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MANILA

LAND REFORM

New life throbbing in rural areas

A group of farmers, sitting around a shade tree, listen intently to a young man explaining the mechanics of a cooperative. Another group, in an adjacent community, are digging the last few meters of a canal that will provide enough water for their crops during the summer months. Far removed from them, at the foot of a hill, a lone figure stands atop a rice paddy, surveying, almost reverentially, a plot of land his family had been tenantry for decades but which they now can call their own.

These are some of the typical scenes that are likely to greet the visitor some 200 miles from the Philippine countryside today. They illustrate the new vigor that now animates life in the rural areas, seven months after the President decreed that the nation's 700,000 or so farmers would henceforth own the lands they till, thereby assuring them of bigger returns from their farms and freeing them from centuries of exploitation.

It does not sound as easy as that, of course. The various aspects of implementation are constantly being reviewed and improved upon, but the results attained thus far indicate there is no turning back in the land reform program in the Philippines.

"Land reform is the first reform we have started under the new society and, therefore, it is my resolve that it is irreversible," the President said after handing out the first land transfer certificates to the first batch consisting of 431 awardees last December.

That figure has since increased several times over. As of April 7, a total of 12,000 farmers had received such certificates. The pace is being quickened, what with thousands of government workers now fielded all over the country. Some are directly involved in "Operation Land Transfer," the first major activity in the program. Others are indirectly but just as actively involved, such as in the organization of cooperatives, which will assure the farmer greater access to production and marketing facilities, instead of leaving him to the mercy of the landlord, the middleman, and the usurer as what happened in the past and which, ultimately, kept him in unending bondage to the soil.

This week, the President adopted two additional measures that would further hasten the pace of the program and firm up the gains already achieved.

First, he set up the Land Reform



President Marcos signing cooperative decree, old farmer receiving land transfer certificate: testimonials to tenants' emancipation from age-old bondage.

Council, with himself at the helm, to resolve, promptly and decisively, whatever problems remain in the implementation phase.

Second, he promulgated a decree strengthening the cooperative movement, which now occupies a focal point in land reform. The premise is that the farmer must be given not just ownership of the land but also the necessary support and other incentives to enable him to get more from his farm and thus become a more productive participant in the overall development effort. Specifically, the decree grants cooperatives the same rights and privileges enjoyed by business firms, including the setting up of enterprises and rural banks. The long-range goal is to increase the income and purchasing power of low-income Filipinos, who make up the membership of cooperatives, and thus help bring about an equitable distribution of the country's wealth.

The implementation stage, programmed for completion in three years, will result in the redistribution of 1.3 million hectares of agricultural (rice and corn) lands. The cumulative targets are: 550,000 hectares in 1973; 1,150,000, hectares in 1974; and 1,300,000 hectares in 1975. By contrast, it is estimated that, under previous land-distribution schemes, it would have taken at least 200 years to achieve the same objective.

The entire program will cost more than P5.4 billion, involving land value, transfer of titles, cooperative development, agricultural credit, and infrastructure development.

Under Presidential Decree 27, now popularly known as the Tenant Emancipation Decree, each tenant is entitled to own five hectares of land if the land is irrigated or three hectares if non-irrigated. With the utilization of

improved farming methods, this area is expected sufficient to support an average family of five members. The landowner, for his part, can retain not more than seven hectares of his land if he intends to cultivate it or is now cultivating it. An old reform law (passed in 1963) allowed the owner to retain as much as 75 hectares; an amendatory act lowered it to 24.

In adopting the new and far-reaching land reform policy for the country, the President has assured that justice will be given everyone. Thus, the landowner will be given just payment for his land, equivalent to two-and-a-half times the average production for three normal crop years and to be amortized by the tenant for 15 years at a reasonable interest rate of 6 percent per annum.

To all intents and purposes, however, the tenant, even before the end of the amortization period, is now "deemed owner" of the land he tills. Thus, the landowner cannot eject him without risking stiff penalties for such act.

At the start of the implementation late last year, nine towns in six provinces were designated pilot areas for "Operation Land Transfer." These are San Mateo, Isabela; Guimba and Zaragoza in Nueva Ecija; Plaridel Bulacan; Calamba and Binan in Laguna; Tigson, Camarines Sur; and Pototan and Dingle in Iloilo. The lessons gained in these pilot areas are proving valuable to land transfer operations in other parts of the country.

First targets in the land transfer are landholdings of 100 hectares and above. The next are landholdings of 50 hectares and above but not over 100. The last are landholdings of less than 50. So far, the Department of Agrarian Reform, together with the Bureau of Lands, has mapped out

206,841.37 hectares owned by 683 big landowners in 34 provinces.

Alongside "Operation Land Transfer," government men are now busy organizing cooperatives to help the new breed of landowners. The targets are 4,355 barrio and 290 area cooperatives. A barrio cooperative will have a membership of 150 farmers. An area cooperative will be made up of 15 barrio cooperatives. So far, 22 cooperatives (involving 330 barrio chapters) have been formed. Other government workers are in the field to teach farmers modern methods of agriculture.

Now serving as "frontline" men in various aspects of the program are some 3,000 officials and employees of the Department of Agrarian Reform (only 359 were left to man the central office in Manila); 1,900 fieldmen trained by the Department of Local Government and Community Government to organize cooperatives; 9,000 field technicians from the Bureau of Agricultural Extension and Bureau of Plant Industry doing extension work for farmers; and thousands of personnel from other government agencies.

Now that land reform is in full swing, the President is optimistic that a firm foundation for a new and truly dynamic society will be realized.

"Land reform must be the basis and the fundamental foundation of all our efforts," the President said. For the Filipino farmer, it will mean a lot of things, and not the least of these is an end to centuries of exploitation and misery. As one observer of the present Philippine scene has said: "The (day) of emancipation has come. The travails of the farmer will soon be over. Freedom and land ownership, the cornerstone of change in the New Society, are worth all the 400 years of waiting."

FOREIGN POLICY

Closer economic ties with neighbors

The Philippines is currently undertaking a general review of its foreign policy in order to gear it to the basic goal of national development.

President Marcos underlined this new policy trend, with emphasis on regional cooperation, on at least three occasions last week — during two consultation meetings with incumbent and former national officials and in a major speech at the opening of the five-day conference of the Jaycees International attended by some 1,000 delegates from 20 countries.

The restudy of the country's foreign policy was disclosed by the President after he met with the national leaders for the second time Thursday. He said the review was being made on a worldwide and regional basis with the aim of converting it into an instrument for economic development.

