



# BOOK CHATS

By the Editor

## OLD BOOKS IN THE BUREAU OF EDUCATION

We fully realize the necessity for caution in regard to the approval of new books to be used for schools. School books are many times more potent than most reading materials, for these undergo intensive reading several times and are accompanied by emphatic presentation techniques, followed by classroom discussion that all together make selections in schoolbooks memorable.

Yes, we fully realize the necessity for deliberation. Yet schoolbooks should also lead, not merely lag behind the times. Schoolbooks need not be mere records of anachronisms and the leftovers of yesteryears.

Let us take a look at some of the books now being used in our schools.

1. Benitez, Tirona, and Gatmaytan, *Philippine Social Life and Progress* (1937). Many facts cited, many opinions standard ten years ago may no longer be valid. What was social life and progress years ago may be expected to be downright backwardness now.

2. Miller, *Principles of Economics Applied to the Philippines* (1932). Many of the facts and figures date as early as 1929, fully twenty-one years ago. In economics, developments happen every day, much more when world-shaking events like war and shifts of sovereignty occur. This book is so old that some teachers of economics actually do not encourage their students to rent copies, much less buy them, on the ground that the book is used so little in the course.

3. Benitez, *History of the Philippines*. The figures are up to 1938. There is only very brief mention of events up to 1940. Nothing more is said about the events of the last eight years. A new edition should be off the press now so our school children can catch up with their own times.

4. Steiger, Beyer, and Benitez, *A History of the Orient* (1939). The facts are up to 1922 only, fully twenty-five years ago. There are many more recent books on Oriental history. We should have more emphasis on Orientalism, especially now that we are independent and we feel sympathetic kinship with Indonesia. We should have a book that can tell our children the background of their own Oriental world and can arouse proper kinship with all Malaysians.

5. *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, Volumes I, II, and III. These are supposed to be collections of the best from Philippine writers in English. Many writers who have long been eclipsed and who do not figure any longer in our literature are presented in these books as though they still occupied the whole canvas of Philippine literature. New important writers are not even dreamed of in these pages. Volume I came out in 1927, twenty years ago. The most fruitful twenty-one years of Philippine literature in English are not represented here. Volume II came out in 1933. The most fruitful fifteen years of Philippine literature are not to be read by Second Year students. Volume III, the last, came out in 1938, but the latest of the selections date as long ago as 1935, fully twelve years ago. No wonder, our students are so ignorant of Philippine literature.

These volumes should be a living embodiment of the best from contemporary literature. They should be revised as Philippine literature revises itself as it evolves with the changing times. They should not be frozen in unchanging editions that get more and more useless with the passing years. There should be selections from the Romulo books, from Bulosan, from Villa, from Javellana, from *Heart of the Island*, from our

war literature—yes, even from literature written during the Japanese occupation. There have been two national literary contests since the last of the PPP books were put out. Our children have a right to taste of the best from these. But, no, they will not, not for a long while yet, because our books have a tendency to lag far, far behind the times.

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15. The Philippines has been chosen as the seat of the Economic Council for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) conference. The Philippine Cabinet has decided on Baguio as the place for the conference.

- a. What advantages does the Philippines get as the seat of the ECAFE conferences? What are the disadvantages?

16. The government will purchase any public utility firm at a price within the means of the Philippine Republic. In line with this policy, Malacañan recently approved the acquisition of 60 per cent of the Manila Gas Corporation.

- a. Will such a policy help put the government on its feet? Why?
- b. Has the Government proved to be efficient in business? Cite instances.

- c. How does this policy affect private business?

17. Professor H. H. Hartlett said that our colleges and universities are "diploma factories."

- a. How does this practice handicap the very graduates turned out?
- b. Can you see evidence of "hasty puddings" even among teachers?
- c. How does this practice affect the nation?
  - a. Is floating bonds better than borrowing from other countries, say, the United States? Why?
  - b. Is it profitable to buy bonds?
  - c. What are the advantages of investing money in bonds rather than private business? What are the disadvantages?
  - d. What service to the country can one render by buying RFC bonds



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