

## STRENGTH IN UNITY

### Samahang Nasyon: Nucleus of barrio cooperatives

Barrio Bonuan Binloc in Pangasinan is one of the many economically depressed areas in the North. The majority of its residents have remained tenant-farmers all their lives, victims of a feudalistic system.

Early this year, something happened to give the barrio residents a shred of hope. Field workers from the Bureau of Cooperatives Development (BCD) under the Department of Local Government and Community Development (DLGCD) descended on the community to bring glad tidings: the barrio had been selected one of the pilot projects in six priority provinces for the organization of

Samahang Nasyon (Barrio Association) — the nucleus of the government's program to establish barrio cooperatives throughout the country.

For the next few weeks, the BCD district workers held meetings with the heads of the barrio families, numbering less than 200, and taught them the rudiments of cooperatives and the benefits that they could derive from these non-stock and non-profit organizations. After the period of education and orientation, the barrio folks met to elect their officers (president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, manager and auditor and a board of directors) and approved the

constitution and by-laws of their organization.

The SN is a major component of the land reform program. Through it, the farmers will be able to pay the amortizations for the lands that they get under land reform. It will establish a cooperative store, and savings bank and also serve as a pool for the improvement of farming and marketing methods. In effect, it will be the center of economic activity in the community.

After the Barrio Bonuan Binloc SN was registered with the BCD, it became a full-fledged SN, one of the many associations thus far formed in the six provinces of Laguna, Albay, Camarines Sur, Nueva Ecija, Iloilo and Isabela. Aggregate membership in 1,504 barrio associations stood at 78,126 with an initial membership contribution of P591,758.22 as of July 31, 1973. Of these, 518 associations with a total of 21,078 members,

had already been registered with the BCD. The success of the program in these pilot provinces will result in the formation of SNs in all the 33,827 barrios scattered throughout the country. And it will not only be confined to farmers but also to fishermen, laborers and other types of workers.

Even while the SNs are being organized, the BCD itself is busy training the experts to supervise the program. So far, 52 auditing examiners, who will keep an eye on SNs funds, have finished their training as auditing examiners while regional development directors and provincial officers are still undergoing orientation training at the DLGCD center in Los Banos, Laguna.

The BCD is also undertaking the listing of cooperatives to determine their viability preparatory to the lending out of funds by the Cooperative Development Loan Fund. Negotiations are underway for a \$6.7 million assistance loan from the Canadian government to boost the Cooperative Fund. Additional funds have been facilitated by the Letter of Implementation issued by President Marcos last year instructing rural banks, the Agricultural Credit Administration (ACA), Philippine National Bank and other financial institutions to deduct in advance 5 percent of production loans to farmers as a boost to the SN savings program.

DLGCD Secretary Jose Rono has reported that the first six priority provinces are now undergoing trainers' training for the next phase of operations, while the next 22 provinces in the priority list are in the process of conducting pre-membership education courses. The remaining provinces in the land reform group are now busy holding Municipal Rural Development Seminars while the 28 non-land reform provinces are conducting provincial rural development seminars. The training program is needed to assure the success of the cooperatives movement.

In the next 22 provinces, the BCD would need about 1,066 field workers to supervise some 5,700 SNs which are expected to be organized soon.

With continued government support, the mass-oriented Samahang Nasyon will help give the downtrodden a new cause for hope.



Samahang Nasyon meeting: Participation in the cooperative way of life

## HYDROGEN PEROXIDE

### A pioneering industry that saves dollars

The rise in world prices and international shipping costs of a little known but important industrial chemical component has seriously affected the operations of hundreds of local manufacturers.

The chemical is hydrogen peroxide, a colorless liquid that is well-known among women for bleaching the hair and to manufacturers as a bleaching and oxidizing agent and antiseptic and disinfectant. The chemical is used for bleaching textiles, leather, pulp and paper and wood products. It is also used as a blowing agent for foam rubber and light concrete, a leavening

substitute for yeast, an illuminating and cleaning material for electrodes and metals and a rocket fuel oxidizer and catalyst.

Peroxide-consuming industries annually import at least \$1 million worth of the chemical. The increase in world prices and transportation costs has threatened the existence of fledgling industries.

When President Marcos issued an open invitation to foreign investors to establish their businesses in the Philippines last year, there were immediate responses but none spelled relief for the peroxide-using firms. Most of the investments dealt in oil, garments, electronics, tuna-fishing and even wig-making.

Last June, however, a French-German consortium of bankers and industrialists announced the setting up of a P27-million hydrogen peroxide plant in Valenzuela, Bulacan. The plant was inaugurated by the President last month.

Known as the Peroxide Philippines Corporation (PPC), the plant is the

only one of its kind in Southeast Asia.

With the PPC's annual capacity of 3,000 tons, the local companies are now assured a steady supply of this chemical unaffected by the rising trend of world prices and freed from the additional costs imposed by the international shipping cartels.

During an earlier call on the President in Malacañang, the French-German group led by Dr. Herbert Aschmidt, an inventor of various chemical processes and builder of chemical plants in many parts of the world; Mr. George Aubrun of Krebif Company in Paris and Mr. Eric Geibing, Far East delegate of Klockner Industry Anlagen of Duisburg, Germany, informed the President that the consortium was registering with the Board of Investments another plant for the manufacture of freon gas, a material used in refrigeration.

The foreign investors said the factors that prompted them to establish the plant in the Philippines were: improved peace and order conditions; favorable business climate;

an adequate pool of highly skilled and labor persons who can speak English fluently and tax exemptions.

Foreign investors in such export-oriented and labor-intensive industries, like the PPC, are granted various incentives, among them, guarantee of investment and profit repatriation which has been decreed. Taxes are, likewise, reduced thus insuring greater profits.

In his speech at the inauguration of the plant, the President said:

"The Peroxide Philippines Corporation is an exercise in self-sufficiency. It fills the vacuum in the raw materials needed by so many prime industries in our country... Now, with the Peroxide Philippines Corporation established and operational, we can look forward to substantial savings in dollars, perhaps to foreign exchange earnings through export. The savings annually in foreign exchange alone is estimated at one million dollars. We can use that sum for other equally essential national development projects."