



THE *Philippine*

EDUCATOR

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, A VITAL FACTOR IN OUR ECONOMIC LIFE

The Filipino struggle for self-sufficiency dates back as early as the later part of the nineteenth century. This was first advocated by Dr. Jose Rizal through his campaign for vocational education for the Filipino youth which received the unconditional support of Filipino leaders, like Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez Jaena, and others. The campaign did not end right there. Throughout their life, the late President Manuel L. Quezon and the late President Manuel Roxas advocated for the same thing, because they knew full well that the Philippines could only maintain its sovereignty as an independent nation, if and when said sovereignty is supported by a sound economic foundation. It is not amiss to state, in this connection, that there is much to be desired insofar as our economic structure is concerned.

The much depleted economy of the Philippines is all too obvious to be ignored. The Filipinos do not enjoy as high a standard of

living as they did before the war. Their earning and consuming power has been in its lowest ebb. The only way to replenish the dwindling economy of the country is to raise its productive power, and thereby, increase the average income of the people.

The government can raise additional revenues to meet its vital needs, such as public education, public health, and public works, by increasing the tax-paying power of the people. This can be made possible by increasing their earning power.

The production of more and better consumers' goods has always been among the greatest concern of the Filipino people in their struggle for greater social wealth. The need for producing locally, more and better commodities is much more evident now because of the operation of the import control law. For this reason, there should be in this country more productive workers than those engaged in non-producing occupations and sedentary white-collar

jobs. For the same reason, the training of intelligent skilled workers, who are producers of consumers' goods, is vitally more important than the training of an excess quota of clerks, "Philosophers," and non-producing "professionals".

There is not much time to waste now. We need trained farmers who could raise more rice, more vegetables, more eggs and fowls. Likewise, we need steady manufacturers who could produce our other needs, such as cloth, canned goods, fertilizers, farm and shop implements, cutlery, building materials, and other products which are vital to our existence as a civilized people.

The Philippines is endowed by nature with two important assets from which it could derive social wealth, viz., *natural resources*, such as materials, soil, mines, rivers, seas, and water power, and the *human resources* which are necessary in the development of the former. Until the material resources could be converted into goods for human use and convenience, much of these material riches would continue to lie in waste. In general, the transformation or conversion of such raw materials into consumers' products depends largely upon the amount of technical and skilled labor that can be employed. However, no matter how great our material wealths are, little will be accomplished to solve our economic problems until our human resources have been developed to the highest possible degree.

The economic prosperity in the Islands can be increased to a considerable degree by promoting and developing the productive ability of the individual workman in both agriculture and industry. And

the best and apparently the only way to improve the economic well-being of the individual workman is by developing his productive skills. It is essential, for instance, to help him develop skills in the use of modern tools and machines; to teach him better ways of doing and making things; to help him obtain facts and ideas necessary in solving the problems about his work and teach him to think straight with these facts and ideas. All these things constitute what is called vocational training for the individual whatever his job or occupation may be. When this form of training pertains to farm workers, we call it agricultural education; and when it pertains to industrial workers, we call it trade or industrial education.

The only way to produce more capable hands and skilled workmen to develop our material resources is to induce more of our talented youth to undergo vocational training in agriculture and in the trades. We should convince the youth that this type of education is really of economic importance both to themselves and to society by providing them, once they are vocationally trained, with adequate employment immediately after their training period. In this connection, we should promote more industrial enterprises, big and small, under government initiative until the private concerns are ready to take over the control and operation of such industries. Only in the way we have indicated above can our much-wasted natural as well as human resources be saved and used to advantage for the welfare of our people. And may it not be said, in this connection, that vocational education is a vital factor in our economic life? R.Y.M.