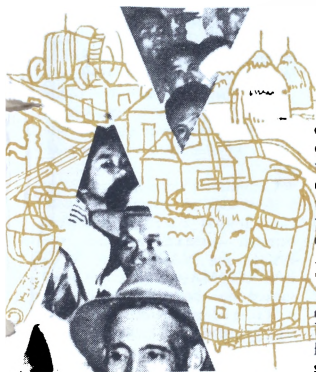


Look homeward, angel

The Barrio and the Government

by **Alejandrino G. Hufana**



COMMUNITY development are big words. In a country like the Philippines, especially, these outcroppings of "social amelioration" programs are usually taken as the solution to ease the backwardness of everything in the nation except its politics. As a working program, community development is bigger in its scope than its slogan value. Consider that there are 19,000 barrios which are involved in the experiment to determine whether barrio competence can receive full benefit from government assistance.

In the recent past, government projects have been established like the ACCFA-FACOMA, the NARRA and more recently the PACD. Evaluation of their work does not necessarily summarize the big task of government assistance when it is spread out over these 19,000 rural communities. The standard for such progress report will be one of comparison.

Further back, in the Commonwealth era, and even before it, Philippine administration had recognized the backwardness of these rural areas, and it was taken as the reason for the rise of "radicalism," with emphasis in mind of the Central Luzon uprisings from 1925 to 1935. This backlog of progress led Manuel Quezon to formulate his "social justice" program, and the same situation, in graver form, led the postwar administration to establish the EDCOR.

Talks about rural industrialization have suddenly intensified. This had been presaged since President Quirino's time when there was talk of total economic mobilization. But it took Ramon Magsaysay to come up with a formula for helping the barrios come into their own. It was in his time that indeed the central government implemented its often avowed intention, and home rule was introduced into the Philippine barrio.

Home rule must be qualified before the enthusiasm for it can muddle the issue at the level of definitions.

In defining it, Dr. Buenaventura M. Villanueva, executive secretary of the Community Development Research Council, points out in his study *The Barrio People and Barrio Government* that competent barrio government is dependent upon at least three factors: "skills and competence in barrio institutions, values and cultural matrix." The study also classifies a barrio's cultural affairs into the "formal" which are mainly political and economic activities and the "informal" which are the personal and inter-personal or family practices which are variables set by tradition and by superstition.

For the 19,000 barrios to develop along the community development plan, they should adopt programs which take these factors into account. In other words, the people can help develop themselves if they take a ready hand as well as demonstrate their efficiency in managing their own affairs.

Community development is not a new idea in government policies. It has operated before through several agencies: the PACD, the NARRA, the ACCFA-FACOMA—all of which were started on the premise that the national government could be strengthened if it extended to its

lowest possible political unit the principle of barrio home rule.

Now, there seems to be a paradox here: barrio home rule is actually decentralization yet local autonomy would help develop the national government's own central position. This is so because even as these agencies, working on a coordinated scale, allow local autonomy to take effect, their success or failure will reflect on the incumbent administration . . . for its neglect or concern regarding the implementation of the field projects of these agencies. It is the individual agency's responsibility, however, to effect its plans of community development through its humblest agent in the field who provides each and every barrio with the stimulus for self-help.

The office of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development was created on January 6, 1956, upon President Magsaysay's Executive Order No. 156 "to implement the program of community development throughout the Philippines, to carry out effectively the program of giving the rural population fair and full opportunities in the pursuit of a dignified and abundant life, and to provide effective planning and coordinating machinery in insuring the success of the above policies." As a coordinating agency of the government, it aimed to avoid overlapping and duplication of community development goals of

various government agencies—a situation uncovered by the Community Development Planning, a local fact-finding council. This council found out that these government agencies were running multi-purpose projects towards these goals.

