

The Consulting Forester, His Qualifications And Problems*

By AGAPITO L. CENABRE

FELLOW FORESTERS, STUDENTS AND GUESTS:

This is indeed a pleasant experience. While from your young faces I can discern your animated expectation of what I may say here that might add to what you have learned from your books and professors, I am, on the other hand, deeply touched living over again the 48 odd years in the government service in which most of you, if not all, hope to be taken. For it was from these very portals that I came out in 1914 full of youthful exuberance and hope, conscious of the immense task of a forest conservationist and the thought that my Ranger Certificate would enable me to do my bit in the CONSERVATION BY WISE USE of our vast natural forest resources. This could and must be your feeling now; and for those who would be stepping out with the BSF degree, the feeling would obviously be greater.

Mine was the rare privilege of having joined the ranks of those heroic men, valiant and unyielding in their struggle to conserve our forest patrimony, but rarer still is this opportunity afforded me by this kind invitation of our Alma Mater through my good friend and your professor, Forester Valentin Sajor, of reentering the same portals and be with you today no longer to study because I took further studies in this institution later and received the BSF degree in 1928, but as one who has "passed through the mill," and I feel again as one of you.

Way back in April 1, 1908 I entered the service of the Bureau of Forestry as a temporary ranger with an initial salary of ₱20.00 per month and a per diem of ₱.50 while in the field. By dint of hard work, loyalty, honesty and devotion to duty I gradually rose

from the ranks and at the time of my retirement from the service on February 28, 1954 I was holding the rank of Sr. Forester and Assistant Chief of Division. My story is long and I hope that someday I may have the chance of meeting some of you to tell you more about it.

But perhaps you would allow a little interruption that I tell you something about my history before I go further, because in that way only would we understand each other. I was born on August 18, 1888 in the little town of Pamplona in the province of Cagayan. As with the majority of you I also completed my early education there in 1903. My public life was started as a municipal teacher from 1903 to 1905 but I yearned for higher education and came to Manila where I studied in the Manila High School in 1907. After qualifying in a third grade civil service examination on April 1, 1908 I entered the service of the Bureau of Forestry as Temporary Ranger. Those were the early days of the American occupation and as there were no Filipino Foresters, American Foresters were our superiors who were quick to reward deserving subordinates. I was fortunate to catch their scrutinizing eyes so I was assigned in Los Baños, Laguna, as a reward for excellent service rendered in order to pursue higher forestry course which enabled me to obtain the BSF degree. Of course I passed the required civil service examinations for ranger, assistant forester, and forester.

The following is a brief summary of the positions I have held in the Bureau of Forestry:

Temporary Ranger
Assistant Ranger
Ranger-Officer in Charge of Station

* A talk delivered at the Convocation of the Forestry Student Body Association under the auspices of the Forest Administration Class, under Professor Valentin Sajor.

Senior Ranger-Officer in Charge of Forest District
 Forest Supervisor
 Forester
 District Forester (Cebu, Bohol, Oriental Negros, Northern Mindanao, and Samar and Leyte Districts)
 Assistant Chief of Division
 Forester-at-Large, In Charge of Public Relations; Special Projects and Inspection Service
 Acting Chief of Division (Division of Forest Lands and Maps and Forest Management and Forest Concessions)
 Assistant Chief of Division (on special detail as District Forester of Cotabato and Davao)
 Superintendent of the Mount Apo National Park
 Forester in Charge of the Bureau of Forestry, for and in the absence of the Director of Forestry, during the emergency as per Special Order No. No. 491 dated December 24, 1941, issued by the Undersecretary of Agriculture and Commerce.
 Supervising Forester for Mindanao and Sulu in addition to my duties as District Foresters of Davao.
 Division Forest Inspector (Northeastern and Southern Mindanao)
 Sr. Forester and Assistant Chief, Division of Forest Concessions and Sawmills and member of the Advisory Staff; investigating and efficiency committee of the Bureau of Forestry.

On the occasion of the Golden Anniversary of the Bureau of Forestry on April 14, 1950, I was the recipient of a service award diploma and a special gift from Secretary Placido L. Mapa of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The service award was in recognition of continuous, faithful and meritorious service rendered to the bureau for not less than 25 years, while the special gift was for attaining 42 years of service in the same Bureau. I was one among the few veteran employees of the Bureau who were instrumental in the establishment of the Cinchona Plantation in Mindanao; responsible in initiating and working for the passage of the Act No. 3294 which deals with the disposition of kaingin fines; and labored, as a lone lobbyist, for the passage of a reforestation

bill known as Commonwealth Act No. 119, the first substantial reforestation fund to be released.

