

Report from Mambajao

Operation "Hibok - Hibok"

About two months ago an unusual sight greeted the eyes of the townspeople of Mambajao, Camiguin Island. In a small school building under the shadows of famed Hibok-hibok volcano, 65 sturdy men filed in and out of the classroom regularly for three weeks. Inside the room where at other times tiny children noisily attended their class, the adults held their own sessions seriously.

The group were farmers of the town and nearby villages. They had come to learn how to produce more out of their land. And the class was a joint project of the College of Agriculture, Xavier University of Cagayan de Oro City and the Columbian Farmers Aid Association.

The class was conducted by Democrito K. Talian, an instructor in the College of Agriculture of Xavier University. Out of 65 who had enrolled, 34 finished the course to become definitely better farmers.

In the classroom, the farmers were taught the modern trends of farming. They learned how to increase productivity through proper land preparation, seed selection, proper weeding, fertilization, control of pests and diseases, proper storage of the harvested crop in the case of crop plants, control of diseases, scientific feeding and improvement of native livestock, and many others. From time to time, the class went out

to visit model plantations and livestock farms. Field demonstrations were conducted by the instructor.

Besides the instruction, the class offered the following services to the students: (1) Free pamphlets on farming and other subjects were distributed, (2) An improved Poland-China x Duroc-Jersey boar was made available to service native sows, (3) Six Single Comb White Leghorn layers and one New Hampshire rooster were given free to the class to upgrade their native poultry stock.

The project, conducted with the cooperation of Lt. Gov. Jose P. Neri of the Subprovince of Camiguin, Mambajao Mayor Sergio M. Lactao, and the local office of the Bureau of Agricultural Extension headed by Mr. Democrito L. Sagrado, was a definite success.

Instructor Talian reported that all the members of the class were serious and enthusiastic about the course. At graduation time, all 34 students who saw the course through had each started a new project in their farms from vegetable gardening to poultry raising.

But the greatest change came over the ways in which the farmer-students tilled their lands. In a survey conducted among the 34 members of the class, Mr. Talian

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Special Project

Knights Shed Light On Rural Problems

Replies thus far received from the different Knights of Columbus Councils to the appeal of Senator Oscar Ledesma are yielding helpful information about the rural needs of the country.

A month ago, Senator Ledesma, as president of the Columbian Farmers' Aid Association, asked the various KC Councils to help the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, of which he is the chairman, to gather information that will help the Committee in its intensive study of agricultural conditions and needs of the people. Questionnaires were sent out and an encouraging number of replies have been and continue to be received.

The question posed by the circular was: "What is the principal way or ways in which our Government — relying, of course, on the mutual support and cooperation of the people themselves — can help to relieve the

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agricultural needs of your municipality, province, or region?"

To this question, Knights of Columbus in different sections of the country, many of them actually engaged in agriculture and are thus qualified, are giving answers which are throwing light on the actual conditions and existing needs of their respective rural communities.

A perusal of the replies on hand disclose that irrigation, pest control, lack of adequate information about modern farming methods, and scarcity of certified palay seeds are common problems in many regions.

Other difficulties brought out by the survey among KC Councils are the need for crop loans, feeder roads, experimental rice stations and soil analysis stations, marketing information, qualified government field men, etc.

The Knights have also come up with many suggestions on how to answer some of these needs. Some of the suggestions are definitely useful, while others are of doubtful value but nevertheless reflect further the difficulties faced by the farm folk.

Solano Council 3749 in Nueva Vizcaya suggests that the farmer should be furnished with marketing information, in order to assure him profits for his crop. For instance, he should be told what crops will be in demand and what will have an oversupply. The Council is for utilizing army manpower in putting up irrigation facilities. (Another Council opines that the community should furnish labor while the government should furnish most of the materials.) And to boost production, it proposes that there should be a legislation on compulsory backyard garden, poultry or piggery for every family (with a backyard, of course).

A government pool that would rent expensive farm equipment to the farmers is proposed by two Councils, one of which is Baybay, Leyte. In this town, it is reported that the farmers are unable to control destructive plant pests effectively due to

MAN SHORTAGE

First old maid: "I see here in the paper that a woman in New York has just had her fourth husband cremated."

Second old maid: "The shame of it. To think that some of us can't even get one man while others have husbands to burn."

lack of sprayers which they can hardly afford.

Calapan Council 4290 in Oriental Mindoro observes that farmers waste considerable time after their main crop is harvested. They should be taught crop diversification to use idle hours in growing other crops.

Newly developed ways of rice culture should be taught to the farmers, according to Concepcion Council 4318 of Tarlac. The Council recommends pilot projects as a means of thus instructing the land tillers.

San Roque Council 4349 of Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija suggests the extension of loans to tenants through their landowners, the landowners to be responsible for the collection and payment of the loans to the government. The Cuyapo Council reasons that the landowner is the one most qualified to know the needs of his tenants and their paying capacities.

Two of the questionnaires returned point to some irregularity in the appointment of government field technicians. Apparently, political interference has given rise to the appointment of incompetent fieldmen, who have little or no qualification to assist the farmers in overcoming their occupational difficulties. In addition, some of the fieldmen never visit the farmers at all.

Another anomaly was disclosed by St. John Council 4074 of Guimba, Nueva Ecija. Grand Knight Francisco Narciso related that recently he bought 60 sacks of certified palay seeds from a cooperative for the use of his tenants. Later, his tenants complained that the seeds were mixed with undeveloped seeds and foreign matter such as sand and gravel. Bro. Narciso reported that in one sack of 44 kilos, three kilos of undeveloped seeds called locally "tulipans" were taken.

More answers are expected to be received by the CFAA. The compiled replies will be forwarded to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

PERFECT GENTLEMAN

Pastor: "You say, John, you haven't spoken to your wife all week? You should be more forgiving and charitable."

John: "Oh, I'm not mad at her. I just don't like to interrupt when she's talking."