Can an American Grow Sugar Cane in the Philippines? By Francis J. Cooper

I have heard this question asked time after time during my eight years in the islands, so I was not surprised to have my friends ask me, "How are you making out?" I recall also a long discussion I had with an oldtimer, American, before I commenced operations on the island of Negros. He assured me that I would be broke before the first crop was ready to harvest. He had been in the sugar business during the muscovado mill days and had failed

Well, the oldtimer was not far wrong. I had forgotten, however, to tell him that I had sound financial backing, besides all my savings, which would assure getting through the first year.

Operations were started at haciendas Los Angeles and Concepción about four years ago. The Haciendas were rented for 10% of the crop and the lease was for five crops with an option for five more. Previously the haciendas produced about 2,000 piculs of sugar, for the Victorias central.

Eighteen pesos per picul was the price when my first operations started. All my estimates were made however for 1 12.00 per picul. The were made nowever for F12.00 per picul. The following year, when the first crop was harvested, eleven pesos was the price and twelve pesos is the highest price offered to me to date. With the above figures, one will wonder what really happened

I started my plowing by using four tractors, 15-30 horse power, with petroleum and distillate as fuel, later changing to motor alcohol. Heavy cogon fields were plowed. Five plowings took about as many months, as many of the fields had never been planted to cane at Hacienda Con-cepción. No animals were used except for plowing around the stumps of trees and for cultivation.

It was decided to plant by the Hawaiian method, of leaving the husks or dried leaves on the cane points, thus saving half the time and naturally the labor. Except for the little delay in the first shoots the results have been very satisfactory, but it is strange to note that e of my neighbors will follow this method.

Fertilizer experiments were started the first year, to determine the kind of fertilizer required. The results have caused several thousand tons of the best fertilizer to be purchased for the district and not one single bag of the fertilizer

which was standard then is being used today. Cultivation was commenced with the sole idea of weed control, and this has been followed.

Labor houses had to be built and wooden model houses were erected. From experience I have learned that an ordinary nipa house, I have learned that an ordinary inpa house, well built, suits the laborer better, unless a first-class wooden house is built, which means concrete foundations and a good drop-siding. Unless this precaution is taken the walls are as good as nothing during a typhoon, whereas the nipa shacks can be made water-tight. It was necessary for me to use petroleum tins carefully cut and painted for an outer siding to my first

I planned to have the new houses attract the laborers, but I soon found that it took more than that; it was necessary for me to give advances, anticipos, from 15 to 50 pesos. This seems to have been the custom ever since sugar cane has been grown on this island.

canch has been grown on this stand.

"Jaw has learned, according to the current Tropical Life, that a crop of 42 tons of sugar cane per applied, 27 that a crop of 42 tons of sugar cane per applied, 72 of line, and 173 of potesh. "Whilst excessive manuring with nitrogenous fertilizers leads to hunuriant is lowered, and the mechanical strength of the cane is diminished. Potash counteracts these tendencies and diminished. Potash counteracts these tendencies and comous manuring is practiced, although it is generally found best to apply nitrate of soda little and often, anous manuring is practiced, although it is generally found best to apply nitrate of soda little and often, and should not be omitted from a balanced fertilizer for sugar cane." We give the formula worked out in Cubas and should not be soict algal, 303-600 pounds per acre (or bone meal, 200-400 list, per acre); sulphate of potash, 107-200 penuda per acre.

I had previously read about the habits of the laborers getting their advances and working for one day or a week, and then making good their escape to repeat the same thing somewhere Having sufficient capital, I was able to plant most all available land, and to use fertilizer. An increase of about 50% over the previous record of the hacienda, as operated by the former tenant, made it possible for me to win.

There were other planters in this district who could have beaten my record, had they had sufficient money to purchase fertilizer.

Forgetting the prize, not taking it up on the hacienda books as an earning, and figuring the last crop of 18,000 piculs, just harvested, together with 4,000 piculs being harvested at this time, but belonging to 1926-27 crop, it is easy





Scenes on Francis J. Cooper's Plantation Upper left, laborers' cottages; lower left, Mr. Cooper's residence; upper right, a corner of the garden; lower right, a closer view of a cottage, showing the utilization of oil cans for siding. (See text)

It was less than two days after giving the first dvances, when it was found that one family I had paid about sixty pesos advance had run away during the night. I soon learned that this sort of thing was happening too often, and that the wages paid would be only a small part of the hacienda's expense unless the truency was checked.

A weekly payroll was started, and paid by me personally. All advances were then con-sidered a permanent advance, and no debits or credits were made unless the laborer expected to leave the hacienda or a death occurred in his family. These rules were strictly adhered to, and have proved more than successful. Each laborer gets paid weekly, when his mind is fresh on what he did during the week, and all rapidly see the results of any spurts or extra efforts given to their work. It has been months since any of my men have taken French leave, and I have found it very easy to get all the laborers required.

The first crop was harvested. After going over the accounts, it was found that a little over P1,000 had been lost. The second crop showed a loss, but a very small one. The figures, of course, included a monthly salary for myself

Looking over the results of the two crops I was about ready to believe that the oldtimer had been right; however, an accurate account of crops was kept and it was easy to see that the

third crop would bring a surplus.