I did not confine myself to the work of the Bureau of Forestry alone as some might mistakenly think as can be seen from the following summary of my outside activities:

Selected by the *Magindanao*, oldest Davao weekly, as Forester of the year 1939.

During the early part of 1942, in addition to my duties as District Forester of Davao, I was detailed to head the Department of Industry of the City of Davao and subsequently as Acting Provincial Agricultural Supervisor, Bureau of Plant and Animal Industry.

After liberation, I was designated by PCAU No. 29 as liaison officer for Mindanao and Sulu between the PCAU and the Bureau of Forestry.

It may not be amiss to mention in passing that I had made my contributions to Philippine botany and forestry. As a result of my botanical collections throughout the country in the early days, the world famous botanist, Dr. Elmer D. Merrill named in my honor the following species:

1. *Eugenia cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
2. *Arthophyllum cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
3. *Semecarpus cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
4. *Strychnos cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
5. *Glochidion cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
6. *Sterculia cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
7. *Knoma cenabrei* Merr. Quia N. Sp.

I had contributed my share in making popular in the Philippines memorial tree planting as well as the arbor and bird's day celebrations, and also prepared some papers for publication. Of those published the most widely known or read, especially by scientists, is the paper entitled "Cinchona Culture in the Philippines."

In testimony of some of my civic activities, the following may be mentioned:

- (1.) While assigned as District Forester of Davao, I served as Consulting Technical Adviser of the Davao Lumbermen's Association. In a resolution, duly passed, the association accredited me as the guiding spirit that led to the organization of the association and the one who has shown great interest, zeal and

skill in helping enhance the success and prestige of the association.

(2). Member of the Rotary Club of Davao. As a departing member in 1948 and as token of my services to the Club, a resolution was approved, pertinent portion of which is quoted as follows:

"WHEREAS, the older members of the Rotary Club of Davao are unanimous in giving Rotarian "Tito" Agapito L. Cenabre almost exclusive credit for the immediate revival of the Rotary Club of Davao shortly after liberation as a result of which the Rotary Club of Davao had been among the first in the Philippines to have been accorded by Rotary International, a renewed CHARTER as a recognized member thereof, hence, Rotarian "Tito Agapito L. Cenabre has been, as he is, rightfully regarded as the personification of the Rotary Club of Davao since liberation."

(3). Organized the BSP in Davao before and after the war where I served in various capacities such as Field Scout commissioner-at-large for camping from 1934 to 1939.

(4). President, Davao Council, BSP, 1940-1947; Honorary Adviser, Davao Council; Regional Scout Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu, 1947; Field Scout Commissioner-at-large, BSP, to date in Manila. In recognition of my scouting activities I was awarded on May 11, 1947 the Silver Thanks Badge citation by the National Council, BSP, for meritorious and outstanding service rendered to BSP.

(5). On May 1, 1949 I received the Bronze USA citation with the following engraving:

"For his continuous outstanding service as a Regional Council wide basis as District Forester and Regional Scout Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu for many years. Through his indefatigable efforts, the movement has gained secure and ever widening ground in many provinces in Mindanao. In various other ways he has demonstrated a positive interest in the welfare of the local boyhood through volunteer service in Scouting. A real Scouter and leader."

(6). President, Department of Agriculture and Commerce Davao Employees Association from 1940 to 1946.

(7). Associate Member, National Research Council of the Philippines.

(8). Member, Philippine Scientific

Society.

(9). Member, Society of Filipino Foresters.

My retirement from the Bureau of Forestry was not a happy event and my feelings on this occasion were reflected in my parting letter in this wise;

" x x x x I am now retired since February 28th 1954. Of course the reality of such severance is poignant indeed minimized only by the thought that I always did my best in the interest of our country and the forestry profession.

I cease to be an employee of our Bureau, but my love for forestry will always remain, as well as the warm association I had with you. Above all, of course, I wish to thank you and those who have worked with us directly during all these years for their cooperation, and those other co-workers in the Bureau with whom I have come in contact, for all the help, courtesy and understanding extended to me.

