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Tobacco

By LUIS A. PUJALTE
Exporter, Importer and Wholesale Dealer in Leaf Tobacco

THERE has been quite a lot in the papers of late regarding the possible revival of the National Tobacco Corporation or an organization of a similar nature. If this is done, it will be a mistake, as again a couple of million pesos of the tax-payers' money will be spent within a few years without tangible benefit.

The claim that tobacco prices are low because the Corporation was liquidated (in 1951), is false. It is true that the 1952 crop was purchased at low prices, but this was because it was a very abundant crop and because most dealers were already heavily stocked with the remainders of previous crops, purchased at high prices, which they had difficulty in selling because of the anticipated lower prices which would result from the large prospective crop. Dealers were also short of cash, which added to their reluctance to buy.

However, because of the low prices paid for the 1952 crop, Philippine tobacco came down to world-market levels and there were heavy exports during the latter part of 1952 and part of 1953. Most of the existing stocks were exhausted.

Unfavorable weather conditions reduced the size of the 1953 crop, and since little old-crop tobacco remained, prices sky-rocketed in spite of the poor quality,—and without a National Tobacco Corporation in existence.

The 1954 crop will also be short and prices will continue high. And as a consequence of the renewed high prices, exports have already dropped considerably and will remain low up to 1955.

The real thing to do, in the writer's humble opinion, is not to attempt to force up prices, but to look for ways and means to obtain a larger and more efficient production so that our tobacco will be able to compete in the world market.

The Department of Agricultural Extension can be of more aid to the farmers than a marketing concern because prices are naturally governed by supply and demand and there is no way of forcing them artificially without some one being hurt. It was the tax-payers who were hurt during the time of the defunct National Tobacco Corporation.

Imports

By S. SCHMELKES
Mercantile, Inc.

ALL figures are in kilos with the exception of those for foodstuffs which are given in package units:

| Commodities: | December, 1953 | December, 1952 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Automotive (Total)..... | 1,874,041 | 1,305,935 |
| Automobiles..... | 145,102 | 223,689 |
| Auto Accessories..... | 5,851 | 26 |
| Auto Parts..... | 352,049 | 184,022 |
| Bicycles..... | 12,019 | 256 |
| Trucks..... | 79,979 | 45,495 |
| Trucks Chassis..... | 247,733 | 250,956 |
| Truck Parts..... | 47,653 | 92,091 |
| Building Materials (Total)..... | 4,702,093 | 3,499,043 |
| Board, Fibre..... | 20,930 | 20,952 |
| Cement..... | 161,024 | 33,981 |
| Glass, Window..... | 1,199,985 | 362,117 |
| Gypsum..... | — | 1,009,072 |
| Chemicals (Total)..... | 12,332,138 | 6,637,828 |
| Caustic Soda..... | 813,115 | 364,125 |
| Explosives (Total)..... | 111,226 | 61,376 |
| Firearms (Total)..... | 8,750 | 2,410 |
| Ammunition..... | 4,072 | 2,398 |
| Hardware (Total)..... | 4,023,692 | 4,253,773 |
| Household (Total)..... | 1,454,815 | 898,656 |
| Machinery (Total)..... | 2,213,443 | 1,828,102 |

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