TO ACHIEVE the necessary coordination, the PACD upon its establishment undertook the training of Community Development Workers, CDW's, in short, who would link the PACD office and the barrio people directly. A cursory glance at this initial step indicates a centralization of functions which, though happily streamlined this way, seems finally destined to follow the usual practice of the government to govern its lower and dispersed political units from an exclusively central vantage. In this set-up, the CDW's act as representatives of the central authority. There is a semblance of decentralization, however. The organizational structure of the PACD shows that on the national level it is assisted in its work by an Inter-departmental Coordination Committee composed of bureau representatives who are directly connected with rural development activities. On the provincial and municipal levels the pattern is similar, with the local government heads acting as chairmen of their respective Community Development Councils, their CD officers as execu-

tive secretaries thereof, and the representatives of their departments as members. Apparently, decentralization courses through these channels that branch out to the farflung communities to which community development plans are directed, with the Municipal Community Development Council as the last depository of policy formulations being directly in contact with rural problems.

To achieve a nationwide scope of activity, the PACD established community development training centers in strategic points throughout the country, where trainees undergo a recruit curriculum and orientation and become pledged CDW's. There used to be eight training centers, but they have been closed after one training term to meet with circumstantial difficulties. Only the original Luzon Community Development Training Center, now called Community Development Center, was retained due to its favorable site in Los Baños and to the limitless co-operation given it by the U.P. College of Agriculture. Here, the training of CDW continues, in order to assure a steady number of workers who will do the actual work of community development and consequently bring about the envisaged barrio home rule. Since most CDW's are natives of the communities to which they are assigned to work, it is



expected that stimulation to barrio self-rule can start much faster in the light of their skills.

As of May 1959, these trained workers numbered 1,510 (plus 3 foreigners on specialized training on what is known as "third country" extension). They constitute the office and field force that implements the PACD program which is categorized into: 1—*grants-in-aid projects* which contribute to increased production and income, like swine, rabbit, duck and poultry raising, livestock and plant disease control, oyster farming, seed and fruit tree dispersal, nursery and gardening, coconut dryer, communal irrigation, pasture, salt and threshing ground development, and fishing; 2—*self-help improvement projects* which include community centers, footbridges, communal roads, multi-



purpose playgrounds and the like; and 3—*health and sanitation projects*, like communal toilets, artesian wells, garbage disposal systems, and others.

Grants-in-aid projects originate from the barrio people themselves. The barrio council embodies their petition for a project in a resolution which is channeled through the local government councils to the President who in turn relays it to the PACD. This office, with the cooperation of the various government agencies directly engaged in community development, usually undertakes the launching of a project aided by government assistance in the form of materials, not cash, on the first-come first-served basis.

Self-help improvement projects proceed from the grants-in-aid approach. They form a pattern of

acceptance by the barrio people that they can do on their own with partial government assistance. Accordingly, self-help is the next logical step towards barrio improvement, in which barrio and local government resources combine, the former donating locally available materials and tools, and supplying volunteer labor, the latter footing the expenditure for construction equipments and wages of operators. The PACD, with the government bureau concerned, provides processed materials, equipment and not locally available technical guidance. By latest accounting in 53 provinces, self-help grants-in-aid projects total 12,410 worth ₱10,508,139.38 while health and sanitation projects are worth ₱4,946,810.25. It is interesting to note that in all these project-categories barrio share shows no falling below half the total expenditures, and that it is even higher than the shares of the PACD, the local government, and technical agency combined. This bespeaks well of the capacity of barrio people for self-improvement.

THE AGRICULTURAL Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration (ACCFA) was created by Republic Act No. 821 on August 14, 1952. Its function is to assist small farmers in securing credit which they cannot otherwise obtain, except at conventionally usurious rates from

moneylenders, and to aid them in marketing their products by encouraging them to group themselves into cooperative associations known in the collective as FACOMA. Thus, the ACCFA evidently aims to raise living standard in the farming areas and, more particularly, to place agriculture on equal economic footing with other industries.

