

# the REPUBLIC

THE PHILIPPINE JOURNAL OF EVENTS

## Development programs in full blast

Infrastructure, as one economist correctly points out, is not just a new bridge, a new highway, or a new schoolhouse. It is more than these and a host of other projects taken together. In its totality, and as the prefix implies, it provides the basic, necessary support for a country's overall development.

It is in this context that the infrastructure program is today a sustained, continuing effort in the Philippines.

Government agencies involved in the program are now putting into shape the various plans that will facilitate the activities of those contributing directly or indirectly to the nation's growth - from the farmer trying to bring his goods to market, to the factory owner in an island with inadequate port facilities, to the foreign businessman who has just plowed into the economy millions of

pesos worth of investment.

Work is proceeding apace. At the moment, construction work is going on in at least nine categories: highways, airports, telecommunications, portworks, waterworks, flood control and drainage, schoolhouses, government buildings and hospitals, and shore-protection projects. These projects will cost P872.7 million, complemented by \$34.7 million in foreign loans, during the current fiscal year alone.

While the infrastructure program has definitely gained momentum, the government is also aware that there are still kinks to be ironed out, weak areas to be strengthened. Thus, complementary measures are on the drawing boards or being readied for implementation.

Last week, for instance, the President, citing the need for hastening the full development of Manila Bay as an international seaport and tourism center, directed the Department of Public Works, Transportation and Communications to submit to him within two weeks an integrated program for the bay's development.

He said the program should aim at meeting the requirements of trade, commerce, industry, tourism, and health and sanitation in the next 20

years and should include the following features:

- Development of the Manila coastal road that would extend southward to Cavite and northward to Bataan. This calls for the reclamation of foreshore areas along the bay.
- Modernization of piers, warehouses, slipways and other port facilities.
- Development of tourist centers in the areas to be reclaimed. These would include beach resorts, at least one south of Manila and another one north of the city, and a complex for yachting, skiing and other sports.
- Establishment of plants for the treatment of industrial wastes and setting up of other facilities to keep the bay area free from pollution.

"A country like the Philippines," the President said, "with limited resources but moving forward as aggressively and as forcefully as it can, must learn the lesson early and well, and that is, that those resources must be used in the most judicious manner possible in the development and planning. One cannot disperse these resources too thinly. Otherwise no favorable effects will follow."

Integration, maximum utilization

of resources - these are the major guidelines in current developmental efforts.

Foreseeing the logical "side-effects" of growth, the President has seen to it that ecological safeguards are incorporated into any infrastructure undertaking. He said that the Manila Bay complex must now be re-studied, re-planned and restructured. Now, it is government policy to prohibit the setting up of factories within a radius of 30 kilometers from Manila's City Hall. The objective is two-fold: to lessen the effects of pollution and to disperse industries outside Greater Manila, where they are at present congested.

Under the four-year developmental program, priorities are given to projects which would boost industrial and agricultural activities, facilitate trade and commerce, bolster education and culture, and enhance the health and welfare of the people. It will involve a total outlay of P6.8 billion for the entire period, ending in 1975.

Transportation and Communications, explains the program thus: "The 1972-75 plan does not reflect the total cost of the projects but rather the utilization of the project investments during the plan period. Some on-going projects previously started are carried forward to the four-year plan; others are to be started within the four-year period and some to be completed beyond the program duration."

Considering that the development program gives emphasis to infrastructure development to support the planned expansion of the agricultural and industrial sectors, he said it was necessary therefore to attain the following objectives:

- Provision of an extensive and efficient transport network consisting of truck highways, regional seaports and airports, supported by feeder roads and satellite ports, for the cheap and fast movement of passengers and goods.
- Harnessing and control of water resources, through power systems to propel industries; irrigation to boost agricultural production; waterworks to meet industrial and domestic needs; flood control and drainage to protect urban settlement and agricultural areas.
- Establishment of an integrated country-wide backbone telecommunications system for effective transmission of information among major centers of population and economic activities.
- Provision of an adequate physical plant to house essential governmental services such as schools, hospitals and administration buildings.

Underlying all these objectives and plans is the government's desire to bring about a better life for the Filipino masses who, in the past, had to content themselves with palliatives and piece-meal reforms.



Manila construction project: beating the deadline before the onset of the rainy season.