

On Teacher's Promotion

By Uldarico Viray

A VERY poor teacher having given the best of her fruitful years to the service; working day in and day out, exhausting her talents for the best results; squeezing her energy to equal the insurmountable jobs on hand; never budging, never running away from her work but staying firm and resolve to tackle even the most hazardous task, has but naturally to hope — to hope that someday she will be rewarded: a promotion. To hope that someday she will be another administrator, not merely a classroom teacher. Crush that hope and you strip the teacher of the very life she has. Destroy that hope, take it away from her and you killed the interest of that teacher. You relegate her to those unnumbered “dead logs” of the teaching profession who have nothing but hate for the work they so dearly loved before; deserving teachers who have “rot” because their school officials have erred, have bypassed them in

making promotions, and have neglected them because there are proteges they can not disappoint.

Perhaps it is an inherent defect of any form of government for an official to err in matters of promotion. It is obtained anywhere. Both in private and public offices and departments. It is, one would say, a by-product of labor. In the teaching profession, where promotion is as slow as the proverbial snail pace, where a teacher has to count on ten, and twenty years of service before she can be promoted for an official to err is a very grave mistake an individual teacher could not afford. A single mistake will mean another ten or five years of waiting. Too costly for an old teacher ready to break to pieces because of the heavy burden.

For every erring official there is one teacher crushed. One teacher who was stripped of the in-

terest and the love for the profession. One teacher who was transformed into a mercenary worker, one who looks at her work as a means to earn a living, one who discharges her work because it should be discharged and whose end will be the monthly pay. And the love for the children, and the inspiration to impart knowledge in the most systematic way is naught. That official had created another laborer in his midst, a dissatisfied teacher who becomes a fault-finder, a potential headache to him.

I know of a very efficient teacher who is a dead "log" now. Twenty years before she was a spark plug, a living dynamo that generates interests, love and initiative. Everyone among her co-teachers ache for her love, for her attention, for her guidance. She was a model teacher, a coach, an everything. Supervisors come and go from her room, and they have nothing but praises for her fine work. Years passed by, she went on her work devotedly. Promotion, was her only obsession. That someday she will become an administrator was her hope. Everyone knows that. Then, so suddenly, after so many years of waiting a vacancy was created. There was one who must be promoted. Indeed there was one — but it was not the old teacher. Someone younger and equally energetic.

"I was not so near the base," the old teacher told everyone. That was enough. The old teacher became another teacher: a dead dormant teacher who has no more fire in her work. No more fire in her voice. "Let them do it," she would say when something is assigned to her. As the years unfold the poor teacher finds herself more and more useless.

What that teacher lacks is proper public relation.

She has never learned to come a little closer to the supervisor. She was headstrong. She stick to that hypothesis that she will be promoted if she is indeed deserving. She had failed to do what others have done. To be extra gregarious, to be over-solicitous of the needs of her superiors, to be equally on hand whenever a thing is demanded. That she missed, and spite of her good work, in spite of her efficiency, seniority and eligibility she was by-passed.

It must be a lesson to anyone who wants to become somebody someday never to neglect "public relation." Good public relation with officials higher than you. The closer you are to the big people, the better is your chance of promotion. Of course it needs an extra expense and effort but it will in the end pay. What is a little thing when it will rebound

in so many bigger things. It is a pity that so many intelligent teachers are headstrong, who because of their intelligence become forgetful of that phase of the work. This people who believed that they would be promoted because they deserved it and not because they have had good relations with their boss are totally mistaken. That is a part of promotion. If ever there are some school officials who neglected and overlooked that they are only a few.

It is quite obvious that all human beings are susceptible to favors. A little present on "his" birthday, a gift for the wife's birthday and many little things softens the heart. It retaliates in many things. It forgets somebody more deserving and favors that "one" who gives. It is not only true in one department it is true anywhere. Nobody can deny that sometimes it works faster than anything else. There are but few persons, officials who can honestly say that they were not swayed by that factor in considering promotions. Very few can say, "I have done it straight."

What is the consequence of that mistake? Promotions which are undeserving produce administrators who are inefficient. Who will succumb and who will perpetuate the same evil practice. Administrators who will little by little lynched and fleeced their teachers in a very diplomatic, in a very sensible way. Yes, indeed, it creates a chain reaction that will pass on till the end of time. And too, it produces administrators who are less fitted for their positions, who knew very little of the work assigned to them and who in most cases have teachers better than they are. How do these people command? By the sheer force of their authority. The Philippine Public School system had paid for this.

It is quite funny that many administrators have the courage to aspire and to occupy a position they do not deserve. And yet these persons are the same persons who occupy the nearest place to the heart of the highest official. One has but to wonder how these things happened.

It is indeed a blessing that the Teachers' Salary Act was approved for then it can right a wrong done to many deserving old teachers. If they were not promoted at least they received or they will receive higher salaries commensurate to the length of efficient service they have rendered. Once again these teachers will awake and rekindle the dead embers of the past — there will be fire in their voice, love in their heart. The day will then be another bright day for them!