



# REFORESTATION ADMINISTRATION

# Notes

Reforestation Administration  
Diliman, Quezon City

## BAJA, RESURRECCION RECEIVE CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Forester Honorato Baja, chief of the administrative services division, and Hugo Resurreccion, a nursery farm supervisor, both of the Reforestation Administration, were awarded certificates of merit by Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources Jose Y. Feliciano for their outstanding services in the government.

The awarding rites were held on the occasion of the second national convention of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Employees Association (DANREA) at the Manila Hotel recently.

Baja was adjudged "Outstanding Bureau Official", while Resurreccion was acclaimed "Outstanding Fieldman."

Forester Baja first started as a forest ranger in the Bureau of Forestry after graduating from the U.P. College of Forestry just before World War II. Upon the creation of the Reforestation Administration as a separate government forestry agency in 1960, he assumed the position of chief of the RA extension section till his appointment as administrative services division chief early this year.

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## FONTANILLA, SPEAKER AT UPCF

Forester Florentino Fontanilla, chief of the statistics and extension division of the Reforestation Administration was resource speaker at a convocation sponsored by the department of forest management, UP College of Forestry last November 24, 1965.

He discussed the development of the various reforestation projects managed and maintained by the agency, 65 in all scattered throughout the country.

The convocation was attended by forestry students taking courses in forest management including faculty members of the College.

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## VIADO ADDRESSES LUCENA ROTARIANS

Administrator Jose Viado of the Reforestation Administration, speaking before the Lucena City Rotary Club monthly luncheon meeting last week, warned that "we are too much in a hurry to liquidate our national patrimony—our forests—to make millionaires overnight out of a few people given concessions and licenses to exploit our forests."

This statement was made in the wake of a recent survey report by the Bureau of Forestry that in Mindanao alone, forests are vanishing at an alarming rate of 90,000 hectares annually for the last five years.

To date, there are 65 reforestation projects established throughout the country and we have increased our reforestation accomplishments from barely 1,000 hectares at the passage of Republic Act 115 in 1947 to an annual average of about 30,000 hectares only.

This figures is obviously still very much far behind the rate of forest destruction which is 90,000 hectares a year in Mindanao as according to the latest Bureau of Forestry report, and even much farther behind the estimate of the National Economic Council which is about 172,000 hectares of forests destroyed yearly.

The administrator also bewailed the recent reports that, wittingly or unwittingly, we have allowed Japan to offer stiff competition to our lumber and plywood exports to other countries such as the United States. The fact is that the raw logs from which the Japanese skillfully manufacture their relatively cheaper lumber and plywood exports to other countries are imported from the Philippines at a concededly low price.

It is internationally known that we have the world's best natural forests but the paradox of it is that we are destroying them faster than any other country in the world, according to the RA administrator.

Viado said that there is no need for dramatizing the necessity and importance of keeping our hill-

sides, mountains, especially watershed areas covered with forests. The lesson from China's tree-less mountains inviting flash floods and other disasters should be enough hard lesson for us.

"For when we speak of forest conservation," the administrator declared, "we invariably mean water conservation, soil conservation, wildlife conservation and can't it be also said, human conservation?"

The inevitable results of the denudation and ravage of our forests had left telling effects upon the people and those events are far more effective than millions of speeches put together, according to Administrator Viado. For who can ignore the annual floods during the rainy season and the droughts during the dry season?

"In order to minimize the effects of these natural phenomena, if that is the only thing now that can be done, let us put our shoulders together," the RA head appealed, "and combat the elements not just with palliative measures but go to the root causes of these phenomena for a lasting remedy."

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### NEC APPROVES R.A. FOOD ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL

National Economic Council Chairman Hilarion M. Henares Jr., recently succeeded by Filemon Rodriguez, has favorably recommended the approval of the Reforestation Administration's project proposal to the World Food Program of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

The proposal consists of a food assistance to be paid in kind by the World Food Program of the UN valued at more than P7 million to aid the reforestation efforts of the Reforestation Administration.

The assistance will aid a proposed project area composed of 18 reforestation projects in Luzon which are mostly located in the watershed area of important rivers now harnessed or projected to be harnessed for irrigation, hydro-electric power and domestic purposes.