While reiterating the country's policy of self-reliance and its desire "to be left alone" in shaping its own destiny, the President indicated that such a policy did not rule out mutually beneficial arrangements with other countries, particularly its neighbors.

"We seek friendship with no more motivation than respect for human dignity and the enhancement of the right to prosper, and, therefore, are in-ent on pursuing a policy of mutual accommodation in our relations with our neighbors," the President said in his speech before the Jaycees.

Within the same week, the President lent substance to this posture by giving the go-signal for the country's membership in the Asian Rice Trade Fund which is designed to stabilize the export-import trade on rice in the region. He also pressed for the immediate creation of the Asian Forum where nations in the area "irrespective of persuasion and ideology" can exchange ideas and find solutions to



President Marcos and former national leaders: consultation on the redirection of foreign policy and economic development.

common problems, and reiterated his proposal for the formation of an Asian Payments Union and the Asian Producers' Union within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

He noted with satisfaction the impending implementation by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) of an Asian payments system similar to the one he proposed for ASEAN and asked the Central Bank and the Department of Finance to look into the mechanics of the Ecafe-sponsored payments union.

In his speech before the Jaycees, the President stressed the need for greater regional cooperation, especially during the period of development because, "divided, obviously alone and by ourselves, often divided

by indifference and lack of understanding, even ignorance, the nations of Asia have seldom been sufficiently strong or free to make decisions that the big and powerful nations have not already made for them."

The Asian Rice Trade Fund is to be set up officially during the 29th session of ECAFE currently being held in Tokyo and where the Philippines is

represented by an 11-man delegation headed by Secretary of Trade and Tourism Troadio Quizon Jr. The other nations which have initialed the agreement are Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Four other countries — India, Laos, Vietnam and Singapore — have formally endorsed it.

The Fund will initially be capitalized at \$50 million through low-interest or interest-free loans from developed countries and international financing institutions.

Its purpose is to help stabilize the region's rice trade through, among others, refinancing of rice transactions between foreign exchange-starved members on a deferred payment basis, elimination of middlemen and brokers, and assurance of supply of the emergency food needs of member countries. Besides helping rice im-

porteders, the Fund will also serve as a boost to exporters of the cereal in the form of an assured market and immediate payment in foreign exchange as well as loans from the International Monetary Fund in the event of export shortfalls due to natural calamities. The Philippines, as well as the other members will benefit either way from the fund.

While the other ECAFE plan — setting up of an Asian payments system — will not initially include the Philippines (the founding members are expected to be Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and India), the experience to be gained from it could be adopted into the RP-proposed payments union for the ASEAN, which is composed of the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

Under the payments system, importers and exporters would be governed by a check-off system whereby obligations are settled without the usual foreign exchange transactions. For instance, if the Philippines imports rubber from Malaysia, payment will be made in the form of Philippine sugar or other commodities exported to Malaysia. One beneficial effect of such an arrangement is that member countries, by complementing each other's products will by themselves be able to supply the needs of the region.

Mr. Marcos' proposal to form an ASEAN Rice Producers' Union likewise is aimed at pooling the organization's resources to enhance its vast economic potentials, which remain still largely untapped. Occupying about 2.3 percent of the world's total land area and with about 5.4 percent of the world's total population, ASEAN countries produce a considerable portion of the world's major commodities such as sugar, rice, timber, tin, rubber, iron ore and crude oil.

Through cooperation, ASEAN nations can make their products more competitive in cost and quality in the world market. Individually, ASEAN countries cannot hope to match the fast developing technology and economies of the more progressive countries of Europe, North America and Japan.

ASEAN MEETING

Expression of unity

The search for lasting peace and unity in Southeast Asia gathered momentum last week.

The two-day ministerial conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in Pattaya, Thailand, provided the forum for an unprecedented expression of unity among member countries. This sent a new surge of optimism that augurs well for the future of the five-nation organization which is composed of the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

Ironically, the testimony of Asian unity emerged from what was earlier billed as a make-or-break session. There had been speculations in the foreign press that the Philippines would use the meeting to condemn



Secretary Romulo: a sound for unity.

foreign intervention in the communal conflict in Mindanao.

But Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carlos P. Romulo surprised everyone by thanking Malaysia and Indonesia for supporting the Philippine cause at the recent Muslim conference in Benghazi, Libya. In that conference, the

two Asean members rejected Libya's radical proposal for sanctions on the Philippines and instead moved for a more moderate stand.

Mr. Romulo said the Malaysian and Indonesian support for the Philippines was one testimony of Asean unity, an asset needed in a region which is in a state of transition and rapid but unpredictable change. He said: "In this context, the Aseans' greatest need is unity. It is only through unity that we can hope to preserve and protect our individual and regional interests. And it is only through unity that we can hope to influence events in a way which takes proper account of our interests."

The Philippine foreign secretary linked the restoration of peace in Mindanao to the overall stability of the region. "Stability in the southern part of the Philippines will mean stability in the whole country which in turn will redound to the greater stability in the Asean region," he said.

And all throughout the conference, other delegation heads — Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Rajaratnam, In-

donesia's Adam Malik, Thailand's C. Chunhawan and Malaysia's Dr. Ismail — expressed the importance of unity and peace to the overall development of the region.

The conferees, among others, also agreed to establish a permanent secretariat in Jakarta, tacitly endorsed Thailand's proposal for the expansion of Asean to include Burma, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia and North and South Vietnam, and discussed such issues as Asian neutrality and rehabilitation of Vietnam.

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Amante F. Panabo, Managing Editor; Rutilio Ochoa, Editor; Alberto M. Alfaro, Zepaida Sava Ong, Section Editors; Emilio U. Macaspac, Luis P. Veneracion, Pablo A. Tariman, Jorge V. Aruta, Staff Members; Jose Dunga and Pablo Guiles, Staff Photographers; Eduardo Velasco and Tito Villasin, Staff Artists.

THE BRAIN DRAIN

Stopping the exodus

How does one plug the "brain drain?"

For many years, planners have been searching for the right formula to keep trained professionals within the country's confines. Several steps had been taken in the past to stop the outflow, but every year, the Philippines continued to lose the services and skills of thousands of trained men who leave the country shortly after graduation.

Among those who go out to work abroad are: four out of every six doctors, one out of every two nurses, nine out of every 10 dentists, one out of every four architects, two out of every three dietitians and nutritionists, and one out of every five mechanical and civil engineers who graduate from college each year.

