

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

by

JULIAN R. MEIMBAN, Jr.
Junior Forester, Bureau of Forestry

One of the oldest and best known schools for the instruction of tropical forestry in the Far East proudly stands in Makiling. The School of Forestry, the only school of its kind in the Philippines founded in 1910, was formerly a part of the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines. By legislation in 1916 it finally became an independent unit of the University. Designed and built for about 50 students, the school saw an ever-increasing student population through the years, and in March, 1954, at the close of the academic year, records show that it accommodated over 220 students — 4-1/2 times greater than what its original capacity could accommodate. There was therefore an urgent need for more room and space for classroom instruction. Because of lack of classroom space some classes had to be conducted outdoors to remedy the situation. But during the rainy season, what with the Makiling weather, it is impossible to hold classes under the trees. A bigger building was the only answer.

The MSA technical consultant on forestry in the Philippines and the committee of the College of Forestry, therefore, recommended the reconstruction and extension of the college building. Under the FOA-PHILCUSA Counterpart Projects No. 482, the amount of ₱167,500 had been appropriated for the counterpart fund to match one-half of the estimated amount. However, said amount was not going to be released for the purpose unless a counterpart fund by the University of the Philippines was made available on or before June 30, 1954.

But was the University of the Philippines

able to put up the much needed counterpart fund?

The Forester-in-Charge of the College lost no time in seeing the President of the University, and when he returned with the news that the University was not in a position to put up a counterpart fund for the college of forestry building, the faculty and the student body put their heads together and decided that a bill be drafted asking congress the needed sum for the counterpart, and that a resolution asking it to pass the bill so that the counterpart fund of FOA-PHILCUSA aid in the amount of ₱167,500 would not be lost. The President of the Student Body of the College, together with the adviser, drafted the resolution which was made in printed form signed by the faculty and the student body, and copies of it were distributed to the different congressmen and senators.

As suggested by the President of the University of the Philippines, the Bureau of Forestry prepared the bill for the counterpart fund. Atty. Felix Mabbayag drafted the bill, later known as Bill No. 324 which was introduced by Congressman Gonzales of Laguna. A few days before the bill was presented in Congress, the Forester-in-Charge of the College banking on the loyalty of the alumni wrote personal letters to all of them through the Provincial foresters requesting them to either speak or to write to their congressmen, and senators on behalf of the College of Forestry. The Forestry Alumni Ass'n followed suit and a strong appeal by President Eugenio de la Cruz was sent to every alumnus. Even the *Philippine Collegian*, official organ of the U.P. Student Council, published articles concerning the situation of the College of For-

estry. Copies of the *Collegian* editorial written by Mr. Romeo Teston strongly urging all parties concerned to work for the College of Forestry, together with copies of the Forestry Supplement of *Forestry Leaves*, were distributed in Congress before the bill was taken up for the third reading.

A handful of seniors with faculty members of the College, held a party for the faculty at the Makiling Swimming Pool on the eve of the Junior Prom. That was March 22, 1954. And Governor Chipeco's unexpected presence made the affair more colorful. The faculty and the graduating seniors took the opportunity of requesting the governor to bring to the attention of the President of the Philippines the situation of the College Building. The governor jokingly said that he was going to prepare a brief that same evening for the College and would be the "messenger" to deliver it to the President. The following day he not only spoke but delivered a very eloquent brief to the President on behalf of the College, urging him to certify to the urgency of the bill.

His letter to the President was as follows:

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LAGUNA
Santa Cruz

Office of the Governor

March 22, 1954

Hon. Ramon Magsaysay
President of the Philippines
Malacañang, Manila

My dear Mr. President:

This is an appeal for a very worthy cause. This involves no particular person nor any individual entity. This involves the forgotten College of Forestry, an institution from which come more than 75% of the officials and employees of our own Bureau of Forestry, not to mention the hundreds of key men engaged in the lumber industry, both public and private.

I wish to inform you, Mr. President, that under the FOA-PHILCUSA Counterpart Project No. 482, the amount of ₱167,000.00 was appropriated for the very noble purpose of financing one-half of the estimated amount needed to reconstruct and expand the school building of the College of Forestry in Los Baños, this province. There is no further need of explaining here that this amount was set aside for

the afore-mentioned purpose because it appears very evident to the FOA-PHILCUSA authorities that the necessity was clear for rehabilitating and improving the said school building.

