

Forestry Problems of Oriental Misamis

By

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When Atty. Floreindo called at my Office and invited me to be your Guest Speaker today, I told him that I am now too old to make speeches. But when he told me that there would be singing, a free meal and the possibility of your cooperation, then I answered that to disseminate forestry knowledge to our people, I would not forego such an invitation.

Today, we are faced by a great problem in forestry. Our forest which once we believed to be inexhaustible is being cut by *kaiñgineros* and squatters in such proportion, that, if the practice is not stopped on time, it will result in greater calamity to our country. The present personnel of the Bureau of Forestry is not sufficient to cope with this work, and it is believed that it is the duty of every civic-minded citizen to help so that the destruction to our forest could be minimized and its effect would not be felt by our people.

The province of Oriental Misamis and the City of Cagayan de Oro are not an exception to this wanton destruction. Although we can still say we are yet on the credit side from an economic point of view, but if this destruction is not stopped it will not be long before we will be on the red, that is, our remaining forest will be less than what will be actually needed to balance our forestry and agricultural needs. Today, you will notice, if you ride on a boat entering the Cagayan de Oro port, that on the west side of the province, the island is yellow and only

patches of green are visible. In this area the forest has long been cut and the soil is already marginal or sub-marginal for agriculture; this condition will require more care and work to enable the inhabitants to eke out a living. In fact, if one has to stay in this place, he will notice that the climate is at the extreme, the flood swift and strong, drought common, and soil erosion when it rains terrific, and the people are not so progressive as those of the eastern side of the province where the forest is yet in many places untouched. In this side, the climate is tempered, flood is not as swift, drought is an exception, and soil erosion is not bad. The people are progressive and contented because their crops yield good harvest. The island of Camiguin, because of the method of cultivation of the people, is always green. Had it not been for the eruption of *Hibok-hibok*, it would have remained the Paradise Island of the South which once it was.

The following are figures which may make you drowsy but ought to be known by the members of this internationally well-known Club, notwithstanding the fact that many of us do not know the area of our own province.

Oriental Misamis and the City of Cagayan de Oro have total land area of 391,681 hectares. Of these, 162,549.87 hectares have been classified as alienable and disposable, 8,814.10 were established as timber lands, 2,994.60 as communal forests, 1,224.45 as forest reserves, and 102 as communal pas-

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tures. Of the remainder, 215,995.98 hectares which are unclassified, 78,743 hectares were granted to 23 timber licensees, 9,166 hectares to 56 pasture permittees, 2268 hectares to 604 special use permittees and the balance of 125,877.98 hectares is yet undisposed or inaccessible.

The timber licensees in the province have a capital investment of over ₱3,000,000.00 and have cut 233,174.13 cubic meters of timber and paid the amount of ₱250,678.58 for forest charges. There are four sawmills operating in the province and they have produced 7,024,025 board feet of lumber which has a market value of approximately ₱1,404,800.00. These licensees besides giving income to the government have been absorbing thousands of laborers who, otherwise, would have been unemployed.

The total income of the government from the forest in this province last fiscal year is ₱424,310.19 while the expenses of the Bureau of Forestry for the same period is only ₱45,921.37.

So much about the income. Let me bring to your attention the work of the Bureau of Forestry which, though not known by everybody, will, in affecting the maintenance of the necessary forestry and agriculture balance, also affects us vitally. Sufficient forest cover has to be maintained to counterbalance the opening of wider fields for cultivation so as not to affect climate, rainfall, flood, the aesthetic view, as well as wild life. In short, agriculture and forestry must go hand in hand if we are to progress economically and live in comfort.

The people of Cagayan de Oro have always been complaining of water shortage. Although the Malasag Reservoir is too small and could not catch up with the increase of population of the City, there would have been not only sufficient but more water if the forest which we had planted in 1927 at the expense of the then municipality of Cagayan had not been cut and burned. We have tried to protect this forest but the best we could do is not enough. Hence, it was found

necessary to request this Club to lead in the information or educational campaign for the protection of the forest around the Malasag Reservoir.

It is our duty to be vigilant in the conservation, protection and wise use of our forest resources but this is difficult of attainment without the help and cooperation of the people. I hope that with your assigned mission of service above self, you would help us to educate our people in the importance of the forest so that we of the present generation may with pride and satisfaction transmit to the future generation this resource unhampered and undiminished.

Before closing, I would like to bring to your attention the Proclamation No. 63, of the President of the Philippines, declaring September 26 to October 2, 1954 as Forest Conservation Week. I hope I shall not be imposing too much on this Club proverbially known for its courtesy, liberality and generosity, by suggesting that it sponsor the First Conservation Week in this province in consonance with the Proclamation No. 63. By so doing, it would be rendering a great service to the country and for which the future generation would be grateful.

Great things never do really happen to anyone; that is, the great things always come in shoals of countless little things, which look insignificant atoms, as we pass through them, and only seem a shoal when we have passed beyond them.

—Mrs. Charles

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Each day is like a furrow lying before us; our thoughts, desires, and actions are the seed that each minute we drop into it, without seeming to perceive it. The furrow finished, we commence upon another, then another, and another; each day presents a fresh one, and so on to the end of life... sowing ever sowing. And all we have sown springs up, grows, and bears fruit, almost unknown to us... Is there not a thought in this that should make us reflect?

—Charlotte M. Yonge

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Nothing comes by chance, for, in all the wide universe, there is absolutely no such thing as chance. We bring whatever comes. Are we not satisfied with effects, the results? The thing then to do is to change the causes.