



WANTED: NATIONAL TRADE SCHOOLS

CONRADO DE LOS REYES
Acting Principal
Ilocos Sur Trade School

The Philippines lacks the necessary technical know-how for our industrialization and mechanization program. The Beyster Commission pointed out this need. The American Fullbright Educational Experts confirmed it.

There is no doubt that sending pensionados to the United States and other countries to learn the technical know-how in the various fields of economic pursuits will go a long way to solve this problem. But certainly, it would be equally wise on the part of our government to provide the incentive and encouragements for our youth to enter our trade schools by improving and expanding their instructional facilities and offerings. This may be the most realistic and positive approach to this problem of producing sufficient technical know-how for our trades and industries.

We cannot, we should not, expect the provincial governments which are most of the time financially handicapped, to carry out this important mission successfully in the absence of a guaranty to actually transfer their financial shares for the operation and maintenance of our trade schools.

We believe that what we really should do is to operate, and maintain our public trade schools with national funds. After all, trade education is essential to the national welfare. It should, therefore, be the function of the national government to provide this form of needed service.

We need to nationalize our trade schools now to give the maximum service to our people and maximum benefit to our country within a shorter span of time. To delay this essential service is ultimately pernicious to our economic progress. It seems useless to be talking about industrialization and mechanization while doing nothing about it. It is selfish for us to wait for foreigners to do it for us. Let us give our own people the chance and the encouragement by giving them all the facilities for efficient and successful preparation to shoulder the gigantic task of industrialization.

We concede that it would be financially impossible to nationalize twenty-five schools simultaneously. But, the government can better express this desire by nationalizing three or four trade schools every year.

We need not nationalize on the basis of Commonwealth Act No. 313. We need not pattern all of them after the Philippine School of Arts and Trades. We need not convert all of our present trade schools into teacher training institution. But we need to operate and maintain them on a sound and stable financial foundation with an eye for progressive improvement and expansion. We need to make all of them secondary national vocational — technical schools.

We must accept the fact that if we hope to become a strong and healthy nation, we must attain a

high degree of self-sufficiency; we must build up our national economy. A firm and sound national economy can only be realized by building up a well-balanced program in both agricultural and industrial expansion.

Our struggle for political, economic, and social emancipation, and the struggles of our neighboring countries give us the object lessons. Our Great Liberator, the United States of America, has shown us how a global war can be won through massive industries backed up by great potentialities in agriculture.

We are now on the threshold of an industrial era. This sudden quickening in our spirit for business adventure is proof of a glorious future.

This impetus in our industrial movement began with the inauguration of the first president of the Republic of the Philippines. The late President Roxas then declared boldly in his inaugural speech: **WE MUST INDUSTRIALIZE.** The theme of his address to the First Congress of the Republic on January 27, 1947, also envisaged industrialization and mechanization of our agriculture.

We are not industrializing gradually but surely. Let us pray that all our Presidents after Roxas will pursue this objective consistently, persistently, and relentlessly until that high degree of a well-balanced program in both agricultural and industrial expansion is attained.

The people cannot be blamed for their slow response to our vocational education program. This hesitancy on the part of our youth to pursue training in production is simply a result of the tight po-

licy of the government in giving a liberal financial assistance to the rehabilitation and expansion of our vocational training programs, especially in the trade schools. The accommodation and facilities for instruction in some of these schools are sub-normal. Is it surprising that our young men and women flock in the private schools? No. These private schools today have big, commodious buildings, airy rooms, large playgrounds, and adequate instructional equipment. They give good pay to the selected, experienced instructors who usually have acquired their professional maturity in the public schools. By the forces of environment and not by sound guidance, our great reserve of manpower, that is the youth, continue to be attracted away from technical training to purely non-productive education.

The bonanza we have enjoyed immediately after liberation is gradually dissipating. We are now awaking from the stupor of artificial prosperity brought about by the surplus business and war damage guerrilla benefits into the reality of an unbalanced national economy. Whether we like it or not, we must admit that we have been caught flatfooted in the unprecedented problem of unemployment today.

Our leaders, in their noble desire to force the issue of industrialization and mechanization of our agriculture in order to rebuild allegedly our tottering national economy, have conceived the idea of the "import controls" and "dollar-conserving - producing - policies." We admit that the import controls are beneficial to our industrialization program. There are not enough men to create and engage in the production of the

essential commodities we stand to lose due to import controls. But there is also a felt need for implementing our vocational education program.

Everybody knows that the vocational schools fill a need in our socio-economic life pattern. The crying need today is for more vocational education. Public sentiment shows this urgent need. Natural resources and human labor are the two great assets of a nation which enter into the production of wealth. The conservation and full utilization of both natural and human resources depend upon vocational training.

Our vocational schools have come up to the forefront to assume their lead in saving us from the morass of national economic dependency. It would be prudent on the part of our leaders to make people realistically responsive to the present need for industrialization and mechanization. The vocational schools should be assured of adequate financial support in order that they can render efficient and maximum service to our people and to our national economy. They should be expanded both horizontally and vertically by offering more occupational courses and by providing adequate instructional facilities.

We are also of the opinion that vocational education in this country has imperative need for more and better legislations. We need better buildings, better equipment, and better teachers. We could have all these things only through more legislations.

We are deeply grateful to our senators and congressmen who are, in one way or another, responsible for sponsoring and causing the passage of some measures

designed to improve our vocational education program. We are sure the people are watching our legislators in their actuations.

At this writing, we feel happy that the President has signed the bills establishing an agricultural school in Iloilo, Antique, and other places. We are happy that the Senate has favorably indorsed the measures which originated in the House of Representatives nationalizing the La Union Trade School; and we are very happy indeed that the President finally signed this bill. It is consoling to remember that our President was once a public school teacher.

We also feel especially grateful to Senators Abada, Pecson, and Osias for preventing the abolition of the Philippine School of Commerce. We certainly need more educators in Congress like Senator Abada who can give us the assurance that as long as he is in Congress "no measure that is prejudicial to our education or to our teachers shall ever be enacted."

Approval of the bill nationalizing the La Union Trade School, we hope, will prove to be just the beginning. This is a precedent-setting law, we understand; and we hope the other trade schools will also get this privilege—together with the needed financial implementation.

The passage of Republic Act No. 364 authorizing "all existing national and provincial schools of arts and trades, national and provincial agricultural schools, and other vocational schools, already established or which may later be established to collect tuition fees from their students receive contributions from private persons, and contract loans from Government or private bank and other finan-

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