

THE RANGERS*

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I wish to congratulate the graduates this morning not only for finishing the course of study that they have chosen but also for having chosen a profession which offers one of the widest latitudes for public service. To be a ranger is not a glamorous job. It does not give one much public recognition and applause. It will not make him rich. But notwithstanding all these, it is one of the most important because the work of a forest ranger involves the conservation and wise utilization of one of our richest national possessions—our forests. Our forests are among the richest in the world and their careful use will benefit the people for generations and generations.

On the honest and wise attention given by our forest rangers will depend the preservation of this national wealth to be enjoyed by our people. On the other hand, careless and dishonest performance of their duties will not only destroy a nation's patrimony but will even endanger our agricultural lands and eventually our very existence. I do not believe one can ever over-emphasize the importance of forest conservation and wise utilization, and it would be an understatement to say that our forest represents one of our greatest assets.

But to be able to render full service to the country, our forest rangers must keep up the traditional honesty and integrity for which graduates of this College are known all over the Philippines. They must never let up on their vigilance and never hesitate to perform their duties according to the highest traditions of the institution from

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which they graduate and the Bureau in which they work. I grant that at times the going may be tough and the remuneration meager, but we should not feel unhappy because we are poor, for there are many blessings that go with poverty, which the rich will have a most difficult time in enjoying. I like the graduates to know that being poor has many advantages. As long as one earns enough to be able to live simply and modestly and to send his children to school, there is really very little need for money. Rich living in many cases deteriorates character, makes the body soft and more susceptible to certain ailments, and exposes the individual to dangers arising from jealousies. Riches have also a way of blinding people, of making them more greedy, more desirous of having more and more, unmindful of their neighbors' plight. Rich people are more in danger of missing the higher and more lasting values of life, of forgetting their idealism and of losing even their souls.

The ranger's life is not meant to be easy nor to be rich in material things, but with a proper attitude it could be made infinitely richer—richer in the higher things of life and richer in service to our fellowmen.

...A national forest policy, like any national economic policy governing the natural wealth of a country, must aim at a rational exploitation of the forest resources on the principles of the greatest good to the greatest possible number of the people.

—T. Francois

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Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

—Bible