

TRAINING FOR OUR FUTURE PRESIDENTS

One of the strongest reasons President Quezon used in supporting the restoration of the Senate was his belief that it would serve as a good training ground for the country's future Presidents. In a way it has so served; but in effect, it is proving a very inadequate school for chief executives.

The Commonwealth began with a unicameral National Assembly. This meant that future Presidents could count on gaining experience in government as assemblymen or department secretary or both. This was obviously not enough. According to Mr. Quezon, the President could easily control the Assembly because its members, not having the stature to be independent, readily kowtowed to Malacañang. Training as department secretary was no better; a department secretary, being a presidential appointee, was nothing but a minion of the President.

A senator being nationally-elected, Mr. Quezon argued, would in the nature of things be more mature than a member of the House of Representatives and greater in stature than either a department secretary or a representative. His argument was based on the assumption that a politician who can command a national following was of necessity a man on the rise. This was the theory, but the practice became entirely different.

In the first election for senators the so-called block voting was adopted under which a voter could check just a box on the ballot, and the entire ticket of the party for whom he voted obtained one vote each. When public opinion denounced this scheme as political fraud, it was abolished but candidates for senator thereafter habitually rode on the President's coattails. The senators became more personal selections

of the Chief Executive than the members of the House.

This is still the situation today. Hardly any candidate for the Senate without direct presidential support can get elected. Yet, today, when we think of presidential timbers, we continue to look for them in the Senate. The current speculations on whom the Liberal Party may field against Marcos are confined to senators. Even when the idea is toyed with that the LP might give the NP a dose of its own medicine and pick an NP to run for President, just as Magsaysay and Marcos were lured from the LP by the NP, only NP senators are mentioned — Puyat, Magsaysay and Tolentino. Secretary Fernando Lopez and Representative Emmanuel Pelaez would by far be more attractive candidates, but not being senators they are not remembered. Yet, they have been both senators and possess executive experience.

All this proves how restricted and inadequate is the training for President our political establishment affords.

In the United States, the

sources of Presidents are more varied: state governorship, the U.S. Senate, the Cabinet and the armed forces. U.S. state governors learn the vast executive side of government, and the presidency is executive in character. Woodrow Wilson, who rose from the governorship of New Jersey to the presidency, is the best example. U.S. senators are elected by the states as partymen but largely on their own. They thus have a real political base. Most U.S. Presidents have come from the Senate, a fact that probably influenced Mr. Quezon's thinking. Former Cabinet secretaries have the advantage of having gone through the complicated executive mill; William Howard Taft, former Philippine civil governor and secretary of war, is a conspicuous case. From the armed forces, several war heroes have become Presidents starting from George Washington, with Dwight Eisenhower as the latest General-President. The American presidential school has produced Chief Executives of wider experience and greater stature.

Except for Magsaysay and Macapagal, we have had senator-lawyers for President. Experts in advocacy and legislation, most have had the handicap of being uninitiated in executive work. If only to provide better sources of Presidents, we should return to the election of senators by districts and raise the stature of provincial governors, per-

haps by making each senatorial district a single province together with a legislature. Such a scheme will also improve Philippine democracy by welding the provinces closer and making representation more direct and genuine. — (VICENTE ALBANO PACIS, in *The Manila Chronicle*)

LIBERAL EDUCATION

Knowledge is one thing, virtue is another; good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness and justness of view faith. Philosophy, however, enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principles. Liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life — these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a university; but still they are no guarantee for sanctity or even for consciousness, they attach to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless — pleasant, alas, and attractive as he shows when decked out in them.

— *Alfred North Whitehead*