

## SOME RESULTS OF COÖPERATION.

By KILMER O MOE, Superintendent, Central Luzon Agricultural School.

During the past few years a great deal has been written about coöperation. It has been adopted as an almost universal slogan for successful enterprise. The get-together spirit is being fostered in the Philippines by all governmental agencies which have to do with problems of general welfare. The Bureau of Agriculture has organized agricultural societies throughout the Islands, and the Bureau of Education is doing all in its power to spread the gospel of coöperation through the medium of the public schools. If precept alone were all, the average Filipino community would long have been a model of efficient and intelligent coöperation for the common good.

The perverseness of human nature is just as likely to find an expression in a Filipino community as elsewhere. Self-interest continues to be a motive for individual action, and this, except on rare occasions, far outweighs other considerations. This phase of the problem may as well be accepted as a controlling factor, and efforts which do not yield some measure of profit to the individual may be looked upon as unsound from the practical standpoint. It is, therefore, necessary to revise the ideas usually held regarding coöperation to conform to the more practical consideration of including the welfare of individuals as well as that of the community. With this viewpoint it is not difficult to find examples of real coöperation. The results in many instances are remarkable. Some typical examples will show the trend and the underlying motives.

## NATURAL FORCES AT WORK.

Settlers in newly opened districts show a strong inclination to work together. Groups of families bound by common ties of dialect and purpose have been moving onto the unoccupied lands of Nueva Ecija for the past eight years in increasing numbers. These people help one another to erect houses, clear land, establish irrigation systems, and to do whatever else is necessary to build up an agricultural community. The hardships of pioneer life are such as to force the settlers to unite in self-protection. The arduous task of taming the wild wastes of forest and cogon does not permit of half measures. In spite of close teamwork, the obstacles to progress oftentimes prove too great, and the settlers emigrate to more favorable localities. But usually the labor and sacrifices are rewarded, and the waste lands finally yield up their treasures.

Not only have large tracts in Nueva Ecija been settled in this way, but other sections of Luzon, together with the unsettled lands of other islands, have been taken up and made to yield profitable crops. The homesteader is in every sense a real benefactor. He builds not merely for himself, but for generations yet unborn. Every sacrifice he makes helps to lay the foundation for the economic welfare of his country. He coöperates with his neighbors because he must, but in so doing learns the value of community effort.

#### COÖPERATION IN THRESHING AND MARKETING.

Practically the only money crop in the vicinity of Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, is palay or unhulled rice. Naturally, the rice farmer is anxious to enjoy the highest returns for his efforts. This does not come about if he has to pay the middleman's profit in threshing his crop and disposing of his product. To escape this extra burden, the principal rice growers of this vicinity joined hands some eight years ago. By pooling their resources they succeeded in purchasing several threshing outfits with which they threshed one another's rice crop as well as that of their neighbors. In this way they accomplished together a task which was beyond the ability of any one of them acting separately.

This combination went even further. After having united in one venture, it was an easy step to extend the enterprise to include also the storing and marketing of the palay. Warehouses were built by means of which the crops could be safely stored and marketed through an organization owned and controlled by the farmers themselves, thereby saving the middleman's profit.

Similar forms of community effort are duplicated many times over throughout the Philippines. Of course, in nearly every instance the interests of the individual are taken care of, but always such enterprises result in a direct benefit to the community. To multiply these endeavors would bring about better economic conditions throughout the country.

#### PUBLIC BUILDINGS A RESULT OF COMMUNAL LABOR.

Another notable example of the spirit of coöperation is the construction of public buildings, chiefly schoolhouses. In the early years of American occupation the school authorities were confronted with the task of providing the necessary facilities for organizing and conducting schools without adequate resources. Buildings for school purposes, for the most part, had to be

donated or constructed with voluntary labor. At this juncture the community spirit rose to the assistance of the Bureau of Education, and a cooperative building program was carried out in anticipation of the opening of schools.

Instead of securing any monetary advantages, the members of the communities labored for the privileges which the public schools would bring to their children. One man delivered posts or harigues, another ripped a few boards, and a third furnished bamboo or nipa. Each worked with the assurance of no other reward than that of securing certain vague blessings for the next generation, which had been denied to his own generation. Of course, the work was initiated by the field force of the Bureau of Education, but the ready response met with in most places will always remain a bright picture in the history of public schools in the Philippines. In a lesser degree the same communal assistance was given in the construction of municipal buildings and other public works.

