

- This note discusses one reason that may explain the slower process of the educational growth of most Filipino students.

AN EDUCATIONAL HANDICAP OF FILIPINOS

The physical component of the Filipino brain is not likely to be different from that of the American or European or Japanese. Physiologically the brains of all of them as individuals, except perhaps those of their geniuses, are similar in size and appearance. Their potentialities are initially of about the same strength and degree. But our school children and students spend more time and effort to learn the same courses or subjects prescribed for American students. The reason is not really hard to find. It is not in the superiority of American brain power. It may be obviously explained by the fact that English, which the language our students have to use in our system of instruction, is not familiar to them.

The length of 40 minutes of a class session in high school and one hour in col-

lege may be sufficient for one whose native tongue is English. In fact, this is the measure originally established in American schools. But it is too short for a Filipino who has to spend more time to understand a lesson, a question, or a discussion in English and who requires more time still to think, to formulate, to articulate, and to vocalize his ideas for his answer or participation in a class session in the same foreign language.

The same thing happens when the non-Tagalog child or student is obliged to use Pilipino. It is not his native tongue. He was born with it. It may be a bit easier for him to learn and to use it than English but the disadvantage is still something to surmount; and it is a greater disadvantage in the sense that learning it gives the student no power to read and study the available

books of great scholars, scientists, and writers who almost always express themselves in English and European languages.

More than 300 years ago, the great works of the intellectual world were largely written in Latin. The modern European languages were not yet developed. So all students in the civilized countries had to learn and use Latin. English today in a way really serves the same service as did Latin in the ancient world of learning. Most of the great masterpieces of this modern age are either written in English or translated into this tongue

from the other languages in which they might have been originally written.

But basic education given in schools could be more quickly and more effectively acquired when taught in the native tongue of the young student. The use of any other language often retards his ability to acquire basic learning. It handicaps the student in the initial process of education. English should remain our preferred foreign language for many reasons. But this is better acquired through the use of the native tongue as the main vehicle of learning it. — *V. G. Sinco, Sept. 1968.*

BREED

What people are depends not a little on who and what their progenitors were. — Ascribe what influences you please to education, examples, habits, etc., and after all a great deal depends upon the breed. — *Mills.*