Records of the US Embassy reveal a pattern of a steady increase in the erosion of the country's corps of professionals and technical and kindred workers since 1967. Topping the list of those who obtained US immigration visas are elementary and secondary school teachers who, from 342 in 1967, rose to 2,285 in 1970. They were followed by engineers, who started from a low of 346 to 1,165 in the same period; physicians and surgeons, from 612 to 968; nurses, from 445 to 954; other technology and related fields, from 194 to 1,709; other medical and related fields, from 240 to 640; other professional and

kindred workers from 95 to 411. Even the scientists have not been spared from the effects of the drain. While only 85 natural scientists left the country in 1967, the figure rose to 283 in 1970; and social scientists from 13 to 67 in 1970.

The figures do not include those who first obtained tourists visas and later converted them into blue (immigrant) cards in the United States. Also not included in the listing are those who had migrated to Europe, Canada, Australia and other countries.

The country filled up 29.72 percent (19,997) of the total of Asian immigrants (67,280) to the United States in 1970 from a previous low of 5.26 percent in 1967. On the average, the Philippines—a developing country which needs all the training and expertise of these technical men in its march toward development—had lost about 50 percent of its total highly skilled college graduates every year.

Thus far, there is no firm consensus among foreign and local labor experts on whether or not such a brain drain constitutes an irreparable loss to the country. West German economists, for instance, count the professionals as part of the country's capital investments. Another country, Russia, is levying a heavy tax on every Russian Jew who emigrates to Israel, and among other reasons perhaps, she wants a reimbursement of the investments by the state.

Mr. M. L. Gupta, a manpower assessment and planning expert of the International Labor Organization who is currently conducting a study of RP labor, says "one must be cautious about inferring conclusions about the merits and demerits of the losses and gains from brain drain."

"While poor countries lose trained

manpower to the rich countries, there are a number of ways in which they also gain," Mr. Gupta adds. "A number of migrants provide real benefits to the country in the form of income remittances, paid or unpaid direct consulting services and the production of knowledge some of which may be of specific relevance to the problems of developing countries and which they may be able to produce more efficiently abroad than at home."

Just the same, Philippine labor authorities are concerned about the problem. Secretary of Labor, Blas F. Ople said recently that "effective and immediate policies must be made to counteract the threat."

The Office of Manpower Services under the labor department has recommended to Secretary Ople a two-pronged plan to limit the medical brain drain and increase the employability of Filipino doctors and nurses.

The OMS says Filipino doctors and nurses must be made to undergo five years' training in local hospitals before they could become eligible for overseas work. Secretary Ople said that "while the ultimate objective is to limit their outflow, this plan may represent the first step in the long process designed to develop or increase their employability."

Since September two, when the program of reform and renewal began in earnest in the Philippines, the country saw a steady decline in emigration, particularly that of professionals. If this new trend continues, one of the immediate beneficiaries will be the medical field and one can perhaps expect more doctors and nurses to be working soon in the rural areas, where their services are badly needed.

Complementary measures, of course, are now being drawn up or put into effect to encourage professionals

to work in their own country.

In line with the administration's policy, Mr. Gupta suggested the adoption of bigger wage differentials in favor of desired skills, adjusting the educational system to include in the curricula such requirements as service in the rural areas by medical students, assistance to tenants in the implementation of land reforms by law students, making extensive use of trained persons in local technical assistance programs; research grants; encouragement for the establishment of private scientific and research foundations; review of Philippine participation in exchange visitors programs and initiation of bilateral agreements with foreign countries and international organizations engaged in development work for possible greater use of indigenous highly trained manpower.

The proposal of the Office of Manpower Services may be the prelude to the implementation of some of Mr. Gupta's suggestions.

Josefina R. Cortes, in a study made in the course of obtaining a doctorate degree in philosophy in international development education at Stanford University in 1970, traced the three major causes of the exodus to the United States. She said these were: (1) government inefficiency, red tape, favoritism and meddling in appointments and promotions; (2) poor pay and inadequate material rewards; and (3) poor professional climate.

With the removal of these conditions following the proclamation of martial law and the adoption of other positive measures, the Filipino professional and technical men may now find it more fruitful and more rewarding to apply their knowledge and skills for the good of their fellowmen and the economic development of their own country.

MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

Correcting an imbalance

utilization of the nation's manpower and out-of-school youth."

This government agency was born four years ago, toward the end of the first term of President Marcos. Its forerunner was the Manpower-Development Council created by the President in 1966 and initially designed to conduct experimental training programs. Two years later, a manpower training program was launched on a nationwide scale. The initial results proved more than encouraging. After three quarters of its first year of operations, more than 37,000 individuals had acquired skills training in some 40 course offerings. In an effort to upgrade the training standard, the government sent 75 Filipino vocational administrators, supervisors and trainers to the United Nations Development Program Vocational Training Center in Turin, Italy. At the same time, the MDC conducted studies and analyses of training programs in various government agencies.

In his 1969 State of the Nation address, the President could already report that "manpower development is a breakthrough in the solution of the perennial unemployment problem." He said that "for the first time we have set up a national program



Trainees at the youth center: the core of educated manpower.

designed to give new skills to workers who otherwise would have no chance to get a formal training."

With the establishment of the NMYC, manpower development as an institution gained a permanent status.

The council is composed of eight ex-officio members coming from the government and six appointed members coming from the private sector, particularly industry, labor, family and youth welfare. It is a policy-making body and has a secretariat which serves as its implementing arm. The secretariat is headed by a director-general and has three component offices (Manpower Planning and Development, an Office of Out-of-School Youth Development, and a

National Manpower Skills Center) and several staff and service branches.

During the NMYC's first year of operation (fiscal year 1969-1970), 98,098 unemployed adults and out-of-school youth enrolled in 49 different courses in 174 training centers. Of these trainees, 77,420 or 79 percent graduated.

Although manpower training program was considered mainly the concern of the government, the program also called for coordination with the private sector. Thus, the NMYC entered into a closer liaison with the private sector. The result was an inroad in the fields of in-plant and instruction training geared to

Turn page

"In a laissez-faire society, we thought that the best way to the top is to go there, and when we are already all there, we find that the only vacuum left to be filled is at the bottom," an educator once commented.

He may as well have been describing too the malaise obtaining in manpower development in the Philippines. The number of graduates in "prestige courses" like commerce, law, education, and liberal arts had been much greater than the demands and needs of the labor market. The result was a mass of educated manpower that was largely unemployed or underemployed. More professionals were being produced than the economy could absorb. On the other hand, "at the bottom," where the demand for vocational and technical skills was great, the available trained manpower was inadequate.