The sorry part about this appropriation, however, is that the amount set up will not be released but will instead be withdrawn if...if no counter-part fund of ₱185,000.00 is similarly raised and appropriated by our own government to defray the other half of the estimated cost. In other words, the first one-half put up by the FOA-PHILCUSA will be useless if we will not take advantage of it. This we can do by appropriating from our own funds the other half of the needed amount.

What other facts I want to explain to present to you the clearest and fairest view of the actual situation can best be pictured to your kind and reasonable mind by the enclosed copies of (1) a Resolution by the College of Forestry Faculty and Student Body Urging Congress to Approve a Bill for the Appropriation of ₱200,000.00 for the Rehabilitation and Expansion of the College of Forestry Building in Los Baños, Laguna; (2) Resolution of the Board of Directors of the College of Forestry Alumni Association, U.P., Requesting Approval of House Bill No. 324 Appropriating ₱200,000.00 for the Rehabilitation and Enlargement of the College of Forestry Building in Los Baños, Laguna; and (3) Committee Report No. 181 in connection with House Bill No. 324 pertinent to the same subject.

I therefore would like to appeal to you to please make House Bill No. 324 an administrative measure and if possible, certify to its urgency to insure its immediate passage and approval. It is certainly a pity and fatality if the ₱167,000.00 already set to be poured out to us by the FOA will not be realized for the purpose it is destined to go due only to our own sluggishness and indifference to the actual needs of our own Bureau of Forestry, in general, and the College of Forestry, in particular.

Your kind attention and usual prompt decision on this point is very much awaited by all of us here in Laguna. We trust that it will not take you very long to realize the tremendous importance of this matter.

Anticipating your full cooperation, please be assured of our sincerest thanks and regards.

Very sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) DOMINADOR E. CHIPECO
Governor

The chronology of events from the introduction of the Bill to its final signing by President Magsaysay is as follows:

1. Introduced by Congressman Jacobo Gonzales on January 28, 1954.

2. Referred to Committee on Public Works the same day.

3. Reported (Committee Report No. 181) recommending approval, with amendments on March 12, 1954.

4. Referred to Committee on Appropriations by order of the House on May 3, 1954.

5. Reported (Committee Report No. 687) recommending its approval without amendments on May 5, 1954.

6. Passed on second and third readings on May 11, 1954

7. Sent to the Senate the same day.

8. Passed by the Senate without amendment on May 14, 1954

9. Approved by the President June 2, 1954.

10. Republic Act No. 989.

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Third Congress of the Republic
of the Philippines

First Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 324

Introduced by Congressman Gonzales

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The enclosed bill seeks the appropriation of ₱200,000 pesos for the reconstruction and expansion of the College of Forestry building in Los Baños, Laguna. Under the FOA-PHILCUSA Counterpart Project No. 482, the amount of ₱167,000 has been appropriated under the Counterpart fund to meet one-half of the estimated amount needed in the reconstruction and expansion of said building. This counterpart fund will not be released for this purpose unless the amount provided for under this bill is made available.

The main purpose of this bill is to rehabilitate and enlarge the present College of Forestry building which is now too small to accommodate the present enrollment. It is expected that more students will enroll in the future as there is a demand for graduates of this College both in the government service as well as in the lumber industries. This institution was primarily established to train men for the service of the Bureau of Forestry, but because of the expansion of the lumber industry and the industrialization of forest products, graduates are drawn into these phases of work. In fact the expansions in the government service and in private enterprises are such that there is an urgent need for more technical men to fill up the demand. The rehabilitation and expansion of the College of Forestry building will take care of increasing enrollment of students who in due time will go into government service and private enterprises.

In view of the foregoing, and in order to encourage desirable and technically trained men to take up

the forestry profession and to enhance the advancement of forestry education in the Philippines, the approval of this bill is hereby recommended.

(Sgd.) JACOBO Z. GONZALES
Congressman, First District,
Laguna

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Third Congress of the Republic
of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 324

Introduced by Congressman Gonzales

AN ACT

TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. There is hereby appropriated out of the funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of two hundred thousand pesos which shall be expended by the President of the Philippines for the reconstruction and expansion of the College of Forestry building in Los Baños, Laguna; for the purchase of necessary laboratory and office supplies and equipment and for such other expenditures as may be deemed necessary to carry out properly and effectively the purpose of this Act: *Provided*, That any unexpended balance of the amount herein appropriated at the end of each fiscal year shall be available for the same purposes in succeeding years until the same is exhausted.

Sec. 2. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,

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Third Congress of the Republic
of the Philippines

First Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE REPORT No. 181

Submitted by the Committee on Public Works, on
March 12, 1954;

Re: H. No. 324;

Recommending its approval, with amendments.