These aims find implementation in a five-fold ACCFA-FACOMA program that (1) grants personal loans to qualified small producers actually engaged in agriculture, thereby promoting producer-controlled and producer-owned cooperatives which should make for a unified system of processing, storage and marketing of agricultural products; (2) extends financial assistance and other essential services to the construction of facilities for cooperative processing, storage and marketing, as well as for production; (3) facilitates placement of FACOMA-stored commodities in domestic and foreign commerce so that farmers may be able to profit directly through their FACOMA's, thus checking inefficient distribution of agricultural products; (4) encourages credit institutions to be established in rural areas by enticing private banks with accumulated farm produce and with availability of comprehensive production and credit information; and (5) holds privilege of rediscounting its qualified indebted-

ness with the Central Bank, the Development Bank of the Philippines (formerly the RFC) and the Philippine National Bank in the pursuance of its authorized activities.

The ACCFA carries out its activities through its central office and field personnel who have been trained primarily as co-op organizers. As of 1959, more than a thousand of them were assigned to 512 FACOMA's covering 51 provinces, 669 towns and 12,464 barrios. Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and affiliated with the ACCFA, these FACOMA's have a total membership of 295,187, including 20 federations of co-ops and the Central Cooperative Exchange, a national federation, which are capitalized at ₱28.6





million, of which ₱6.1 million has been paid up.

Extension of credit services in the form of production, farm improvement, commodity, facility and merchandising loans to FACOMA's and individual FACOMA members is the basic objective of the ACCFA FACOMA program. These loans, as of May 1959, show a cumulative total of ₱184,185,819, with the production taking up the most, farm improvement the least. The liberality of credit is mutual—the loans are granted almost without collateral and loan repayments average 85 per cent, the unpaid balance of which represents chattel mortgages for carabaos and crops and community storage in FACOMA warehouses.

CERTAIN special operations are conducted by the ACCFA. There is, for instance, its implementation of the congressional price support program for Virginia leaf tobacco through short-term from the Central Bank, now estimated at ₱240 million but readily covered up by the actual stock of redried tobacco leaf sold to aromatic cigarette manufacturers. Since 1954, the ACCFA has been buying and re-drying tobacco leaf from tobacco co-ops at subsidy prices ranging from ₱3.60 to ₱0.80 per kilo in accordance with grades determined by its own personnel and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Another ACCFA operation lies in the ramie industry through a ₱16 million contract with the CCE which buys ramie fibers from farmers, processes it in Japan then allots it to ramie producers for local distribution. Other operations involve distribution of fertilizer and certified seeds which the ACCFA undertakes in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In 1958, ₱2,269,420 worth of R.A. 1609 and imported and locally-produced fertilizer was distributed to farmers.

By any accounting, these achievements are laudable. Again, as in the PACD set-up, the tendency to delegate central powers to field representatives must account for the ACCFA-FACOMA's being this active. Recently,

however, this agency has been thrown into bad light in the press by the abuse of the same powers. Whether it will redeem itself by the nature of its function in the cooperative system, which in itself is conducive to barrio home rule, remains to be evaluated.

REPUBLIC Act No. 1160 created the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) on June 18, 1954. This agency is actually an improved version of two earlier agencies—the National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA) and the Land Settlement and Development Company (LASEDECO)—which were established in 1939 and 1950, respectively, to solve the problem of uneven land distribution in the Philippines.

The NARRA has for its purpose the development of public land suitable for agriculture, homesteading and organized settlement; the resettlement of families from congestedly tenanted and over-populated areas into sparsely occupied provinces; the survey and subdivision of public lands believed suitable for agriculture into family-size farms of six to ten hectares each; the expansion of road and bridge constructions, public health and social work, school and agricultural extensions, and of other government services to settlement sites; and the securing of land titles for qualified settlers.

Presently, the NARRA maintains a total of 18 settlement projects in Bukidnon, Sulu, Lanao, Cotabato, Tarlac, Masbate, Capiz, Negros Occidental, Palawan, Isabela, Laguna, Negros Oriental, Rizal, Davao and Camarines Sur. A total of 23,201 individuals have been resettled in these areas as of May 1959, and of this number, 10,205 are pioneers. Patents approved total 7,338, vesting qualified settlers with ownership of farm lots originally allocated to them for home-building by raffles.