A number of measures are now being implemented to correct that imbalance. The educational system, for one, is being reoriented to relate to the country's development needs. For another, manpower development is an important new activity now being vigorously pursued by the government.

On the forefront of this activity is the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC), created "to take care of, train and develop human resources and to establish institutions and formulate integrated plans, programs and projects as well ensure efficient and proper allocation, accelerated development and optimum

(From page 3)

grading of skills. During the fiscal year 1966-1970, 3,874 industrial workers were trained.

This training helped in the promotion of these workers and in increasing their salaries. Moreover, as a consequence of the promotions, vacancies were created, giving job openings to the unemployed.

By definition of law, manpower from the out-of-school youth group falls between the ages of 12 and 17 years. As such, these young people are still practically unacceptable to industrial establishments. What was fashioned for them was a cooperative system of "bayanihan" integrated skills program aimed mainly at the development of agricultural skills and skills needed for cottage industries.

At present, the NMYC is conducting two "bayanihan" youth settlement programs. One is in Negros Occidental where 15 youth recently graduated from a one-year training in various agricultural skills like sugar technology, rice and corn culture, vegetable raising and animal hus-

bandry.

In several barrios in Pampanga, where a home industry project was launched in 1971 — also in line with the "bayanihan" integrated skills training program — the NMYC revealed that 86 percent of its training graduates were able to find means of self-employment and were able to earn an aggregate income of P12,600 from their various projects, including hog and poultry raising, rice farming and vegetable production.

Giving the NMYC program a big boost is the completion of the multi-million-peso National Manpower Skills Center in Taguig, Rizal. This complex construction represented the counterpart of the Philippine government under the RP-United Nations Development Program-International Labor Organization agreement. The UNDP and ILO provided \$200,000 worth of machinery and equipment.

It started full operations last January 15, with the first 80 trainees enrolling in machine fitting, automotive mechanics, electronics and electricity. The training will last from

six to eight months, after which they will undergo an on-the-job training in selected industries where they might later be employed.

The NMYC is also putting up 10 regional manpower training centers in key industrial regions of Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Bicol, East Visayas, West Visayas, East Mindanao and West Mindanao.

Since the proclamation of martial law, the NMYC has undergone a self-evaluation of its programs with the view to giving them added momentum. Now, it is centering its program implementation on three principal areas, namely: manpower assessment and planning, projects operations, and establishment of additional institutions for effective development and utilization of manpower resources.

Among the long list of activities under these three principal areas, perhaps the most outstanding is the implementation of a restructured manpower training program. Findings showed that only 60 percent of the training graduates had been actually absorbed for gainful occupation. To

raise the level of efficiency, several measures have been adopted, including an increase in the number of training hours, the revamp of the instructional materials by employing a method used in Europe and the United States called "training modules," aptitude testing in the recruitment of trainees, the employment of trade test standards, and the exclusion in the curriculum of so-called soft trades like dressmaking, hairdressing, cosmetology and the like and concentration instead on higher technical skills needed by industry and agriculture.

Also part of these activities is the construction skills training project of the NMYC in conjunction with the Export Processing Zone Authority in Mariveles, Bataan. One hundred jobless adults have so far received training at the trade zone training center. Additional workers are at present undergoing training in construction skills while another group of trainees are engaged in shoe manufacturing.

LUIS P. VENERACION

TOWN FIESTAS

Tradition as a tool for growth

Early last month, the Department of Local Government and Community Development issued a circular to all local officials to transmute lavish fiestas into agro-industrial fairs and other meaningful activities. This was in line with a presidential edict issued shortly after the proclamation of martial law enjoining all citizens to avoid and prevent ostentatious display of wealth and extravagance, including the holding of fiestas and other festivities.

Fiestas are indeed costly affairs. On the average, a barrio (of which there are now 33,827 in the Philippines) spends around P500 for its annual fiesta. This is a conservative figure and does not include the expenses in city and town fiestas, which can be far more lavish. In any case, barrio expenses add up to quite a substantial sum: P16,913,500. Such amount, if spent for the construction of irrigation systems, fertilizer, and tractors, can mean untold benefits in terms of increased agricultural production.

In response to the government call, many cities, municipalities and barrios have been harnessing the "fiesta spirit" for progress in agriculture, industry, and even culture. Last month, according to the Philippines News Agency, at least three cities, four provinces, and 22 towns held agro-industrial fairs under mini expositions to replace the lavish fiestas of the past. In Caloocan City, at least 50 industrial firms participated in an exposition held at the athletic grounds of the city high school. An average of 2,000 persons visit the fair each day. In Marikina, the country's shoe capital, more than 30 industrial firms are participating in a cultural and industrial fair. Paranaque, a few minutes drive from Manila International Airport, is also holding its own fair to redirect the people's enthusiasm and energies towards the enhancement of



Farm products at the agro-industrial fair: a change from lavish fiestas.

local business.

Apart from the government call for austere celebrations, what has made the spirit of the agro-industrial fair catch one? One of the main reasons is the success of the "Green Revolution" in the cities, towns, and barrios. The agro-industrial fair has provided an outlet for the people to display what they have produced, such as the longest "upo," the biggest pig, the largest carp, the most beautiful handbag and other outstanding products.

This and other trends may not mean the abolition of the fiesta altogether but, rather, its being redirected towards social growth and economic development.

The idea is to harness a long-established institution in shaping a new society responsive to the needs of the masses. Thus, in some communities today, there are moves to pool the contributions they usually chip in for fiestas and to invest the amount in some communal project or enterprise.

Mayor Osmundo de Guzman of Marikina said that "aside from finding ready market for products of agriculture and industry, the agro-industrial fairs have encouraged our people to

improve the quality of their products."

Another example of a fiesta as an instrument of growth was the one held in Taytay, Rizal, last month. During the town fiesta, different barrios put up agricultural and industrial exhibits. Among the products exhibited were handicrafts, ornamental cases, embroidery items, kitchen utensils, bags, trinkets and trays. All sectors of the community were involved, and the proceeds were to be plowed back into the community through various projects.

"The success of the fair was not only in terms of the profit realized but more so in the realization of the people that they have so much to be proud of in terms of products and potentials," Taytay Mayor Benjamin B. Esguerra said.

