

NEWS FRONT

MARKETING NETWORK

Speaker Jose B. Laurel revealed recently a legislative plan to establish a nationwide marketing network that will be under the control of Filipinos and using extensively cooperatives in the agricultural sector. The project which is embodied in the "Economic Freedom" bill which congress plans to enact shortly is expected to generate more agricultural production through efficient and effective marketing outlets.



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

The electrification plan for the Philippine countryside got its biggest boost recently when the House legislative mill approved on second and third reading a bill that aims to accelerate the program. As approved, the bill will increase the revolving fund of the electrification administration from its present P25 million to P100 million for the next five years. The bulk of the fund will be used for the purchase and installation of generators, transmission lines and other equipment. Also included are motors for irrigation and other industrial purposes.

MACAPAGAL WARNING

Former President Diosdado Macapagal warned the Liberal Party recently of inevitable defeat in the November elections unless the struggle for power among its leaders is stopped. Macapagal directed his warning to Senator Gerardo Roxas and former Speaker Cornelio Villareal, the two chief protagonists in the fight for the party presidency. The former president also appealed to his partymen not to expel Villareal from the party directorate to preserve the unity of the opposition.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

President Marcos revealed recently that the public works and infrastructure program will continue to receive top priority as long as he is the Chief Executive of the country. Speaking before the second annual convention of the district and city engineers league, the President said that he will shortly release several hundred millions for the construction of various work projects, including feeder roads. The President said that the country could not progress either in agriculture or in industry "unless we lay down the basic requirements of such progress, which are adequate public works and infrastructure."

ECONOMIC GAINS FOR RP

The Philippines' output of goods and services (Gross National Product) last year reached P28.37 billion (at current prices), an increase of 10 per cent over the 1967 level. This was disclosed by the Office of the Statistical Coordination and Standards (OS-CAS) of the National Economic Council. The report also disclosed that national income which represented the total earnings of the factors of production went up to P14.80 billion or 5.7 per cent or P805 million more than the previous year's record.

ECONOMIC PROSPECT

Bankers see a rosy economic outlook for the Philippines. In a report to stockholders, Filipinas Bank and Trust Co. Chairman of the Board Romeo R. Echaz and President Claudio T. Calalang said that "the potential for economic growth is tremendous and the opportunities in harnessing the nation's resources for faster and more sustained economic development have never been as great." The report adds that the gross national product is increasing at a faster rate, personal income is rising and so are individual savings.

PILL IMPORTATION

The importation of contraceptive drugs and devices was declared legal by Justice Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile. Enrile's opinion was made in answer to numerous requests from various organizations interested in family planning. Reports say that if the present trend of population increase continues, the Philippines would have a population of no less than 100 million in 35 years.



POLCOM ORDER

Policemen all over the country, whether on or off duty, are prohibited to enter day or night clubs, cocktail lounges, hotels, motels, rest houses, cabarets and cockpits, according to a memorandum circular issued by the Police Commission. The only exception provided for by the ban order is when the officers concerned are on official mission duly authorized in writing by the chief of police or the mayor or when they are responding to an emergency call. Not a few police officers feel that the order is "arbitrary" and plan to contest it in court.

IRRIGATION PROJECTS

An agreement involving P11 million to finance the completion of 15 major irrigation projects was signed recently by the Philippines and United States governments. The second such agreement between the two countries in the past year (the first involved some P7 million, also for local irrigation projects), the fund will come from the US public law 480 funds realized through the sale of American agricultural commodities in the Philippines.

LAND REFORM

President Marcos proclaimed recently a 10,000-hectare land contiguous to the Clark Air Force Base in Pampanga as a land reform area, thereby taking a significant step towards the fulfillment of the administration's land reform program. The President signed the proclamation in Malacañang in the presence of farmer leaders from Tarlac.

CRIME DRIVE

A total war against criminality was set in motion by Congress recently when it approved on second and third reading a bill constituting a P41 million peace and order fund. The fund which will be used to underwrite peace and order projects will be taken from the increase in travel taxes and a portion of the gold subsidy.

CIS POWERS CLIPPED

President Marcos clipped the investigative powers of the PC criminal investigation service when he directed the CIS to lay off business establishments. The President's order came in the wake of reports that the CIS is allegedly harassing some businessmen and business firms. The CIS was ordered by the President to confine itself to missions connected with the peace and order campaign.