

# Our Dollar-Making Lumber Trade in Difficulties

By FLORENCIO TAMESIS  
*Director of Forestry*

I have been asked of the present status of the lumber industry particularly the export trade. Our export trade has considerably improved since last September. It is expected that we will increase our export logs and lumber to at least ten per cent of our production before the year is over. Our export last year was only 4.5 per cent of our production. We are still below pre-war level of from 25 to 30 per cent of our total production. Many of the Filipino producers find difficulty in taking advantage of the offers now being made from foreign countries to absorb our products. For the last few months I have been contacting producers for possible foreign trade in view of numerous requests that I received from foreign buyers, but unfortunately the response was very discouraging. Outside of 10 or 12 producers who were themselves exporters, no one seems to be able to take advantage of the brisk market in the United States, particularly for logs. All these big producers are booked almost to the end of the year which indicates healthy business. On the other hand, the local market prices seem to go "tobogganing," thus discouraging smaller producers who are not exporters from increasing their production.

The situation is indeed anomalous and I believe it requires a drastic measure or remedy so that the country could take advantage of its foreign trade which is dollar-making and saving business for the country. Small lumber operators can not hope to get into the export trade without help and because of this they suffer losses by the

lowering of local prices in the market which should not have been the case.

As I have repeatedly said, the main difficulties of the lumber industry lie in inadequate financing and unorganized merchandizing both in local and export trade. Unless these two phases of the industry are corrected, we could not hope to increase our foreign trade to bring us the dollar. Today if we have the lumber and logs of the grades demanded abroad, we could dispose of them in no time. I have a standing inquiry to supply over 12 million board feet this year, but I doubt if any one can take it up seriously. We therefore have to be contented now with what little improvement through the efforts of big operators who are doing their utmost to increase production. I was asked if this situation could be remedied. My answer was in the affirmative, provided proper financing is obtained. Merchandising would come as a consequence of proper production at lower cost. The recent allegation therefore that we have lost our market in America is not quite true now. Today we can sell almost anything we can produce in the American Market, provided they come in proper standards and can compete prices with other woods produced elsewhere.

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Love is like a mushroom. You never know whether it's the real thing until it's too late.

—TIMES OF BRAZIL (Sao Paulo)

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There is no limit to the good a man can do if he doesn't care who gets the credit for it.

—STATS