

AGRICULTURE-

Most Honorable Vocation

Richard R. Hill

NOTE: *Mr. Richard Hill is the son of the late Percy Hill, the grand "Old Man" of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. Mr. Richard Hill paid us a visit recently and congratulated us for "Farming and Cooperatives" for which we thanked him sincerely. He did us a favor by doing something novel. He bought twenty-five copies of our first issue and distributed them among his tenants. We asked him, "But can they read English?"*

"No," he said, "but their children go to school and I told the kids to read the magazine and interpret the contents to their parents."

"Good work, Mr. Hill, you are carrying on your 'Old Man's' work."

—THE EDITORS

The most important man in the Philippine Islands today is the farmer. Why? Because he produces from the soil not only his own and his family's subsistence, but also helps to feed others. Furthermore, he is economically independent.

The farmer can boast that his vocation is both ancient and honorable, and it is the only profession in existence without which all others must come to a standstill. The man behind the plow is the man that feeds the world. The following of Agriculture is a natural vocation; all others are more or less artificial.

All callings or trades that call for work with the hands are equally honorable, as there is true dignity in labor well performed. In the past the world has been inclined to accept a totally wrong attitude toward work, and the average school graduate has imbibed

his share of this attitude. Once his book education is finished many a young man is prone to seek some gentle occupation that does not require manual labor. This is certainly an unfortunate state of affairs, for nobody can do satisfactory work, if he believes that his education is a loss unless he is assigned to "desk-work." The right attitude looks upon honest toil as honorable, and considers an education as useful on the farm and in the shop as in the office.

The choice of a career is the most important thing in a man's life. He should choose not so much with a view to present benefits, as with an eye to future possibilities. Most of the so-called learned professions in these Islands are crowded, and as a consequence many engaged in them are poorly paid. Many of the best citizens and best patriots in any country are to be found among those who have chosen to cultivate the soil; they have an important share in laying, through honest manual labor, industry, and thrift, the firm foundations of nationality.

One chooses a career primarily with the object of supporting oneself and one's family. In comparing Agriculture or one of the trades with the professions such as law or medicine, the chance of profitable employment is greatly in favor of the former; for in the vocations requiring manual labor there is little that one can succeed in making a good living. Greater than if a person studies to be a lawyer or a doctor. The talent which all men have in common is the ability to labor, the patrimony of man lies in strength and dexterity of his hands.

A nation is not made up only of subtle lawyers, of clever doctors, or of shrewd merchants; who do not produce wealth but merely use it. A nation includes also all those who work

with their hands—the farmers, the mechanics, and the followers of all trades and industries. These men are the producers of wealth and the founders of National prosperity. It is a good thing to remember that both those who work with their brains and those who toil with their hands, together form the nation to which we belong. The soil of our country is the basis of its wealth; is the source of both individual property and national prosperity. The first stable thing a man ever possessed was piece of land cultivated to support himself and his family.

Where would the lawyers, doctors, and policemen get their subsistence if it were not for the farmers? They might earn money, but with it they could buy nothing to eat. When a country wishes to find out how rich it is, the value of its cultivation or cultivated lands is found first; secondly, the value of its manufactures, and industries; and finally, that of its commerce. The farmer and his lands are the foundations of national wealth.

The man who employs his capital in agriculture has it more under his supervision and command and his fortune is less liable to accident than is that of a man who invests his money in industries or in trade. No equal capital puts into motion a greater quantity of productive labor than the investment of the farmer. Of all ways in which capital can be employed, its use in agriculture is by far the most advantageous to society and to the nation, as both individual wealth and Government revenues are increased thereby. Every country that has become great has its wealth based upon Agriculture, and the incomes of its inhabitants have been largely determined by the annual products of its fields.

Education is a means and not an end; it is the start and not the finish in the struggle of life. It is a means of improving the farmers, and is just as important to them as to those engaged in any other trade, occupation, or profession. It is time in the Philippines that the graduates of schools should avoid the professions that are now overcrowded. Far too many young men, once they finish their schooling, look to any other trade or profession rather than that of agriculture. This attitude should be changed; they should not despise the profession of their forefathers—that of honorably tilling the soil.

Modern education should not be a means of escaping work with the hands, but rather a means of increasing the

earning capacity of the individual. A man who seeks education on the theory that the day of manual labor is over, is building on a foundation of sand. His education based on this idea becomes detrimental rather than helpful. This notion is only a prejudice of former times and should disappear forever. More theories will never produce sugar or rice, neither can education produce them except in cooperation with men who work with the hands. It is the union of labor and education that creates agricultural wealth and develops the individual as a social and economic unit.

