

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER FOR THE YEAR 1947-1948

This is the first annual report of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association, and it covers the period from October 1, 1947 to June 30, 1948. The report also includes the activities of the President of the PPSTA before he became Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

The undersigned temporarily assumed office as Executive Secretary-Treasurer on October 1, 1947, when he went on leave of absence from the Bureau, until his leave expired on December 8, 1947. From then on he was on full-time basis and began drawing an annual salary of ₱7,200, in accordance with the PPSTA Constitution.

From January 3, 1947 to September 30, 1947, the undersigned was engaged in organizing the PPSTA in earnest. The first step in this direction was to circularize all Division Teachers Associations asking them to join the PPSTA. A general letter dated January 5, 1947 was the initial appeal for reorganization and contains the objectives of the PPSTA. These are the same objectives which are being discussed in the present convention and which are to be worked out in detail with a view to formulating means of implementing them.

On October 1, 1947 the first steps were taken to formally organize the Office of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer by requesting the Division Associations to recommend the names of those from whom an Executive Secretary-Treasurer was to be selected by the Board. Several names were nominated by various division associations and members of the PPSTA. These persons were then requested to indicate if they would accept the po-

sition of Executive Secretary-Treasurer, under terms specified in the list of duties and functions indicated in the Constitution. None of those to whom letters were sent accepted the position, with the exception of Mr. Marcelino Bautista, who was later elected to that position by the Board of Directors. See November issue of the *Philippine Educator*. As already indicated above, in order to expedite the organization of that office, the incumbent took a two months' leave, meanwhile the selective process of determining the Executive Secretary-Treasurer was going on. On December 8, 1947 the present incumbent resigned from his position as Division Superintendent in the Bureau of Public Schools and became full-pledged Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

One of the first acts of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer was to submit to the Board of Directors a budget which was finally approved as it now appears as Appendix A of this report. The expenditures from this budget have followed substantially the items and amounts indicated. There have been savings from this budget. For example, a great portion of the salary of editor has been saved because after the part-time Acting Editor, Mr. Juan C. Laya, resigned on November 1, 1947, the Executive Secretary-Treasurer has been Acting Editor. The reason for the absence of a full-time Editor is the fact that the salary provided for that position has not been attractive enough to make it possible for the very best candidates to accept it. Qualifications were listed for the position of Editor of the *Philippine Educator*, to wit: 1. He should be actively interested in the welfare of public school teachers and in the public

schools; 2. He should be facile enough as a writer to express his ideas and criticisms and should not be afraid to state these when it is necessary to do so; 3. He should be a teacher or former teacher. The position has been offered to three persons who met these qualifications but none of them accepted it because of the low salary.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PPSTA:

1. We took part in the drafting of bills that were submitted to the Congress for consideration. Among these are: The Educational Act of 1948, the new salary scale (embodied in the Pendatun Bill), and the Bill to Turn Into Cash the Service Credit Earned by Teachers in 1941-1942 and in 1945. See the November, 1947 issue of the *Philippine Educator*.

2. We endorsed other bills such as the General Retirement Act for all Government Employees, the Back Pay Bill, and the Bill to Give Temporary Employees Vacation and Leave Privileges submitted to Congress by His Excellency, the President. We helped in securing the conducting of hearings on the proposed Educational Act of 1948.

3. We visited nine school divisions and addressed teachers' gatherings with a view to urging them to become members of the PPSTA and to support its policies and its official organ, the *Philippine Educator*. These efforts and the articles published in the official organ urging teachers' support of the PPSTA succeeded in swelling the membership of the Association to 39,480 as of May 15, 1948.

