

- Appropriations for Philippine public education in 1968 under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos.

EDUCATION EXPENDITURES AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

Such perennial problem areas as classroom and text-book shortages can be achieved in record time. This hope was born when President Marcos signed into law the special education fund act which assured the department of ₱105 million a year in addition to its yearly budget. The law would set aside one per cent (₱87 million) of the real estate tax and a portion of the tobacco stabilization fund (₱19 million), for public education projects.

Aside from this, a ₱24-million permanent trust fund for private education has been put up from a portion of the special war damage fund. The amount, to be invested in worthwhile business ventures, is expected to grow to ₱107 million in ten years while the principal funds earnings are poured

into various scholarship projects of private schools.

The education budget, having increased by 13.45 per cent over that of fiscal year 1967-68, now stands at ₱781,596,011. This, plus the new appropriation laws and the expenditures of the private institutions, bring to more than ₱1 billion the country's investment in education.

But while the national allocations grow bigger, so does the magnitude of the problems to be solved.

This year, as in previous years, the problem of accommodation could not be completely coped with. Thousands had to be packed in large classes so it could not be said that children of gradeschool age were turned away from the schools for lack of room.

Despite the P34 million added every year for 12,000 additional classes in the national budget, thousands of schoolchildren could not be assured of accommodation for weeks after opening day.

Enrolment for this school year swelled by 8.48 per cent, placing the total student population at the 9.7-million level. The country's total enrolment, as education officials point out, is bigger than the total national populations of any of the following European countries: Sweden, Bulgaria, Austria, Finland, Denmark, and Switzerland.

The special education fund, as programmed by the department, will buy P44 million worth of additional grade one classes, equivalent to about 15,000 classes at P8,400 each. By June next year, officials hope, the problem of accommodation will be almost completely solved.

Along with this proposed expenditure is a plan to build 30,000 new classrooms through the mass-production of the so-called Marcos-type schoolhouses. If this target is reached before the fiscal

year ends, the total number of new classrooms built by the Marcos administration will be 68,000; or, as education officials like to point out, 5,400 per cent more than the previous administration's classroom production record ("only 810 classrooms").

And for this schoolyear, some P13.4 million has been set aside for textbooks alone. The amount is expected to buy 3.9 million elementary and high school textbooks, cutting down the national shortage (11,131,000 textbooks) by 28 per cent.

Corpus said that the P105-million special education fund will be spent as follows: P44 million for extension classes; P10 million for textbooks; P20 million for salary standardization of department personnel; P5.5 million for vocational and general high school equipment; P2 million for government scholarships; P3.5 million for athletics; and P5 million for barrio high schools. *From The Manila Times, December 27, 1968 issue under the title "The Times in '68" by Romeo del Castillo.*