

## A heart for the poor

REACHING out to the greatest number of people, even to the remotest areas of the country, has always been a goal of the New Society government. In the words of the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos: "We find love not in ourselves but in others. This is so obvious yet so often forgotten. One will find it among our people, in their poverty and misery. During travels to seek out people, I always tried to absorb every little thing that could be of value for our fellowman, for it is by knowing others that we gain more self-knowledge. And I have but one conclusion: that for many of us, the beginning of hope, the keystone of progress, is a Compassionate Society."

Compassion should indeed be felt by all—only a small percentage of the population enjoys the comforts of life while many are still deprived of even the basic necessities. This is particularly true in the rural areas where 70 percent of the country's population reside; it is this 70 percent that is plagued by malnutrition, disease, poverty and poor environmental conditions. Of course, there are programs to combat these, but the inaccessibility of services in the rural areas has hampered the success of these programs.

To remedy this, Project Compassion was launched in November last year. A brainchild of the First Lady, it is a rural family development program integrating four major projects—nutrition, green revolution, family planning and environmental management—with the barangay network acting as organizational channel. It was planned by Mrs. Marcos' four foundations: the Nutrition Center of the Philippines, the Green Revolution, the Population Center Foundation and the Environmental Center of the Philippines.



Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos

The first area to benefit from the project was Bagbilas, a quiet little town in Quezon province 140 kilometers from Manila. Previously, an ordinary days, the tenor of life in this palm-fringed town bordered on the humdrum. But with Project Compassion, Bagbilas nowadays hums with activity. A common sight around are children cleaning the roads of dirt and weeds, women busying themselves with improvised greenhouses, men sprucing up their homes and babies being brought to the "Operation Timbang" clinic for the regular check-up.

Project Compassion seeks:

- To increase the production of vegetables, fruits, livestock, poultry and fishery products and elevate consumption to recommended nutritional levels.

- To improve the nutritional status of the family and prevent the occurrence of malnutrition.

- To motivate eligible couples to have only that number of children they

can properly rear, educate and support, and to provide family planning information and other services.

- To develop environmental awareness by providing information on environmental management and to motivate the family toward the improvement of its surroundings and environment.

Specifically, the project aims to develop the family by assisting its members in acquiring and applying the knowledge and skills needed to produce a considerable amount of their own food, practice proper nutrition, improve their physical environment and plan their size. This is done by encouraging the families to identify and utilize available resources and providing them with minimum external assistance.

How it works. In delivering its four-program package of services on a door-to-door basis through unit leaders, Project Compassion utilizes the barangay network to reach the family. The barangay is divided into puroks, each purok headed by a teacher-coordinator and a purok leader. The purok, in turn, is divided into units of about 20 families led by unit leaders. This vertical network enables the unit leaders to reach each individual family in their areas of operation.

As each barangay is under the jurisdiction of a barrio captain, a municipal family development officer under a mayor, and a provincial family development officer under a governor, the project's directions and materials come through these appointed heads. Project Compassion then fits into the existing hierarchy of local governments to assume the ultimate task of the integrated program.

The governor, mayor and barangay head are responsible, as chairmen of the

various family development committees (FDC) organized by Project Compassion, for the overall implementation of the program within their respective areas. Technical representatives of the various government departments, whose duties include activities decided upon by the FDC, sit as members of the committee and help in the planning of the local programs. Once the program is decided upon by the group, such technical representatives are expected to contribute their technical expertise and carry out their share in the total effort by utilizing resources of their various offices. Representatives from the private sector, including the academic community, do their share by mobilizing the skills and resources that are available in the community.

On the other hand, assistance given by Project Compassion to the implementors of the program in the rural areas is two-fold: the dissemination of information materials and commodities coming from each cooperating agency, and the training and orientation of members of the family development committees, including invited participants at the provincial, municipal and barangay levels to develop skills necessary for the planning and implementation of their own family development programs.

Now on its Phase I of operation, Project Compassion covers eight provinces, two cities, 82 municipalities and 2,650 barangays. Some 17,920 unit leaders are being trained to service 358,400 households. The sum of 5.9 million pesos has been allocated to fund the project's first 18 months of operation. In the long run, the First Lady envisions Project Compassion covering all towns and municipalities of the country. □

## Continue conserving

THE search for oil in the Philippines has a long history. The recent Palawan oil strike was the culmination of more than 80 years of exploration which began in the last decade of the Spanish occupation of the Philippines.

From 1890 to 1964, 245 wells with a combined length of 589,833 feet were drilled. Of these wells, 189 having a combined length of 423,000 feet were drilled during the period 1969-1964. Eighty million pesos were spent for exploration and drilling during the 1959-64 period. After 1964, there was a drop in exploration due to lack of money and lack of attention by the government.