4. We did considerable publicity for the PPSTA through the newspapers and the radio and by means of ad-

resses to teachers' gatherings and PTA meetings. We have also urged some members of the PPSTA to write articles for publication in the newspapers. Several of these have been published. As a result of this publicity, we believe we have aroused public opinion to endorse the Educational Act of 1948. Hundreds of resolutions were received by the members of Congress from teachers' associations, parent-teacher organizations, and civic organizations. The clamor for the improvement of the school system has been so great that almost 150 bills have been submitted for consideration by Congress on matters pertaining to the improvement of the schools and the teachers. Despite these efforts, however, it appears that we have not been able to secure legislation on the improvement of the school system. Members of Congress are of one accord in their belief that the changes we have proposed or endorsed are urgently needed but that the obstacle to their realization is lack of funds. We need ₱25 million to return Grade VII to the elementary school. We need ₱44 million to finance the return of the double-session plan and the generalization of the 5 teachers—3 classes and 3 teachers—2 classes plan. These amounts are not now available in the coffers of the government. It is to be understood that we were not alone working for these bills. There is the Secretary of Education and the Director of Public Schools who were also interested in the same things. They, too, put in great efforts to get approval of the bills, and yet in spite of our joint efforts we did not get what we wanted.

5. The PPSTA took active part in the solution of projected strikes of teach-

ers in the Nueva Ecija High School and in the Davao City High School. Through the intervention of your Executive Secretary-Treasurer and in connection with the efforts of the Administrative Officer of the Bureau of Public Schools in the case of Nueva Ecija, and of the Assistant Director in the case of Davao, the teachers went back to their classes. The root-cause of these troubles was the non-payment of the bonus for high school teachers.

6. We have helped individual teachers and school officials in expediting action on and approval of papers pertaining to salary warrants, insurance policies, traveling expense vouchers, appointments, etc. This type of service entailed considerable time on the part of the personnel of the PPSTA Office, but we believe the help was worthwhile.

7. We referred questions raised by teachers and school officials to authorities and officers concerned, and in many cases we received prompt and favorable action. Some of these questions and their answers were published in various issues of the *Philippine Educator*. Oftentimes these matters pertained to simple administrative regulations but the correspondence in many cases lay pending for sometime in various offices. It needed only a personal follow-up to have them acted upon. It appears that in many cases the questions could have been raised directly with the Division Superintendents concerned, and so were accordingly returned thereto for action. It is surprising to find that some cases indicated reluctance on the part of the teachers concerned to refer the matter directly to the Superintendents. This may serve as a clue to the further exertion of efforts to have teachers voice their problems without restraint. In some of the letters received, the teach-

ers expressed their desire to have their names withheld.

The Executive Secretary-Treasurer realizes that what has been accomplished is very little. We are still in the process of organization and it is inevitable that the greater part of our efforts had to be centered on solidifying the whole teaching force. It is a source of gratification to us that to a large extent this has already been achieved. Letters received from teachers and officials testify to the fact that now more than ever before the public school teachers are united and are determined to get improvements in the school system and in their own welfare. Teachers and school officials are beginning to feel that we are getting heard as a group and that other people realize the strength of this group. The general public is beginning to realize that we know what we want and know how to get it.

The members of the Association are, however, warned that we are only beginning to make a dent in the consciousness of public opinion. We need greater efforts to solidify our ranks and to get every single teacher and school official thinking and talking about our problems. It is a sad commentary on our sense of values that there should be a few among us that do not realize the need for uniting together. Note that we have only 39,480 members as against the expected total of 62,500. These small groups prefer to wait until something has been done before they join our ranks. Perhaps these groups are not entirely indifferent to our cause, and that it needs only a little rousing up on the part of local school leaders to get these group into our organization.

There is danger in the attitude of some of us who believe that they "wait and see" before they join our ranks.

This danger lies in the fact that other people may become skeptical about the teachers' faith in one another. Where there is lethargy on the part of teachers as regards matters pertaining to their own welfare, it is easy to form the opinion that teachers can be treated with indifference because they are themselves indifferent to their own cause.

The great task of implementing our objectives has just begun. Even now we are only formulating ways and means of implementing those objectives. We have really only scratched the surface; the real spade work is yet to be done. We cannot expect results when we are even now in the early stages of organization, when there is still a significant number that refuse to be organized. We must not be impatient for results. "A squash can be grown in a few days; it takes years to grow a molave." The momentary "defeats" as indicated by the inability of our legislators to finance our pet project, the Educational Act of 1948, should spur us to greater efforts. It is not fair to say that because in the first trials we failed to get what we want, we shall never get anywhere.