Fiestas cum mini-fairs can also be directed towards the promotion of tourism. An example was Kalibo, Aklan which held a fair last January. The provincial and municipal governments joined hands in making the annual at-i-ta-ihan festival more useful for Aklan's tourism industry.

Other places which have held agro-

industrial fairs include Jaen, Nueva Ecija; Mandaue City and Talibon, Bohol, both in Eastern Visayas.

"For years," Kalibo Mayor Icamina said, "we had been celebrating the at-i-ta-ihan, and all we did was spend so much money without getting anything in return. But this year, we fully tapped our fiesta to derive some profits for our people and for our government coffers."

According to Mayor Icamina, Kalibo attracted more tourists this year with the sprucing up of several hotels and boarding houses to accommodate revelers from other parts of the country. He said there also was a brisk sale of locally made products.

Other towns, cities, and provinces can learn from such example.

There is much to gain from fiestas being geared toward socio-economic uplift. With more initiative, ingenuity and imagination on the part of the officials and with the full cooperation of the people, what used to be a purely religious tradition can be tapped fully for the country's development.

EUFRONIO V. AFUANG

STOCK MARKET

Still going up, up, up

It may just be a matter of definition, but some people are still hard put to describe precisely the present state of the local stock market. Some say that the long-awaited boom is now a reality. Others believe that it is just the sign of even bigger things to come.

Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that never in its entire history has the local stock market seen the likes of the buy-and-sell spurge that has attended the first quarter trading season of 1973. After a shy and probing start of P57.6 million in January, the peso value of transactions surged to a P491.6 million February total and then coasted to a P469.6 million aggregate for March. By the end of March, the Board of Investments reported that total stock transactions for the first three months of the current year amounted to a staggering P1,018,913,000. This sum represents a 579 percent increase over that of the first quarter of last year which saw only around P150 million worth of

stocks being traded. More significantly, this year's first quarter performance has already outpaced the whole year's total of approximately P608 million in 1972.

This dramatic turn of events certainly lends support to the view that the boom is now a reality. But there are those who feel a still bigger thing is likely to happen and would rather have, in the meantime, a conservative reading of the facts.

While there may be a difference of opinion over terms, there is general agreement, however, over the factors that have induced this new-found vigor in the stock market. On the political front, the ominous clouds of unrest have been dispersed; the deleterious effects of the changing political seasons of the past, which often led to unpredictable shifts in economic policies, have disappeared; and the initial uncertainty of the early days of martial law has given way to a palpable feeling of confidence and trust in the nation's leadership. In short, political stability has been restored.

At the same time, the Administration has been continually reviewing and revising economic and political policies which had become institutionalized barriers to investment and economic growth. Immigration rules have been relaxed to facilitate the entry of foreign investors. The participation of foreign nationals in the exploitation of natural resources, particularly in oil exploration, is encouraged under the most liberal terms, coupled with

guarantees for the repatriation of capital and profits. The Investment Incentives Act has been amended to allow greater foreign equity participation in certain areas. The tax on the interest on foreign loans has been reduced to a uniform rate of only 15 percent.

The stock market itself has also been the special object of more realistic policies. Among the first decrees that President Marcos issued after the proclamation of martial law was the reduction of the stock transfer tax from two percent to a minimal one-fourth of one percent. Then the broker's fee was also reduced to just one percent.

Over and above these inducements, the recent record of the Philippine economy helped create the prevailing climate of confidence. The greatly improved balance of payments position, for instance, gives substance to government guarantees on loans and other forms of foreign investments. Liquidity has also been enhanced with the flushing out of hidden wealth through the tax amnesty and the expansion of development projects by the government.

Under these conditions, it was but to be expected that the stock market, which is often regarded as the nation's economic barometer, would register the appropriate response.

In the face of this already creditable performance of the stock market in the last three months, many foresee even brisker trading days ahead. The point that is often brought out in this forecast is that the impact of all these

policies and positive changes in the economic climate is just beginning to be felt. Those who subscribe to this view cite the example of foreign capital inflow. Many of the foreign investors who have entered the country recently came for a first-hand view of the investment climate. And if one judges by their favorable impressions about the economy, additional investments may be expected to pour in shortly.

Besides, the government has adopted lately two additional measures that are likely to give fresh impetus to the flourishing stock market. First, the President ordered the demonetization of old Philippine currency notes. This should ferret out unproductive hoard cash, some of which should surface in the stock market. Second, the President has also decreed the automatic listing of all securities in all stock exchanges so as to broaden public participation in business and industry. The latter decree is also designed to facilitate the diffusion of profits and property ownership as well as to protect the interests of the investing public by giving them the option of trading at the exchange of their choice. "A company which has decided to go public should not be given the authority to limit the trading in its securities to only one market place," the President explained.

When finally the full force of these developments hits the market, nobody has to guess where it will carry the economy. Only one direction is indicated: UP.

JORGE V. ARUTA

PERSPECTIVES

Unity among RP shippers

By TROADIO T. QUIAZON, JR.
Secretary of Trade and Tourism



Secretary TROADIO T. QUIAZON, JR.

The Philippine Foreign and domestic trade received the needed shot in the arm when President Marcos created the Philippine Shippers Council "to stabilize freight rates and assure the shipment of exports on time."

Long under the clutches of the conference lines which unilaterally impose frequent freight rate increases, Philippine shippers can now protect their own interests and negotiate for reasonable freight rates and optimum shipping terms with foreign shipping interests.

Created by Presidential Decree No. 165, the shippers' council will be a non-stock corporation composed of firms regularly engaged in exporting, except those with efficient chartering operations but which will be given the option to join.

The council will be attached to the Department of Trade and Tourism for direction, supervision, and coordination of the government efforts to assist it.

Creation of the body could not have come at a more appropriate time — when the conference lines have effected or are about to effect another freight rate adjustment.

The Department of Trade and Tourism, while making the necessary representation with the conference lines to forego or at least delay the rate adjustments, has merely persuasive influence in this respect.

What the country needs, as provided for by Presidential Decree No. 165, is an effective machinery which will provide an instrument for

consultation and negotiation among shipping lines, liner conferences shippers and other interested parties including public authorities regarding shipping matters.

With the creation of the shipping body, the determination of the quality of shipping services, increases in domestic and freight rates, and the terms of shipment will now have to be negotiated with leaders of the Filipino shippers.

It can be pointed out that the high cost of commodities for local consumption, the uncompetitive prices of some of the country's export, and the accompanying adverse effects on the nation's balance of payments with respect to the Philippines' trading partners resulted from the unilateral imposition of freight rates by the conference lines.

