

Taiwan Shows the Way

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TAIWAN'S OVERSEAS TRADE in 1939 totaled Y1,001,588,032. For the same year her total agricultural production was valued at Y536,890,000.

If we compare these figures with our overseas trade for 1940 of P581,311,589 and a total agricultural production for the same year of P427,634,299 the conclusion is inescapable that Taiwan's agriculture and industry are much more highly developed than ours. Nor is this a fair comparison for Taiwan's territory is only about 1/8 of ours while her population is but slightly more than 1/3 of ours. If we are to take the proportion therefore, based on population as the factor of production, we must multiply Taiwan's total agricultural production of Y536,890,000 by three to get an idea of what should be our total agricultural production. This would reach the enormous figure of P1,610,670,000 which the Philippines must produce yearly to be on a par with Taiwan.

OBJECT OF MISSION

The Philippine Agricultural Survey Commission was sent to Taiwan to find out (1) how Taiwan was able to attain such a high level of development and (2) how her enormous wealth is distributed. Is it reflected in the standard of living of the masses of her population?

The answer to the first question is the application of the results of scientific research and experimentation to Taiwan's agricultural practices. Science literally stalks the farms in Taiwan.

For instance, forty years ago the Taiwanese farmers were using over 1,000 varieties of rice. In three years this number had been reduced to 375 and the farmers were given the choice of any. Later the creation of the so-called "Horai" varieties and their general adoption by 1924 for seed increased the unit and total yield of Taiwan rice enormously. The same scientific procedure was adopted in developing other crops.

Taiwan agriculture is dependent on irrigation on which the government, the irrigation associations and sugar companies have spent the considerable sum of Y130,000,000. The irrigation system of Taiwan are among the best in the world. To make up for lack of commercial fertilizers the government turned its eyes to farm compost and the universal practice of applying large quantities of compost has made it possible for Taiwan to maintain her high production.

The improved methods of cultivation generally practiced is another important factor of high production. Rice is planted in straight rows and is properly spaced while the soil is well prepared and weeds are thus kept down. Other crops like camote and peanuts are as carefully cultivated.

SMALL LANDHOLDINGS

Finally improved agricultural practices are quickly introduced and adopted through farmers' associations. The smallest unit is called "buraku" and roughly corresponds to our *sitio*, being a smaller unit than the *barrio*.

The answer to the second question is the small landholdings in Taiwan. Only 1/7 of 1% of the total number of farm families have holding of 50 to over 100 hectares, the average big landholdings being 202 hectares. While the percentage of tenancy and part ownership is high due to the scarcity of land compared to the large farming population, yet there prevails general contentment among tenant farmers for their total income is high.

They derive their income from various crops: rice, sugar cane, sweet potato, beans, peanuts, bananas, vegetables and farm animals, of which the pig is the most important. In fact pig raising is considered such an indispensable complement of farming that the farmers feel farming cannot exist without the pig.

Land utilisation is high, that is, land is made to grow various crops in continuous succession and by the practice of companion or overlap cropping (known in Taiwan as the Koa system) two or even three different crops may be seen growing on the same soil at the same time.

A fact worth noting is the absence of big Japanese landholders. The total Japanese population engaged in farming is given as 8,500. Many of these are engaged in the cultivation of specialised crops like tobacco. They are found in settlements located on reclaimed river beds the soil of which for the most part is so sandy that it literally has to be built up. This is done by running the muddy water of rivers to the area being reclaimed. It is certainly remarkable that the Japanese have not taken the best when they could have done so.

"WITH OPEN ARMS"

The policies of the Government of Taiwan are liberal and benevolent. In

this connexion we must not fail to mention the two officials of the early Japanese administration responsible for the initiation of a policy of fair treatment for the native population. Their spirit still lives and the policies of all the succeeding administration are a continuation of those liberal policies.

I refer to Viscount Kodama who was appointed Governor General in 1898 as the fourth Governor General and his great collaborator Dr. Goto.

As a result of such enlightened policies of government, there are not to be seen great mansions whether in the cities or rural communities, while the homes of the poorest class are provided with the necessary comforts of life and the people's standard of living is high. There are no high peaks of wealth nor deep vales of poverty. The curve of prosperity is well graduated and follows a high level.

The Philippine Agricultural Survey Commission to Taiwan had an opportunity to visit cities, villages and the smallest political subdivisions called "buraku" and make close personal observations of the life of the people.

The Commission's conclusion therefore are based on a study made of representative cross sections of the urban and rural life in Taiwan. And no information was withheld from us. The widest possible opportunity was given us to learn what Taiwan has done and what it is doing.

The officials of the Government General as well as the provincial, city, town and village official alike, received us with open arms as the representative of a friendly or sister nation. To these officials goes our heartfelt gratitude.

