

Assistant General Manager Benitez addressing students of the Philippine Women's University on the occasion of a spinning demonstration by Nacoco instructors.



The Spinning Wheel:

A Symbol Of Personal Freedom

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Radio Audience:

I am glad to have this opportunity tonight to make a public report on the present state of the coconut industry in this country, and on what the National Coconut Corporation is trying to accomplish to enlarge its usefulness.

By way of illustration, I want to tell you of a high school girl who a few days ago came to my office, asking for a job. Of course, we have no more clerical positions available, but I asked her if she could spin. And she replied that she could. I then suggested we could give her a spinning wheel which she could take home and use to spin the coir which we were willing to give her, with the offer that we shall buy the yarn produced. She consented, and now, instead of being a jobless girl, she has become one of the productive elements of this community, helping to utilize heretofore wasted by-products and making possible the establishment of the sack-making industry, and at the same time satisfying an immediate need for sand bags.

The other day also, I took one of our spinning instructors to a public institution where we have 100 spinning machines. The instructor in less than one-half hour was able to teach one of the members of that institution who, in turn, is expected to transmit what he had learned to his companions. In view of this demonstrated facility with which spinning can be taught, the superintendent of the institution asked for more spinning wheels and also for a few of our looms in order that the yarn produced may be converted into cloth, ready for sack-making. Only

this morning, a local university asked that a few of its girl students be taught spinning to enable these students to go back to their respective home communities and teach the wives and children of their *kasamas* this new productive occupation which utilizes a formerly wasted by-product of the coconut. I am inspired by this evidence of the growing social consciousness among our young people who feel that they owe a certain duty to their less fortunate countrymen, and who believe in making a definite contribution to the cause of national self-sufficiency, especially in these days of emergency. I regard the spinning wheel which has been associated with man from time immemorial, as a symbol of his personal freedom. With the advent of the machine age, man lost his freedom because he could no longer produce what he needed without securing the aid of a machine owned by others. But I look upon the spinning wheel that we are now giving to the individual for the production of coir yarn as a means of liberating and enabling him to create and produce something which he can call his own.

The Coconut Corporation is now engaged in buying yarn which is produced in increasing quantities by the hundreds of persons who are fast learning to spin. So through our efforts, we have converted a formerly wasted by-product of the coconut into something valueable, and have enhanced the earning capacity of the individual, thus contributing to the self-sufficiency of the nation.

In a way, I agree with Ghandi, the great Indian leader, who has an abiding faith in the spinning wheel as an instrument of individual liberation. But

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let me not be misunderstood. I am not advocating a return to the primitive, nor am I antagonistic to the use of the machine. On the contrary, I am searching for a more efficient machine from anywhere in this country or abroad, a machine that will defiber the coconut husk in a more efficient manner. Thus the tempo of our campaign for the distribution of spinning wheels and the establishment of a home industry based on the utilization of the husk must necessarily be determined by our success in securing defibering machines which are modern and efficient. This is a challenge to the mechanical proficiency of our people, a challenge which I have no doubt will soon be successfully met.

By enabling therefore every willing person to produce something that has a market value out of the coconut husk, the spinning wheel of this Corporation has become a potent factor for the industrialization of the coconut as well as an effective instrumentality for the carrying out of President Quezon's policy of distributive justice. And right now, we have an understanding with the National Social Sec-

urity Administration that no man who is willing to work need be unemployed for he can be employed by means of the spinning wheel. It is possible to give every man something to do. Hence, there is no room for pauperism, if and when the great message of the spinning wheel is properly heard and acted upon by our people.

This is what we are doing with the husk and its industrialization is only a sample of what has been done by this Corporation in utilizing the other by-products of the coconut. We are pushing the making of charcoal also by building the kiln for the planter and buying his products. We are improving the quality of the Philippine copra by constructing the copra driers for the planters on the easiest possible terms. And incidentally, we have discovered the great American market for one of the minor products of this Corporation. I refer to the buri braids which can now be exported to the United States in unlimited quantities.

I have recently made a trip to the Visayas and Mindanao, calling on provincial governors and officials, and I offered to them the services that this Corporation is ready to render to the people. After the establishment of a few provincial coconut centrals, we have discovered that rather than rush the construction of new ones, it is more advisable to share with the planters the already known benefits of industrialization revealed in our present centrals. We are, therefore, going directly to the planters and offering them this great boon. I earnestly hope they will respond to our call.



Learning the art of the spinning-wheel from a Nacoco instructor.

COPRA AND COCONUT . . .

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2 centavos during the month. The closing quotation in September almost trebled the price last year for the same period, which was ₱0.08.

Manila, sellers, per kilo, delivered in drums:

Opening	Low	High	Closing
₱0.20	₱0.20	₱0.22	₱0.22

COPRA MEAL.—The American market was nominal throughout at \$35.00 per ton, Pacific Coast in the absence of shipping space. Local offers were stationary at ₱18.00 per ton, ex-warehouse.

DESICCATED COCONUT.—The price list in New York was revised to 8½ cents, up ½ cent. The trade, however, was reported as taking orders at 1/2 cent lower for fine and medium cuts. Demand was considered fair, but the seasonal pick-up was expected. Another steamship line cancelled its diversions which was interpreted by the trade as an influence for higher prices.