

The problem which confronted Rizal still confronts us today. His attempt to break foreign monopoly of local trade may be regarded as the forerunner of the producers and consumers cooperatives now being organized by the Government all over the country. The elimination of middlemen, whether supported by domestic or foreign capital, will banish profiteering and thus insure to our farmers and artisans adequate return for their products and services and give to our consumers maximum purchasing power.

This is neither unprincipled selfishness nor vain idealism. It is nothing less than an enlightened mode of self preservation. Charity begins at home and we should first set our house in order before we think of helping strangers stand on their own feet. We should, therefore, cultivate foreign trade only insofar as our products may be exchanged for goods which we cannot produce locally.

We are already producing locally-manufactured textiles, embroidery, hats, shirts, ties, shoes, slippers, cosmetics, cigarettes, canned goods, foodstuffs, toys, paper, office and school supplies, ceramics, building materials, kitchen utensils, and various household gadgets which we used to import before in large quantities. Our extensive and continued patronage of these local products will help bolster our infant industries and lead to national economic self-sufficiency. We would thus contribute in a large measure to the economic stability of our people and thereby promote their happiness and contentment.

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## XVI

**USE AND DEVELOP OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVE THEM FOR POSTERITY. THEY ARE THE INALIENABLE HERITAGE OF OUR PEOPLE. DO NOT TRAFFIC WITH YOUR CITIZENSHIP.**

Real freedom must go hand in hand with economic prosperity. Our vast domain and natural resources constitute the inalienable heritage of our people. We cannot alienate them. We are at most usufructuaries thereof. They belong to the generations yet unborn. It is, therefore, our duty to conserve and develop them.

As early as February 7, 1781, a Spanish Governor-General, addressing the *Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País* which was organized pursuant to a rural decree convoking local talent to devote themselves to the economic development of the Islands made the following glowing inventory of our resources:

"Of what will the Society of Manila not be capable when it extends its glance over the pleasant fields of the Philippines to investigate the beauties which Nature has deposited in them; to combine upon the important branches of agriculture, industry and commerce all that may lead to the advantageous establishment, and to save them from the chaos of poverty to which they are being reduced by alien commerce on the one hand and by inaction and indolence on the other. Is the cause perchance, that the Philippines lack the raw materials to meet the necessities of life and all our supplies? Certainly not. The Philippines are rich in the three vegetables, animal and mineral kingdoms. They merely await the law of wise application in order to make delivery of the treasures they contain in kind of clove, cinnamon, pepper, and nutmeg; in exquisite cotton, abaca, lanotan, tonduque for textiles; in indigo and bonga sibukaw dyes and other drugs; in rice, wheat, corn, kidney-bean and other grains; in abundant wax, cacao, sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee, edible birds nests, slug, coconut and sesame oils; in abundant lumber for construction and other purposes; in many precious pearls, mother-of-pearl, tortoise shells, si-gay or snails that serve as coins in some kingdoms of India; in amber, civet and many exquisite kinds of fishes; in domestic cattle, carabaos, cows, sheep, goats and horses, and also wild mountain game, as the wild boar and deer from which three trades are derived from their skins, beef and tendons; in many placers and mines of gold, copper and iron; in diverse medicinal plants, resins, and gums used by us, our learning not having, up to the present, succeeded in investigating the entire riches and beauties of the Philippines, for lack of Natural History."

Nature has richly endowed our country in the way of natural resources and wealth. Our principal natural treasure vault is our wide expanse of fertile arable land without which the abundant agricultural products enumerated in the preceding description would

not be possible. Opportunity for the cultivation of numerous other plants and crops is unlimited. Later discoveries have also uncovered other underground riches with which we have been lavished; in addition to gold, copper and iron, we also have marble, coal, chromite, mineral oils, lead, zinc and manganese deposits. Our rivers and waterfalls are potential sources of power with which to furnish us electricity and turn the wheels of our industry. All these untold riches are ours to develop and exploit for ourselves and our children and our children's children. And it is our duty both to our forefathers and our posterity to husband these resources with that wise end in view, and prevent their unreasonable depletion either through wastage or through pilfering by aliens.

Our natural resources are primarily for the Filipinos. Corporations or associations desiring to exploit or develop them must be characterized by citizenship to the extent of sixty *per centum* of Filipino capital. Alien individuals are prohibited from acquiring public and private agricultural land, excepting with respect to the latter, in cases of hereditary succession. (Article XII, section 5.) This proceeds from the fact that the government which we are establishing is intended for Filipinos. It is designed to make them happy and progressive. This is sane nationalism and self-protection which every country of the world is practising today in the interest of self-preservation.

The nationalization and conservation of our natural resources are of such vital importance that the framers of our Constitution devoted the whole of its Article XII to this subject. Its first section provides that "All agricultural, timber, and mineral lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and other mineral oils, all forces of potential energy, and other natural resources of the Philippines belong to the State, and their disposition, exploitation, development, or utilization shall be limited to citizens of the Philippines, or to corpora-

tions or associations at least sixty *per centum* of the capital of which is owned by such citizens, subject to any existing right, grant, lease or concession at the time of the inauguration of the Government established under this Constitution. Natural resources with the exception of public agricultural land, shall not be alienated, and no license, concession, or lease for the exploitation, development, or utilization of any of the natural resources shall be granted for a period exceeding twenty-five years, renewable for another twenty-five years, except as to water rights for irrigation, water supply, fisheries, or industrial uses other than the development of water power, in which cases beneficial use may be the measure and the limit of the grant."

Because of the vital importance of preserving our patrimony for ourselves and our posterity, the National Assembly passed Commonwealth Act No. 108 which was later amended by Commonwealth Act No. 421, imposing severe penalties on acts of evasion of the constitutional and legal provisions on the nationalization of certain rights, franchises and privileges. It is not enough, however, that we do not infringe the law in this regard; it is likewise our civic obligation to see that other people do not violate the law with impunity.

We should subscribe to the following profession of nationalistic creed: "I would rather live in a *nipa* shack whose ownership I may not only boast but within whose four corners I may also enjoy the companionship of my wife and children in the realization that its weather-beaten parts may some day be replaced by my progeny, or the fragile construction entirely demolished and a stronger and grander structure raised in its stead,—repaired or demolished, as the case may be, not by those who do not and cannot love it, but by those who have inherited it, who will cherish its possession and will be determined to defend it as a priceless gift of God."