

Manila Hemp

BY H. ROBERTSON

*Vice President and Assistant General Manager,
Macleod and Company of Philippines*

THIS review covers the period December 16, 1948, to January 15, 1949. In New York, the market period opened on a very steady tone, but gradually developed into a dull affair, and ended with sellers rather than buyers at the quotations given below. At the time of writing, buyers are showing a tendency to hold off in anticipation of lower prices.

A fairly large business was done by SCAP in Davao hemp toward the end of the period. This tendency developed when it became apparent that United States buyers would not pay the prices asked by exporters here except for limited quantities. Prior to this, exporters had preferred to sell to the United States market as prices there were slightly better than when selling to Japan.

Business to other markets was once again small.

In the Philippines, the market closed rather steadier than in the consuming markets due to provincial sellers still being of the opinion that the small available supply of abaca would prevent a decline. Whether their ideas are correct remains to be seen, but local producers must not forget that manufacturers are finding ways and means to reduce their consumption of high-priced Manila hemp by using substitutes. There are also indications that the over-all business picture in the United States is not as bright as heretofore and a lessening demand for manufac-

tured products is becoming a distinct probability. This may fairly quickly manifest itself in a decreased demand for raw products such as Manila hemp.

An interesting feature noticed during the month was the apparent increase in demand for non-Davao hemp which resulted in a small rise in values; whereas Davao prices ended about unchanged. This in part may be explained by the somewhat higher production of Davao hemp and the continued scarcity of non-Davao hemp.

Nominal provincial values on January 15 were:

	Per Picul		
	Basis	Loose	
Davao I . . .	₱70.50	—	Unchanged from December 15
Davao J1 . . .	69.00	—	" " " "
Davao G . . .	61.50	—	" " " "
Non-Davao I	₱68.00	—	Up ₱2.50 from December 15
Non-Davao G	51.00	—	Up ₱0.50 " " "
Non-Davao K	30.00	—	Unchanged " " "

New York quotations:

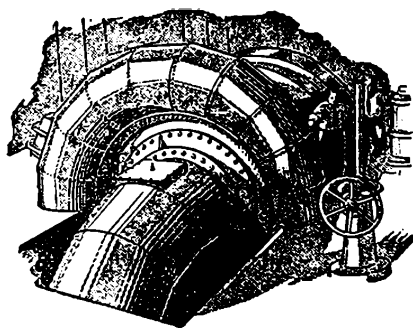
	Per lb. c.i.f. New York	Per lb. From December 15
Davao I	30-5/8¢	Down 3/8¢
Davao J1	30-1/4¢	Down 3/8¢
Davao G	27-3/8¢	Down 3/8¢
Non-Davao I	30-1/8¢	Up 1/4¢
Non-Davao G	23-1/8¢	Up 1/8¢
Non-Davao K	15-1/2¢	Unchanged

Production for December, 1948, was 36,884 bales, — an increase of 6,745 bales from November, 1948. Non-Davao balings for December were slightly better than those of November, being 15,936 bales as com-



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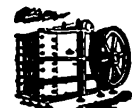
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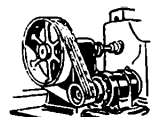
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pared with 15,012 bales for November. The bulk of the increase for the month, however, resulted from Davao balings reaching 20,948 bales, as compared with 15,127 bales for November, — an increase of 5,821 bales.

Total pressings for 1948 amounted to 577,464 bales, compared with 786,765 bales for 1947, — a decline of 209,301 bales for the year. Unfortunately for the trade, there are no signs at this time that 1949 production will be much in excess of 1948.

Tobacco

BY THE CONDE DE CHURRUCA
President, Manila Tobacco Association

LAATEST events in the tobacco business have been two conventions sponsored by the National Tobacco Corporation; the first of manufacturers, and the second of planters.

Many interesting points were discussed during the first one, among them the ways to obtain better tobacco and bigger crops; possibilities of increasing the exports of cigars and leaf tobacco; and ways to stop the increasing imports of cheap brands of foreign cigarettes which are sold here at prices well under the original factory wholesale price.

These imports are not only endangering the local industry but are in very unfair competition with established and well known brands of American cigarettes.

In one instance cigarettes invoiced and selling at P12.50 c.i.f. Manila, and naturally classified under the lowest income-tax bracket of P2 per 1000, have a wholesale factory price in the United States of \$17.

During the tobacco planters' convention, a Planters Association was created, and it is hoped that its success will benefit not only the farmer but the tobacco business in general.

There is no change in the estimates of the size of the crops; if anything, there is a probable increase in the Union and Pangasinan figures.

Sales are few and prices tend to decline, in expectation of the results of the 1949 crop.

One of the chief causes for the high prices paid last year in the Union and Pangasinan provinces, and consequently in the other tobacco regions, was the speculation on war. Many Chinese merchants wanted to secure large quantities of tobacco, which in case of war would have represented a solid and very profitable investment. In the other case, as their overhead expenses are practically none, they could always dispose of the tobacco without loss, selling to local small factories, many of which are owned by them.

This year, with 80% or more production and talk of war having subsided, it is very probable that prices will descend to the 1947 and 1946 levels.

“AN analysis of the annual progress and program reports submitted to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations by 30 member nations reveals that in spite of a slight gain in food and agriculture supplies throughout the world in 1947-48 over other post-war years, only seven of these reporting member nations had food supplies which, if equitably distributed, would have provided adequate nutrition for all their own people.”—*United States Information Service.*

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