To these resettled individuals, this new lease on life is an enviable one. They receive assistance in the control of plant and animal disease, in seed selection, and in the methods of planting root crops and legumes and proper plowing. Direct aid comes to them in the form of medicine, seeds and seedlings, farm implements, fowls, hogs, carabaos, and the like. To safeguard their health and to guide them along hygienic lines, maternity and child care, nutritional and such cultural education, the government provides the services of experienced physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives and clinic aides. Periodic calls on settlement communities are made by government experts on agriculture, health and rural living and by education officials who deliver lectures and conduct barrio seminars.

Above all, the NARRA patron-

izes the produce of the settlers at current market prices to protect them from the aliens who buy their crops at give-away prices. Bodegas are also built and stocked up with sufficient staple crop supply to meet crop failures on settlement sites. With other phases of public service—like helping build roads to facilitate marketing of crops at commercial centers, laying out bridges and culverts for purposes of communication and irrigation, setting up artesian wells to insure continuous water supply, and maintaining and operating lumber mills to provide cheap construction lumber, fuel and fertilizer from sawdust for settlement farms—the NARRA is certainly doing its full share in community development. It shows, among the government agencies described, the least tendency to being politically exploited. This is due perhaps to the absence in its structure of an elaborately stratified gradation of authority, or to the unlikelihood of extracting from its operations big personal gains. It therefore presents an ideal enterprise, more of actual work than of ways-and-means, that will redound to the realization of the barrio home rule idea.

THE FACTS of achievement shared by the foregoing government agencies, of course, outweigh the fallible conduct of some individual personnel who di-

vine in their duties some opportunity to subserve themselves. Evaluation of these facts will be more in demand in the light of the "new deal" pledge to the barrio people by the Office of the President in 1953. For all its sensational appearance in a politically charged scene, this deal—community development—has taken up the best available conviction to give way for the rural areas to assert their capabilities for social and economic advancement, though they will not in the main turn out to be model villages. True, in social behavior there can be no precise measurement of result or even of cause. But somehow evaluation of work accomplished may provide the clue, especially when "welfare," as of now, has acquired an occupational identity. Such evaluation is being done at the Community Development Research Council (CDRC).

A joint project of the University of the Philippines and the PACD, the CDRC started work by a memorandum of understanding drawn by the presidential assistant and the university on August 28, 1957, and which will remain in effect, unless sooner terminated by the contracting parties, until June 30, 1961. The contract obliges its parties "to set up a cooperative endeavor . . . for qualitative evaluation of the methodology employed in the Philippine Community Develop-

ment Program in order to determine better ways and means to increase the effectiveness of the Program; and to create a research organization therefor . . ."

Being this organization, the CDRC has explored the community development program and formulated four broad problem areas which were then made subject of research for 1957-58.

The first area relates to PACD operations, an examination of the grants-in-aid and community development training program and the effectiveness in the assignment of CD workers; the second deals with the different levels of coordination among government agencies engaged in community development, and with how the village power structure receives the impact of community development work; the third covers the participation of people in the program which includes innovations and proposals made by CD workers as they go along in their field work, the phases of daily life in the barrio where the CD

program is applied; and the fourth explores "the etiology of rural poverty," that is, the factors—special psychological, economic and others—that keep the people from improving their conditions.

These formulations are based at most upon the methods of problem-solution and the approaches that can combine ideal and practicality. The researchers cannot afford to be vague where they are committed to the dedication that they are finding a way for the upliftment of barrio life, an upliftment, by the way, that is long overdue. Their findings are now utilized as guides in the implementation of the CD program at large.

ALREADY Congress has formulated a barrio code for the acceleration of community development based upon a barrio study furnished by the CDRC and copies of which were made available to public schools for class material. Barrio leadership, according to this study, mentioned earlier in this article, is wanting in many respects, chief among which is the problem of founding a bureaucracy in the barrio. There simply are not so many activities to justify such a system and to keep the barrio busy along this line. Nevertheless, the study recommends eventual home rule when literacy and competence warrant it, and the most elemen-



tary education that can bring this about has a big task at hand.