Last year the Victorias Milling Company offered a prize to the best average hacendero. One prize was offered to haciendas which could mill over 100 hectares, and was l'10,000. The two other prizes, of 1'5,000 and 1'1,000, were offered to those milling less than 100 hectares.

Handicaps were arranged on the basis of the class of soil. In this district there are distinct zones, good and bad soil. Points were given for the largest area planted, as compared with the available land, and also points for the highest vield of piculs per hectare, and tons of cane per hectare.

I was fortunate, and won the first prize.

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to see that I can grow sugar cane and make money. But it has taken a lot of hard work and

time to get the original money back. For those who care to enter into the cane growing business, I advise the following rules, which are very simple:

House your laborers well. Pay them weekly.

Keep medicine at hand.

Keep animals under cover at night, and have plenty of fresh water for them to drink at all

Prepare all fields for planting until a perfect seed bed is ready, as a great saving will result in further weed-control.

Cultivation with animal plows, only done to control weeds and hill up the cane to prevent it from blowing over. Destroy all diseased cane.

The same plowman should be kept in charge of the same animal.

Burn the fields over after cutting, and as soon after as possible.

Ratoon no fields infested with bucan or any other cane disease.

When buying portable track, buy 16-lb. rails as the yearly up-keep will be less and very few cars will be derailed during the harvesting opera-

Pay not over 28 centavos per picul to bring the cane to the loading station, and even less if the distance is short

Pay about 40 centavos per picul for cutting and less if the cane runs more than 100 piculs per hectare.

Twenty centavos per ton is sufficient to load a ton of cane at the loading station into central's

Apply one-third ton fertilizer per hectare and do so as soon as possible after planting, or after commencing ratoons. Cover same by turning a furrow, if you expect rain. Apply by spreading about the entire young shoots, but not on

The average wage for daily work is 80 centavos per day, and even less if the week is not com-pleted. However, contract men average over a peso per day.

A cabo should receive P30 to P40 monthly, an an encargado P80 to P100, depending upon

the number of years of service. Last, but very important, sell your sugar as ou make it and accept the general average for the year as your price.

For the benefit of readers not familiar with Spanish plantation terminology as in general use in the Philipper of the property of the plantation terminology as in general use in the Philipper of the property of the property of the control of the control of the control of the control of the property of

YEARSLEY GOES WEST

A. W. Bert Yearsley succumbed to a heart attack at his home in Caloocan Sunday morning, January 29, aged 51. He was one of the best known Americans in the islands, and a member of the chamber of commerce. Funeral services of the chamber of commerce. were held Tuesday, January 31, the Fraternal Order of Eagles participating. Yearsley was active in Eagle circles. He was also a Mason, a member of the South African lodge. Coming from Brooklyn, he had been 27 years in the Philippines, always in the amusement business. He opened the oldtime Majestic theater, and was the original proprietor of the famous Silver Dollar Bar on Plaza Santa Cruz and the Escolta. with cartwheels at the corners of the tiles in the floor and imbedded thickly in the bar. More recently and for many years he has operated Lerma Cabaret in Caloocan, of which he became the proprietor, and he was preparing to open Lerma Athletic Stadium when he died. He also had plantation interests in Cotabato which he was developing. Mrs. Ruby Yearsley, appointed administratrix of the estate, and their son, Edward, six years old, survive; also Robert John Yearsley, a brother associated with Yearsley in business, and their sister, in Detroit. The Journal extends its sympathies to the bereaved family. Mrs. Yearsley has announced her intention of carrying on everything as had been planned by her husband. Bert was liberal-hearted and endowed with unflinching courage,

a man of many friends. His ashes rest in the family plot in the Cementerio del Norte. His demit came from Africa on the day of his fune-His masonic apron was placed in the urn with his ashes.

CHINESE LEADERS VISIT HERE

Two weeks ago several of the most prominent nationalists of China visited Manila: Dr. C. C. Wu, Sun Fo, and Hu Han Min. They are on a world mission in behalf of treaty revisions and were accorded a grand welcome in this city, where their countrymen's interests are so im-

Trinidad Tecson, heroine of the Philippine insurrection, died two weeks ago, of old age. She is honored as the organizer of the Philip-pine Red Cross at San Miguel de Mayumo, but she took part in many engagements and was several times wounded in action.

Dispatches of January 28 brought the news of the death of the celebrated Spanish author. Blasco Ibañez, in exile at Mentone, France, and very fittingly the newspapers were filled with biographies and eulogies of Spain's great son. Though his shelf is a long one, it is for the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse that he will be remembered, like Hugo for Les Misérables, like Cervantes for Don Quixote, and like his contemporary, Reymont, for the Peasants. He had chosen exile rather than submit to

The Manila Gas Corporation added P280,000 to its investment last year, bringing it up to P7,580,000. The production of gas, 10,348,-610 meters, was 741,260 over 1927, while 1600 new patrons were obtained, making 13,695 altogether. The efficiency of the plant is remarkable too, losses of gas being a fraction of the average loss in the United States. The company proposes, whenever its net earnings warrant, to lower its rates.

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was used by Mr. Francis Cooper and is the Fertilizer referred to in the article on opposite page

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