

• FORESTRY IN THE NEWS •

THE MANIPULATING GRIP

No government official is better informed about the problems and prospects of Philippine lumber, both as a booming dollar-producing item and as a primary building material, than Forestry Director Florencio Tamesis. His views on the subject are given a respectful hearing abroad, where the prestige of Philippine woods has been envied by even high-pressure competitors.

Director Tamesis has warned of exportation, in unregulated quantities, of Philippine lumber, to avoid a local shortage and a consequent rise in prices. Actually, no real shortage exists, as every home builder knows. What possibly has "stabilized" prices at high levels and made house-building a pretty expensive proposition to all but the moneyed folks and RFC borrowers is the fact that the industry is controlled by aliens.

References have been made to inefficient logging methods and the introduction of the minimum wage as factors that have threatened not only to raise prices but force the collapse of the smaller firms. The first factor will eventually be eliminated when mechanization becomes possible; the second will admit of no correction.

Local lumber prices will lower if steps are taken to relax the alien grip on an industry which already is rated as one of the nation's top dollar-producer. Once that is done, we can proceed more smoothly with plans to improve production methods and lower costs.

Editorial, Manila Times, July 4, 1953

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SALE OF BAGUIO PINE PRODUCTS REGULATED

Baguio, Aug. 3—In line with the policy of the new city administration to give more protection to the Benguet pine forest of Baguio, the city council enacted last Tuesday an ordinance which would regulate the sale of pine firewood and prohibit the peddling of certain forest products derived from pine trees.

The explanatory note of Ordinance No. 178 states that the cutting of pine trees, even by duly licensed concessionaires and holders of permits to cut pine trees for sale to the public in the form of firewood, logs and lumber, had in the past years been "seriously abused," thus rendering it impossible for the local forest officers to cope with this deplorable situation.

It also cited that there has been steady and unabated increase of cases of illegal cutting of pine trees and all sorts of forest destruction, and that if this alarming situation is not arrested, the deple-

tion of the Benguet pine forest, of which Baguio is singularly proud, will be hastened.

The ordinance provides that it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, entity or corporation, even with license to sell forest products to the public without an accompanying invoice, and failure to carry said invoice shall constitute a violation of this ordinance.

Peddling in public or display for sale, of split firewood of "saleng" or charcoal without written permit from the government entities concerned is also prohibited, and in both cases, corresponding fines or imprisonment have been fixed by the ordinance.—*Manila Times*, August 4, 1953

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ZAMBO CHIT CHAT

A valiant attempt to hoodwink the fact that the reforestation plan of the Bureau of Forestry in Basilan City has been a rotten business is published on page 5 of this issue. The Basilan Acting Forester, Mr. Martin R. Reyes wants me to dismiss said charges as mere "chit chats." My charges against the Bureau stand as long as there are human bulldozers killing our important national resources, and they are not mere chit chats because nothing said in this corner has been pure mouth wash. We have documents to prove that *kaingineros* are destroying the vital tax-producing forests of Basilan. We have nothing against the farmers known as *kaingineros*. There are plenty of places in Mindanao for them where they can farm and live happily but they have no business in our forests. Maybe the Basilan Acting Forester has not gone around but the man must see what is going on in the American Rubber area in Buli-Buli, the former Basilan Company's area in Maligue, the Evangelista area in Lamitan, the Basilan Lumber area in Maluso, the forest concessions in Mangal and elsewhere. I am inviting the angry Acting Forester for a "honeymoon" over these areas on a piper cub flown by lady pilot Charito Rodriguez anytime, anywhere, so that he can see the pitiful devastation wrought on our forest by clandestine farming. Or, maybe, the Acting Forester has not heard of the conversion of thousands of hectares of forest areas into agricultural plantations by some concessionaires themselves. We are digging more facts about this. Don't you worry, mister. The Acting Forester has also admitted that the bulk of the forestry collections are spent for "essential public services, such as education, public works, justice, peace and order, etc." Precisely, it is the duty of the BF to continue maintaining our forest by a zealous and concerted reforestation plan so that we can continue reaping a national fortune out of it till eternity. In other countries, the destruction of

the forest is considered a capital crime against the state. Here, it is highly probable that it is being made as a capital for the pocket of a few unscrupulous people. This too is no mere chit chats.

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July 25, 1953

The Editor
Zamboanga City Times
Zamboanga City
Sir:

Our attention has been called to the derogatory statements of Mr. Armando A. Lopez in his "Zambo Chit Chat" column in your newspaper issue of July 21, 1953 pertaining to the newly-created Forest District No. 44 in Basilan City. Although Mr. A. Lopez can excuse himself by saying that they are mere chit-chats, yet those statements have the damaging effect of poisoning the minds of the people, and baselessly undermining their confidence in the Bureau of Forestry.