In 1970, Senate Bill 581 tried to accelerate the exploration for petroleum by granting incentives to foreign businessmen. President Marcos certified the bill as urgent. But the extreme protectionist position held by local business and the efforts of political and leftist opponents to portray government policy-makers as tools of foreign business hampered the bill's enactment.

On October 8, 1972, PD 8 made Senate Bill 581 a law. This marked the active participation of the government in oil exploration and exploitation. The following December, PD 8 was amended by PD 87 which defined under a more meaningful system the incentives to oil resource explorers and developers. Under this system, called a service contract system, contractors provide services and technology for a fee. To allow service contractors to recover their costs, the government's share of the production increases gradually from a relatively minimal amount.

The service contract system outlined by PD 8 actually satisfies local protectionism and at the same time allows the entry of much-needed foreign capital and technology. It asserts government sovereignty over its own resources,

lodges part of the production with the country, and grants some incentives directly proportionate to Filipino participation in a contract.

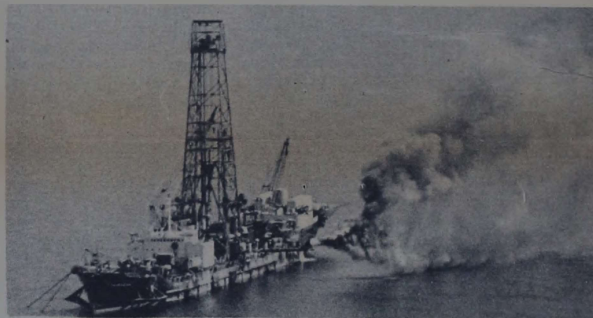
Besides granting incentives to local and foreign investors to accelerate the search for oil, the government also created the Philippine National Oil Company in 1973 to foster exploration operations conducive to a sustainable economy.

The government's efforts have paid off not only because of the oil strike but also because of the number of commitments in the search for oil. Some 240 wells have been drilled on and off-shore since 1973. At present, there are about 50 service contracts covering a total of about 7 million hectares.

The number of service contracts will increase this year because all concession-holders under the Petroleum Act of 1949 have been given until August this year to convert to service contracts under the terms of PD 87. There are, under the Petroleum Act, about 250 concessions covering some 11,500,000 hectares. The move requiring concession-holders to convert to service contracts was done because most of the promising areas are in the hands of concessionaires who have failed to develop their own financial and technical resources and to get the expertise and support of the multinationals.

The discovery of crude oil in Palawan should not mean a relaxation of present energy conservation and energy substitution efforts. There are several reasons for this.

First, it is much too early to be sure that Philippine oil deposits can produce in quantities sufficient to meet all our oil needs. The significance of the Palawan oil find, as reported by Husky Oil, one of the service contractors, "is the establishment of hydrocarbon presence



Palawan oil strike: energy conservation continues.

in the area." In other words, while there is definitely oil in the Palawan area, its exact amount is yet undetermined. The Nido well is, of course, not the first oil find in the country but it is the first one with significant potential. A sign of this potential is the extent of the seismic survey (800 linear miles) being done to evaluate the size of the oil deposit. Another is the recommendation of Pertamina experts that the Nido structure can be placed in immediate commercial production, although the Petroleum Board has opted for the more cautious move to first evaluate the area.

Second, our only significant oil find, if placed on commercial production, will start producing only two or three years from now and so, we do not have any oil riches yet.

Third, oil resources, no matter how large, are not unlimited. Australia, for instance, is producing 70 percent of its petroleum needs but if it does not find new oil sources or new energy sources, it will be importing all of its petroleum needs by 1990.

Fourth, we have a balance of payments deficit of \$500 million. Until we reap the benefits from our oil resources, we will continue to incur huge oil bills. This year, our oil bill is projected at \$980 million.

Fifth, oil is generally becoming harder to find. Material costs are soaring because of inflation. And operating costs are increasing because of the need to go

offshore and to dig deeper. Most of the wells in the North Sea in Northern Europe for example, cost at least \$1.5 million each with a success rate of nine to one. So, before enjoying any net benefits, there are huge costs to make up for.

Sixth, as President Marcos said last year, 94 percent of our energy is produced by fossil fuel-fired generators. And while the government is moving as fast as possible into the generation of electricity from hydroelectric and geothermal sources (which are cheaper than petroleum sources), a complete conversion will be possible only after more than ten years. Financially, it is possible only to reduce fossil-fired generators from 94 percent to 75 percent by 1985.

The search for alternate energy sources has not, therefore, slackened because of the Palawan strike. President Marcos recently ordered the acceleration of coal exploration and development; this he did only a few days after the Palawan oil discovery. He directed the Bureau of Mines to actively look for new coal deposits in selected areas and government reservations.

To rationalize the Philippines' continuing search for energy sources, President Marcos created the Energy Development Board which shall intensify and consolidate government efforts relating to the exploration, exploitation, and development of indigenous energy resources vital to economic growth. □