As created, the PSC will:

- Promote and protect the common interests of Philippine exporters, importers, and other commercial users of water transport.
- Conduct consultations and negotiations, on behalf of the members, with shipping companies,

associations of shipping interests, government authorities to secure appropriate vessels for the shipment of their goods, on time and at reasonable rates and other favorable shipping terms.

- Facilitate consultations and mediate or arbitrate disputes between members and non-members.

- Serve as a clearing house of information on shipping services and other matters of interest to Philippine shippers.

- Bring to the attention of government authorities the laws, policies, rules and practices which hamper the healthy development of Philippine trade and commerce, especially those which serve to delay or obstruct the speedy, economical and efficient carriage of merchandise, and recommend and work for appropriate legislation and the adoption of remedial measures.

- Maintain and develop close relationships and enter into mutually beneficial arrangements with shippers' councils and other related organizations in Asian and other countries for the attainment of its objectives.

As the bulk of the export commodities of Asian countries like the Philippines is composed of comparatively cheaper priced raw materials compared to the finished products of the industrialized countries, the cost component of shipping shall remain a major factor of the total competitiveness of the Asian products in the world market.

In this regard, Filipino shippers, through the Philippine Shippers Council, could initiate cooperation among Asian shippers to operate viable shipping enterprises of their own.

There is a wide scope for regional or sub-regional pooling of shipping resources, which arrangements have been found successful in other countries.

The region's almost uniform export products — coconut oil, palm and processed agriculture products — are certainly worthwhile fields of cooperative activities in the acquisition and operation of bulk carriers and tankers.

This, we believe, is an objective worthy of support. The President of the Philippines has given this support, through the creation of the Philippine Shippers Council.

THE PRESS

Catalyst for social change

Seven months after the government clamped down on a wayward press, several publishing houses have been reopened to fill the demand for more reading materials, especially hard news. A number of daily newspapers, the traditional backbone of the Philippine press, are now in circulation with practically the same hands that wrote and edited them in pre-marital law days.

The concept of the social responsibility of mass media, however, has been recast, and they are now a partner of government in evolving desirable social changes, inculcating new attitudes, and helping spur economic development.

Behind this new orientation was the government's decisive action in September 1972 to arrest the general deterioration and the extremist drift of a large segment of media. Today, while policing mass media for possible lapses, the government is also busy working out programs for the upgrading of the press and its strengthening as a social institution.

Dailies based in the Greater Manila area have built up a combined circulation of almost 900,000, which is more or less the same aggregate circulation of the major dailies before martial law. This tends to indicate that the information void left by the closure of mass media late last year has been substantially filled by existing publications.

While the circulation of newspapers seems to have levelled off, public information analysts feel that less than a million newspaper copies, augmented by other mass-oriented publications, are not enough to meet the information needs of 40 million Filipinos whose literacy rate is 84 percent.

Before martial law, there were 21 newspapers, 17 of them publishing out of Greater Manila. Their total circulation of almost 900,000 was supplemented by 16 weekly magazines whose circulation reached almost one million.

The community newspapers numbered 35, with an average circulation of 3,000 copies each.

The bulk of the income of the major newspapers came from advertising, a factor that, in pre-marital law days, heavily influenced their editorial policies. Advertising in 1971 cost P215 million, and 37 percent of this went to the print media. Ten years earlier, the print media got 50 percent of the total annual advertising expenditure.

Latest figures show that the 15-centavo Daily Express tops the field for dailies with its circulation of 330,000.



The defunct Manila Times, in its day, had to content itself with only 270,000 for its big Sunday edition.

There was a time, some days and weeks after the proclamation of martial law late last year, when the Express was selling 576,000 copies daily, an indication of a staggering demand for hard news. The Express presses were running 20 hours every day, but still the tabloid could not cope with the demand.

The demand was partly met with the appearance of a new daily, the Times Journal, on October 21, 1972. The Journal these days has a circulation of 80,000.

The Bulletin Today came out a month later, on November 22. Starting with 80,000 copies, its circulation has leaped to 150,000. To supplement the output of its presses, the Bulletin has leased the printing plant of the Philippines Herald, two blocks away from Muralla Street.

The Express has shifted to high gear with the putting out of its evening edition (an additional 65,000 copies daily), and its sister publications, Express Sports (35,000), Expressweek (80,000), and Filipino Express (100,000). The Express plant's capacity has been augmented with the leasing of the offset presses of the defunct Daily Star in Port Area.

The Times Journal, the only major daily without its own printing plant, is using the web-fed offset presses of the defunct Manila Chronicle in Pasig, Rizal.

Among the English-language magazines, Panorama, which serves as a weekly supplement of the Bulletin, is No. 1, with 150,000 copies. Expressweek, sold separately from the other Express publications, comes second with 80,000. Focus Philippines runs 75,300 weekly, Woman's Home Companion, aiming at a special market, has a gross paid circulation of 75,000. Last April 2, another weekly, the Women's Journal, joined the women's magazine field. One of its circulation officials said it had an initial run of 90,000 copies. Another English-language weekly, the Sunday Observer which came out early March, has a circulation of 10,000.

The vernacular publications have improved on their pre-marital law circulation. The latest figures are: Liwayway, 180,000; Bisaya, 80,000; Bannawag, 60,000; Hiligaynon, 53,000. Balita, a daily tabloid in Filipino, prints 85,000.

Except for a few who chose to try their hand in other fields, most of the displaced newspapermen had found employment in the reopened media, the government service, and other areas allied to newspapering.

News coverage has been simplified, with the channeling of government news through the Department of Public Information (DPI). Most news outfits today have at least two men assigned to the DPI offices in Malacanang, which has become the main source of important news reports.

Appearance-wise, most of the newspapers before and during martial law generally look the same. The Express and the Bulletin have not undergone any major change as far as front-page makeup is concerned. The Times Journal somehow looks like a cross between the Manila Times and the Chronicle.

As for content, however, there has been a noticeable "cleansing" of the pages of all newspapers. The screaming headlines on crime and scandals blown to hysteria proportions are gone. There is now more emphasis on using the mass media as a catalyst for social change.

Applications for the reopening of mass media are passed upon by the Mass Media Council, created by President Marcos through Presidential Decree 36 to oversee the resumption of the operations of qualified media. Permits to operate are renewable every six months.

Secretary of Public Information Francisco S. Tatad and Secretary of National Defense Juan Ponce Enrile are the chairman and co-chairman, respectively, of the MMC. The council is run by a six-man executive committee, and serviced by a secretariat and five action committees that process applications and monitor the media, among other functions.

