

Education and Community Improvement

By Pedro T. Orata

Some Basic Principles of Economic Development

NOWADAYS the man of action is listened to more than the man of words. This is as it should be. One successful demonstration is worth more than a thousand theories which are still to be tested and implemented. If one one-hundredth of what we know about scientific agriculture were put into practice by our two million farmers, we would be self-sufficient in rice, and would have enough milk for our children. There would be no malnutrition in a country so rich with natural resources such as ours. What happened in poultry since the war is proof enough of this. We have enough eggs and chicken meat because a man of action in Santa Maria, Bulacan, went to work to apply what he had read in books and pamphlets about poultry, and we have since been following his example. Margate did this in rice culture, but we are still hesitating in using his methods in spite of the encouragement by the Bureau of Agricultural Extension.

This is by no means an indictment of theory. By the nature of things and of man theory must always precede practice, even though in some cases practice was ahead of theory. Action without basis in sound principle is blind and may be worse than inaction.

In the field of economic development, which is foremost in our minds today, we are apt to forget fundamental principles. We tend to act first and think afterwards, or not think at all. We make decisions by "ad hoc" methods. No doubt, this approach has its advantages, but a reasonable combination of sound reasoning and vigorous application is the best formula to follow.

In this article, attention is drawn to a number of fundamental principles of economic development, using as a guide a thoughtful article by a well-known student of the subject, Professor H. Belshaw, Victoria College, New Zealand, who was formerly Director of the Rural Welfare Division of the Food and Agr. Organization of the United Nations. In writing on the subject "Some Social Aspects of Economic Development in Under-developed Countries in Asia" (*Civilisations*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1954), Mr. Belshaw calls attention to some of the dangers of the common if not usual approaches to the problems of economic development, which fail to take into consideration the sense of values and state of development of the people. Among these dangers are the following:

1. Failure to realize that economic development is a social, if not by and large a moral, process, because it depends for its success on the attitudes of mind of people of a society, whether they have the propensity to work, save and invest, and whether their social relations, institutions or forms of organization are generally in favour of these traits. To the extent that these traits are absent or under-developed, the initial problem is not economic but educational in nature.

2. Failure to realize that there must be sufficient identity of interest among the people in support of both objectives, and the means or processes of achieving them, if economic development is to be promoted. This means that, to be successful, approaches to economic development must first of all encourage and stress voluntary participation of the people, both in making and implementing decisions and in self-help and mutual help.

3. Failure to realize that people in a society must want economic development sufficiently to pay the price needed in terms of the modification in existing attitudes, institutions and relationships, otherwise the effect of economic development measures would be feeble unless they are imposed upon the people by autocratic and dictatorial methods which would, in the end tend to defeat the purposes of economic development.

4. Failure to realize that, as a peace programme, economic development requires attention to the process as much as to the end result. For, it is not solely higher consumption or higher material standard of living to which people aspire, but also satisfying conditions of work, and positive opportunities for self-expression. "It requires, for example, minimum labour standards in factory employment, reform of land tenure and usury in the villages, and provision through credit of the means for an approach through self-effort to the higher consumption levels and satisfying conditions of work aspired to, as well as more capital and better technology. Equally, it requires integrity and stability in government, and agencies to enabling the people, especially the villagers, to participate actively in making decisions on programmes directed to their own benefit and in implementing them."

5. Failure to realize that, in any society, there are persons who, while pausing as champions of the common people and urging aid — national or international — to combat poverty, disease, ignorance or even communism, are in reality practising blackmail and have proved adept in diverting funds to their own purposes.

6. Failure to realize that more is required than feeling of pride in going it alone; economic development cannot succeed or even gather strength in a society where people are under-fed, malaria ridden, exploited, unorganized or cynically mistrustful of their leaders. Better nutrition and health improve the energy and efficiency of the workers and their propensity to make innovations or to accept them. Education extends the horizons of knowledge and the area of receptivity to new ideas. Land reform and other institutional changes may improve both the incentive and the resources available for the fuller development and expression of latent potentialities of the people.

7. Failure to realize the value of integrated and multi-purpose approaches. "This does not mean that everything can be attempted at once, but rather that the minimum necessary supporting or complementary measures must be undertaken for the success of any given approach. It will be futile to improve agricultural techniques if the malaria ridden population cannot apply them. On the other hand improved agriculture is necessary so that health measures can be afforded."

8. Failure to realize that, while it is necessary to awaken new wants, it will be dangerous to do so un-

less the means to satisfy them are made available or that the people have both the will and the competence to acquire the same.

9. Failure to realize that "as long as a desk strewn with files is the fall-mark of status, and field work with its dirty hands and dirty boots has low prestige value, success in implementing (economic) development plans will be limited."

10. The mere provision of services is not enough. "The active participation of villagers, both individually and as groups, is required." While in the initial stages leadership may have to come from the outside, "the primary object of awakening technical consciousness and providing channels for technical and other forms of aid, is to promote more active and more efficient village participation."

These "dangers" necessarily overlap. The only point to itemizing them is to call attention to the many and varied elements that are involved which are often overlooked because of the tendency to oversimplify the problem of economic development, and to show that social attitudes and values, customs and habits of work and thinking, which are not easily changed, are powerful deterrents or handicaps — in some cases they may act in the opposite direction — to measures of economic development.

In the next article, an attempt will be made to show the implications of the foregoing discussion for the problems of economic development in the Philippines and to suggest ways and means of avoiding the various dangers that have been mentioned.

The Constitution and Education

By Gregorio C. Borlaza

THE Constitution of any country is the source of its strength and stability. A government becomes stable or shaky in proportion as the governed regard their Constitution as a venerable document which must be respected and defended at all times.

The Code of Citizenship and Ethics (Executive Order No. 217) which is displayed in thousands of classrooms all over the land, enjoins the people to "Respect The Constitution which is the expression of your sovereign will." And yet, how empty must this injunction seem to our pupils, and how futile must the efforts of our teachers to teach it be, as long as our schools have to violate the Constitution in the very process of teaching the pupils to respect it!

One of the most fundamental educational precepts in the Constitution of the Philippines is that found in Sec. 5, Article XIV, which provides *for at least free primary instruction*. Are we giving our school children free primary instruction?

In some progressive countries of the world free education is understood to include free bus service, free milk, and even free lunch. It is of course unreasonable to expect these in the Philippines which is a comparatively poor country. We may even excuse the fact that the parents of the primary pupils in this country are often asked to contribute money, labor, and materials for the acquisition of school sites and for the construction and repair of school build-