

EDITORIALS

A GREAT STRIDE TO FULLER UTILIZATION

Under the ECA aid plan that was agreed upon and approved by the U. S. and the Philippines, the go-signal has already been given for the installation of a forest products laboratory here patterned after that at Madison, Wisconsin. This is an answer to our long-felt need. With this laboratory, we will find uses for our tremendous wood wastes, hitherto unused timber species and other forest products. With the promising results of research, our industrialists will be induced to put up plants for the manufacture of pulp products, plastics, textiles and probably cellulose proteins, sugar, motor fuels, glycerine, glues, etc. from wood not made into lumber, plywood and other timber products. These new enterprises will mean more employment, more wealth. And with the general improvement in agriculture and industry, standard of living will increase and extend to a greater number of people. In the resulting increase in demand for necessities and comforts of modern living, the new wood products will be on hand to fill most of those needs.

The now certain realization of the Forest Products Laboratory is a great stride indeed towards making wood, our biggest source of raw material, more fully utilized and lasting in supply, for the nation's good.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LAND CLASSIFICATION PARTIES

Large scale land classification—a five-year project with ECA aid, is in the offing. It is not much of exaggeration to say that the future of Philippine forestry lies much in the hands of the men entrusted with this big job. Theirs is a great responsibility. More than ever, their high sense of duty, courage and wise judgment will be demanded for the best interests of the nation, for there will be some individual and powerful selfish interests pressing for the pushing back of timberland lines to the steep slopes and foot of rough ranges, without regard to the need of retaining accessible wide tracts of production forests that will sustain

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the lumber industries and other forest industries that will be established. It must be borne in mind that forest industries are one of the sinews of our economy, hence, they must be maintained for all times by a sustained supply of timber. This calls for managed production forests. Our L. C. men must, therefore, give primary consideration to the retention of areas to comprise working circles especially in regions where there are now established lumbering companies.

Of no less weighty responsibility is the seeing to it that what happened in the United States, where there had been wholesale and indiscriminate disposition of public lands to private parties leading later on to a tremendous expenditure in buying back extensive portions that became wastelands, should not happen here.

PHILIPPINE FORESTS

In its broadest aspects, the Philippine program of national recovery has laid emphasis primarily upon agricultural development, as is quite proper. This is the recommendation of the Bell report and it is being wisely followed by the E.C.A. But the fact remains that the forests of the Philippines are perhaps the nation's greatest natural resource, viewed as a means to ultimate survival. Forest preservation and research should go hand in hand with agricultural development.

One reason is the great progress made in the Twentieth century in wood technology. Today the chemist and physicist can produce from wood a substantial amount of man's total requirements. Carbohydrates, proteins, alcohol, gasoline, in fact all the thousands of products that come from coal and petroleum can be synthesized from a self-perpetuating source, the forests.

When laboratory techniques are fully developed into commercial processes, the scientists assure us that the forests of the world will be farmed as extensively as we now farm fields, and more profitably. The Philippines has some of the best forest lands to be found anywhere.

Thanks to the foresight of the well-trained leadership of the government's bureau of forestry, there is an awareness generally of the need for preserving our national and privately-owned forest resources. But relatively little is being done to contribute to the knowledge of our forest potential. The school of forestry at Los Baños was created primarily to train men for forest management, not for research.

Now, with the current emphasis laid by the government and the E.C.A. upon technical advancement and research in agriculture and industry, it seems timely to convert the school of forestry into a college of forestry, and add basic research to its mission.

The government bureau of forestry has done some valuable research within its financial and other limitations, but research is not its primary function. It is more properly the agency to implement and further the use of research findings once they are made adaptable to local conditions. There has always been a splendid liaison between the school of forestry and the bureau of forestry, and this distribution of function would serve to strengthen both institutions.

With a college of forestry fostering research and a better-financed bureau of forestry managing and protecting our natural forest resources, the latter would be better conserved and its value to the people enhanced, while by means of the former, greater and more profitable utilization would be accomplished.

Today there is a tendency to look upon the public forests as a source of revenue from forest charges rather than as a resource that must be husbanded to prevent its destruction.

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