All the churches, also, those massive structures, which bear silent witness to the skill and enterprise of a former régime, are monuments to donated communal labor. Stone upon stone, with infinite toil and patience, the massive walls were built and buttressed to withstand the ravages of time and earthquakes. Generations passed before the structure was finally finished. The completion usually was the crowning feature in the lifetime of the good padre under whose direction the work had been carried on. Such a structure would seem to be symbolical of an average community. Each member, though ever so humble, contributes his share, and, though it be small, his bit counts in the final structure.

#### STUDENT COÖPERATION.

The writer on a recent trip to Albay was impressed by the neat and well-kept appearance of the school grounds. Upon inquiry it was found that the maintenance of the grounds was in the hands of the students. Student teachers under the supervision of an American teacher in the provincial school served as foremen and pupils in primary and intermediate grades did the work. This organization not only served to keep the grounds in good shape, but accomplished a great deal of constructive work by way of establishing lawns, building drains, walks and drives, and planting hedges and ornamental plants. This work if done by hired help, would have cost considerable.

Such work, however, cannot be measured in terms of money. The real value lies in the training which is afforded to growing

boys and girls in working together for the common good. There are hundreds of schools throughout the Philippine Islands where this and similar work is being accomplished—some of it as a regular feature of the daily program and some as voluntary labor contributed by the pupils in addition to the regular requirements. The practice of having communal gardens and of working together to accomplish a common purpose is excellent training for future citizens.

There are many other features which involve the active co-operation of students. Among those may be mentioned school athletics, school entertainments, school discipline, and library work. These offer subjects on which whole articles could be written to show the effects of coöperation in each activity.

#### UNITED EFFORT IMPERATIVE.

Almost every large problem, whether political, economic, or social, requires the get-together spirit or the combined effort of the many to make any considerable progress. Whether the problem is one of establishing irrigation systems, eradicating animal diseases, exterminating locusts, or fighting cholera, it is all the same. To be successful, one must secure the coöperation of a majority of the individuals affected, either voluntarily or by legal methods, or the effort will come to naught.

When the future welfare of the Philippine Islands is considered, every thoughtful person must be impressed with the importance of coöperative work. Government bureaus must coöperate in order to avoid duplication and useless expense; farmers must coöperate in order to fight pests and overcome natural difficulties; landowners must work in harmony with tenants; and the merchant must found his business on building up a community instead of exploiting it to insure his own success. No wonder the gospel of coöperation is finding more and more advocates.

#### THE SCHOOLHOUSE AS A RALLYING CENTER.

Many of the problems involved in the progress and future welfare of the Philippines are, strictly speaking, outside of the field to which the activities of the Bureau of Education are limited. But as this branch of the Government is closest to the people, it has lent its organization from time to time to the spread of movements for the general welfare. This practice has led to the free use of the Bureau whenever movements for the public good are to be inaugurated. Pests and plagues have been fought and eradicated through campaigns in which the

Bureau of Education has taken a very active part. Members of the Bureau have organized forces to fight cholera, locusts, and rinderpest. And all the while the schools were the chief medium through which information on the various campaigns reached the public.

And this is as it should be. The schoolhouse is best fitted to be the rallying place for the community. It performs its best function only as it serves the needs of the community in the broadest possible manner. Every movement which has for its purpose the welfare, improvement, and uplift of the community may very properly use the public school building to promote its cause.

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#### THE SCHOOL AS THE NUCLEUS OF COÖPERATIVE WORK.

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In the Philippine Islands, the school is the institution of greatest efficacy in social reconstruction. Recent years have brought to it enlarged responsibility and increased efficiency. The school has led in many movements of far-reaching significance, and it has become the social center.

The school is a proper nucleus for coöperative work. In the industrial and agricultural development of the country it has taken a prominent place. The Bureau of Education, working jointly with other bureaus of the Government, has contributed greatly to the development of agriculture by the courses it offers in the agricultural schools under its control; by the gardening courses in the primary and intermediate schools; and by such activities as garden days and corn demonstrations. It also has influenced homes in many respects through its courses in domestic science, housekeeping, and hygiene and sanitation, and through the teaching of subjects that conduce to proper conduct and right living. Special vocational schools have been organized in the hope that they might be instrumental not only in preparing the pupils and students for definite vocations, but also for the development of household industries.

As specific examples of schools under the Bureau of Education which have been and are instrumental in preparing students for definite callings, mention may be made of some of the most prominent. The Muñoz Agricultural School is exercising a powerful influence in Nueva Ecija, and generally in the development of settlement farm schools through the employment of its graduates as teachers. The farm schools of Indang, Cavite, and Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, have done much to influence the pupils and