

# Collective Efforts for Forestry Glory

by

JUAN L. UTLEG  
*Acting Director of Forestry*

Let me first take this opportunity to extend to you and other friends outside of the Bureau of Forestry my profoundest gratitude and appreciation for your congratulatory messages on the occasion of my appointment as Acting Director of Forestry; likewise, to a number of sympathetic organizations (both in the public and private sectors) who had praised President Diosdado Macapagal for having restored in the Bureau of Forestry the career system.

I have been deeply moved by your spontaneous manifestation of trust and confidence in my humble self. My soul is lifting because I have received your assurance of support and cooperation to make this administration of ours in the Bureau of Forestry a resounding success.

My appointment is not a personal triumph on my part. It is not my victory alone. It is rather the victory of the career system in the Bureau of Forestry. It is, therefore, our collective victory. It is as much my victory as it is yours.

With you let us express too our profoundest gratitude to President Diosdado Macapagal for having reposed in us his trust and confidence by appointing a career forester as head of the Bureau. Let us pledge to continue upholding the finest tradition of public service for which the administration has consistently espoused.

Fellow foresters, there had been in the past a not too savory insinuation to the effect that it would take the leadership of a non-forester to put back our Bureau to its proper place.

I am not my friends casting aspersion on the capability of the non-forester who had headed our Bureau. On the contrary, it is my personal as well as official belief that each had contributed something good into the overall structure of the Bureau.

With your permission, I would like to pay tribute to our non-forester directors who had been with us in the Bureau.

They were Dr. Mateo S. Pecson, Ex-Governor and Ex-Congressman of Masbate; Mr. Esteban Piczon, now governor of Samar; Mr. Estanislao R. Bernal, now Undersecretary of General Services; then Executive Secretary Calixto Zaldivar, now Justice of the Supreme Court; and finally, Atty. Apolonio F. Rivera, who was recalled to Malacañang.

Although they did not stay long with us, the good that they had done will always be remembered by those whom they left behind in the Bureau.

To each of them, we are grateful. The foresters as well as the rest of the forestry employees wish each of them the best of luck.

Atty. Apolonio F. Rivera was the non-forester director who stayed longest with us. Without fear of contradiction, I say that he had done much in the Bureau.

I will reiterate in this congregation what I said in the joint birthday tendered in honor of Atty. Rivera and me: Atty. Rivera is the best non-forester director the Bureau ever had.

Fellow-foresters and employees, let us give Atty. Rivera a standing ovation.

As I said there was an insinuation that it would probably require the leadership of a non-forester to put the Bureau back to the state of repair.

Now that the helm of the Bureau is back in the hands of a forester let us prove together to everybody that the forestry leadership is dead set on redeeming itself at the bar of public opinion. The fact that the forester director happens to be my humble self is incidental. What should be borne in mind is that the Bureau of Forestry is composed of men and women who have made public service their lifetime career.

The success of one in the Bureau is the success of all. The failure of one is the failure of all. This is the logic from which we can not escape. This is the logic that should guide us in charting the course of our official department.

And there is only one course that beckons us. Let us project our motives and purposes to that course which leads to success. In the forestry leadership is at stake not the honor of one man alone, not the honor of a few persons, but the honor of all officials and employees of the Bureau of Forestry.

My purpose in calling this conference is timely as it is urgent. I took advantage of the National Convention of the DANREAS to save time and money. The field service of the Bureau of Forestry is the direct implementing hand of the government in protecting and conserving the country's forest resources.

The field service should therefore be at all times effective. But it is confronted with numerous problems, most of which often hamper the smooth operation of its offices. The problems are capable of being solved. This is the reason why you are here now. Discuss the problems and propose the solutions.

There is an urgent need to maximize the effectiveness of the administration of the field offices to place them in a position

where they can maximize the successful achievement of the goal of forest protection and conservation. It is in the field where the success or the failure of the Bureau of Forestry will ultimately depend.

Our forest protection campaign is beset by problems. The reports of some people tend to picture the hopelessness of the forestry situation in the country. We do not know where some critics get their figures. It is amusing to observe that figures emanating from sources other than the Bureau are highly exaggerated especially those on the rate of forest destruction.

The more figures on the rate of forest destruction are exaggerated the more obvious the implication becomes. As a matter of fact every time they make a mountain out of a molehill they at the same time make a veiled conclusion to the effect that forest officers are sleeping on their job.

