

Reforestation with Government Fund*

By

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Too often people cannot appreciate the value of a thing until they have lost it. History has fully demonstrated this in the case of forests. People destroyed this important heritage not knowing that forests are the life of a nation. They did not realize until in comparatively recent past, that in order to insure the permanence of agriculture in the lowland, the upper slopes of the mountains must be kept forested. This is true in the more advanced nations of the world, but in the Philippines only the people in denuded regions are beginning to realize it. This indifference of a great many of our people should be dispelled and the government should show the way.

As early as 1910, the government started to prove that the open grasslands can be made productive by planting them to trees. The Legislature, reflecting the general public sentiment, voted sums of money to reforest denuded barren lands. The financial condition of the government, however, could not allow huge sums to be appropriated for the purpose. Before the last war, appropriation for reforestation had to be intermittent and inconstant, hence work had to stop now and then.

In spite of this state of affair, however, just before the outbreak of the last war, we have the following:

Number of reforestation projects in operation	35
Areas extensively studied	2,111,070 Has.
Areas intensively studied	1,851,960 Has.
Found needing reforestation	972,670 Has.
Areas to be reforested in the 35 projects	476,692 Has.
Area of established plantations	27,983 Has.
Area of cinchona plantation	334 Has.
Amount so far spent for reforestation—over 3-1/2 million pesos.	

The last war practically wiped out all the improvements and when an inventory was conducted, only 5,230 hectares of plantation was left.

After liberation, work in reforestation could not be started right away as fund for the purpose was not immediately available. The pre-war difficulty of financing reforestation again presented itself. Congress had been thoroughly convinced of the necessity of carrying on reforestation, so it had to

look for a steady and permanent source of fund to finance this work. Thus was enacted Republic Act No. 115 which ordained that "There shall be collected, in addition to the regular forest charges provided for under Sec. 264 of Com. Act No. 466, known as the National Internal Revenue Code, the amount of ₱0.50 on each cubic meter of timber for the 1st and 2nd groups and ₱0.40 for 3rd and 4th groups cut out and removed from any public forest for commercial pur-

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poses." The Act specifies clearly that "the amount collected shall be expended by the Director of Forestry with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources for reforestation and afforestation of *watersheds, denuded areas and cogon and open lands* within forest reserves, communal forests, national parks, timberlands which are found needing reforestation or afforestation or needing to be under forest cover for the growing of economic trees for timber, tan-

nin, oils, gums and other minor forest products or medicinal plants, or for *watersheds protection, or for prevention of erosion and floods . . .*"

The law took effect June 7, 1947 and since then a total of ₱7,177,343.83 had been collected. This gives an average of ₱890,000.00 annual expenses.

As of July 1, this year, we have the following:

Number of reforestation projects in operation	38
Number of nurseries for cooperative planting	12
Total area nurseries	174 Has.
Total area of existing plantations left after the war	5,230 Has.
Area of plantations established after the war	6,470 Has.
Total area of plantations under maintenance	11,700 Has.

From the above figures, it will be seen that only 11,700 hectares have so far been established as plantations. This may appear too expensive considering the expenses already involved. But it will be noted that only about 1/5 of the established plantations before the war is left and the greatest bulk of expenses after the war have been directed toward rehabilitating the projects, building sheds, constructing water system, paths sides, seed and transplant beds, etc.

Recommended Action

With the present "Reforestation Fund" available, the reforestation activities can be pushed much farther by, at least, double the present rate of over 1,000 hectares of planted areas annually. This can be carried out by adopting the following measures:

1. Concentrate reforestation work in the watersheds of destructive rivers such as in the Agno, Cagayan, Abra, Laoag, Pampanga, and Santo Tomas Rivers all in Luzon and Mananga River in Cebu. The areas covered in these watersheds comprise about 330,000 hectares needing planting. Progressively, plantings can be increased, double the present rate until 4,000 hectares or more per year can be planted. At this rate, the whole area may be planted in about 80 years. With

more funds available we can expect to do the job in less number of years of course.

