

Little Gods That Starve

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"It takes a week more before we receive our salary for this month, and there are but a few centavos left for family expenses." "I cannot figure out what I will do with my son in college asking money for his fees when there are still seven days to count before we receive our salary." "My brother came home for vacation a couple of days ago purposely to ask for money to cover up rentals for his books, but what could I give?"

These are a few of the remarks often heard from teachers a few tormenting days before the end of the month. A week or so after pay day, one would hear them say, "I paid the amount of ₱50.00 for my child who is sick in hospital" or "Half of my salary was used to cover up my debts last time."

Modesty aside, it is safe to say that teachers who should live decently to command the respect of the populace and his pupils and who should go to school with appropriate attire and live up to certain standards are living with an income barely sufficient to make both ends meet. Thanks to the resourcefulness and initiative which in him were traits developed during student days or during the trying days of the Japanese occupation, teachers have learned to "do

things on the side."

With the ravages of war inflicted upon our native land, the problems confronting a teacher nowadays are ten times more than his problems six years ago. Classroom handicaps such as books, devices and the like are of secondary importance as adjustments could be made so as to lighten the daily task of teaching. His major problem is how he could possibly budget his meager earning in order to meet all his needs and cover up all expenditures. With the present high prices of commodities, it is almost unbelievable how an average classroom teacher would be able to squeeze his pocket in order to carry him through in a month's time.

The teachers' problem on financial status is so far bearable, but it is feared it might get more acute in the next few years. This is not to undermine the far-sightedness of our law-makers to take up measures for the good of the masses, but what if they would deem it right and proper to decrease the monthly bonus or cancel it entirely for "economy's" sake? It would not be so bad if the cost of living would then return to pre-war level but what if not? What would the "forgotten public servants" do?

Only God Knows.

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