We are cognizant of the fact that our Bureau sadly lacks men, money and equipment. But they say this is not a valid excuse for official negligence. Whether we like it or not, they are right. I believe this particular disadvantage should rather serve to impel us to exert more effort to achieve more.

That we need more men, more appropriation and more equipment is a fact that can not be disputed. That we should become less enthusiastic, less interested and less hardworking on account of this disadvantage is an attitude of defeatism.

My friends, foresters in the past did not have the attitude of defeatism. They were known to have the ability to convert disadvantage into advantage, weakness into strength, perspiration into inspiration, sorrow into happiness, enemies into friends, tragedy into humor, and tears into smiles. They knew how to stand up every time they fell.

The situation is now changed. The world has become materialistic and so with the

people who live in it. We ask for more and more but give less and less. We have become more interested in what we receive than in what we give. Now one feels happy even if those around him are unhappy. And the more those around him are unhappy the more he is happy. It is the tragedy of time that one enjoys seeing others suffer and fail.

We in the Bureau of Forestry should relive those by-gone days. Let us try to make the most out of what is less. As we ask for more let us at the same time give more. Let us be more interested in what we give than in what we receive because sooner or later we will receive more if we give more. Let us give more before we expect to receive more. Let us not enjoy over the tragedy of our co-workers. As we commiserate let us at the same time help them.

The forest officers in the field are supposed to be on their job all working hours. Actually probably some are not. Perhaps there are some who go home early Friday morning and return to the office Tuesday noon. Perhaps there are some who stay in their houses upstairs most of the working hours instead of staying and working in the office downstairs. I refer to those who live with their families in the office where they also work. Perhaps some have made arrangement with their companions in the office in such a way that if one is out the other is in in a rotation basis.

It is possible that those who are supposed to do protection work in the forest are doing something else elsewhere. They record in their diaries that they are inspecting this and that, surveying this and that and guarding this and that, when actually they are not. And they collect not only their salaries but also per diems.

If some are doing this it is about time they stopped the practice. Let us not be like Nero who played his musical instru-

ment while Rome was burning. Let us not enjoy complacency while the country's forests are destroyed. As supervisors in the field, see to it that your personnel are actually in their places of assignment and are actually doing their job.

Fellow foresters in the field I give you this assurance. Show me your worth and I will show you what you deserve. My administration in the Bureau of Forestry as acting director will underscore public service with efficiency, honesty and fairness. I will make it a point to take note of what you have succeeded to do and what you have failed to do.

At the risk of sounding monotonous to you, I will repeat to you a pledge that has been made time and again in conferences like this. I will see to it that every appointment, every promotion, every designation and every transfer is made solely according to the merit system.

To use a bold expression, I am hell-bent to fulfill that pledge. Under this administration of ours in this Bureau everybody will get what is due him provided he gives first what is due from him.

There is one attitude which I would like to be corrected. I have observed that every time some officials from the Manila office go to the district offices on official mission the red carpet of welcome is rolled for them by the fieldmen. We are not certain whether this kind of treatment is a traditional hospitality or some form of investment to inspire those in the Manila office to act fast and favorably on pending papers from the district offices. Whether it is hospitality or not, the fact is that it is a heavy drain on the pockets of the fieldmen.

It is up to you if you want to lavish your hospitality on the visiting Manila officials. But do not get the impression that the way to expediting your papers in the Manila office is through the stomach and flesh of the

Manila personnel. So long as your papers are complete and in order, I assure you they will be immediately acted upon accordingly.

If you think your case is being unnecessarily delayed do not hesitate to let me know. Unless it is urgent, do not come to Manila without prior authorization from the office of the director. If you have complaints forward them to the Forestry Project Coordinator.

I will not prolong further this speech by giving you the details of the programs and objectives which we should undertake as these will be discussed in due time. I will confine myself to briefly stating the projects that should be given more attention to place the forest resources in continuous productivity and utility by wise use, protection and conservation.

In forest management, we should strive to place all licensed areas and those under license agreements under selective logging system. We will require more concessionaires and timber licensees to submit their policy statements and timber management plans. We will see to it that selective logging is really practiced as it should be by those who are required. As a disciplinary measure, we will either cancel the licences or reduce the annual allowable cut of the licensees who fail to comply with the implementation of selective logging.

