

# • Forestry Confab Sidelites •

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The First Forest Conservation and Reforestation Conference held on September 30 to October 1, 1954, at the U.P. Rizal Hall, Padre Faura, Manila, was called by President Magsaysay under Administrative Order No. 57 (text printed elsewhere in this issue).

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Prior to the conference, a one-week technical meet was held at the instance of energetic Department Secretary Salvador Araneta at the conference room of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Ranking officials of the Bureau of Forestry, FOA experts, prominent lumbermen and some technicians participated in the pre-conference discussions.

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It was during this preliminary meeting that the former director and the incumbent found themselves in opposite camps. Former (retired) Director Florencio Tamesis, first Filipino director of forestry, 1937-1953, presently connected with the Nasipit Lumber Company and other big lumber enterprises, arguing as a lumberman, spoke on the theory of sustained yield but doubted its applicability and success. Director Felipe R. Amos, on the other hand, urged vigorously the adoption of sustained yield, a practice he has long advocated in order to save "Our Heritage", the forest. Amos said that this was long necessary because some lumbermen were cutting trees merely as sources of marketable commodities for financial gains without regard to and with little or no interest in the protection of future timber crops.

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Forester Nazario Peñas, a lumberman, too, sided with the former director. On the other hand, Forester (Col.) Jacobson, a senior member of the Society of American Foresters and manager of the Bislig Bay Lumber Company, joined Director Amos in advocating sustained yield management which is now being practiced in the former's enterprises. Forester Tiburcio S. Serevo, an FOA pensionado now in the United States, also expressed approval of the theory and suggested immediate implementation.

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Secretary Araneta asked for a clearer definition of watershed following a spirited debate. The secretary was for the priority of the protection phase of forestry over reforestation. He said that the remaining forests should first be protected. However, he did not totally relegate reforestation to

the background. Moreover, protection is now more urgent.

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The district foresters and outstanding forestry officials in the central office also held a preliminary meeting presided over by Director Amos. They all had some recommendations to advance the cause of forestry in their respective jurisdiction.

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Forester Nicolas P. Lansigan did a fine job as secretary of the conference. He edited various technical articles. In this task, he was ably assisted by Forester Juan Daproza and the writer.

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The preliminary discussions were thoroughly "covered" by the Public Relations Section of the Bureau for Manila dailies. Supplements featuring the role of forestry as an important balance in our economy and presenting the problems confronting the bureau and the forest industry were published in the metropolitan papers on the eve and opening day of the conference.

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Executive Secretary Fred Ruiz Castro addressed the conference in lieu of the President who was then in conference with U.S. dignitaries. He conveyed the President's appreciation for the way Secretary Araneta was ably handling his job and the presidential exhortation upon the staff to protect our forest resources for the present and future generations.

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Other speakers were General Florencio Selga of the Philippine Constabulary, who promised the full cooperation of his organization in the campaign against *Kaiñgineros* and Secretary of Commerce and Industry Oscar Ledesma who pointed out the direct and indirect dependence of commerce on forestry.

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The technical papers discussed included "Logging Systems Under Sustained Yield" by Director Felipe R. Amos; "Necessary Balance of Forest Cover" by Valentin Sajor; "Forest Exploitation in Relation to Forest Conservation" by Forester Carlos Sulit; "Physical Protection of the Forest" by Forester P. Buenaventura; "Reforestation with Public Funds" by Forester Jose Viado; "Reforestation Through Private Initiative" by Jose Mapa Gomez; and "Educational Campaign for Forest Conservation" by Mr. Roberto Villanueva, vice president of the Manila Chronicle.

Retired Forester Doroteo Soriano, a senatorial aspirant from the province of Pangasinan, tried to hold his ground in a lively discussion with Secretary Araneta regarding the forest map of the Philippines. NPC boss Filemon Rodriguez suggested that watersheds which are possible sources of power should be protected. Forester Sajor also took the floor "armed" with maps.

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*The documentary film of the Bureau of Forestry, OUR HERITAGE, depicting the evils of destructive logging, kaiñgin-making and the role of forests to the well-being of the nation, was shown at the U.P. meeting hall.*

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The closing of the two-day conference was highlighted by a dinner at the Philippine Columbian Club offered jointly by the Philippine Lumber Producers' Association and the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture. Guest speakers for this occasion were Senator Fernando Lopez, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources; Rep. Guillermo R. Sanchez, Chairman of the House Committee on Forests; and Col. Harry A. Brenn, FOA chief.

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*The Society of Filipino Foresters tendered a luncheon at Los Baños, College of Forestry for the Conferees and visitors on Saturday, October 2. The conferees had a field day and they visited the forest plantations, Central Forest Experiment Building, the new College of Forestry building and the Forest Products Laboratory.*

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A post-conference informal meeting of the district foresters, division chiefs and other ranking forestry personnel was held at the office of the director. Undersecretary Jaime N. Ferrer and Director Amos heard the various problems of the district foresters, most of which are common to all. Mr. Ferrer said that it was the Christians who started forest destruction. He urged the foresters to organize themselves with other DANR employees for better harmony and coordination. The director expressed hope that the district foresters would collectively help implement the resolutions approved at the conference.

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*The 46 district foresters from north to south, I mean from Batanes to Sulu, including Forester Jose R. Claveria, the only Chief of Land Classification Party present, returned to their respective districts with the very pleasant and unforgettable memory of having shaken hands with the President when they called on the Chief Executive on October 4, 1954. They were accompanied to Malacañang Reception Hall by Secretary Ferrer and Director Amos. President Magsaysay, in his almost one hour chat with his callers, urged the foresters to con-*

*tinue their good work and promised to take the matter of increasing their present low pay with the reorganization commission. It was observed that the President addressed Tony Quejado, the PHILCUSA Project Accountant, intimately. Palawan Forester Julio de Luna prides with a picture taken of himself side by side with the President.*

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Left behind, just after the conference to put things (resolutions) in order, as ordered by the DANR Secretary Araneta, were Foresters "Malapayaya" Vicente Marababol of Agusan, "Bagtikan" H.B. Marcelo of Basilan Island and "Molave" R. A. Sabado of Davao, who was substituted by "Ipil" Martin R. Reyes, apostle of management.

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"Men of the Forest We" ever united we must be. Let us not fail the President in particular and the people in general. We have been known here and there not only for our loyalty and devotion to the forest service, but also for our unequalled *esprit the corps* which we have cultured and seasoned under the invigorating atmosphere of Mount Makiling. Let us keep it up.

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*With the keen interest and encouragement given by the President together with the vigorous and relentless support of the foresters, the lumbermen and the general public, it is hoped that the conference would bring about concrete and lasting results destined to protect, conserve and utilize wisely the nation's patrimony—the forests.*

