

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PPSTA

Ladies and gentlemen of the convention: I wish to thank you for the honor conferred upon me when you elected me president of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association for the school year 1948-1949. This responsibility is a tremendous one, but I know I can count on the wisdom and experience of my colleagues in the Board, where we have a cross-section of representative minds. There are Board directors who are conservative; some are liberal, while others are radical. Mr. Trinidad, Mr. Lardizabal, and Mr. Naval may be considered conservatives. Among the radicals, we have our young superintendents like Mr. Tuazon, Mr. Castro, and Mr. Sadtul. Mr. Lorenzo is midway between the conservatives and the radicals. Mrs. Pineda will be there to furnish the refining influence on and the necessary inspiration for our work in the Board.

I know that all the division superintendents are heart and soul for the Association. Even if there are a few who have not reported their support by the remittance of membership fees, I assure you they are with us. I have talked to them and I know from the feelings they expressed to me that they will wholeheartedly support this Association. We know fully well that we can also get all kinds of expert advice from our division superintendents. They will support us not only with their active participation in swelling the membership of the Association but also with their expert advice.

We have an A-1 Executive Secretary-Treasurer, — aggressive, radical, and good at writing. If he has any fault

at all, it is that he gets a little too enthusiastic at times and sometimes impatient for results. He is heart and soul for the Association. He left the promising position which he formerly held in the General Office, so that he could devote his full time to the affairs of the Association. If he had remained in the government service, who knows but that someday he might have become the Director or even the Secretary of Education.

It is one of our main objectives to develop professional pride among our teachers. The beautiful report of Mr. Laya on the dignification of the teaching profession is enough to convince us of the need for raising the standards of our work and of making teachers realize that we need to unite and to pool our resources together so we can attain our objectives. One evening I was talking to two nurses, who were my guests. They talked about nothing else but the Nurses' Association. They are proud of their association. I asked how much their fee was and they said it was ₱3.00. They are willing to pay this much for the sake of their profession. We can do no less.

Consider the common laborer on the street. He is nobody, and yet he has certain feelings of dignity, self-confidence, and self-respect because of his affiliation with a labor union. We should do better.

The teachers are a very good people. They have been helping others, giving contributions to the Red Cross, war veterans, charitable enterprises, fiestas, etc. but they have forgotten to help themselves. The ₱1.00 membership

fee a year is one way of helping ourselves. What is the reason that 35% of our people are not yet with the Association? We have to convince them of the importance of our work. Once they are made conscious of the need for this Association, they will be with us. When the delegates go back to their respective divisions, they will know what to do. It is up to them to work out the membership campaign successfully.

The PPSTA is not in politics and the present administration will see to it that this principle will be adhered to. If we people in the Civil Service go into politics, there will be plenty of headache; politics is not our field. But if we support a good cause, like advocating amendments to the Educational Act of 1940, we are not in politics. We are going to fight politics and politicians whenever our interests are jeopardized. We are not going to back up anybody just because we like him personally. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude, if he is for us. If he is against us, we shall show that we have some power to make our influence felt. In the elections, we have to open our eyes, scrutinize the platforms of political parties, and what each candidate stands for. We have to make these people recognize the fact that we are alive to the educational needs of our country and that political parties must present concrete proposals for the improvement of the school system and of our teachers' welfare if they want our support. In every election, we want to be sure we scrutinize carefully what each party has to offer to us.

We shall be independent in our thinking. The PPSTA is not a tool of the Bureau of Public Schools. We give credit to Director Abada for taking the stand that the PPSTA should be in-

dependent. He is a liberal director. The Under-Secretary has told you that this group is not under the dictation of the top brass in the Bureau of Public Schools as shown by the fact that the Association has freedom to make suggestions regarding educational matters.

I would like to see the PPSTA develop into an agency for the development and application of democratic principles in our schools. This Convention, for instance, is democracy in action. You can speak as you please. But in the field, when you are talking to your superintendents you are reserved because you have to defer to their opinions. Here we allow everyone to say what he wants to say. We are fortunate to have a Director like Mr. Abada. At one time when I met him at the Interscholastic Meet, he said, "I am advocating the practice of democracy in the schools, and if I do not practice it how can I teach it to my people." He has the interest of the teachers at heart. I hope we can have him long, but I am afraid we may lose him. Circumstances may force him to go into politics. If we have a man in Congress like Director Abada, the teachers and the schools can be given greater assurance they will be well taken care of.

My friends, it is your good fortune and your privilege to be here in this Convention. I hope that while you are here, you will have acquired sufficient inspiration to carry on the work of the PPSTA. From now on we hope that you will be missionaries of the Association. The Association needs to be propagandized among the people and the teachers. Even His Excellency, the President, had for a time a wrong impression of the PPSTA. Yesterday, at 11:00 o'clock, our Under-Secretary was called by the President

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