
SOME RESULTS FROM HAVING SPECIALIZED IN EMBROIDERY.

By LEROY MARTIN, Division Industrial Supervisor, Union.

Twelve of the fourteen municipalities of La Union do embroidery and two make lace. The course of study is followed carefully, but this year only two double periods each week are given to embroidery in the fourth and intermediate grades, instead of three double periods heretofore required.

There are seven teachers who are considered very good in embroidery work, including the division supervisor of girls' work, but not including the representative of the General Office in charge of the household industry class in San Fernando. The division supervisor of girls' work gives more time to primary industrial work than to embroidery. Two of the embroidery teachers have attended the Vacation Assembly in Manila. Five of the municipalities have teachers who are rated as "fair" in charge of the embroidery.

There are no records available to show the number of articles fabricated, the designs used, or the number of girls engaged in the work. Fairly reliable generalizations, however, can be made.

The total value of the output for 1915-16 as reported by the division industrial supervisor was ₱1,844.79, of which about ₱550 is yet on hand.

The money was distributed on the basis of 50 per cent of the value of the work to the pupil and 50 per cent to the pupils' fund. Much of the material of the finished work on hand was purchased from the pupils' fund. When a reduction is made in the selling price of an article the worker suffers the entire reduction. In many cases she receives nothing for her work.

Specialization affects the quality of the work indirectly. When the time for fabrication is not sufficient the workers will be hurried and the quality of the product is lowered. If, however, the pupil is taught that good work brings a better price than poor work, the standard is raised. Under proper supervision specialization in embroidery will raise the standard of workmanship.

As a direct result of raising the standard of workmanship the pupil will make more money. Under the system of 1916-17, when the General Office sends out the stamped materials and fixes the price, the remuneration of the pupils is controlled by

the General Office. When the work is accepted at a price that is too low the pupil's profit is reduced.

The total product is increased, but this increase is not due to specialization. It is due to the fact that the workers receive pay for the work done. This is not true in plain sewing. In plain sewing the worker not only receives no pay but must buy her materials. In embroidery the materials are furnished and the pupil is paid for her work. The remuneration and not specialization is responsible for the increase in production.

It is true that the pupils will make more money as a result of specialization. One reason is that the teacher can give more careful supervision and instruction when her attention is centered upon one line of work. The pupil also gains proficiency by working at the same design week after week. It is believed that specialization should be carried yet further where it is possible to do so. Where it is possible each school should be limited to one particular design for at least one school year.

This plan will be tried out in the local industrial center and an accurate time record will be kept of each article made by each girl. When the order is completed the records will be studied and it will be ascertained whether the speed of the worker increases as she works on the same design.

There are some unfavorable results to be guarded against in specialization. The first one is that the teachers will place too much stress upon the one line. Every municipality in Union has requested that pupils be excused from plain sewing in order to work on embroidery. The art of plain sewing is much more important to the Filipino girl than skill in embroidery. It occupies a much more important place in the home life of the girl than does embroidery.

This unconscious stressing of the subject tends to detract from the academic subjects also. Unless the teacher is careful the pupil will give more time to embroidery than she should.

Another evil is that of working at home at night. Very few Filipino homes have adequate lighting arrangements for the children to do embroidery work. The poor light is very apt to strain the eyes and work a permanent injury. The work should be limited to the industrial period in the school and should be done only under the supervision of the teacher.

The prospects for embroidery for 1916-17 are better because of the Bureau's having laid stress on specialization. The effect is more indirect than direct. The improved prospects are due directly to the orders which have been received from the General Office.

The orders accepted to date total ₱1,140 as against the grand total of ₱1,844 for the full year of 1915-16. Orders to the value of over ₱400 have already been completed. From now on, this province should turn out approximately ₱350 worth of embroidery a month.

Since the organization of the first schools on Negros, difficulty has been experienced in settling upon a system of school organization which would meet with the hearty support of the hacenderos and still come up to the standards of the Bureau of Education.

It was urged that the children of the laborers on the haciendas could not attend school, as they must eat with their parents and the meal hours came in conflict with the school hours.

The following tentative plan is being tried out and marks the first step in a plan to do away with this objection:

Instead of making any attempt to get the children into the regular school, special schools, which shall deviate somewhat from the regular course, are to be established. Each hacendero supplies a room in which instruction may be given, free of cost to the municipality, while teachers are sent out to the haciendas at municipal expense. Each teacher has three separate classes daily, one from 6 to 8.30 a. m., one from 11 a. m. to 1.30 p. m., and from 2 to 5 p. m. That is, he teaches one class before breakfast in the morning, which enables the children to go to breakfast with their parents. The middle-of-day class enables those who have been working during the forenoon to secure two hours and a half instruction. The afternoon class usually consists of those who do not have work in the afternoon. This plan permits the children to secure two and a half hours of academic teaching, yet permits the hacenderos the benefit of their services practically all day.

So far, in pursuance of this plan, nine of these schools have been established under three teachers with a total enrollment of 445 pupils and an average daily attendance of 390. When the fact that these pupils would be receiving absolutely no instruction without the organization of these particular schools is considered, the plan is fully justified, even though the entire course of study cannot be carried out. One hacendero has already constructed, at his own expense, a building for a school, and others will do likewise at an early date. At the present, most of the schools are being held in the sugar mills.