Sponsors: Congressmen Gonzales and Moreno.

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Public Works, to which was referred the Bill (H. No. 324—3rd C.R.P.), introduced by Congressman Gonzales, entitled:

AN ACT

TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BA-

NOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, has considered the same and has the honor to report it back to the House with the recommendation that said Bill be approved with the following amendments:

1. On line 1, substitute the word "appropriated" with **AUTHORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED IN THE ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKS ACT**;
2. On line 3, substitute the words "two hundred thousand pesos" with **ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FIVE THOUSAND PESOS TO CONSTITUTE AS COUNTERPART FUND**;
3. On line 6, change the semi-colon (;) after the word "Laguna" to comma (,), and then between the comma (,) and the word "for," insert the following: **WHICH PROJECT IS INCLUDED IN THE PHILCUSA PROGRAM**;
4. Amend the title of the bill so as to read as follows:

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF THE SUM OF ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FIVE THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) **FLORENCIO MORENO**
Chairman
Committee on Public Works

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H. Bill No. 324
Appropriation Committee (CR 687)
MALACAÑANG
Manila

April 30, 1954

Gentlemen of the Congress:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 21 (2), of the Constitution, I hereby certify to the necessity of the immediate enactment of a bill entitled:

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Respectfully,
(Sgd.) **RAMON MAGSAYSAY**

The House of Representatives
Congress of the Philippines
Manila

Third Congress of the Republic
of the Philippines

First Session

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 687**

Submitted by the Committee on Appropriations, on
May 5, 1954

Re H. No. 324

Recommending its approval without amendment
Sponsors: Congressmen Gonzales, Fornier, Rodriguez,
Jr. and Mitra

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Appropriations, to which was referred the bill (H. No. 324—3rd C.R.P.), introduced by Congressman Gonzales, entitled:

AN ACT

TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

which has been previously reported by the Committee on Public Works as per Committee Report No. 181, has considered the same and has the honor to report it back to the House with the recommendation that the said bill be approved without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) **TOBIAS FORNIER**
Chairman

Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable
The Speaker
House of Representatives
Manila

* * *

February 23, 1954

**MEMORANDUM for the President
of the Philippines:**

House Bill No. 324, sponsored by Congressman Jacobo Gonzales, seeking an appropriation of ₱200,000.00 for the rehabilitation and extension of the College of Forestry building, has been presented to Congress for consideration. This bill affects one of the most important units of the University of the Philippines from which the country draws the men to take charge of our vast forest resources. The Bureau of Forestry personnel is composed of men who studied and were trained in the College of Forestry.

Today this College is facing a very critical period in its history for lack of classroom space, equipment and faculty. The present building was constructed in 1928 to accommodate from 60 to 70 students. During the first semester of 1953-1954 the enrollment of this College rose up to 230. It is evident

that it cannot accommodate all the students that are interested in the forestry profession. It cannot fill the demand of the Bureau of Forestry for more forestry-trained personnel as well as that of the lumber and allied industries. For lack of classroom space, the faculty have to conduct their classes outdoors, but this is only possible when the weather is fair.

The FOA-PHILCUSA have jointly found the necessity of giving aid to the College and therefore, approved the granting of an allocation in the amount of ₱167,000.00. The University of the Philippines was supposed to match this amount but owing to lack of funds it deemed it necessary that the bill No. 324 should be sponsored and presented in Congress. Failing to put up the counterpart on or before June 30th this year would mean the reverting of the aid to PHILCUSA.

As this bill vitally affects the training of young men who will be entrusted with the conservation and wise utilization of our forest resources, one of the most important assets of our national economy, your favorable recommendation of this bill as urgent is respectfully requested.

SALVADOR ARANETA
*Secretary of Agriculture and
Natural Resources*

* * *

April 12, 1954

President Ramon Magsaysay
Malacañang
Manila

My dear Mr. President:

As President of the Philippine Coconut Planters Association, I found out that vast areas in the Philippines, especially the Bondoc Peninsula of my Province of Quezon, are now wasted where only shrubs and grasses grow due to kaiñgin system and unlawful deforestation. With this anomalous situation now obtaining in my province in mind and to avoid the occurrence of this similar situation, I deem it proper to speak in favor of House Bill No. 324 now pending calendaring.

The matter treated herewith is also racing with time because if we do not take advantage of the assistance up to June 30th this year, said aid will be withdrawn. Provisions for taking advantage of this aid is embodied in the enclosed House Bill No. 324 which affects the College of Forestry. For and in behalf of the College of Forestry I wish to have this bill pushed through.

