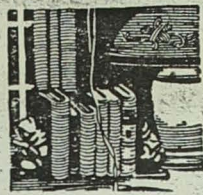


Presidential

TABLE TALK

MARCELINO BAUTISTA



1. In the July issue of our magazine we reported to the Association that a proposed bill presented by school authorities in the last session of Congress, which would have resulted in the improvement of the school system, had been squelched. It is not our plan to take this apparent rebuff as final. The Congress of the Philippines will still do something for the school system if sufficiently impressed with the fact that the proposed educational bill (we fondly called it the Educational Act of 1947) is what the people want. Let us get our Parent-Teacher Associations strengthened, let us discuss the provisions of this bill in the meetings, and let us get the meetings approve resolutions asking our respective Congressmen to sponsor or support the passage of the bill in the next session of Congress. The democratic processes should of course be followed, and we should endorse or reject the bill purely on the basis of its merits. It is our feeling that the present resources of the government will not be able to meet adequately the demand for the revamping of the school system; hence the proposal.

2. We have hesitated to publish a tabulation of the memberships received so far from the different school divisions; we were afraid to embarrass those that have not made much of a remittance. We are of the belief that their failure to send in their membership fees is due, not to any indifference but to a misunderstanding of the process of getting affiliated. A school division does not have to wait to be organized into a Division Association before its teachers can send in their membership dues. Those may be sent even by supervising districts; in fact, individual teachers could send in their dues individually.

Because it would be very difficult to account for such individual remittances, however, we prefer that remittances of membership dues be made by districts. Total membership to date is only 14,196. This, out of a prospective 57,000! Are we or are we not interested in organizing ourselves, and presenting a united front on all matters affecting the school system and the people engaged in the educational services of the government?

3. Between now and the next session of Congress, we intend to revive, work out, and work for the following bills:

- a. The Educational Act of 1948 (The same as the Educational Act of 1947.)
- b. A general retirement act for all government employees, if we cannot get a separate teachers' pension act.
- c. Improving the salary allocations of positions for teachers, clerks, and school officials. (It passed the Lower House in the last session.)
- d. Securing cash equivalent for the service credit given to teachers for the proportional vacation pay rendered in 1941 and in 1945 (prior to July 1).
- e. Removing sources of inequalities in the pegging of salaries due to the operation of the Salary Standardization Law and its various interpretations.

What other measures do the members of our Association want us to work for? Let us not have too many of these; let us concentrate on a few, and if we can get these few approved, we shall have done well.

4. We have not yet elected your Executive Secretary-Treasurer because we do not have enough funds to be able to offer the position to capable people. If

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we offer the position to someone, he will ask, "How much money do you have? Will there be enough to insure its stability?" I wish we could give the right answers as soon as possible. This is why we need your one peso very badly. We requested the Director of Education to give us an office room in the PNS compound for the prospective Executive Secretary-Treasurer. We were to pay the usual nominal rentals. Rentals downtown for small office space are at least ₱150 a month. This is what the Director said in reply: "I believe it will look better if you have your PPSTA locate its office elsewhere. I do not want any people to believe that your Association is merely a tool of the Director of Education. If it should come to such a pass that you will fight the Director of the Bureau of Education himself, you will not be in a position to do so if you are occupying an office space which he provided for you." He does seem to expect that someday the Association may have to work against him! This need not be, since he is with us.

5. I have a feeling that our Editor feels he is a little overworked. He has been doing the work of Editor, Business Manager, Accountant, messenger, general utility man—all in one. Why? Because we have not appointed the people who should perform these other functions. We have not done so because we wanted to save money so that we can soon set up the Office of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. But I have not told the Editor that we need at least ₱10,000 a year to set up an office for the PPSTA. I have a feeling that we have not been fair to him. This is what he wrote to me recently: "Incidentally, if I did not know you, I would think you have abandoned me and the Philippine Educator. I want someone to help me in the proofreading. If I have to do all this myself, my eyes will make me resign soon. Addressing the subscription copies alone takes two weeks to do on the typewriter. The work has mounted.