Other completed research projects have probed into the problem areas which the CDRC has formulated as subject-goals.

One study is on rural health practices and conditions in two municipalities in Laguna from which practical corrective measures were drawn. Another study is on factors related to the acceptance or rejection of innovations in swine and poultry production in rural areas; a third is on the integration of resources in community development in Batangas; a fourth on some socio-economic effects of building barrio roads.

Together with studies in progress and in outline form—which promise to be noteworthy in that they aim to examine the dynamics of power in a municipality receiving the impact of community development, agricultural innovations, levels of living among rural families, marketing farm products, leadership competencies in community developed areas, and even the role of the ACCFA-FACOMA agency—the completed projects serve as indicators of work done and values or significance attained under the CD program which seems to advance, deleting its defects by sheer momentum, allowing no quarter for its detractors to put in a criticism or two.



Yet, evaluation does not cost much, considering that, as of June 30, 1959, it only amounted to ₱119,470.96. This means that of the CDRC peso, 76% goes to research, 5.1% to supplies and equipment, and 18.9% to administration.

With this systematic and intensive evaluation, the CD program may finally become a remedial program, auguring a maturity for home rule in Philippine barrios. If the PACD, the ACCFA-FACOMA, and the NARRA are the means towards this end, their defects must automatically be overlooked.

Keeping in mind the barrio home rule idea, the paradox seems to be that, while the government decentralizes through its delegated representatives in the field, the lesser the chance of home rule appears to effect. Whereas, if there is maximum centralization, that is, a liaison between government and community, the people show more response to self-improvement.

PLANS, any plan, look good on paper. It is, however, not the case when practices are concerned. The CD worker, for instance, is trained to initiate discussion groups in the barrio in the expectation that these will redound to the understanding by the people of their own problems. Understanding makes for half of effective participation in barrio affairs. And in most rural areas, such affairs would mean the relationship of tenants and landlords.

In this respect, the PACD program is pitifully deficient. It does not give ideological training to its trainees, with the result that the CD worker may be indeed a trouble-shooter as regards scrutinizing the needs of the barrio and placing order for materials here and there. But how can he even discuss the undesirable aspects of subsistence farming or the more elementary evils of tenancy with the people who live it from tradition and usage? Without this basic discussion the daily activities and habits of the rural population he serves will remain what they are—social and economic variables subject to the exploitation and caprices of the landlord caste—as in the beginning.

Accordingly, intentions for local autonomy will be inseparable from agrarian troubles. It will be too much to expect from the PACD that its community work-

ers behave beyond their technical capacity and be land reformers, too.

Neither can the ACCFA and the FACOMAS to which the CD worker is told to turn his barrio group for agricultural help, do full service. The encumbrances these agencies suffer need not be recited. For one, perhaps the bluntest, they have not realized for the farming groups under their influence any substantial increase in farm income. This points to the defect in their cooperative system, which is most discernible in the tobacco boom in the Ilocos and the northern reaches of Pangasinan.

In our last visit to La Union (where buyers prefer the quality of its leaf to the yield elsewhere), the people benefited by tobacco, wholesale or retail, are not the small producers but the middlemen who, expectedly, are Chinese or mainly Chinese-invested. The farmers instinctively go to these middlemen who pay on the spot and in take-home cash where the FACOMAS would take several weeks to disburse an equal amount, duly receipted. Hence, the government agency is up against private competition that operates without tape of any kind; it thus considerably loses what should accrue to its co-op funds.

THE FARMERS, on the other hand, are not any wiser to the fact that the prosperity they

are experiencing is artificially induced by artificial demand. Not encouraged by storage facilities FACOMAS should offer, they are attracted to sell even immature leaves outright before the coming rainfall will wash their crop away. They know that tobacco is good only for six months in a year when the dry season holds for picking. In turn, the middlemen buy everything and are quickly rewarded because the farmers are in a hurry and that grading does not matter to them. As a result, most of the choicest leaves are classified at lowest prices, mixed clandestinely with a few real low-graders.

