

## New boon to teachers



*Executive Order No. 500—embodying a new position of Master Teacher—opens new doors to career advancement for overworked and underpaid teachers.*

Filipino public school teachers have long been among the most overworked and underpaid of government servants. No more. President Marcos has opened new doors to career advancement for thousands of teachers by enabling them to win higher salaries and positions while remaining classroom teachers.

Under the new system—embodied in Executive Order No. 500—a new position of Master Teacher, equivalent in rank and pay to those of Head Teacher, Principal, Supervisor or other school administrative officials, was created to provide new areas of promotion into which deserving classroom teachers may be moved while continuing to serve where their capabilities are best suited: in the classrooms.

The new system eliminates the problem of good teachers being forced to accept administrative posts

in order to qualify for higher salaries. By keeping effective teachers in the classrooms, the new system expects to raise teaching standards in the public schools.

### Limited opportunities

Previously public school teachers had limited chances to advance to higher positions with correspondingly higher salaries. The narrow field of promotions tapered off at the top to 126 Division Superintendent positions—the ultimate goal of the country's 264,000 teachers.

Executive Order No. 500 directed the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Education and Culture to provide the machinery for screening school teachers for master teacher positions. It also directed the Budget Commissioner to create for school

year 1979-80 (when implementation of the new system starts) over 15,000 new master Teacher I positions, the equivalent in rank and pay of Head Teachers. In anticipation of subsequent promotions to higher M-T brackets, the Order also provides for the creation of an adequate number of Master Teacher II, III and IV positions, beginning with the school year 1980-81.

The new classes or ranks in the Master Teacher group shall have the following equivalent ranks in the School Administrative group:

District Supervisor—Master Teacher IV  
Elementary Principal III—Master Teacher III  
Elementary Principal II—Master Teacher II  
Head Teacher (Elementary Principal I)—Master Teacher I

### Career line

A deserving teacher may be promoted initially either to Master Teacher I or, as under the old practice, to Head Teacher or Elementary Principal I. Once he opts for either career line, there is no switching to the other line unless it is clearly demonstrated that he possesses all the necessary qualifications for the other career line and that these qualifications exceed those of individuals who otherwise might be considered for the vacancy.

Whether the promotion be in the School Administrative group or in the Master Teacher group, the promotion will be administered jointly by the CSC and the DEC. This requirement provides a further guarantee of the capability of the individual concerned and acts as a deterrent to political patronage.

There is no doubt that the new system of career advancement, prescribed in Executive Order No. 500, will give public school teachers a greater pride and security in their jobs, and more than this, an assurance that they can look forward to continuing opportunities for self-improvement and higher pay.

### P20 million for barangays okayed

President Marcos has authorized the release of P20 million to be distributed among the 40,000 barangays all over the country to enable them to undertake priority projects. The amount, P5,000 per barangay, was earmarked for distribution before the April 7 election, but the release was delayed at opposition candidates' insistence that public works expenditures be suspended during the political campaign. The appropriation is in line with the government policy to shift development from urban to rural areas.

### RP rejects "Law of Sea" text

The Philippines has rejected the United Nations preliminary negotiations text on the "Law of the Sea" as a violation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Foreign Undersecretary Jose D. Inglis, in a report to Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo, said the Philippine group refused to endorse the committee report of the on-going UN Conference on the Law of the Sea because of the omission of certain provisions which would give "archipelagic states" control over overflights and underwater passage through their waters. The present provision, instead of confirming the basic unity of the archipelagic land and waters, he said, "becomes an instrument of its fragmentation and dismemberment and violates its territorial integrity."

### School loans to benefit more

The Department of Education and Culture announced that 1,050 more students stand to benefit from the government's study-now-pay-later program with the increase of the program's fund from P25 million to

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**P40 million yearly** The additional slots will be awarded to poor but deserving high school graduates who will enroll in technical/technician courses in agriculture, trade and fisheries. The 1,050 openings will bring to 3,500 the total number of slots now available to student applicants. Some 3,629 students have been assisted since the program was started in 1976.

### RP population almost double by 2000

Latest projections by the World Population Bureau (WPB) in Washington estimate that the Philippines will have a population of 84.7 million by the year 2000, almost double the current 46.3 million. The WPB was established in 1929 and is considered the best available source of information on world population trends.

### Research on seedless fruits

Experiment at two farms in Laguna and Bulacan Provinces by researchers of the University of the Philippines have resulted in the "deseeding" of several Philippine fruits, including watermelons, mangoes and lanzones. Through treatment with alkaloid extracted from herbs, fruits produced more abortive or immature seeds than fully developed ones.

### RP tourists up by 25 percent

Visitor arrivals in the Philippines during the first quar-

ter of 1978 rose by 25 percent—213,804 arrivals compared to 172,314 during the same period last year. As in the preceding year, the Japanese were the largest group—70,646, or 7.6 percent more than last year's figure of 65,604. Second biggest groups were Americans (24,911), British (24,654) and overseas Filipinos (24,688).

### More benefits for workers

President Marcos has signed a decree providing additional disability benefits for workers. Under the new decree, a worker who suffers work-connected permanent total disability will be paid a lifetime pension instead of for a limited period of five years, even if the sum involved is in excess of the maximum allowable amount of P12,000. The same decree also provides for an increased minimum monthly pension from P51.75 to P100 and an increased maximum cash allowance for temporary disability or sickness from P16 to P20 a day.

### No travel ban

President Marcos reiterated that he would not reimpose the travel ban, thereby quelling speculations which had developed mainly as a result of his cancelling the foreign trips of cabinet secretaries and senior government officials. Mr. Marcos explained that the travel restriction on government officials was intended to prevent the dislocation of urgent development projects and that it did not include those who are traveling to fulfill urgent international commitments. The President lifted the travel ban, along with curfew, in August last year, when he addressed the World Law Conference here. He has not reimposed any of these restrictions since