This severance is, however, not the parting of my ways and yours. I find my mind and body still responsive to our work and I believe I can still be of service to forest users in a private way. x x x "

After my retirement, contrary to what most retirees do, I continued my work in Forestry outside of the Bureau of Forestry. Somehow I love forestry and my life has been devoted to it. Through my own initiative, on July 1, 1954, I established my office at the Capitol Theatre Building in downtown Manila, and began to advertise myself after obtaining registration papers and paying my occupation or privilege tax as I was entering a line of endeavor wherein I had to come into competition with fellow professionals. There are very few who practice Forestry in a private capacity. The majority of forestry graduates enter the service of the Bureau of Forestry or are employed in lumber companies. It is not my intention to discourage you from entering the service of the Bureau of Forestry for the service challenges you now and in the future in the task of forest conservation, nor from seeking employment in private lumber companies where remunerations are enticing. However, the private practice of forestry is just as challenging and just as remunerative

once you have established a name. I adopted the title of Consulting Forester and hung my shingle at the door of my office. Under the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code the office of consulting forester came under the category of "appraiser or concessioner of domestic or foreign products" and is subject to the payment of privilege tax of ₱50 per year, which I readily paid.

The work of a consulting forester is wide and in order to qualify as such, one must satisfy the requirements found in the definition of a Consulting Forester. In my own personal opinion, a person who shall carry the title of "Consulting Forester" must have sufficient experience and background. A "Consulting Forester" must possess not only technical education and practical training but he must also be *well-versed or conversant* with forestry principles such as forest conservation and forest utilization, as well as forest laws and regulations, forest land uses and forest policy, forest conditions and the problem involved for proper solutions for the benefit of both the government and the forest users. These can only be obtained through long period or years of actual practice, observation, study, research and experimentation. Likewise, a "Consulting Forester" must keep himself abreast of the knowledge and technique of his profession through constant and appropriate study and of the progress and development of forestry practices of other countries. Besides, a "Consulting Forester" must be an "ambassador of goodwill." I do not claim that I satisfy all the requirements in this definition although I have adopted the title of "Consulting Forester". However, I do believe that a substantial compliance with them is sufficient provided it is supplemented by continued study and application to work.

In consulting work, the practitioner will be beset with the multifarious problems of public relations, among which is the problem of collection of professional fees and the maintenance of goodwill. The problem of collection of professional fees is common in all the professions but this should not be discouraging as there are better times when sub-

stantial fees come in without much asking. Although they are tempting, fees should not be the measure of your service but rather the maintenance of a good name and the winning of the confidence and good-will of clients because they are the key to the success of a consulting forester. However, fees are necessary to run the office of a consulting forester and so he must be a kind of an artist at the game.

There are occasions where a consulting forester shall use his wit and tact in dealing with clients especially when he is committed to help two clients whose interests conflict with each other. To cite you a concrete example: When the Mindanao Lumber Company, Inc., and the Sarbro and Company, Inc., were both applicants for the same vacant timber concession. Being a consulting forester for both companies I had to work for the good of both, yet their interests in this instance came to collide with each other as both were striving to acquire the same forest concession. I had to advance the cause of the first one who called for my assistance and had to leave behind the other as it would be unethical for me to advance the cause of both conflicting interests.

As I told you a while ago, a consulting forester must have sufficient experience and background. These experience and background will be much needed in his practice especially in difficult and important assignments. An example is the time when I accepted the offer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy to prepare a manuscript on shifting cultivation in the Philippines. It was not easy to prepare a manuscript on a controversial subject where there is a dearth of the necessary materials, data, and information. I was provided with an outline to follow, which outline was too broad in treatment and did not elicit the technical details they wanted. Thanks to my assignments in many province in the Philippines, my long service in the Bureau of Forestry in several capacities, and my continued interest in shifting cultivation that I had accumulated a wealth of data, inform-

ation, and materials which enabled me to prepare the manuscript to the satisfaction of the FAO in Rome. To add to the data, information, and materials, I had to make further researches, ask information from my colleagues, buy materials, and delved into subject matters not forestry in nature as were indispensable towards the making of a good manuscript. The natural, economic, social, administrative and legal aspects of shifting cultivation in the Philippines had to be discussed thoroughly and research on geography, economics, sociology and the laws had to be undertaken. When I submitted the finished manuscript to FAO in Rome, I thought that I had already covered all phases of the subject matter. I was surprised to find that my readers wanted more details particularly on the shifting cultivation of the non-Christian tribes and they asked me further questions which I answered with the desired details.