Meanwhile, the ACCFA and the FACOMAS have plenty to do in improving the level of living of the rural folk. The Mag-singal experiment in Ilocos Sur has been cited precisely for its success along this line. (F. Sionil Jose, *"The Filipino and His Land"*). But generally, the trouble with these agencies is they seldom explore possibilities of crop diversification in the areas they operate, their functions following, if at all, a one-crop economy. This results in idling between planting and harvest, the bodegas empty. If harvest depends on the outcome of pests and typhoons, the ACCFA and the FACOMAS necessarily rely most of the time on extracurricular eventualities, such as primitive seed selection, unchanged

ways of planting, and the tropical weather. Rizal did not speak wildly about Filipino indolence. It is a birthright, aggravated by the absence of rural activity in every sphere of living.

The ACCFA-FACOMA entity should be reinvigorated, in which case a training program, as we would wish for the PACD, be followed. As the ICA land tenure advisor to the Philippine pointed out, the ACCFA is one of the logical agencies to cope with detailed training in land tenure, credit and marketing. An ACCFA team should be sent to each 20-barrio unit to instruct good farming methods at farmer level, conduct barrio meetings—as the PACD personnel is doing—in which farm education is tied with credit know-how, the local FACOMA instituting pilot projects on the understanding that FACOMA loan funds are to be used for workstock, farm implements, seeds, fertilizers and insecticides. As further encouragement, the FACOMA will have finances readily available to farmers towards the eventual stamping out of middlemen who take in as much as 25 to 40 per cent of farm income in the share tenancy system.

THESE FIRST steps will clear the ground for the farmer's faith in their activities and will direct the increase of ACCFA borrowers and of agricultural pro-



duce channeled to FACOMA warehouses. Care must be taken that clean records are kept at the start and must be kept open to the members. One of the great grounds of distrust in the tenant communities is the keeping of books for farm products in secret or by the landlord's word of honor which of course can be readily withdrawn come the time when it will work against his interests.

It is said only too well that farm tenancy will not disappear. Had historical events indicated that it should, there would be no need for literatures on the subject, all of them enclosing ideas that did move men, who embraced them as ways of life, to do or die. Historical fact is infallible, especially when it is applied to economics. Population pressure alone bears testimony that land cannot just support it. In the hundred years prior to 1940, writes William Vogt in

Road to Survival, the world population more than doubled—from 1,000,000,000 to 2,200,000,000. The excess could be partly relieved by industrialization.

*N*OWADAYS conditions are scarcely better. And in this situation the NARRA has been envisioned to work wonders. By a series of agreements, this agency should have all the coordination it required from the Bureau of Forestry, in matters of timber concessions; from the Bureau of Lands in the adjudication of land claims, contract-survey procedures and transfer of title to settler; from the Bureau of Soils in the classification of land usefulness within reservations sought by the NARRA; from the NAWASA in the matter of water wells for the settlements; from the Department of Public Works in the construction and maintenance of feeder roads in and out of these communities; from the Depart

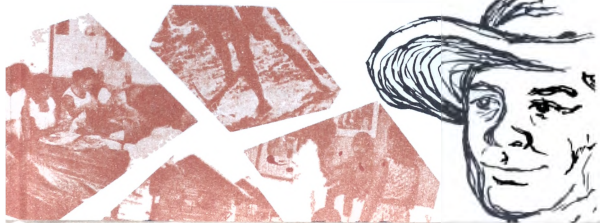
ment of Health in the establishment of sanitation centers for the settlers, from the Department of Education in servicing settlement children with elementary education; from the Bureau of Plant Industry in seed selection, improvement and distribution to settlement farmers; from the Bureau of Agricultural Extension in the development of agricultural productivity and marketing channels for farm products; from the ACCFA, PNB and RFC in the extension of credit services to these rural sites; from the Land Tenure Administration in the screening of settlers from congested estates for NARRA resettlement; from the local government in terms of police and other intermediate support; and from the PACD in left-off phases of community development.