It is expected to spearhead an accelerated forest education, reforestation schedule and allied activities.

Administrator Jose Viado likewise stressed the significance of the assistance project. He said the present rate of deforestation and forest destruction in the Philippines has surpassed by far the reforesta-

tion work done by nature and by human beings. It has come to a point where in a few years the destruction of the forest resource will jeopardize the future economy of the country unless remedial steps are taken right away to institute an effective program of reforestation. The UN assistance project is an important and workable step, Viado said.

The proposed joint venture of the Reforestation Administration and the UN is calculated to help ameliorate the living conditions in the rural areas where this assistance will operate. Consequently, the people benefited by this UN assistance will help insure the continuity of the forest resources.

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### URGE NUCLEAR ENERGY COURSE INCLUDED IN FOREST CURRICULA

A course in nuclear energy should be introduced in the professional forestry course to enable would-be scientist students to grasp the fundamental techniques on the uses of atomic energy in forestry research.

This is the contention of Isidro D. Esteban, a research forester of the Reforestation Administration and a UN FAO-IAEA fellow who was just back from a two-month international training course on the use of radioisotopes and radiation in forestry research in Hannover, West Germany.

Esteban claimed that at present, the emphasis is given on the use of radioisotopes in agriculture, medicine, engineering, and industry while its use in forestry has apparently been overlooked. He asserted that atomic radiation can have various useful applications in forestry as well, such as in tree physiology, forest soils, tree breeding, silviculture, forest products utilization, forest entomology, pathology and activation analysis.

To induce forestry students who can be potential scientists to explore the vast possibilities of the use of atomic energy or radiation in these various fields of forestry, our forestry schools, especially the UP College of Forestry, should initiate the training of their students on radiation biology, Esteban asserted.

"This necessitates the inclusion of a course of courses in atomic energy or nuclear physics in our forestry curricula to keep abreast with modern trends," Forester Esteban said. "I am confident though that our forestry educators cannot have less foresight on this matter of no mean consequence," he concluded.

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## VIADO REPORTS ON PROGRESS OF REFORESTATION

Administrator Jose Viado of the Reforestation Administration has reported that 26,141 hectares of denuded forest lands have been reforested by the agency within the fiscal year 1964-65.

The areas reforested consist mostly of watersheds of important rivers and water sources harnessed for irrigation, hydroelectric power, and domestic purposes. The total area of reforestation plantations under maintenance now is 126,550 hectares, containing some 198.9 million trees.

Administrator Viado said that in accomplishing this task, the agency was backed up by a labor force composed of 66,000 laborers and less than a thousand permanent employees. It was learned that the casual workers were recruited from all parts of the country.

"Because of considerable progress in reforestation work, many areas which were once useless and unproductive can now be considered as assets to the agricultural and economic development of the country, Viado claimed. Besides this, we were able to at least help solve the unemployment problem by employing as many needy laborers, though on a rotation basis."

To speed up the reforestation of wide areas ravaged by loggers, kaingin farmers and natural catastrophes, the agency has utilized modern methods. Recently, it has intensified research activities through the creation of a research division.

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### PANEL STUDIES TURNOVER OF DENUDED AREAS TO R.A.

A special *ad hoc* committee to find ways and means of effecting the expeditious and efficient turn-over of denuded areas of the public domain requiring immediate reforestation to the Reforestation Administration was created by virtue of Special Order No. 122, series of 1965. Jose Y. Feliciano, secretary of agriculture and natural resources signed the creating order.

The special order came in an effort to accelerate the pace of reforestation work throughout the country which is being undertaken by the Reforestation Administration. It was also aimed to seek cooperation and coordination of the other bureaus and offices under the DANR whose functions may be affected for this purpose.

Valerio O. Ergino of the DANR and Regulo D. Bala of the RA, both foresters, were appointed

chairman and vice-chairman respectively, of the *ad hoc* committee.

A representative from each of the Bureau of Forestry, Parks and Wildlife Office, Bureau of Lands, Bureau of Soils and Bureau of Animal Industry designated by their respective directors are members of the *ad hoc* committee.