Another problem of a consulting forester is advertisement. Several solicitors of advertising firms approached me and I thought that in order to inform the public accordingly I had to advertise in the local magazines and those advertisements cost me a considerable sum of money. Consulting Foresters are not known in the Philippines and I believe the public ought to know more about them. The general impression is that a consulting forester is a member of the Bureau of Forestry or an employee of a private lumber company, and on account of this impression a consulting forester is apt to be mistaken. I am, however, confident that in the future the practice of consulting forester may become like one of the established professions.

The work of a consulting or practicing forester is wide and one cannot hope to have a mastery of all its phases within a lifetime. He must choose one or two branches of the work where he can specialize. Any one of the following specialization is recommended:

- Forest Inventory
- Logs and Lumber Grading and Sealing
- Lumbering (Logging and sawmilling)
- Forest Laws and Regulations
- Forest Surveying and Mapping

- Forest Management and Protection
- Forest Pests and Diseases
- Land Classification
- Silvics and Silviculture
- Reforestation

Several lumber concessionaires among them Mr. Henry S. Thompson, President of the Insular Lumber Company (who arrived from the United States) accompanied by Mr. Harry C. Pope, Director and General Manager of said firm offered me contracts on timber cruising and forest inventory and the fees were tempting. Because my physical condition did not permit me to undertake the work so I politely rejected the offers.

I am at present specializing in Forest Laws and Regulations and in this work the nature of my duties is assisting forest users follow the forest laws and regulations to the letter as the majority of them are ignorant of the provisions of the laws and to help them in the protection and enforcement of their rights under these laws and regulations.

My office as Consulting Forester is the pioneer of its kind in the Philippines. It has been established primarily for service (1) to assist and collaborate with the Bureau of Forestry in its mission to conserve our forests by wise use; (2) to bring the forest users closer to the government; and (3) to help solve the problems of forest users. Of course it collects nominal fees for expenses in running the office. But if a forest user cannot pay the fee, my office helps him, free of charge, in obtaining what he wants from the Bureau of Forestry. In view of this, my policy in running the office is to be careful, diplomatic and courteous so as to establish a private practice that will win the confidence and respect of forest users in particular and will serve as model for service to the public in general. At the same time I observe strictly and judiciously the code of ethics for professional foresters in carrying out the business of my office as Consulting Forester.

I owe my success to the several friends I have made in and out of the Bureau when I was still employed there.

Now, my friends, if you decide to make Forestry as your career, and practice as a

professional consulting forester after having acquired the necessary education, experience and training, both in the government service and private firms, I can only add—that while you are still in college, aside from what you learn in your books about Forestry you should continue and learn to speak effectively, to develop self-confidence, to sell yourself and your ideas above personal interest, to improve your power of observation, to increase your ability to handle people, to win more friends, to improve your personality and to prepare for leadership.

I admit I may not have realized the importance of these qualifications in my college days and its relation to my present work in spite of the fact that my professors and chiefs have put so much effort in emphasizing these points to me. However, in the course of time and practice, later, I have learned to overcome some of my handicaps and shortcomings.

Those are the things I can impart to you, my friends, to prepare you for a better start in the profession because it is high time you

should know them now. You should not wait to learn from your own experience alone, as I did, but you must also profit from the experiences of others.

All these and many more have made of me a consulting Forester. I only hope that with the ideas I have told you, coupled with those of others who may yet impart to you, we shall have made an ideal consulting Forester of you.

I thank you.

Integrity comes high. Few seem able to afford it. Stuart Chase said that it was a luxury. Nevertheless, a long time ago Socrates uttered a truth, "The shortest and surest way to live with honor in the world is to be in reality what we would appear to be, and if we observe, we shall find that all human virtues increase and strengthen themselves by the practice and experience of them."

— Marios Hansome

Compliments of

PLYWOOD INDUSTRIES, INC.

Lunao, Gingoog, Misamis Oriental

Manufacturers of

PERMAPLY

PERMAROSE

Perma-Gold

Perma-Door