



THE BUNAS-NONAS TYPE OF AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT SCHOOLS

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ONE OF the greatest pre-war contributions which the Philippines has made to the world of education was the "Muñoz" type of agricultural high school—a type which was established in the Philippines three years before the first American agricultural high school was established in New York State. Schools modeled after Muñoz have been established in Siam, Brazil, and other countries. Our post-war Bukidnon National Agricultural School (BUNAS) and Negros Occidental National Agricultural School (NONAS) type of agricultural settlement schools are schools with all of the advantages of the Muñoz school with none of its weak points. They are schools which have been established by the Philippine government not only to give agricultural instruction to the young people but to develop agriculturally unoccupied sections of public land. Every student in these schools is not only a student but a prospective settler in the area and upon graduation receives not merely a diploma but a farm which he has started to develop even before graduation.

The site of the BUNAS-NONAS type of agricultural school has an area of from 4,500 to 5,000 hectares of public land surrounded by 50,000 or more undeveloped land. Of the two schools, the Bukidnon National Agricultural School was established in 1946, while the Negros Occidental National Agricul-

tural School in 1947, the government providing an aggregate amount of P300,000 annually for the establishment of the school. With modern mechanization equipment, it has been possible to accomplish in three or four years what needed twenty or thirty years of handwork to accomplish in Muñoz. While the production in these two schools has not reached the 23,000-cavans of annual production of Muñoz, with the complete development of the large 5,000-hectare sites in these postwar schools, the production in the little 780-hectare site of Muñoz, in spite of its heavy harvest, will be comparatively a mere begatelle. The Bukidnon and Negros Occidental National Agricultural Schools will not only be one Muñoz—it will be ten Muñoz school on one site.

The BUNAS school was established on its large cogonal site on a mere financial shoe-string and in army tents but thanks to the War Damage Commission special aid its 60 buildings are now rapidly approaching completion and as fully mechanized. It is planned to make this school the pilot agricultural school in the Philippines.

The NONAS school in Negros was established a year after on a large forested plateau, 18 kilometers from Kabankalan. This school, unlike BUNAS, had a large initial appropriation as the government provided P300,000 for this

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project which enable the Bureau of Public Schools to begin the work with a sawmill, a P27,000-bulldozer, caterpillar tractors, and heavy trucks for clearing the forested site and to provide the lumber needed for its more than 60 buildings.

Although a small first year class was organized, most of this first year of pioneering was devoted to the setting up of the school sawmill and cutting a site through the forest. With lumber costing only 4 centavos a boardfoot, the school plant will cost less than that of the 60 building plant at Bukidnon. Last year, the Bukidnon school graduated its first graduating class and started its first student settlement group on a site near the school site. In the meantime, the old and pre-war site of the pre-war school at Managoc has been subdivided and occupied by pre-war school graduates of the old school.

Three years ago when the NONAS school was started, there were practically no settlers on the road from Kabankalan to the school, but after only three years this same road is lined with new settlers and there is a market, a store, and cockpit in a new barrio settlement near the entrance of the school site.

Both schools are now practically self-supporting as far as food for students is concerned. Both schools are completely mechanized with the very best modern agricultural equipment. Both schools are purchasing hydro-electric units. That for the NONAS school is one of the under-shot wheel type and at the Bukidnon school, a turbine type. These hydro-electric plants will reduce to a minimum the heavy fuel expense for light and power.

The last three and four years have been the pioneering and building phase. The next stage will be devoted to the development of the animal husbandry, poultry and fishery projects, to supplement the present rice and corn projects making the school absolutely self-supporting with reference to food for teachers, students and settlers.

This new type of school is one that is not only adopted to the settlement of undeveloped areas in the Philippines but could also be adopted by other tropical or semi-tropical countries with large unoccupied areas. Establishing more schools of this type in Mindanao, Palawan, the Cagayan Valley, Samar, Mindoro, and other unsettled regions would do more for land settlement than ten land settlement organizations and at considerably less cost.

Select the area, establish an agricultural school as a nucleus and build a road to that school and settlers will immediately come to the area and all of the students of the school will become the educated, trained farmer-settlers that will leaven the life in the area.

This is not theory. It has been proven over and over again. When we established the Upi School in Cotabato and when the governor fulfilled his promise of making a first class road to the school in less than five years, Upi became not only a barrio but a thriving town with a full intermediate school, a market and a post office.

Give the settlers a school and a road to the region near the school and they will flock there by the thousands. This now obtains at BUNAS and the process is being repeated at NONAS.

The present legislature is sold on this type of project and have

provided funds so that this year a new NONAS will spring up in the center of Mindoro between east and west Mindoro and funds have also been provided for another similar schools for sparsely settled regions in Antique and Iloilo.

This type of school has gone far beyond the theory stage. A visit to NONAS in Negros Occidental and BUNAS in Bukidnon will prove that the Philippines have made a contribution not only to world education but also to scientific and fruitful settlement of unoccupied areas. These schools are a type that would be especially helpful in changing the large forest areas of South America to permanent agricultural settlements.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that if student-settlers in these schools marry their girl classmate, their farm area is doubled, as both boys and girls are given settlement sites.

As we cannot attract young people to rural areas without making these areas at least approach urban conditions, the school life is made as attractive as possible with radio and moving picture facilities, a good gymnasium and library, and community singing and concerts. The school is in reality a community with a community set-up, student cooperatives — a mayor, a council, a student's bank, a chief of police, and a student court.

As to the student's program, the school is divided into two shifts—one working in the field all day while the other students are in school. The next day, there is a change in shift—the first group studying and the second group doing a full day's basis but it has been found that more and better field work and classroom work can

be accomplished when the shifts are on the full-day basis.

Much of the fieldwork is on a group basis with a group of 6 to 8 students assigned to a field area. At harvest time, the student group receives 75% of their field production after deducting cost for use of farm animals or heavy equipment. The school receives the other 25% left. By this method, the students are entirely self-supporting and instead of asking money from parents are usually able to send money home.

There are not many schools in this world of ours where a penniless boy can enter school without paying for tuition and board and in addition can send money home to his parents and can have a little homestead of his own after graduation and with an additional area if he marries one of his farmertte classmates.

Subsistence is not given free to the students but all students can earn their subsistence and all are self-supporting. All field and shop projects are or soon will be entirely self-supporting. However, as the teaching process and classroom work are not financially productive activities, these schools cannot be entirely self-supporting. There are activities which have to be supported either (a) by means of government appropriations, (b) by tuition fees paid by parents, (c) by tuition fees paid by students from their field or shop earnings. No school whether public or private can be considered as entirely self-supporting. Where no government aid is available, it has to be dependent upon tuition fees and in the latter case, cannot therefore be considered as an entirely self-supporting institution even if all of its shop and field projects are self-supporting.