

Graft and Corruption

IN THE SPRAWLING Malacañang Park located south of the Pasig River opposite Malacañang Palace, one of the few low, unassuming buildings houses the Complaints and Investigation Office (CIO). Unlike other locations of government offices, the area which is better identified as the locale of the security force of the Palace, is a peaceful and quiet nook—conducive site for offices with special missions.

It is therefore not surprising that an equally quiet and unassuming man works conscientiously in the Park. He is Secretary Quirico P. Evangelista—a Fourth Degree Knight of the Order of the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines and District Deputy of District No. 40 consisting of five KC councils—who now heads the Complaints and Investigation Office. Sec. Evangelista is one of the several members of the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines who are occupying high positions in the government. As CIO Chief, he acts as overseer of government functionaries and guardian of the oppressed and seemingly defenseless individuals who are very often the victims of injustices hurled against them by unscrupulous government personnel.

A Case of Don Quixote

It is noteworthy that Sec. Evangelista is a prime mover in the creation of the K of C Anti-Graft Organization—a highly placed citizen participation in the fight against graft and corruption. As consultant of the KCAGOR, he is instrumental in having stirred the present enthusiasm of the KCs in fighting graft in the government, about which many of them were doubtful at the start as a case of Don Quixote sparring with a windmill.

To say that his present job in the government is expressly cut out for him in view of his experience and stature as responsible official (*pls. see biodata*) is definitely not tossing flattering comment. Indeed, the job of going after grafters in the government service and the perpetrators of similar ills in the private sector should fall upon the shoulders of a man with unquestioned integrity who has written for himself a way of life that is worthy of emulation.

Outstanding Nemesis of Corruption



“A strong public opinion or oneness of thought is necessary in the fight against graft and corruption, but this should be not only in words but more significantly in action.”

Secretary Evangelista joined the CIO (then PARGO) in 1967 as Deputy Chief soon after his retirement as Vice-Commander of the Philippine Navy; in 1969, he became the Acting Chief and has held it up to the present.

Downward Trend

In an exclusive interview with the *Cross*, Sec. Evangelista said that today there is a downward trend in

graft and corruption in the government in the wake of the “vigilance not only of his organization and the other watchdog-agencies of the government but also of the citizenry—” the student activists and vigilante groups, the peasants and workers who have made marches for a cause, many times denouncing graft and corruption. This is not to mention the private organizations that now have an

observant eye at the performances of government personnel: All have contributed to the diminution of instances of perpetration of graft.

The CIO Chief said that graft and corruption is a national ailment—it is a disease that plagues government offices and its total eradication seems unlikely. But like a disease, graft and corruption and other forms of ills of the government can be adequately minimized or prevented—there can always be some remedies on hand to keep them from flourishing.

Strong Public Opinion

Secretary Evangelista staunchly believes that a strong public opinion or oneness of thought is necessary in the fight against graft and corruption but this should not only be in words but more significantly in action. He laments the fact that at times, while some citizens are at first vocal in denouncing a government official who, by common knowledge, has violated the anti-graft law, they become afraid to testify in court.

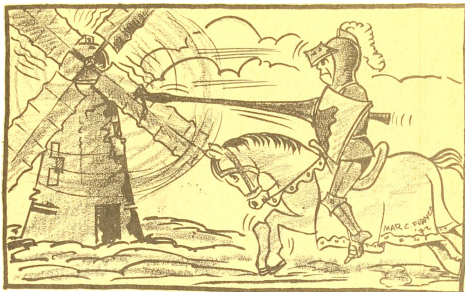
The top government graft-buster lauds the small people who have come to his office to report graft cases and been brave enough to "tell everything" in the trial courts.

The CIO's operations scope, according to Secretary Evangelista, is nationwide. Of the total number of cases filed with the Agency, 782 involved national officials and employees, 76 provincial officials and employees, 71 local officials and employees, and 62 officials and employees of government-owned or controlled corporations.

Assistance to the Public

Secretary Evangelista said that the CIO gives assistance to the general public like those seeking aid in connection with their claims for back-pay, back salaries, pensions, compensation, retirement, death and educational benefits, land conflicts, policy premiums or dividends, not to mention its all-out support to those who contemplate filing complaints against erring government officials or employees.

There should be an unremitting vigilance and active participation of the general public in the crusade against graft and corruption if the vicious tentacles of this national monstrosity are to be severed. Secretary Evangelista said. The Knights of Columbus as a civic organization, has shown the road towards this end, he declared. —BEN S. DE CASTRO



A Life of Achievement

Secretary Quirico P. Evangelista was born in Orion, Bataan on June 16, 1915.

He graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio in 1940. He finished law at the University of Manila in 1950 and passed the bar the following year. He earned a Master of Laws (Cum Laude) at the University of Manila (1954).

He studied in several military service schools here and abroad, the last in the Naval War College, Newport, U.S.A. (1960-61).

He saw action in Bataan and Corregidor during World War II while serving with the Off-Shore Patrol, USAFFE.

After the war, he served in various positions in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He was at one time Navy Task Force Commander, Patrol Force Commander, Chief of Naval Staff, AFP Chief of Personnel (J-1) and AFP Chief of War plans (J-5).

After retiring in 1966 as Vice-Commander of the Philippine Navy, he was called back to the government service as Customs Director of the ASAC in 1966; later as Deputy Chief of the PARGO in 1967; then as Acting Chief of PARGO (now CIO) from September 1969 to the present.

He is a former professor of law in two Manila universities and a guest lecturer at the Philippine Center of Professional Management, Manila. He has been a recipient of various military awards and numerous civic and academic awards.

He is an officer and member of various civic and religious organizations in the country. He is at present District Deputy of the Knights of Columbus (District No. 40 consisting of five councils in Manila). He is a Past Grand Knight, Our Lady of Loreto Council No. 4288 and Past Faithful Navigator, Padre Burgos General Assembly; and a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus.

Secretary Evangelista is married to the former Miss Felicitas Verzosa. Their union is blessed with ten children.