



#### AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETARY INVESTIGATES BASILAN SQUATTERS

Basilan City was host to Honorable Jaime N. Ferrer, Undersecretary Agriculture and Natural Resources, last week. He was sent post-haste by President Magsaysay to investigate the complaints of some 100 squatters of this City as contained in a telegram of Atty. F. Dianala Jo who represents the complaining squatters to the President dated March 13, 1956. Secretary Ferrer came to Basilan City on Tuesday, March 20, 1956 on the President plane. Accompanied by Engineer Erling Foss, of Denmark, he landed at Latuan airstrip at noon. He was met and welcomed by the personnel of the local Forestry Office led by District Forester Jose R. Claveria.

He got acquainted with the squatters problem and condition in a 2-hour meeting he held with all members of the Screening Committee of Basilan City created under Executive Order No. 116. This regular meeting purposely called by its Chairman, Forester J. R. Claveria, was attended also by Mayor Leroy S. Brown, Atty. F. Dianala Jo, representing the alleged 100 complaining squatters, Atty. S. J. Martinez and the technical staff of the Forestry Office. After due deliberations which showed the existence of conflict of the body in arriving at an effective solution to the squatters problem, he asked point-blank whether they want their Island City always green and told them that it is up to the City authorities and public spirited individuals whether they want to preserve their forest or not. The entire body rose in unison for the conservation of Basilan's dipterocarp forests. Whereupon, the Undersecretary advised the body to enumerate their decisions for the conservation of the City's forests giving due consideration to the amelioration of the squatters. Together with his findings, said decisions of the Screening Committee will be incorporated in his report of the case to the President.

Immediately after the meeting, the whole group then went to Barrio Concepcion to verify the area in question. Undersecretary Ferrer stopped at different places from Barrio Maligue to Barrio Matarling including Barrio Concepcion to observe the alleged improvements introduced by squatters inside the "resettlement area" now being subdivided into 4-hectare lots by the Bureau of

Forestry and Lands (the 2-party survey teams from the District Land Office at Zamboanga City began the work on March 5, 1956). The party returned to Isabela at about 5:00 P.M. as Atty. F. Dianala Jo failed to produce the alleged 100 complaining squatters.

Undersecretary Ferrer left for Manila at 6:00 A.M. the following day (Wednesday) to attend a meeting of the Cabinet at 9:00 A.M. scheduled that day. Before he left, he gave verbal order to continue the 4-hectare lot subdivision.

—o o—

Municipal Forestry Council of Odiongan Initiate Planting of Trees.

During the Arbor Week Celebration last July 24-31, 1955 the Municipal Forestry Council of Odiongan leads all other Municipal Forestry Councils in the program of tree planting. Among those in the picture are sitting: Mr. Pedro Formilleza (with hat) and Pedro P. Fradejos, all members of the Municipal Forestry Council of Odiongan; Forest Guard Pershing Menez, also member of the Municipal Forestry Council of Odiongan is shown planting a narra (*Pterocarpus indicus*) in the beautiful of all public plazas in Romblon province. Mr. Penafior Ferrer, head teacher of Libertad Barrio School is also squatting as he looks on the tree planted. Others in the picture are Ordinary Timber licensee Jose Villamin, also member of the Odiongan Municipal Forestry Council (with hat), Mr. Ricardo Manzala a school teacher; Mrs. Inday M. Tobias (Municipal Teacher); Mr. Conrado Menez, Chairman of the Municipal Forestry Council, Ornum (teacher); Mrs. Francisca Servanez; Miss Angeles Medina, (teacher) Mr. Ireneo Fabon and school children of Libertad Barrio School, Libertad, Odiongan, Romblon.

The Municipal Forestry Council Chairman and member's term of office will terminate on June 31, 1956. The New Mayor of Odiongan Mr. Francisco Firmalo will take over as Chairman of the Odiongan Municipal Forestry Council on July 1, 1956.

TEODORICO MONTOJO  
DANREA, PRO