

# Forestry in Panay

INTERVIEW WITH VICENTE GOBUYAN, PROVINCIAL FORESTER OF ILOILO, OVER STATION DYRI

Sunday, February 1, 1953—8:30-9:00 P.M.

Interviewer:—Mr. J. Morris Forbes of the Rotary Club, Iloilo.

Interviewer:—Mr. Gobuyan, what is the total revenue of the government from forest products for the entire Philippines; for Iloilo Province?

Mr. Gobuyan:—The total forest revenue for the entire Philippines runs to around P6,000,000.00. Out of this amount only about P2,500,000.00 is spent annually by the Bureau of Forestry in the operation and maintenance of its offices and projects all over the country. The Forest revenue of the province of Iloilo is only about P10,720.00 annually.

Q—What forest products abound in the island of Panay? In what region or regions are they located?

A—In the island of Panay we have timber as the principal forest product; and rattan, vines, firewoods, charcoal, dyebarks, etc. as minor forest products. Extensive stand of timber could still be found in westernmost parts of the municipalities of Lambunao and Calinog, province of Iloilo, and in the southwestern parts of the municipalities of Malinao and Libacao, province of Capiz.

Q—How many board feet of lumber is used for building construction in Iloilo annually?

A—The province of Iloilo including the city of Iloilo consume about 9,600,000 board feet of lumber and timber annually for building construction. The estimated value of this amount of materials is P2,160,000.00.

Q—Where do most of the lumber imported in Iloilo come from? Is it true that lumber coming from Mindanao is of poor quality?

A—Lumber imported in Iloilo comes mostly from the provinces of Negros Occidental, Surigao, Agusan and Lanao. Practically lumber of the same species from all over the Philippines are of the same quality, texture and durability. They differ in this regard when some are gathered from immature tree and others from mature tree, (speaking of the same species of lumber, for example Negros Yacal and Surigao Yacal).

Q—Into how many classes is lumber divided? Please give examples for each class, Mr. Gobuyan?

A—Our known commercial species of lumber in Philippines are classified into four groups, namely;

First group—Species of Narra, Ipil, Yacal and Molave fall under this group.

Second group—Under this group are the Guijo, Banaba, Makaasim, Narek, etc.

Third group—We have under this group the species of Apitong, Red lauan, Tangile, etc.

Fourth group—Some of the species falling under this group are White lauan, Bagtikan, Almon, etc.

Q—Can your office cope with the work of inspecting and checking the forest and forest products in your district?

A—Our district which covers a territory of about 530,449 hectares, has only 9 personnel. This means that each personnel

has to cover about 60,000 hectares of territory to inspect and check our existing forest, forest lands and forest products in transit. Our present force is inadequate to cope with our forestry work, but we are trying to do the best we could with the cooperation of other local government official and private individuals interested in forestry.

Q—Where in the island of Panay are there still public lands or forest available for concessions?

A—There are still wide areas of virgin forests in the interior or mountains of Calingog, Iloilo, and Libacao, Capiz. These forested areas may be applied for concession, but only it would require a big investment of capital to extract timber for commercial purposes from these areas.

Q—Can you give us Mr. Gobuyan, an idea how profitable the lumber industry is?

A—Under a good system of managing the business, lumber industry is profitable indeed. To give an example—one cubic meter of timber when manufactured into lumber will give around 250 board feet of sawn lumber; the present market value of 250 board feet lumber is about ₱45.00. The estimated total cost of production—starting from cutting, logging, manufacturing, marketing, and forest charges fee, of one cubic meter of timber, ranges from ₱23.00 to ₱25.00. There is therefore a margin of ₱20.00, as profit, for every cubic meter of timber converted into lumber.

Q—What reforestation work or project is your office undertaking in the island of Panay?

A—The Bureau of Forestry is now actually undertaking reforestation project works in the municipality of Dingle, Iloilo and in the municipalities of Sibalum and San Remegio, Antique.

Q—Mr. Gobuyan, what encouragement does your office to the people to engage in forest products industry?

A—The Bureau of Forestry does encourage lumber industry in the way that it helps advertise our lumber products and look for market locally and abroad. It is also instrumental in protecting our lumber trade abroad. The bureau is conducting extensive research work, on the most efficient method of manufacturing lumber in order to eliminate as much as possible wastes, resulting from the process of manufacturing. It is also finding means to utilize such wastes—as sawdust, slabs, and even barks, into articles of commercial value.

Q—What percentage of the lumber business is in the hands of the Filipinos; to Chinese; and to other aliens? Please enlighten us on this matter, Mr. Gobuyan?

A—Our lumber industry branches out into three distinct phases, namely:

- (1) The production, which is almost entirely in the hands of the Filipinos and Americans;
- (2) The distribution and remanufacturing, which are dominated by aliens;
- (3) The retail marketing, 99% of which is in the hands of aliens, mostly Chinese capitalists.

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