

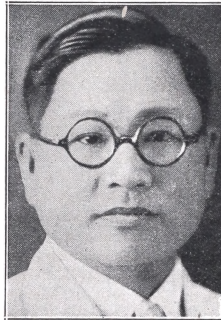
LITERACY IN THE PHILIPPINES

By

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THE campaign of the National Federation of Women's Club of the Philippines for more literacy among our people is worthy of encomium and praise. If the supporters succeed in this literacy campaign, which is calculated to acquaint and arm the people with the absolute fundamental which is to know how to read and thus start them on the road to information and learning, they shall have laid a solid foundation for the country's salvation. Because a people whose majority at least know how to read is the people that can be rich and progressive both within and without their land.

The literacy campaign of the National Federation of Women's Club of the Philippines will provide an opening wedge for the complete demo-



DIRECTOR RODRIGUEZ

cratization of education in this country, because it will give the bulk of our citizenry the opportunity to read so that

they can take part in the intelligent formulation of public opinion in their country. In this manner the Federation will help the Commonwealth Government in making effective the provisions of the Constitution, Art. 13, part of Sec. 5, which provides: "The government shall establish and maintain... citizenship training to adult citizens."

The high rate of literacy, of course, is always associated with education. And speaking of education, Rizal stated:

"I desire my country's welfare, therefore, I would build a schoolhouse; I seek it by means of instruction, by progressive advance-

ment; without light there is no road."

Rizal's idea of the education and enlightenment of his people is evolutionary and based upon a solid foundation. In his farewell address to his countrymen before his execution at the Luneta, he admonished them thus:

"My countrymen, I have given proofs that I am one most anxious for liberties for our country, and I am still desirous of them. But I place as a prior condition the education of the people, that by means of instruction and industry our country may have an individuality of its own and make itself worthy of these liberties."

About the beginning of the 19th century, since the rise of nationalism and the growth of

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LITERARY IN THE . . .
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democracy with the necessary enormous expansion of popular education in several European countries, it had been the concern of these countries to increase the rate of literacy of their peoples. Therefore, the old time tradition and practice of leaving the act of writing to the monks and a few learned aristocrats was shifted to the masses so that they, with intelligence, could exercise their authority as citizens through the wise use of their suffrage. Many countries since then have been trying their best to eliminate illiteracy.

The high rate of literacy among the people of a nation

is regarded to be the barometer of the cultural progress of that nation. In the United States the different states of the Union are competing with each other for the highest rate of literacy. In Europe the seat of civilization is invariably found in countries where the rate of literacy is high. In the Philippines it was the policy of those who administered its educational system at the beginning of the American regime to give importance to increasing the rate of literacy, and laid emphasis on the academic rather than on the vocational courses, reserving the improvement of the latter to a later period when the rate of literacy in the Philip-

pines should have been raised.

The latest data on the rate of literacy in the Philippines are found in the Census of 1918. From that year no statistics have been made on the same subject except the Wood-Forbes Report of 1921 giving 37% literacy in the Philippines. In view of the increase of schools in the Philippines both private and public since 1921 and because of the literacy campaign drive made by several educational institutions and social workers like the University of the Philippines, Dr. Frank C. Laubach and others, the percentage of literacy in the Philippines for this year, 1936, must be comparatively high. In order to be able to compare the relative position of literacy in the Philippines with the rest of the world the statistics hereinbelow is given.

In Australia the rate of illiteracy is 4.3% (1921); Austria, 4.0% (1924); Canada, 5.7% (1921); England and Wales, 5.8% (1910); Finland, 1.0% (1920); Germany, 0.3% (1927); Netherlands,

0.23% (1927); Scotland, 3.57% (1900); Spain, 52.78% (1930); United States, 4.3% (1930); Mexico, 62.2% (1921); Argentina, 24.0% (1924); Brazil, 71.2% (1920); India, 90.5% (1921); Japan, 0.9% (1925); Egypt, 92.0% (1917). This illiteracy datum is, of course, not complete as this deals only with the representative countries of the world.

On the day when all our people could read and shall have been sufficiently educated to be able to appreciate with profit of the great usefulness of the books to them; on that day when intelligent reading shall have become a part of, and a relief from, our daily grinds; on such a day we can truly repeat what the great military genius said, "Give me a family of readers and I will tell you a nation that rules the world."



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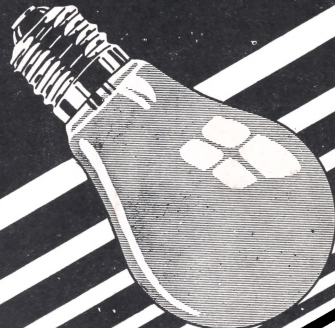
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