There were distinct achievements as regards the improvement of teachers' welfare. These bills were passed by Congress:

1. Fixing the minimum monthly salary of elementary school teachers at ₱100, ₱120, and ₱140.
2. Extending leave privileges of 60 days with pay to temporary employees who are married women.
3. Retiring employees who have rendered 20 years of satisfactory service and who have attained the age of 60.
4. Creating a revolving fund for

the purchase of homes for teachers.

5. An appropriation of ₱5 million for the encouragement and promotion of Parent-Teacher Associations.

6. Providing a system of liquidating the back pay.

This achievement, of course, can not be attributed to the efforts of the PPSTA alone, for the highest school and other authorities worked hard for the approval of these measures. But it was largely through our agitation for improvement of the teachers' welfare, our constant dinning into the consciousness of the public of the need to rescue the teacher from his miserably impoverished condition that these bills have been approved.

In the matter of salaries, one common cry heard from all corners of the country is, "What about the salaries of those who have better qualifications and longer service than the new teachers?" In time, we hope, the salaries of these teachers will also be taken care of. It is really the case of "one thing at a time". If the authorities who hold the purse strings of the country should find that our demands are too great, they may find themselves in a position to be unable to do anything even for the lowest-paid of us. Anyhow, many of us realize that there have been a few increases in the higher brackets when many positions have been made available carrying the higher minimum rates.

THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATOR

The *Philippine Educator* is the official organ of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association. Primarily, it is not a business enterprise. It is the medium through which members of the organization can freely exchange ideas and through which the PPSTA tries to mould public opinion in favor of its aims, policies, and program. This magazine reaches all

members of Congress and all authorities directly concerned with matters affecting the public schools and the teachers. The present policy is to charge the minimum subscription rates which will enable the publication to maintain itself. There is no attempt to make it a profit-making magazine, since its subscribers are mostly teachers. The rates have been reduced as of July 1, 1948. (See May-June issue.) As of May 15, 1948 the financial position of the magazine is as follows:

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|---|------------|
| Paid-up subscriptions (4,519 subscribers) | P24,947.41 |
| Collections from direct sales | 4,163.33 |
| Receivables (unpaid subscriptions and direct consignments, see elsewhere in this report | 7,572.35 |
| Income from advertisements | 6,652.50 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total receipts | P43,335.59 |
| Total expenses (printing, transportation and mailing, overhead, etc.) | P42,277.50 |
| <hr/> | |
| Net profit | P 1,058.09 |

As can be seen from foregoing statement of financial position, the magazine is "in the red", if we consider the fact that the "receivables" are not 100% sure income. If we deduct, say, 20% of the receivables as possible bad account, P43,335.59 less 20% of P7,572.35 or P41,821.12) we would be in the red by P456.38.

In another portion of the report, we mentioned the reduction in subscription rates, effective July 1, 1948. This would not appear to be a wise move in the face of a situation in which the magazine is not as yet paying. However, it was hoped that if the sub-

scription rates are lowered, many more teachers would subscribe to the magazine. In the long run, reduction in subscription rates would prove to be profitable.

There is a significant message to be derived from the foregoing statement of the financial position of the magazine. It should mean that if we wish to continue maintaining the official organ of the Association, the members should give it greater boost and support. By all means, members should read as many magazines as possible, and therefore teachers or teacher groups should subscribe to several magazines. It would seem, however, that this particular magazine should secure the unstinted support of all members, and the greater bulk of the subscriptions for professional magazines should be to the *Philippine Educator*. The important thing seems to be that all members should become familiar with what is going on in matters affecting the schools and the teachers' welfare. And the only source of information in this regard is the teachers' own publication.