His statement that we collect forest charges from Basilan lumber firms without a plan of reforestation for Basilan City is not true. The Bureau of Forestry does not collect, but submits for collection forest charges to the Collector of Internal Revenue. The greater part of the collection goes to the General Fund which are spent for essential public services, such as education, public works, justice, peace and order, etc. The other part goes to the Reforestation Fund (Rep. Act 115) which is spent exclusively for reforestation (artificial or natural). The greater part of this fund goes to the reforestation of watersheds of destructive rivers and streams which are harnessed to produce electric power, irrigate fields, and supply water for domestic use in different parts of the country. In Basilan we do not only have plan for reforestation but are actually reforesting logged-over areas and *kaiñgins*. For this matter, I wish to inform the general public and Mr. A. Lopez that our reforestation plans in this city have been put to work since 1950. Our reforestation work here, however, takes the course of supplemental planting in logged-over areas giving more efforts to protect immature timber left after logging which we will tend to maturity for the next harvest.

It is not true that all forest lands after logging go to the *kaiñgineros*. The *kaiñgineros* can be counted still and they are being dealt with accordingly. The offenders are accused and complaints are filed in the courts. We have cases in the Municipal Court, but action is slow. We hope to get more cooperation from our colleagues in the Government and with a stronger and more efficient patrol force, we can minimize illegal entries into the forest reserve and national park (called the Working Circle.)

The Class A Forest District here was opened not merely to collect forest charges. The main purpose

is the implementation of a forest management plan for this island to perpetuate the supply of timber for the lumber firms. This embraces all the fields of regulation, reforestation and protection. We are now doing this work.

Please do this Office justice by publishing this letter...an answer to the unfounded comments of Mr. A. Lopez. Fairness and good journalism would be served in doing so.

Very respectfully,

MARTIN R. REYES
Acting District Forester

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FOREST MANAGEMENT PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN BASILAN

The Island City will be the site of the first Philippine Forest Management project, according to Forestry officials who are connected with the project.

The scope of the project cover systematic timber cutting, reforestation, and forest conservation, and is expected to cover the forests of the whole island of Basilan.

This project is the first of its kind as initiated by the Bureau of Forestry, and if successful, will be tried throughout the Philippines.

Forester Lalog, present head of the newly created Basilan Forest District No. 44, will tentatively be in charge of the project.

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The report of the forestry member of the FAO Agricultural Mission to Korea emphasizes the vital role of forests in the general land use of that country. Recommendations embodied in the report are: (1) the formulation of a forest policy; (2) greater efforts to control the shifting type of cultivation (locally known as *kaingin*); (3) improvements of practices on private forest lands. To implement these recommendations, the Mission suggested that additional legislation be enacted and a strong forest service be established.—From the FAO director general monthly letter (April, 1953)

The U.P. College of Forestry has provided, together with the Division of Forest Investigation of the Philippine Bureau of Forestry, a continuing series of seed samples of Philippine forest trees, which have been forwarded to the Bureau of Forestry (Recherches Forestieres) in Saigon for trial plantings. A request for *Phasmidae* material from the Philippines by an entomologist in Hanoi remains outstanding owing to the difficulty of entering Philippine forests to collect them and the fact that "walking sticks" and leaf insects which belong to this family are hard to detect because of their resemblance to twigs or plant leaves. Two shipments of *Mallotus philippinensis* seeds, provided also by the College of Forestry, were recently forwarded by

airfreight to Recherches Agronomiques et Pastorales in Saigon for trial planting.—From UNESCO SCO Newsletter July, VTEC

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LOCAL MAHOGANY POPULAR IN HAWAII

Philippine mahogany is the most popular furniture wood in Hawaii according to a report of the consulate general of the Philippines in Honolulu, received by the Department of Commerce and Industry.

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, a widely circulated daily in Hawaii, in its editorial issue stated: "Phil. mahogany, long a favorite with Islanders, has become more popular in recent years. About 85% of all furniture built here is of Phil. mahogany. Since 1946 when manufacturers began making furniture here, the imports of Phil. mahogany have increased 500%."

The term Phil. mahogany is the trade name used in the export trade for lauans which belong to the softer members of the dipterocarp family and may be divided into the red lauans and white lauans. The former include tangle, mayapis and tiaong.

The Manila Times, July 28, 1953

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LUMBER INDUSTRY PROBLEM

No one will quarrel with Secretary Placido L. Mapa on the program of a balanced exploitation of our forests and the need of striking a happy balance between our exportation of logs and the quantity of sawn lumber that is available locally.

The lumber industry has since the war moved to the forefront so quickly it is now bracketted among the islands' ten biggest dollar producers. The minimum wage law was a source of irritation to lumber men only for a brief while, indicating the capacity of the industry to adjust itself to rising costs and changing conditions.

On the other hand, the spectacular rise of the lumber industry has also compelled the more thoughtful of our public officials to take a look at the consequences of injudicious cutting of timber, the deforestation of wide areas, and the improvidence of concessionaires who care little about reforestation.

Sometime in the past, Governor Osmeña of Cebu had occasion to deplore the cutting down of trees in the heavily wooded areas of his province until complete denudation, the danger of floods and erosion seemed imminent. Apart from their economic value, forests provide our natural watershed needs and are a potential setting for the park program which the national government has yet to launch.