I need not repeat here the benefits that would be derived from the approval of this bill. Suffice to state that your economic program could be accelerated. In this connection, may it please your honor to certify this bill as an urgent measure.

Assuring you of the gratitude of the people who will be the recipient of the benefits of the approval

of this bill and of my highest respect and esteem, I wish to ever remain,

Very respectfully yours,
(Sgd.) VICENTE CONSTANTINO
Governor

*President, Philippine Coconut Planters
Association*

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H.R. No. 4-B

Congress of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Manila

Office of the Secretary

May 11, 1954

Mr. President:

I have been directed to inform your Honorable Body that the House of Representatives on May 11, 1954, passed the following House Bill (H. No. 324—3rd C.R.P.), entitled:

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY BUILDING IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES;

in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.
(Sgd.) N. PIMENTEL
Secretary, House of Representatives

It is very difficult to pinpoint who was the person or the persons largely responsible for the actual passage of the Bill and the certification to its being a "must bill" by the President, as well as the getting of the certification by the Budget Commissioner for the release of the counterpart funds from the 1945-1955 budget, as at the time the bill was approved the Budget Office frankly admitted that there were no available funds then.

The College faculty, alumni, and student body however, acknowledge with heartfelt thanks the help of Congressmen Gonzales, Fornier, Mitra and Rodriguez, Jr. for sponsoring the Bill; Secretary Araneta for his memorandum to the President requesting him to certify to its urgency before Congress; Speaker Laurel for recommending to the President that it should be certified as an urgent bill; Governor Chipeco for seeing personally the President on our behalf; Governor Constantino for sending a letter of appeal for our cause; Dean Amos, Prof. Mabesa, Forester-in-Charge, and Forester Cenabre,

who patiently followed the progress of the bill from day to day in Congress; the alumni and friends who wrote and spoke to their Congressmen in behalf of the Bill; and to all who do not wish their names to be mentioned and who in one way or another also helped in the passage and implementation of the Bill.

House Bill No. 324 eventually became Republic Act No. 989 upon its signing by President Magsaysay on June 2, 1954.

When the Forester-in-Charge went to see the President of the University of the Philippines to show him the certification of the Budget Commissioner for the release of the counterpart fund as embodied in Act No. 989, which after so much red tape, was obtained through the explanation of Dr. Paul Bedard, FOA technical adviser to the Bureau, Dr. Tan said, "Congratulations to the faculty, alumni, and student body for their wonderful work. Such a small school to be able to lobby in Congress and get money for its new building, deserves my heartiest congratulations. I was skeptical that you would succeed. As a matter of fact, at the very beginning, I had a feeling that the bill was bound to fail in Congress."

And when the new and beautiful building shall open its doors to welcome the honored guests and the alumni at its inauguration ceremonies, we shall tell again how a small college, so often called the "Forgotten College" in the past, took a chance when it presented a bill asking for the counterpart fund. Nobody then gave it a Chinaman's chance that it would succeed, for Congress was believed to be at the time in no mood to tax the already taxed purse strings of the government. Perhaps the congressmen realized the importance of our College and its graduates to the national economy. And the lobbying done merely consisted of writing and speaking and convincing everyone of them that the bill vitally affected the training of young men who would be entrusted to carry on the task of conserving our forest resources, one of the most important assets of our national economy.

This is the simple story of how a small College left to struggle for itself was able to get what it wanted. It is also the story of its alumni, their love for their Alma Mater and their loyalty to it. It is also the story of faith, patience, courage and prayer answered.

GEORGE M. HUNT . . .

(Continued from page 37)

When asked for suggestions to solve these problems and make the Forest Products Laboratory efficient, he said, "This is an institution that will be in operation for 100 or more years and its work will never be finished. As present problems are solved, new problems will arise, just as in other fields of research. The cost of wood will change and so will the economic and industrial condition of the country. Wood will become increasingly important as a source of raw material for the chemical industries. The Laboratory must always be a pioneer in these developments.

"The Laboratory, in order to accomplish its purposes, must have a staff of competent

people who are devoted to their tasks and who work together in harmony as a team. It must have good equipment. It must have enough money to operate at a reasonable level. It must have good leadership and freedom to concentrate on technical tasks without regard to politics. Since there are very few people in the nation who are trained for forest products research, the early years of the Laboratory must be training years.

"In the beginning, the staff will consist of only 30 to 40 people but it should grow fairly rapidly and ultimately may have from 100 to 200. The wood utilization problems of the country are big enough and broad enough to keep such a staff occupied indefinitely."