We will adopt ways to insure complete control and supervision over the existing licensees and eliminate undesirable ones. The forest resources inventory work has progressed remarkably with the completion of the job in Mindanao. We will speed up the work in Luzon and the Visayas. The data gathered from the work are very important in the formulation of sound forest policies and programs.

The forest officers in the field should give more time to checking the activities of the licensees in the cutting areas to detect acts that defraud the government. The report that

some license holders are getting their supply of logs from areas other than those specified in their licenses should be looked into. There are those who credit their actual cut with the annual allowable cut of other licensees.

We will push with more vigour the classification of the remaining unclassified public forests. The implementation of Republic Act 3092 otherwise known as the "Permanent Forest Law" should be speeded up. We are studying the practicability of reverting alienable or disposable lands into the category of public forests.

The scaling of logs should be done actually and accurately so that the government is not defrauded of the forest charges due from the concessionaires. Rules on grading and inspection of logs and lumber for export should be enforced strictly. Are all logs cut by licensees scaled? Are all scaled logs scaled properly? These are the two questions that we should look into.

Action should be intensified on all pending special use cases through better planning of work and use of control maps. The inspection and appraisal of pasture permits and leases as required by Forestry Circular should be accelerated. We will encourage woodland leases and planting of trees of economic value to promote reforestation of badly cut over areas which can not be incorporated in another license area for reason of non-continuity. Under study is the institution of a system of bidding of remaining areas available for pasture. The present system of priority seems to be productive of conflicts and protests.

We will soon embark on the actual implementation of our program on watershed management. With the able assistance of Mr. Gulcur and the agency he represents, we expect to launch the project very soon.

More vital forest research projects should be undertaken. Results of studies and expe-

*(Continued on page 20)*

and see our field offices and compare them with offices of the Provincial officials. They can see the big difference. Our Administrative Services Division should do something to

get more money for our field offices. Haphazard action will not amount to anything. Some aggressive and progressive action must be done to get the desired results.

---

### COLLECTIVE EFFORTS . . .

(Continued from page 4)

riments should be published and fed to the Forestry Information Section for dissemination to the public. We should conduct more studies on the growth and yield of forest stands and trees to regulate the cutting of timber and attain sustained supply of raw materials for our wood industries.

Researches on forest influences, silviculture and forest grazing should be extensively undertaken. The research projects that have been started should be completed as soon as possible.

Forest legal cases should be attended to in cooperation with the local fiscals and the Bureau Legal Division. Efforts should be exerted to preserve and collect evidence which can stand up in any court of justice. It seems that legal cases on forestry are pursued on and off.

Forest officers in the field service should take every opportunity to spread the gospel of forest protection and conservation. As part of your public relations program, you should enlist the support of the local govern-

ments and civic organizations in the campaign against forest destruction.

My fellow-foresters, I hope in this conference you will discuss intelligently your problems and propose the necessary solutions. Let us make this conference not merely an occasion to get together. It should be a fruitful one. Talking is a very easy task. We can talk to our heart's content. But doing is another thing. After this conference let us rededicate ourselves to doing things.

My friends, let us revive the forestry golden era of the past. Always remember each of us has a stake in the success of the programs of the Bureau of Forestry.

Together, my friends, we will do our very best to live up to the expectation of the public. You who are assigned in the field service face a challenge that is more immediate because you are always in the front-line of the government campaign to secure for all generations the blessings of our country's forest resources.

Forestry fieldmen onward to your march to glory.

I thank you.

---

### INTENSIFICATION OF . . .

(Continued from page 8)

All of these efforts should be directed to worthwhile studies without unneeded duplication. I suggest that the Forest Research Division of the Bureau take the initiative in coordinating all efforts in forest management research.

6. *Plant open areas on concessions through cooperative arrangements with the Reforestation Administration.*—The most productive areas available for planting are those recently opened around spar trees, in skid-ways, etc.

within the timber concessions. Prompt planting would prevent invasion by weed species and also would reduce the temptation of squatters to expand and cultivate such openings. It is logical that the skills and facilities of the Reforestation Administration should be utilized in this work. It is hoped that the necessary arrangements can be made by the Department to implement this inter-agency cooperation. Such planting would make very productive use of some of the reforestation funds generated on the timber concessions where the planting is needed.