Considering the format of the magazine and the content material we are safe to say that it compares favorably with other magazines; however, it has deficiencies some of which are as follows:

1. There should be more material that is helpful in the everyday work of the classroom teacher. We realize the dearth of material of this kind. In spite of our efforts to exhort teachers to write and publish such materials, the response has been very meager. Academic supervisors, industrial supervisors, leading teachers in different schools should send in what they produce in connection with their everyday work so that we can circulate this type of material among the teachers.

When our finances permit, we shall maintain a regular and permanent corps of writers whose main work will be to prepare teaching aids, model lesson plans, etc.

2. The magazine lacks advertisement. Our efforts in this regard have not been very satisfactory. We had an ad solicitor who started quite well in the first issues. The income from advertisements at its peak was ₱1986.00 (the April-May 1947 issue). This has dwindled to ₱159.50. The reason given for this reduction in the income was the fact that most advertisers now place their ads with regularly organized advertising agencies who would charge us commissions on ads, which means we would get that much deduction from advertisers. Every effort will be exerted in the future to study this angle of the financing of the magazine. A necessary first step would be to engage the services of top ad solicitors who must necessarily be paid satisfactory salaries and commissions.

3. There is little material about the everyday lives of teachers depicting typical activities from day to day. We wanted to have more of such material not so much to glamorize the life of the teacher as to show what problems, what experiences, what disappointments and satisfactions are common to all. It would be a source of comfort to teachers for them to know that they have satisfactions and problems in common. We have conducted a writing contest for and among teachers on two subjects, "My Most Unforgettable Teacher" and "Stories of Everyday Life of Typical Teachers". The response from the teachers has been very meager.

4. Some subscribers complain of the small size of the magazine and espe-

cially of the type. We could enlarge the magazine both as to size and type, but it will mean an additional expense. The larger the type, the larger would be the size of the page and size of the magazine and, of course, the bigger will be the expense, because of the larger amount of paper used. There are others, however, who would prefer the present size. They say that it can easily be accommodated in a pocket, and it does not easily crumple because of its compactness. The important consideration in this case is expense. At the present financial status of the magazine would it be advisable to incur additional expense?

THE FINANCES OF THE PPSTA

As of May 15, 1948, the amount of cash deposited in the Philippine National Bank and in the Philippine Trust is ₱24,010.13. This represents the assets of the PPSTA proper and the *Philippine Educator*. As of this date also the number of members of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association is 39,480. Since the *Philippine Educator* has practically made no money, it seems safe to assume that the difference between ₱39,480, which were paid in as membership fees, and the present cash deposit in the banks, represents what has been spent for maintaining the PPSTA Office and publishing the magazine. This amount is roughly ₱15,500. This organization has been in existence in its revamped form from January, 1947 to date, or approximately 16 months. The average expenditure per month was therefore about ₱970. The members of the Association are to judge whether or not the expense has been justified in the light of what has been so far accomplished.

The Association might wish to know what is to be done with the amount of ₱24,010 which is now deposited in the

banks. When members realize what great and urgent need there is for improving the teachers' welfare, it is not difficult to see that this amount is still too insignificant to meet what plans and projects might be undertaken in this regard. Your Executive Secretary-Treasurer recommends that the Convention consider the following proposals:

1. Establish a mutual aid and benefit system for the purpose of giving immediate financial assistance to teachers and their families if a teacher dies or incurs prolonged or serious illness.

2. Organize a cooperative association engaged in supplying supplies and equipment needed by the schools. Private enterprise has made money from the government by supplying the schools with their needs. A cooperative association is a legitimate sphere of investment by government employees, but they cannot engage in private business outside the cooperative association. It is recommended, in this connection, that the Convention decide whether or not it would be wise to ask teachers who have invested money in the National Teachers Cooperative to request the Secretary of Education, under whose initiative the NTC was organized, to turn over to the PPSTA their shares in the NTC. Members will realize that the amount at hand in the PPSTA coffers would be inadequate to finance the business venture herein contemplated.