The cabinet office having powers of direct regulation over the mass media is the DPI. One function of this department is to "formulate standards and guidelines, including measures of supervision and control, for the production and dissemination of information about the government and its activities."

One of the agencies under the DPI is the Bureau of Standards for Mass Media (BSMM), which "shall be responsible for setting standards, guidelines, and criteria for the operations and activities of publicly and privately owned media; adopting measures of supervision and control to ensure that their operations conform with set standards and guidelines; and establishing a system of liaison and cooperation between the two sectors in the dissemination of information to the public."

The BSMM is headed by Acting Director Andres Cristobal Cruz, a writer-painter, a TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men) awardee, and former assistant director of national libraries. His deputy director is Amante E. Bigornia, former editor of the Evening News and one-time president of the National Press Club. The Bureau has separate divisions for specific sectors of the mass media: radio-television, advertising and promotions, press and publications, and films. Each is headed by a division chief who is a media specialist.

The BSMM has formed citizens' councils composed of recognized authorities in the various media of information to help set standards for professionalism, content, and economic viability of mass media.

Discussions in these panels and the position papers submitted by the members point to a consensus that mass media should upgrade further their standards and their activities be regulated in the higher interest of the public. The panels have also recognized the key role that media play in bringing about desirable changes in society and spurring economic development.

FEDERICO PASCUAL, JR.

ART

Saprid's murals in metal

Nothing short of phenomenal is the rise of Solomon Saprid to the front rank of contemporary Philippine sculpture in the last three years. It started with the commission for the Gomburza Monument, won in a 1970 competition in which all Filipino sculptors of note participated. Since then Saprid has become the country's leading mural sculptor. After the death of Carlos V. Francisco, a critic observed, Saprid is in fact carrying on in metal what the genius of Angono did with oil and canvas.

Saprid's works in beaten bronze or copper decorate the lobbies of several banks in Manila and Makati. The latest is a pair of murals, each 40 feet long, for the new Central Bank building on Roxas Boulevard. At present the sculptor is working on the design for another major commission which is to be finished by the middle of the year.

As "Botong" Francisco turned, not too frequently, to easel pictures when not executing murals, so Saprid does less ambitious works in between the big ones. In this respect he is more prolific than Francisco. All told, his output in the last few years has been really prodigious. His works are in continuous demand by architects and builders who appreciate their richness of execution to offset austere modern interiors. This has not prevented Saprid from producing small-size sculpture in high relief for numerous homes and offices, figures in the round for lawns and gardens, or life-size statues in a variety of motifs ranging from the religious to the



'The Fruits of Labor': a detail of the mural at the Far East Bank & Trust Co.

paganistic.

As if all this were not enough, he potters around his studio, in a rambling house in San Francisco del Monte, with bits of metal which he shapes into unique objects that could serve equally well as paper-weights, door knockers, conversation pieces, and what not. Recent diversissements include miniature carvings in ivory, perhaps to be framed in silver or worked into the skull of a hornbill or some other curio prized by his collector friends.

When not occupied with institutional art, Saprid is free to indulge his propensity to surrealism, endowing conventional subjects with overtones of the religious, the erotic or the occult. Signs of the Zodiac lend themselves particularly well to this purpose, and Saprid exploits them to the



Saprid in his workshop.

BOOKS

Guide to the Bible

POINTING THE WAY
by Martin Buber
A Harper Torchbook

In this book *Pointing the Way* are essays by the German Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, who died in 1965. Says Maurice Friedman, the translator of the essays into English: "(there is) a growing importance in the English-speaking world both of Buber's works and his life. Today Martin Buber is recognized as one of the great contemporary philosophers." Says Reinhold Niebuhr: "The publication of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, a quarter of a century ago was a great event in the religious life of the West."

Each essay is on a different subject, and the reader is advised to read only one essay in one sitting. This book review will concentrate on the third and last section, namely "Politics, Community, and Peace."

In this third section Martin Buber analyzes and criticizes "modern" western society, which to the Asian reader might be difficult to understand. Buber often begins a sentence with "we." What does "we" mean?

"We" is "the Jewish people" or "Jerusalem" or "Israel" and Martin Buber is no longer talking as a philosopher nor as an individual, but as one of the Jewish nation. And whenever he talks as one of the Jewish nation, he has left philosophy behind.

Probably the most important essay is "Prophecy, Apocalyptic, and the Historical Hour," which is impossible to summarize. It is true biblical criticism to help the Bible reader who has been floundering around in the New Testament. Buber explains the distinction between the prophets and the apocalyptic writings. The prophets' cry was always the same: "turn," or "return!" often translated in English as "repent!," while in the apocalyptic writings, the end of all history is near and there is a coming age in which there will be a transformation of all things. In the apocalyptic writings, therefore, it is a process that cannot be arrested. But in the message of the prophets of Israel, there is "a living historical dialogue of divine and human actions." To the prophets of Israel, the turning is "not a return to an earlier, guiltless stage of life, but a swinging round to where the wasted hither-and-thither becomes walking on a way, and guilt is atoned for in the newly-arisen genuineness of existence."

It is not surprising that Martin Buber has been counted among the existential philosophers. And, in fact, he has somewhere a commentary on Kierkegaard's relation between Abra-

ham and God.

In the last paragraph of "The Validity and Limitation of the Political Principle" he again talks of a group who may have to come to the rescue "in the hour when the catastrophe sends in advance its final warning," but he does not identify them here; he merely says: "those who stand on the cross-front will have to come to the rescue." He adds, "They who have in common the language of human truth must then unite to attempt in common at last to give to God what is God's."

In "A Letter to Gandhi" (written in 1939) he explains to someone who does not know anything about the Jews what it means to be a Jew. In the course of the explanation, he also touches on the Arab and Jew conflict and Palestine.

Martin Buber was in Germany during the beginning of the great persecution of the Jews. He was brought to Palestine. He taught at Hebrew University. Among his works are: *Two Types of Faith*, *A Believing Humanism*, and *Eclipse of God*. He and his friend Franz Rosenzweig worked together on a translation of the Hebrew Bible into German in such a way as to preserve the original spokenness of the Hebrew (from a note by Maurice Friedman). Dag Hammarskjöld nominated him for a Nobel Prize in Literature. He is listed as a writer on Jewish life and religion by Schocken Books who, sponsored by the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations,

limit.