The question of striking a balance between our export of logs to Japan and the sawn lumber made available locally has been raised by the director of forestry himself. When local lumber prices remain high it is not merely because we ship too many

logs to foreign importers. Alien control of the retailing end is one big factor that has nullified efforts to bring down prices to reasonable levels.

The lumber industry has never been so prosperous as it has been during the last ten years. It could assure itself of continued well-being if it took a second look at the problems of the future—the problems of reforestation, cost and price adjustments, and control by native producers.

Editorial, *Manila Times*, Aug. 12, 1953

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LUMBERMEN TOLD TO GO EASY ON LOGS

Agriculture Secretary Placido L. Mapa put it up to the lumber industry last night to work out a balanced exploitation of forest products or run the risk of having the government step in and regulate the heavy cutting of logs.

In a speech delivered last night before the Hoo Hoo Club in Manila, composed of representatives of the various sectors of the lumber industry, at the Philippine Columbian clubhouse, Secretary Mapa urged the lumbermen to adhere to a well-rounded program of cutting down trees for both the local and foreign market.

He said he had heard reports that consumers of sawn lumber, most of whom are ordinary home-builders, as well as domestic users of logs for veneer manufacture, are being forced to pay higher prices for their needs owing to the keen competition offered by foreign buyers of logs, mostly from Japan.

"Without saying categorically," he said, "who is right and who is wrong, and apart from the technical aspects which the problem presents, I feel the welfare of all concerned dictates that we take stock of the situation and see how we can proceed on a well-rounded program of cutting down trees for the market, whether for local consumption or for export.

"I believe all of you realize the necessity of coordinating your efforts in order to achieve a desirable equilibrium in wood extraction. It is only by doing so that we may be able to avoid unpleasant consequences which may result from too much concentration on one phase of lumbering."

"Let us not wait," he said, "for an unfavorable public opinion that might compel the government to take undesirable steps before you yourselves correct whatever unbalanced cutting of wood might have done already."

Secretary Mapa, who was introduced by Carlos Fernandez, president of the Hoo Hoo club, congratulated the lumbermen for their successful efforts in rehabilitating the industry which Mapa said, had exceeded its pre-war production.

"As of June 30, 1953," Secretary Mapa said, "production had already reached 1,206,114,589 board feet, compared to 941,604,449 board feet in 1941.

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out as a challenge. I can think of few other fields where the exercise of professional skill and high personal qualities will be more rewarding in national betterment.

We of the F.O.A. recognize quite well the importance to continued well being of the Philippines, of the wise use of the forest resources. We are cooperating to the extent permitted by our policy and our means in measures designed by the Bureau of Forestry to facilitate some of the approaches to solving the immediate problems and to assist in the longer range aspects. Some of these measures, such as the important matter of land classification, are already being applied. Others, including additions of your College facilities, expanded silvicultural and forest products research, and assistance in vital protection and reforestation are close to actuality. You probably are quite well aware of the details of this matter. Indeed, I recall a certain recent article in "Forestry Leaves" which indicates that you are extremely well aware of what is going on. I hope you will maintain an equally questioning attitude in all of your work.

Such cooperation as we may be able to extend, however, merely helps you to acquire some of the tools you will need in accomplishing the task ahead of you. And this applies to technical advice even more than to material things. That is why we have given research a prominent place in our planned cooperation. The practice of forestry is an art based on several sciences. It can not be formed into a stencil for application in different places in the same way. A new pattern must be developed for each new set of conditions. The early foresters in the United States were inclined to attempt applying European stencils to American conditions with unfortunate results. When we threw away the stencils but retained the principles to develop techniques suitable to American conditions, we began to make progress. That is why I expressed the

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both made torches and set fire to the whole grove. And as those exquisite flowers were eaten by the flames, a heavy load seemed to be lifted from my heart and my conscience was eased, for I knew that we had done the right thing for the lesson of the rattan was still fresh in my mind.

Well, after all, who would value orchids if they were as common as weeds? Like Mickey's rattan these orchids would have flooded the market, disturbing the balance between supply and demand and resulting in disastrous consequences to the orchid business. Don't you agree with me?

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"This achievement speaks highly of your ability not only to rehabilitate an industry that was all wiped out by the war but also to rise to the occasion and meet our urgent national requirements for wood and other forest products," he added.

Secretary Mapa called the attention of the lumbermen to the tendency among some lumber companies to produce more logs and less sawn lumber in view of the high prices for logs offered by Japan.

Manila Times, August 12, 1953

Be unselfish. That is the first and final commandment for those who would be useful and happy over their usefulness. If you think of yourself only, you cannot develop because you are choking the source of development which is spiritual expansion through thoughts of others.

hope that you will maintain a continually searching and questioning attitude as you relate advice or knowledge from all sources to your own specific problems.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that although the problems confronting you foresters are great, the opportunity to make important contributions to the good of the Philippines is even greater. It represents a real challenge, and one which will require the best in professional skill and personal qualities to meet successfully.