New subscriptions are coming in at a tremendous rate. Please assign another clerical-messenger for the morning work." We cannot let the Editor down. Send in your dues.

5. You must have known by now that our Director had almost been drafted to run for the senatorial election next November. Several Provincial Boards and Parent-Teacher Associations had sent resolutions to the Central Committee of the Liberal Party, asking that he be drafted. Whenever he was asked about his prospective candidacy, the Director always said, "I have been appointed by the President to head the Bureau of Education, and I will stay here as long as he wants me to. He alone can decide whether or not I should run for the Senate." The Liberal Party mugs asked the Secretary of Instruction if he thought that the Director could be dispensed with in the Bureau of Education. This is what the Secretary wrote to President Avelino: "I should like to say offhand . . . that if I could have my own way I would retain him in his present position as Director of Education. Director Abada is an able man, keen in perception and decisive in action, and by training, experience, and sympathies is eminently qualified to hold this position, the importance of which is obvious, particularly so at this time when the Government is confronted with many difficult educational problems pressing for prompt and adequate solution.

"It appears to me, however, that there is a general feeling among the teachers which is fully shared by the numerous parent-teacher associations scattered all over the country that now, more than ever, they need somebody in the Philippine Senate who has come from their ranks, who thoroughly understands the problems of the schools and of their profession, and who has on more than one occasion proved himself ready to go out of his way to help them. It is not for us to ignore, let alone thwart, this sentiment among our public school teachers. For this reason, much as I

should want Director Abada to stay in his present position, I feel I should endorse his candidacy for the office in question. That he will make a very valuable addition to the upper chamber of our Congress, I have no doubt.

"I am of the opinion that the candidacy of Director Abada will be an asset to the Liberal Party in the coming elections, especially if there is some kind of assurance that the Party will back him up in his proposals to improve the school system and the lot of the teachers. With such a prospect before them, I feel that the teachers as a body will give their support to the entire ticket of the Party, knowing as they do that their candidate Director Abada, if elected, will perforce need the backing of his colleagues in the Senate. There is a large portion of our intelligent population who think, in all earnestness, that

the problems of our schools are serious and transcendental. An educator of the caliber of Director Abada is needed in the Congress to present adequately a plan which will assure an effective solution to these schools problems, and I have every reason to believe that the people will rally behind the Liberal Party if it sponsors such a plan. For it has been adequately demonstrated that our people consider the schools as the fountainhead of their liberties." Up to the last balloting of the recent convention of the Liberal Party, the Director's name was prominently mentioned.

6. Let us have your subscriptions so that we can go on improving the magazine. Let us get a subscription for at least every five teachers. This will be considerable help toward making the magazine what you want it to be.

US... (Continued from page 17)

As it is, what do we have in our organization to keep it running? We have a president who is tied to a desk sky-high with official work and who can hardly be expected to devote more time than what he is devoting now to the welfare of the organization, considering that he does not receive a single centavo.

We have the editor and proofreader who is also of the Philippine Educator business manager, advertising manager, circulation manager, and office manager of the PPSTA, all in his evening hours and a few minutes' visit at the office in the morning and in the afternoon. During the day, he administers a big high school in Manila. In keeping the PE alive and kicking, he is assisted by a part-time clerk-messenger who receives a salary of thirty pesos a month and devotes nearly all of his four hours to addressing and wrapping the subscription copies of the PE. (Some consider this

a miracle.) The other office help is a clerk-bookkeeper who works also part time and who does all the typing of the PE and PPSTA. Aside from these, we have only a few active sympathizers and God above to help.

All this economy is necessary so that we may live within our income. We are not a well-financed organization yet, although we are now making much noise. Our power should be slowly built with patience and perseverance and faith and hope. Our power is not now but in the next few years. We do not care to predict how far away this day is, but as long as we work on and on and on, building slowly but surely, working unselfishly and unselfishly supported by the thousands of teachers who are now daring to hope, we shall succeed.

By the way, the annual membership is only one peso. Have you clipped in your share of our group insurance?

And do you keep yourself informed by reading the Philippine Educator? Yearly subscription, 12 issues, is ₱7.00. How about it, partner?