

THE RICE INDUSTRY

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Owing to the crop shortage now apparent, prices for rice at Cabanatuan and other shipping points range from P3.90 to P4.10 per cavan of palay of 44 kilos, with clean rice at from P9.50 to P9.80 per sack of 57½ kilos. These prices for palay are the highest reached since the war, at the commencement of the buying season. Peak prices for the season are reached about August or September each year and ordinarily range 12% to 20% above the opening prices of this period of the year. This year they will probably not go above the lower figure, unless something now unforeseen happens to the export surplus of Indosasia. Harvesting there is still underway.

Losses from the drouth fall heaviest upon those provinces dependent upon interprovincial export; Pangasinan, the granary of the Philippines in former times, will perhaps have to depend this year upon other crops for subsistence, or else import in part. It must be said that the outlook for extension of the rice industry appears dubious, although the population is increasing whether there are drouths or banner crops. The force of education relative to the rice industry is about nil. Parents believe, and children are obsessed with the idea, that education will cover a multitude of discrepancies, one of which is the producing of the food they consume.

There is a touch of pathos in such dreams. The average highschool that leads away from agricultural production includes far too many boys—or men, if you will—who are from 25 to 28 years old and the fathers of growing families. Is this not carrying learning too far? At twice this age most of these men will be dead. Meanwhile they stagnate, dissatisfied, while forever seeking the softcollar job.

It is difficult to see what purpose can be served by the farmer boy attempting to learn differential calculus when the demand for this is low, and the demand for rice and other farm crops high. Universal education, one becomes aware in a season like the present one, does not mean the Golden Age. Far from it. Education must fit, or it fails. Though the bureau of education, most conservative in the government, points with pride to nearly a million pupils, in its reports at least, receiving the 'uplift' in the school system for nearly a quarter of a century, the total effect upon agricultural production is so slight as to be negligible. The schools product seems unfitted to carry on the occupation of their forefathers, that of producing enough to eat and something to sell. But we all view this with bovine complacency, and get even by tearing to pieces the Monroe Commission's report.

The coming generation may, instead of blessing education and educators, regret the blindness with which it followed false gods until it was unlifted to carry on. Those who should lead back into productive pursuits the generation they have 'uplifted' appear not only indifferent, but actually to harbor an aversion toward change; and so without much change the schools go on, along the course leading inevitably to national decadence—parasitism, not productiveness.

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