Again, these impressive agreements are not practicable. In a report of the acting land settlement adviser, the Bureau of Forestry and Lands find their records, maps and surveys so inaccurate, missing or incomplete that they cannot point to arable tracts to allocate the minimum 10,000

hectares that NARRA seeks to break even with the administration expense of settlement. With 22,000 or more families applying for title only 6,600 titles have been issued, and these on few good land. Crop failures are the result. The nature of the soils on these settlements has not been predetermined, the Bureau of Soils studying soils and classifying land in several settlements after the settlers were moved in.

The Narra has met with serious difficulties in nearly every other phase of settlement life. Fact-finders know that the surface-water pumps it has installed are almost entirely useless. Half the wells it dug—1 to 3 to each settlement against the NAWA-SA minimum standard of 10 to 20—are dried up.

Feeder roads fare no better. They serve only about 10 percent of the total farm lots most of which can be reached only by power-wagon. An allweather road sometimes connects three or four settlements, but the rest cannot be negotiated even by carabao sled.



Public health staffs could not maintain themselves too. The department concerned discontinued payment of personnel at 8 settlements. Only a few clinics, built by the Charity Sweepstakes, are housed in more or less permanent buildings, though they are pitifully equipped, and in malarial cases they run short of drugs. If they are adequately supplied refrigeration is still to be wished for the quickly spoiling serums.

A brighter side appears in the critical condition of the NARRA settlements. Elementary schools, though proceeding without textbooks and sufficient schoolhouses to shelter the 14,000 children enrolled, usually manage to dish out education by the strength of their teaching staff which includes teachers with college degrees. Besides this, the NARRA is justifiably proud of its 2-centavo charge on seedlings from its own nurseries against the 10-centavo each for coffee seedlings obtainable elsewhere.

One of the more significant failures in the NARRA program is its Land Tenure Administration coordination work. The LTA has for its primary function the screening of tenants for NARRA resettlement, for which in its original efficient farm lots would then be selected by lot for NARRA settlement sites. The LTA seems not to have favored this idea which must have ended at its office.

However, this is little felt in a situation where ineptness is prevalent. It can be pointed out at the very beginning that, anyway, the NARRA is not the redemption it could be in the integrated land reform movement. It has resettled, on direct order of the President, only 89 families from the Batanes in January 1958; it has moved a mere percentage—some from the unrest in Central Luzon—to the four projects it has opened at the Lasedeco pioneer projects. The ICA-supplied tools for the farms have been delivered indiscriminately; many, as a result, received not enough of the implements. The six-month subsistence rations the NARRA should furnish the settlements for the production season are charged to the settlers' account in Manila where all NARRA's high-salaried employees, about 200 of them, are situated against the 500 in the field force who are cursorily trained.

AT BEST the NARRA exhibits haste. In Palawan, where the EDCOR at one time rejected a farm site, the NARRA established the Panacan settlement which involved a million pesos (F. Sionil Jose, *"The Filipino and His Land"*). Because of the general aridity of that farm, the amount may just as well be counted as a loss.

Other EDCOR pointers should give the NARRA direction, am-

ong which are the former's method of screening its settlers with emphasis on ability to work, together with considerations about their age, civil status, and education. Or it should take the cue from the report of the Advisory Committee on Large Estates Problems when it examined the deficiencies of the Bureau of Lands in the administration of landed estates in 1951. The committee recommended a type of administration similar to that of Lascodco. This is to forestall the unhappy situation of the homesteader, purchaser, or lessee finds himself in when the awarding entity leaves him to his own resources upon acquiring the land, to rise or fall according to his ability.

But, as the ICA land tenure advisor said in 1958, the Philippine land tenure agencies are to be congratulated for the progress they have made in land reform, working as they did under adverse conditions compared with those which education in this country has overcome. The tenant-farmer's average annual income, it is recalled, is less than 400 pesos, his production per hectare of staples (rice and corn) has for a half-century remained the same. This constitutes the biggest unsolved land reform problem in 1958 several causes of which are: the large number of share tenants—700,000 more or less; the difficulties in the trans-

fer of land ownership; congestion in farming areas and reluctance for resettlement; restrictions on farm mechanization.