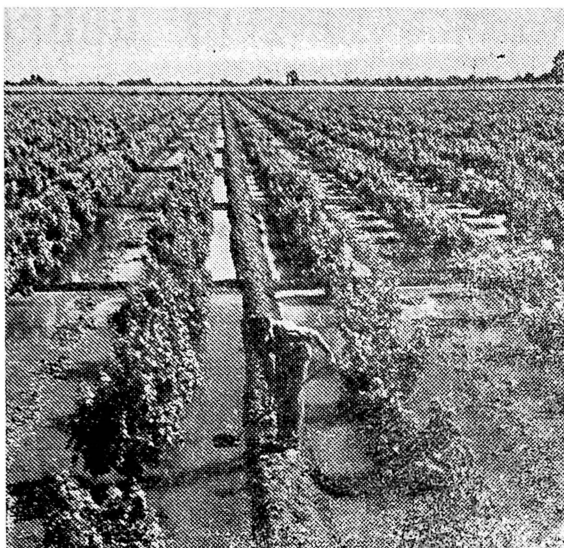
The soil offers subsistence in the present and holds out for the future a bright and profitable means of acquiring a home and moderate wealth. A firm foundation for a successful national future can be built only on the basis of progressive farming.

In the distant past the land was cultivated by slaves and serfs, private ownership of land was rare, and the profits of production went to a few persons only. Now all this is changed; principally by universal education. In most countries, the man who is most contented, who is raised above immediate wants and who is gradually acquiring property is the man who is successful in agriculture. The good farmers are the educated men who are not afraid to work with both their hands and heads. Such men can always produce better results than those who, having only brain education, do not care for hard work—the theoretical farmers. Those pursuing the arts, trades and professions need study and hard work combined, just as much as do the cultivators of the soil. All men must work hard for success.

A nation to be truly independent in the modern sense of the word, must produce from its soil at least enough to sustain its own population. The farmer, therefore, is as good a patriot as the soldier who is defending his country.

The master of a trade has an income just as long as he has health and strength to labor for the support of his family. If his health gives out, his family often has to struggle to make ends meet. He who devotes his life to agriculture, by his labor, generally implants an investment in the soil thus assuring both his own and his family's future and supplying insurance, as it were, against absolute wants. He is a property owner and the responsibilities of property go far to teach self reliance, order and thrift.

In these Islands of ours, agriculture offers a particularly good investment



(USIS cut)
The beauty and usefulness that comes from scientific farming.

to the young men seeking an occupation, requiring but a small outlay. The industrious trained man can be assured of success, while the untrained man can grow up with the business, learning everyday. Both should center their activities upon the crops which have proved to be successful in a given locality. Too many men have failed because they have catered to alien crops, forgetting the staple ones which have been successful and which have an assured market.

The Philippine Islands possess two important essentials — large areas of good tillable soil, most of it still free for homesteading, and the rising generation which is being educated to take its place in the economic struggle. It remains for this rising generation to supply the third factor — that of intelligent industry.

In the future, civilization will not wage its struggle in the forum, nor at the desk, but in the fields, in the factories, and in the workshop. The vital things in any community are not only faith and belief; they are also industry and thrift.

Farming is a healthful occupation. The man devoted to agriculture pursues usually lives longer than one engaged in other vocations. His work in the open strengthens his body and improves his general health. This of itself is a valuable asset that no money can buy. "Back to the farm"

is as good a slogan here as it is in other countries. Many who have tried urban professions have found that individual independence for all, does not lie within the city limits. They realized that their lives become circumscribed and they long to return to the fields and farms of their youth. They envy the man with clear mind and strong body who by honorable toil produces his subsistence from mother earth. They want their children to be brought up among healthier surroundings than those that obtain in the crowded cities and towns. At the same time their ambition is to find a permanent investment in the soil for their future and that of their families.

Even at the present time there are ample tracts of free arable land in the Philippines easily obtained under the present laws. There are good markets for such staples as rice, tobacco, sugar and other crops. A young man, once his education is finished, is making a sad mistake if he does not take into account these facts. Now is the time for every man to aid himself, his family, and his country by seizing the opportunity afforded him.

The pleasure of an agricultural life and the health of mind and body which such an existence promises have a charm that attracts nearly everyone to this long established and honorable employment. #