic trends to improve the competencies of the teacher...to make him a better and more effective community school leader. 'Tis here where teachers from diverse parts of the country meet on a common ground, fired by identical purposes and intents, share the same roof above their heads and rub elbows in almost every endeavor — in a delightful but highly routinized cycle.

Here is the teachers' haven where barriers, customs, and traditions created by distance are quickly broken down; where the rank and file is not clearly pronounced and where demarcation lines with respect to dialects and geographical divisions are never magnified...for each is a brother to the other in the interest of the teaching profession. Living and working together at its functional best promotes the mutual exchange of ideas, not found in books but gleaned from the vast field of experience...where each imbibes from the other, the beautiful and inspiring, and make these a permanent part of our heritage as Filipino teachers.

The Teachers Camp is more of the classroom teacher's world, not alone in number and composition but even in the make-up; though there is a liberal sprinkling of school supervisors and administrators within its folds. The long-forgotten teacher, so oft taken for granted, finds his rightful place not through vociferous clamor or assertion but by sincere recognition — where his views and convictions are very much a part of every deliberation. Here, he speaks out his heart and mind; assumes greater freedom to dis-

sect and analyze vital matters that have a definite bearing on his chosen task...a far hue-and-cry from his traditional counterpart who swallows everything dished out to him in the matter and manner of "pre-fab" thinking and planning!

For the first time, the average classroom teacher meets supervisors on an equal plan of thinking; where rank distinctions invoke respect but not "sacred" privileges nor the compelling voice of authority. In such a set-up, where each has some stake to share with and partake of and where mutual cooperative effort is stimulated, there can be no place for "roaring lions" and the proverbial "spineless jellyfishes".

The six-week stint at the Teachers Camp is truly an eye-opener as it is replete with novel experiences and a taste of truly democratic principles given functional application...not just dinned into the ears and rendered lip-service. Where the common weal is involved, no one is above comment; data pin-pointing camp conditions, suggestions, and personal as well as group reactions embodied in evaluation sheets find their way into the office of the Camp Director or channeled into that of the Superintendent. Where there is no intelligent appraisal of facts, reflecting the pulse and tide of public opinion, can there be hope for better things to come; not in the manner of anything given free without the asking...a hand out. With a taste and sampling of these little concessions, the teacher returns to the field — more enlightened, awake, an eager participant than ever before.

The Teachers Camp can claim the singular pride of having top officials of the Bureau of Public Schools at the helm, who are considered authorities themselves along their respective lines. An interesting facet of instruction are the resource persons enlisted to shed further light and elucidation on the different aspects of the courses, who are drawn from the ranks of both foreign and local experts and specialists. The faculty, itself, is select having been drawn from all over the country after a careful and thorough screening. Thus, with qualified and competent guidance, the teacher draws heavily from tried and tested sources in an effort to gain a clearer insight and perspective of the goals in the classroom, in the community, and even in life, itself.

One significant fact is that the Philippine Association of School Superintendents (PASS) holds its annual convention every summer in the Teachers Camp. The discussions and deliberation of educational policies and issues and the inter-change of views on a high level and plane of planning and perusal affords the teachers a critical insight and grasp of present day problems, issues, and trends in education.

As a whole, after the summer term at the Teachers Camp is over, the teacher is suffused with many

new experiences, new trends that couldn't fail to elicit the attention of the traditional, close association with people whose ideas and views could mean anything from the bizarre and conventional to the outspoken and radical. He goes back to his assignment better equipped than ever, more enlightened and refreshed amidst an invigorating climate and environment...a well-blended conglomeration of fruitful influences and experiences...all fused into a balanced personal and professional outlook!

The Future and Our Constitution

By **Claro M. Recto**

WE OWE it to the initiative and laudable consistency of the Philippine Lawyers' Association, that the commemoration of the adoption of our Constitution has become a recognized ritual at which once a year we publicly render to this great historic document the tribute of our conscious veneration and renewed faith. A little over a month ago, more exactly, on February 8, last, we commemorated with appropriate ceremonies all over the country the 22nd anniversary of the Supreme Law of the land.

Our unflinching devotion to that great instrument stems from a deep-seated conviction that the free and ordered life of our nation depends upon its faithful observance and the preservation of the principles it consecrates and the spirit it embodies. Without its orderly processes and guarantees, its discerning allocation of governmental authority, and its calculated system of checks and balances, it would be difficult, not to say impossible, for our people to have and maintain a truly representative government, or, having chosen it and entrusted it with power, to protect themselves from its deteriorating into an irresponsible and tyrannical oligarchy.

And yet our Constitution, or any constitution for that matter, cannot work miracles. Its lofty declaration of principles, its wise commands and injunctions, are not the open sesame to all the promised treasures of a republican regime, nor a magic formula which by mere fiat will restore youth and vigor to a decrepit polity. It is an instrument, noble, it is true, in its origin and purpose, but a very human thing, and it can only attain validity and dynamism with popular consciousness, faith and militancy.

A few years ago I read in an American magazine that the original documents containing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were transferred from the Library of the United States Congress to the National Archives Building. The editor of the magazine, after reporting that a military escort and a military band had attended them, observed: "How uncomplicated it looked, this physical act of guarding our greatest treasures! And how serene," he continued, "life would be if the essence of the documents could be guarded so easily, so precisely, and with such gay props as bagpipes and such exact ones as machine guns! Ah, liberty," the magazine editor concluded, "you look so simple crossing town!"

We are perhaps in a clearer position. The war destroyed the original of the Constitution, and we are free from any confusion between the historic document itself, as a treasured possession and essence it once contained. It is only the spirit of the great charter over which we must stand guard in order to preserve its purity and integrity.

Yet we too may regard that spirit to be too simple a thing, just a matter of bureaucratic routine, adorned with good intentions and vehement protestations of loyalty to the ideals of freedom. We may grow to believe that the Constitution will work on us like grace from heaven, like a guardian angel, benevolent and detached, leading us not into temptations of personal vainglory and unbridled love of power, and delivering us from all the evils of misgovernment.

And yet such is not the case, for when the people no longer agree on the necessity of living under the