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### 3 R.A. MEN ELECTED TO PGEA COUNCIL

The Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA) elected on December 10, 1965 twenty-five new council members for the fiscal year 1965-66.

Elected among the 25 to the national council are Atty. Rosario Jaramillo, Atty. Eufemio Dacanay, and Forester Regulo D. Bala.

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### CRITICAL WATERSHEDS NEED IMMEDIATE REFORESTATION

Macid Y. Gulcur, United Nations watershed expert and project manager of the UN assisted project, "Forest Range and Watershed Management" in the Philippines, said that in the last eleven years the country had cleared about one million hectares of forest lands.

Speaking here before the recent conference of foresters in charge, regional officers and fieldmen of the reforestation administration, the UN expert warned that as a result of such extensive exploitation of forest lands, we are losing at the average one millimeter of top soil every year, an asset costing about ₱10 million in the last 5 years.

"In the Ambuklao watershed area alone where the multi-million hydroelectric power dam is situated, the rate of erosion is one centimeter every year," Mr. Gulcur claimed. The Ambuklao watershed has an approximate area of 63,000 hectares and more than 10,000 hectares of this area now need immediate reforestation.

Such impoverished condition of lands should have been prevented if the Filipinos have not been so indiscriminate and destructive with their forests according to Gulcur.

"It would be noted that Filipinos are capable of practicing the proper profitable land uses desired," the UN watershed expert said. He cited as best evidence of this assertion the 2,000-year old world famous and scenic Banawe rice terraces in Mountain Province. The terraced areas consist about 40,000 hectares with irrigation water properly managed.

Gulcur stressed confidently that reforestation is about the best remedy to minimize serious damages due to siltation, water shortage and floods. As a proper land use practice, reforestation is a basic type of watershed protection control measure.

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### VIADO UNDERSCORES REFORESTATION BEFORE LUZONIAN COLLEGES

The necessity of conducting massive reforestation of all the existing denuded forest lands throughout the country as a means to balance the fast rate of forest destruction was underscored by Administrator Jose Viado of the Reforestation Administration in a convocation speech at the Luzonian Colleges in Lucena City.

Viado explained how the over-exploitation of the present forest resources would result in destructive natural occurrences such as floods, droughts, erosion, etc., which destroy agricultural crops and farms, wreck havoc to public works projects worth millions, and cause the siltation and sedimentation of hydroelectric power dams thereby resulting to brownouts and lack of irrigation water.

The administrator pointed out that there are more than 5 million hectares out of the total land area of the Philippines covered with grass and therefore are a liability rather than an asset to the nation.

"This vast areas of idle lands should be rehabilitated fast because of the serious danger they pose not only to the present but to the future generations as well," Viado warned.

Reforestation is about the best solution to the prevailing ills brought about by wanton forest destruction. There is also a need for our people to appreciate the value and importance of forests in order for them to practice conservation, he concluded.

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### R.A. OBSERVES 5TH ANNIVERSARY; INAUGURATES CENTRAL OFFICE

The Reforestation Administration celebrated last September 21st its birth five years ago by virtue of Republic Act 2706.

Side by side with the observance of its fifth anniversary, the agency also inaugurated its three-storey central office along Visayas Avenue at Diliman, Quezon City. The building is estimated to cost ₱400,000.00 upon completion.

The inaugural and anniversary program started at four o'clock in the afternoon. Forester Jose Viado, Administrator of the Reforestation Administration, welcomed guests and the field and central office personnel of the agency followed by the reading of the address of His Excellency, President Diosdado Macapagal by the First Lady, Mrs. Evangelina M. Macapagal. Acting Secretary Jose Y. Feliciano of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources introduced the First Lady.

Mrs. Evangelina M. Macapagal, the First Lady, performed the traditional cutting of the ribbon, assisted by Mrs. Maria Elena N. Feliciano and Mrs. Antonia P. Viado.

The First Lady unveiled the reforestation administration plaque with Secretray Feliciano and Administrator Viado assisting after which Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jose C. Abriol blessed the building.

The main office inauguration and fifth anniversary celebration of the Reforestation Administration was preceded by a two-day conference of regional officers and foresters in charge of the various reforestation projects of the agency starting last Sunday, September 19.

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