

The Neighborhood Associations are a practical enterprise in neighborliness and peace. No activity of ours has so impressed us with its significance knitting us together into closer fellowship in the interest of the common weal. We shall, greater than ever, have need of peace and order if we are to go about our individual and common tasks, filling out the new improved pattern of life which we have set for ourselves as an integral part of that greater community which is East Asia.

Mayor GUINTO

HEALTH AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

WE generally emphasize the utility of neighborhood associations to society as a cooperative institution for the maintenance of peace and order through the inculcation in every citizen the sense of collective responsibility. The prevention of crimes and the ferreting out of criminals effected through guarding and patrolling of designated areas, through close surveillance over the movements of every inhabitant, through denunciation of criminal elements, and through cooperative effort in the apprehension of wrongdoers—these require the highest type of civic consciousness and constitute the noblest form of service to the state as an institution for the promotion of public weal and happiness.

An eminent writer says that three factors are essential in the great task of achieving civilization: man, labor, and the state. Man is the creator of values; labor is the activity whereby man creates values; and the state is the agency which elevates the quality of human labor to such a level as to make man worthy of civilized life.

In the New Philippines, neighborhood and district associations are being organized under the direction of the Bureau of Local Governments, Department of the Interior, as government instrumentalities to raise to the highest possible level the quality of human endeavor. They are designed to serve as institutions to educate the people in cooperative living—in making their impulses, strivings, and actions social rather than anti-social. The individual man, as a component member of the social organism, is to be disciplined to subserve the collective welfare rather than his own selfish individual interest. Man is valuable to the community only in so far as he serves its interest according to his capacity; his labor contributes to the common good only when the community at large is benefited by his activity; the state serves its purpose only as long as it can direct human activity towards the realization of the greatest amount of happiness and prosperity.

Selfish Individualism

In individualistic governments, in all enterprises of life, the guiding philosophy seems to run along this course: leave every man to himself—"let the devil take the hindmost." As long as the individual can escape the evils of life, he does not care a whit for the welfare of others.

Unfortunately, this attitude—highly anti-social, highly inimical to the collective welfare—is most patent in matters of sanitation and hygiene: in matters of health, the wealth of the individual as well as of the nation.

In cases of epidemic, such as cholera, dysentery, small-pox, and other contagious diseases, families, in wanton disregard of the health of others, generally hide individual cases from health authorities. Even lepers are shielded by members of their families from the public eye. This is an attitude that is, to say the least, anti-social, as it endangers the health not only of one family, or of one group of families, but also of the entire body of inhabitants living in the community.

Coöperative Spirit

Through the coöperative spirit underlying neighborhood associations, which demands the subservience of individual interest to public welfare, this general apathy of the people will in time be changed into an attitude of active general helpfulness; because the fundamental purpose of the organization of neighborhood associations is to safeguard not only public order, the safety of life and limb, and the security of property, but also the general health of the community.

In connection with the disposal of garbage, there is also to be noted the lamentable tendency on the part of many of our people to remain callously indifferent to the general welfare. In this respect, many of our people are most guilty of lack of civic consciousness and discipline. It is a common sight to see a person dragging the carcass of a pig, a dog, a cat, etc. on the public highways to be deposited in a spot he considers convenient for his purpose—i. e., about a hundred meters or so away from his residence. There the dead body begins to decay, and its stink and stench bring discomfort, misery, and even death to the entire neighborhood, until a more civic-spirited resident takes the trouble of disposing the disease-producing filth in a more "civilized" manner. In times of flood, it is not seldom that we see people throw into the water wastes of all kinds and in advanced states of decomposition to be carried by the current and deposited in more innocent neighborhoods there to spread the mischief of disease and death.

In many cases, this dirty and anti-social manifestation of down-right ignorance of t'

sanitation and hygiene; in some cases, however, it is a product of sheer deviltry, which drags human beings down to the level of pigs and hyenas.

Educational Value

The neighborhood and district associations will render a great service in educating the people to repress and suppress tendencies and habits inimical to society and to encourage them to form those that will produce

the maximum good for human living. In every community, the people will be made to realize more and more the golden rule. Civic-spirited provincial and municipal officials as well as intelligent and alert leaders of neighborhood associations and presidents of district associations will contribute greatly towards the building of a happier and more abundant national life.