2. Direct seeding will be intensified with the use of tried species such as Ipil-ipil, Lumbang, Baguilumbang, Benguet Pine, Teak, Narra, Mahogany, Dipterocarps, etc. where soil and climatic conditions are favorable. This will hasten the rate at which we are planting.

3. Concentrate fire protection work in planted areas and existing plantations during the dry season. Newly planted areas and young plantations are susceptible to grass fires.

4. All personnel in the reforestation plantilla should be made to work in reforestation. As it is now, about 25% of the funds appropriated annually for reforestation are diverted to activities not actually reforestation.

5. It is maintained that in using the "reforestation fund" priority be given to that intended by law (Rep. Act No. 115), "for reforestation and afforestation of *watersheds, denuded areas and cogon and open lands . . .*"

6. Experience has shown that District Foresters who are already overburdened by administrative work and Supervising Foresters of Reforestation Projects used as district foresters cannot effectively supervise the refor-

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FOREST EXPLOITATION . . .

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tation of logs to Japan be limited to what that country needs for local use.

In order to help in the conservation of our forest and insure the stability of the lumber industry, it is recommended that (1) selective method of cutting should be applied on permanent forest lands where conditions warrant; (2) reduce and utilize wastes in logging and sawmilling through improved methods of manufacture and by establishing a system of integrated industries; (3) lessen the drain on our forest through the use of less popular but just as good wood and by means of wood preservation; (4) conduct studies on the chemical and physical properties of woods through the Forest Products Laboratory; and (5) limit exportation of logs to Japan to at least what that country actually needs for her local use.

TECHNIQUES AND . . .

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still remains to be a serious one. Millions of dollars are spent every year on painting, decorating, maintenance, and repairs, because of disfigurement and damage caused by cold weather condensation.

Another problem which this section has been doing a lot of work in preliminary studies is how to prevent water entering between outside wall sidings caused by capillarity. It has not been only causing failures in paints but has also been the root cause of decay, thereby shortening the life of the building.

Thermal insulation is another study that is considered of great importance because of the peculiarly cold climate during winter and the exceedingly hot weather during summer. To make the houses as comfortable as possible during the period of climatic extremes the houses should be properly insulated.

The inflow of heat through outside walls and roofs in hot weather or its outflow during cold weather has important effects not

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estation projects. It is, therefore, to the best interest of the public if the reforestation projects be removed from the responsibility and supervision of the District Foresters and be placed under the five Supervising Foresters who should devote their full time supervising the projects under them. These Supervisors will in turn be responsible to the Director of Forestry through the Chief, Division of Reclamation and Reforestation. This set-up will reduce the span of control, hence less red tape and better efficiency.

EXCERPTS AND . . .

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diameter of the tree above buttress becomes bigger; (2) The damage in felling increases as the tree grows taller; (3) The damage in felling increases with the volume of the tree; (4) The damage in felling increases with the per cent of slope if the trees are felled downslope; (5) The damage in felling largely occurs in the unmerchantable tops with a ratio of 1 per cent damage for every 2 per cent in the unmerchantable top; and (6) The damage in bucking is low and negligible. These findings may not be applicable to all cases since conditions in different places are different.

—P. D. Bautista

A good reputation; a clear conscience; appreciation of nature; a peaceful heart; the knowledge of having given happiness to others; a trained and well-filled mind; satisfaction from duty well done; faith in the outcome of right; contentment; well-adjusted social relationship: these make for true happiness.

only on the occupants but also on the furniture and fixtures as well as the building materials of the house. Besides, during cold weather, such heat flow also governs fuel consumption to a great extent. Most structural and finishing materials used in building are low in resistance to heat transmission. Hence, the necessity for the use of insulating materials to be incorporated in exterior walls, ceilings, and floors so as to increase resistance to heat passage.

(To be continued)