The first of these causes alone is enough to engage government effort for a while. Share tenancy, predominant in rice-crop areas, is an endeavor of both tenant and landlord, the former furnishing the labor, and the latter, the land. Fortunately, Republic Act 1199, known as the Agricultural Tenancy Act, now provides a net 70% for the tenant in the division of the produce. Under the old system his share was 50% though he furnished the labor, workstock, farm implements, and half the transplanting expenses. The government, therefore, should attempt to increase the percentage of tenants receiving the 70% share.

Moreover, the government has yet to combat the stranglehold of the lessee, the farm overseer, the tenant-leader, and the rice merchant on the share-tenant. These middlemen, it is found, take 25 to 40 per cent from the tenant's income for all kinds of representation on the gross yield. And it also has to provide credit and marketing facilities for the tenant who, in the final analysis, is managed by the landholder on a 55-45 sharing arrangement. The landholder has simply advanced to the tenant certain interest-laden credit and price-fixed the

farm commodity with the rice merchant.

DIFFICULTIES in the transfer of land ownership are the official headaches of the Land Tenure Administration in its task of acquiring large estates and subdividing and reselling them. For one thing, only a negligible percentage of the 200 big landholders with whom it has negotiated have sold portions of their landholdings. This is understandable in this country where land is the surest source of income and prestige. While its tax is minimal, land is priced so excessively that tenants acquiring them may not be able to repay. All this is due to the absence of systematic farm appraisal based on productive value and political influence exerted on the LTA to buy unclassified land at more than its fair market value. Though the market value of land, however, was reasonable, large scale purchases by the government could not still be effected for lack of necessary funds.

Regarding congestion and reluctance for resettlement, the 1948 census shows 60% tenancy in the provinces where farm population pressure is most felt. While the Bureau of Lands maintains that there is no lack of arable public lands, at least for the next 10 to 15 years, for resettling purposes, many of the tenants are reluctant to migrate from their

domicile though this is steadily becoming impossible to live in. Much more, if moved into the new sites, they show signs of complete dependence on the government for livelihood.

Farm mechanization could be the answer to these ills. Yet, it could work both ways—for and against tenant interests. The Agricultural Tenancy Act, for example, can give the owner legal basis for evicting tenants in order to mechanize his land. The application for mechanization is directed to the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources through the Agricultural Tenancy Commission which will then investigate the suitability of the land in question for mechanized farming. The Court of Industrial Relations, created by Republic Act 1267, approves or disapproves the application. An executive order from President Magsaysay restricted this pursuit, however, stating that no tenants can be ejected under any circumstances by the landowner mechanizing. The order highlights the fallacy of mechanization of overloaded farms. Mechanization in these cases entails large scale transportation of tenant families and land is not readily available for them.

Of course this again calls for government action. The government may be forced to negotiate for machinery, fuel, and technical advisers with an exporting nation, since the reasons on the

towards the creation of tenant side of mechanization are hopeful employments heretofore unavailable. The field contacts of the Agricultural Tenancy Commission and the Court of the Agrarian Relations may yet argue for the adoption of modern farming methods. Only recodified agrarian

laws that the peasantry understand, together with agricultural and other economic education, can bring this about. Eventual decentralization of government powers, implemented with a means of honesty in the rural communities, will be one of that progress' happiest aspects.

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Huge Seamount Discovered Off African Coast

A huge undersea mountain, higher than California's Mt. Whitney, has been discovered in the South Atlantic.

The formation, termed a seamount by geologists, rises 15,980 feet from the ocean floor. Its platform top is 210 feet below the surface of the ocean, with one isolated knob rising to within 120 feet of the surface.

Discovered by Columbia University scientists aboard the university research vessel Vema about 550 miles west of the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, the cone-shaped seamount is some 35 miles across at the base and five miles across at the top.

Previously unknown to mariners, the seamount could have proved a menace to mariners, scientists said. A submarine with its sonar not in operation could possibly have rammed the formation before being aware of its existence.

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