3. Establish a mutual savings and loan association for teachers.

4. Finance the publication of magazines for the use of pupils or students. Members of the Association are familiar with several such magazines which are now being used in the schools.

5. Establish a building and loan association for teachers. Obviously much

greater capital is needed for this project.

6. Buy a site and construct a headquarters for teachers. This will be a place to house the PPSTA and to serve as temporary domicile for teachers while visiting in Manila.

7. Finance the studies of brilliant deservng teachers so that they may be helped in improving their attainment.

There are many other projects that might be suggested by members of this association. What is important to bear in mind is the fact that the little amount we have thus far collected would be insufficient to undertake any important project contemplated. It is obvious that greater efforts should be exerted to have all teachers join the Association so that this amount would continue accumulating. The present membership to the Association consisting of 39,480 is only approximately 65% of the expected total of 60,500 teachers. It will also be noted that there are still four division and national school associations which have no members in the Association, and that there are thirteen associations that have less than 30% membership. (See report on membership as of May 15, 1948, in our special convention issue.)

A few words may be said in this connection with respect to the safeguarding of the PPSTA funds. The accounts of the Association are audited every month by a certified public accountant. The latest report submitted by him may be inspected any time by any member interested to know more about the finances of the Association. Strict accounting regulations have been imposed, and no cash receipts are allowed to stay in the hands of the cashier more than a few hours. These are deposited in the banks every day.

In closing, the undersigned wishes to

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conscious of their concerted powers. I have a feeling that the heads of our educational system, those responsible for all general policies and the welfare of all personnel, look upon the association with mingled anxiety and joy—anxiety that it might run amuck and degenerate into a mere labor union which stresses violent policies and violent techniques, yet joy that these fears did not materialize and instead the mammoth association backed up everything that the directorate did for the improvement of the school system and the amelioration of the teachers' lot.

One significant decision reached after much passionate discussion was the decision to make known the desire of teachers regarding the choice of Secretary of Education. A few timid souls were for keeping quiet lest being vocal on so vital a decision would be misconstrued as undue interference. The great majority, however, asserted the right of teachers to feel rightly and strongly about educational leadership in the Philippines and the further right to make the nation know what that stand is. Very unpopular in the convention is Dr. Jorge Bocobo, often mentioned in the papers as slated for the position. His uncompromising opposition to the proposed Education Act of 1948 and rather autocratic methods which he displayed when he was an incumbent before the war unfit him, many delegates felt, for the position. The majority much preferred Dr. Manuel V. Gallego, who might not have grown from the ranks and so had not had the chance to learn the intimate needs and problems of lower education in the Philippines, but whose mind is wide open to suggestions from the men immediately under him who themselves grew up within the system and were conscious of its defects even if they loved it with all their soul.

3. Teachers now know the technique of practical life. They have given up the private whining and lamentations for social justice; they have risen, rolled up their sleeves, and are going after what they want. No more the supine self-pity, no more the disastrous folding of the hands and passive praying for the nation's sense of justice. The teachers, through their delegates, have marched to Malacañan and taken it by storm. The president, in the face of so many influential educated men from all over the Philippines, could do nothing but be friendly and good, as he was sincerely friendly and good, trying to establish rapport with the mighty 60,000 by recalling to mind the time when he himself was a *maestro*.

Teachers, through their association, have learned the practical techniques of lobbying. Hundreds of letters, petitions, resolutions, telegrams, etc. pour into the offices of congress in support of many measures, so that the tide is irresistible. Playing like a pack of well-trained players, they have dribbled, made passes, guarded, made long-distance tries at the basket, played a man-to-man game, played interference, etc. Through the business-like and effective arrangements of a central office, teachers have been able to play with excellent team work.

And so the future is full of great expectations. The organization needs more strengthening. The indifferent and weak, those who lack educational leadership in their respective divisions, have to rally to the association. We could use even more effective publicity and public relations. We could establish more effective and more immediate contact with all teachers through means other than the mails and the *Philippine Educator*. We could do all these for next year, and then . . . and then . . . I don't dare predict what will happen . . .