But the subject which has become his virtual trade-mark is the Tikbalang, the centaur of the Philippine "lower mythology" symbolizing male power. Saprid has woven many variations around this theme, of which the most notable so far is a statue on one of the squares in the Makati commercial center.

Saprid's art may have been saved from sterility, after its beginnings in religious themes, by its entry into the realm of mythology and folklore. He has done his share of Resurrections and Last Suppers and now draws more from myth and history for inspiration. An academic person (master's degree in Communications, leading faculty member in one of the Manila universities) until a few years ago, Saprid is no stranger to research and scholarship.

It was a former neighbor, painter Vicente Manansala, who revived Saprid's artistic ambitions after remaining dormant for many years. Saprid had spent a term at the prewar School of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines, but later found the academic life more rewarding. He was nearing his 50th year when Manansala literally threw a piece of wood at his feet and dared him to sculpt it if he had not yet forgotten his earlier ambition. That, Saprid now remembers with gratitude, was how he got started.

After winning three major awards in two sculpture exhibitions in 1968, he had his first one-man show the next year. Then came the Gomburza commission, and Saprid the sculptor was fully and securely launched. He resigned his teaching post to devote himself entirely to art. Like H. R. Ocampo and Cesar Legaspi, who also left high-paying jobs in middle age to paint full time, Saprid has had no cause to regret his decision.

E. AGUILAR CRUZ

published *Tradition and Contemporary Experience* in 1970.

Within the past ten years, there have been efforts made to consolidate Jedaec-Christian unity. Jewish intellectuals, many of them rabbis, are teaching in American universities.

Scholars and philosophers have been trying to pierce the mystery of the life of Jesus. Martin Buber mentions him several times while the authors of the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* present the moral problems of Judas.

Judas and Israel used to be one nation. The tribes broke away and called themselves Israel. The two tribes that were left called themselves Judah. The people of Judah never let go of their language or of their identity; they were called "Jews" from the name "Judah." The ten tribes of Israel, however, forgot their identity as children of Israel, they forgot who they were, they strayed from the faith of Israel, and became "lost sheep." They were captured by the Assyrians and migrated with the Assyrians. Jesus said he came to find "the lost sheep." Also he is quoted as telling his followers, "Go to the ten tribes."

The Jews had no chance to worry about what had happened to their brothers, the ten lost tribes. Jesus put himself through trouble and agony, even appearing as a traitor to his own nation, to "get the message across" to them, to the lost tribes who didn't even know who they were.

JOLICO CUADRA

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respite from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Lately, the area has become a "hunting ground" for residents of nearby Cape Bolinao hoping to find maybe their first million in the bottom of the sea. Indications are that it may not become a futile search.

The object of the hunt is a branchy coral about two to four feet long. Some call it the pink coral, but may also be bright orange in appearance. It is said to be the toughest coral yet found in the deep sea and, consequently, commands quite a price. One has to knock it off from its rock bed. This coral is believed to be found in the sea around Cape Bolinao, the nearby island-town of Anda, and the Hundred Islands.

Other people call the coral "Kamoka," after a 38-year-old Japanese businessman who had spent months on board a ship combing the sea off Cape Bolinao for the coral.

It is related sometime in September, 1969, a Bolinao fisherman sold one big pink coral to a Japanese buyer for only P200. Later, the Japanese buyer sold it for \$20,000 in Japan. It was still considered a giveaway price. The coral could have sold easily for \$100,000 or more, a Japanese informant told the Philippine News Agency correspondent in Pangasinan.

"Since the arrival of the Japanese ship hunting from morning to sunset for the precious coral, there has been an influx of deepsea divers looking for the treasure," the PNA man reported.

An article in Asia magazine featuring the pink coral also has heightened the interest of treasure hunters in Pangasinan. The coral can be fashioned into necklaces, rings, brooches and other ornaments.



The Hundred Islands of Pangasinan: wealth hidden underneath?

PEOPLE

A man with a reputation for reacting instantly to emergency situations, the first American to establish formal contact with a North Vietnamese mission to try to secure Hanoi's agreement for what ultimately became the Paris peace talks on Vietnam, and the only man — in the words of Henry Kissinger — who understood the complicated ceasefire agreement forged early this year. These are some of the feathers in the cap of William Leahy Sullivan, a 50-year-old bushy-browed ex-destroyer and minesweeper officer who worked his way up the US State Department ladder to become deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Late last week, Mr. Sullivan was nominated by President Nixon as the next American ambassador to the Philippines, vice Henry Byroade, who is ending his tour of duty here. The son of a Rhode Island dentist, Mr. Sullivan served at one time or another in Laos, Thailand, India, Rome, and the Netherlands. In college, he did research work on Latin America, but "he can fairly be said to be an Asian specialist," according to a United Press International profile on the new envoy. US Presidential Security Advisor Kissinger paid him the supreme tribute when he told reporters in a recent public briefing in Washington that Mr. Sullivan was the only man who understood the intricacies of the ceasefire agreement.

His "first love," he was quoted as saying, is housing. But it was oil that brought James Christie, to the Philippines Friday last week. Some-

time ago, he had received from George Guthrie, an American geologist, a report on the prospects of an oil reservoir in the Philippines. The report, said Mr. Christie, seemed "very accurate." This and other positive factors obviously led to a contract for Scientific Research Ltd., of which he is president, to invest \$3 million for oil exploration in concessions of the South-Eastern Sierra Madre Resources situated in Sarangani Island, Sarangani Peninsula, the Sulu Sea, the Celebes Sea, and Tigao Channel in the Bicol region. "I believe that there is oil in the Philippines," says Mr. Christie. "I want to see it come in." The initial stages of drilling are expected to start within the next three months. At this point, there is no way of telling what the outcome will be, but in Mr. Christie's words: "We don't put that kind of money into anything and just stop trying. The oil game is always a challenge."

He had wanted to show his appreciation, and so, Pedro Patulin of Palawan decided to give the government first crack in mining a rich deposit of caustic soda he discovered in that island-province in 1958. According to a sample analysis conducted by an engineer, the deposit can be tapped for as much as P1 million a day. Mr. Patulin said he had staked a claim on the site but failed to follow it up because of a lingering illness that resulted in blindness late last year. The government took notice of his plight. Last month he regained his eyesight after a surgery arranged by the Philippine Eye Foundation. To Mr. Patulin — and to anyone in his eye-glasses, for that matter — a pair of healthy eyes is, without doubt, worth more than P1 million.



of Bohol; once under the sea?