

- **Effective education and inspired nationalism are the qualities needed for students who must build their country.**

EDUCATION FOR NATION BUILDING

The young Filipinos whom we find in our colleges and universities today are understood to be preparing themselves for work and participation in the activities here in their country now and in the days ahead. They should realize, as they face their task, that we are all part of a world community which is not static and standing still but in constant change at different rates of speed depending upon the energy and the ambition and preparedness of every component nation.

Every college or university should also realize this incontestable fact, and, therefore, each one of them should know that it cannot give the student all the knowledge and skill he needs for his entire lifetime. An educational institution may, therefore, consider its duty well done only when by its efforts its students acquire the ability and willingness to learn

how to learn. Possessing this competence, they may be able to help themselves effectively and to serve as builders of a better Filipino nation.

A well directed education concerns itself with the cultivation of personal discipline and of the will to work with others for community betterment. It recognizes the existence of differences among individuals in their interests and potentials for growth. It makes a reasonable allowance for unavoidable limitations of human effort and attainment. More concretely, it seeks to develop students into men and women able to perceive and comprehend their environment, to organize their efforts for improvement, to appreciate matters of social value, and to make decisions of wider significance. It endeavors to make of each man a free individual, able and willing to face facts and situations in-

telligently and courageously and to use his own reasoning power and judgment. At the same time, it also impresses upon the individual the value of working with others, the need for thoughtful and constructive leaders, and the indispensability of enlightened followers acting not as blind drones but as responsible, productive, and self-reliant members of the community.]

Education of this nature and purpose receives ample encouragement only in a free nation where the individual enjoys the widest opportunity for economic and social mobility. In a general way this condition exists in our country. Here a man's advancement depends in greater measure on personal merit, dedication, honesty, and purpose than on such factors as inherited status, family position, influential connections, or official rank.

The idea of education for nation builders in the sense here described is not coextensive with the nation of special education for an exclusive group known as the social elite. It is an education aimed at producing un-

selfish men and women who love their country and express that love not by mere words but by a deep and honest commitment to honor and duty and by a feeling of pride for superior performance in their chosen occupations. People who have received this kind of education may be expected to contribute much of their knowledge, their strength, and even their life for the improvement of their motherland. This has actually happened in the history of our country when prompted by the idea of education for nation building our leading men and a host of their fellows dedicated themselves to the establishment of a united and independent Filipino Republic and the cultivation of a free and democratic environment.

The tradition of national growth cannot be established apart from education; and for our national growth can best be promoted in and by institutions of higher learning under the leadership of responsible Filipino educators inspired by a deep sense of national pride and purpose. As a free nation, our

country is still very young and, as such its character bears the tender plasticity of youth. To develop our people towards national maturity, the instruction of their sons and daughters should be entrusted to Filipino colleges and universities under the direction of educational leaders of honest convictions.

No progressive country today leaves to aliens the management of its institutions for higher education. Every important nation realizes that no amount of rationalization can change the fact that for a people, such as the Filipinos, to cultivate a genuine love for their own country and an enduring faith in its destiny, they have to look for aid and encouragement to institutions under the direction of their own educational leaders. As the late Dr. Jose P. Laurel stated: "No one can love the Filipinos better than the Filipinos themselves."

The education that a Filipino College should consistently offer should be based on this criterion of quality and inspired nationalism.

No alternative or substitute for this practice can adequately take its place in a program looking towards the strengthening of the Filipino nation as an independent community. Consequently, the Filipino student should learn thoroughly the purpose and value of freedom and the responsibilities freedom entails. He should be steeped in the ideas and the spirit of democracy as conceived and lived by Filipino leaders.

The selection of students considered fit for higher education is an essential step in the process of preparing men for building a better nation. There is not one sure and satisfactory method of doing it. Observers have noted that most of our elementary and secondary schools, the usual sources of materials for higher education, are not producing enough students adequately prepared for college or university studies. The possession of a high school diploma or the acquisition of a general average grade of 85 per cent or more has not often indicated intellectual fitness for superior learning. Consequently, responsible educators have dev-

veloped an attitude of skepticism towards formal school ratings as indubitable evidence of sufficient mental preparation for college education. Many have thus adopted the practice of using less formal or less rigid entrance requirements and of placing those admitted on probation for a period of time sufficient to show their ability and interest in higher education.

The experience of many a responsible institution has been that a student of fair intellectual ability but with sufficient ambition and a willingness to concentrate on his educational work may be expected to acquire the benefits of higher education. Not a few of those who have had an unimpressive secondary school record but with a determination to do their best in their subjects have not only managed to finish the prescribed courses but have also succeeded in passing government examinations for the practice of particular professions.

In preparing Filipinos for the work of building a better nation, a college or university with a responsible head realizes that dedicated teachers and ambitious students play an important role. The acquisition of modern tools and facilities and the adoption of effective courses, curricula, methods, and techniques, are necessary; but they only provide the means and instrumentalities for mentors and learners in their efforts to achieve superior performance. Both teacher and student should therefore understand that unless they are properly used or applied, they will be of no great value to education.

On paper or in catalogs they may attract and impress the gullible. In shelves, laboratory equipment and tools may have the same effect. But for effective instruction, they must be actually handled by qualified teachers and by students under their guidance. — V. G. S.