

Some Achievements of Our Republic *

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THE REPUBLIC OF THE Philippines may be likened to an infant born in parlous days and, probably, a little before its time. The birth of the Republic caused no small consternation in the household, as it were, what with the general confusion caused by the greatest war that has visited mankind.

On October 14, 1943, the Republic of the Philippines was established and inaugurated with simple ceremonies at the Legislative Building in the City of Manila. The granting of such independence was, of course, considered a boon and a historic event in the life of our race. But our Republic was ushered in the midst of tumult and dangers, and has had to face multifarious problems unusually difficult to solve. In his inaugural address, His Excellency, President Jose P. Laurel of the Republic of the Philippines did not hesitate to reveal to the Filipino people his plans in connexion with the program of his administration. This program is based on the patriotic concept of Andres Bonifacio that "the welfare of the people is the sole purpose of all governments on earth."

President Laurel mentioned, among other things, the importance of maintaining peace and order as our first duty; tilling our idle lands; improving and diversifying our crops; developing our fisheries; multiplying our livestock, dairy and poultry farms; producing the necessities of civilised life,—in other words, economic sufficiency; looking after the

wellbeing of the poorer elements constituting our masses; increasing the salaries and wages of employees and laborers; giving relief to the needy and suffering, particularly to war widows and orphans; evolving a new type of citizenry; reviving our old-time virtues as Orientals; instilling honesty and loyalty in the minds of our public officers and employees; preparing our youth early for useful citizenship, providing compulsory and free instruction for all children of school age, and training them for rigid discipline; forging and riveting the links of family solidarity; restoring womanhood to its proper sphere in the home; developing and disseminating the national language; preserving health and propagating intelligence; and abolishing political parties.

1. PEACE AND ORDER. The foremost problem of the government in any clime is the maintenance of peace and order. This is important, because should there be disorders and disturbances, the public mind is in a state of confusion. The people neglect to tackle the ordinary problems of life and the development of natural resources, such as the cultivation of lands; likewise, they neglect to promote commerce and industry; all of which would gradually but surely lead the country to untold sufferings and starvation. Undoubtedly, any disorder would be inimical to the healthy growth of the Republic. We

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could imagine the difficulties which the government should encounter to suppress troubles arising from the current war. The reinforcement of the Bureau of Constabulary was, therefore, felt necessary in order to have sufficient force to face any emergency. As one of the initial steps, President Laurel issued Proclamation No. 2, dated October 14, 1943, granting general amnesty and pardon for crimes and offenses of political nature, like sedition, organising unlawful association, leading or joining the guerillas, etc. committed by Filipinos. Again, on January 17, 1944, Proclamation No. 11 was issued, designating the period from January 19 to 25, 1944 as "Amnesty Week", and at the same time, appealing to the public for cooperation in the attainment of the desired end of such movement. According to official report, a total of 89,459 *guerilleros* surrendered up to February 4; and 100,594 *guerilleros* surrendered in Mindanao up to February 8, 1944. In the meantime, the government accommodated or otherwise gave employment to the Filipino members of the USAFFE who had surrendered. On the other hand, in its desire to continue its program of maintaining peace and order, the administration issued Executive Order No. 40 on March 27, 1944, authorising the sale of bonds in the sum of ₱100,000,000 pursuant to the provisions of Act No. 18 which was approved on December 28, 1943. Aside from this, Executive Order No. 64 was issued under the provisions of Act No. 35 appropriating the sum of ₱3,000,000 for purposes of pacification, including the payment of rewards for the surrender of firearms, weapons and other military equipment.

The result of the peace campaign has, on the whole, been quite satisfactory. It may be said at this juncture that through the untiring efforts of the administration, peace and order—although not altogether com-

plete—have prevailed throughout the Philippines.

2. AGRICULTURE. It is of common knowledge that even during the seemingly prosperous years of the Commonwealth regime, the Philippines had to import large quantities of rice and other foodstuffs like meat, eggs, vegetables, canned foods, etc. During this time when the East and the West are engaged in a total war; it is not surprising that we should suffer a shortage in food supply. It was for this reason that from the very beginning, the government urged all citizens to redouble their efforts to till idle lands and plant not only palay but also corn, camote, cassava, vegetables and other foodstuffs. The war not having ceased until and after the inauguration of the Republic of the Philippines, so the food and other economic problems of the country became more and more acute and serious every day and continue to be so up to this time. Nor did the present administration neglect to do its duty. As early as October 29, 1943, the President appealed to the people to cultivate all available lands and issued Proclamation No. 3 designating November 19 of each year as "Farmers' Day". In line with the policy of the Republic, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources did its best to persuade the inhabitants in every nook and corner of the Philippines to increase production to forestall impending crisis in food. As a result, it was reported on June 10, 1944 that in Luzon 103,307 hectares of land were planted to corn, camote and cassava, while the Visayas and the provinces around and adjacent to Manila were making remarkable progress in food production. In connexion with this nation-wide campaign, Act No. 14 was passed, penalising any person for the injury of carabaos and cattle to render them unfit for labor. Act No. 46 provides the sum of ₱2,000,000 for irrigation system funds. Moreover, the President created the "Philippine Agricultural Commission

to Taiwan" to study ways and means by which to increase our rice production, etc.

8. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. If it is hard to maintain peace and order during emergency, it is no less difficult if not much harder, to cope with the economic problems of our country nowadays. Firstly, because we were not self-sufficient even before the outbreak of the current war. Secondly, economic dislocation and disorders are but the natural concomitants of war, and daily events can neither be determined nor presaged. The present war developed monetary inflation; this in turn invaded the market. The "buy and sell" business came into being and prospered quickly; prices of commodities soared skyward. Eventually, planting was in some way neglected; food production suffered thereby. So foodstuffs became scarce and dear. Clothing materials and other prime commodities could not longer be had as usual. Consequently, when the National Assembly first met last year, a special committee otherwise known as the "Vamenta Committee" was created to probe the causes of the alarming increases of prices of foodstuffs and other necessities. The President recommended the enactment of a law which would remedy the shortage of food supply and disruption of transportation facilities. Administrative Order No. 9 was issued, urging the cultivation of public plazas, sidewalks, grounds, etc. On December 3, 1943, President Laurel appointed Jose G. Sanvictores as Food Administrator, after approving the bill creating the new Food Administration office to solve food problems of the country.

In the meantime, the Imperial Japanese Army in the Philippines made a loan of 20,000 sacks of rice to the Philippine government and then gave 25,000 sacks of rice as a gift to the Republic. The NARIC was dissolved on December 31, 1943, and in its stead, the Bigasang Bayan or BIBA

was created. The latter continued the distribution of rice, although the quantity was diminished little by little until such distribution stopped finally. The government has been taking all the necessary steps to avert possible starvation, especially in Manila. In this connexion, the President said at the gathering of City officials and NA presidents held at the City Hall on January 5, 1944 that his administration was determined to provide for the adequate and equitable distribution of foodstuffs throughout the country, particularly in Manila. On January 7, 1944, the government authorized the release of the sum of P2,400,000 for the purchase of palay through the municipal rice growers' associations. Free entry of rice to Manila was allowed in January, 1944. Executive Order No. 37 decreeing the recruitment of able-bodied persons for civilian emergency service in food production was issued on February 23, 1944.

In spite of all the measures taken by the administration, the price of rice continued to rise, and as a consequence, the prices of other prime commodities followed suit. The Food Administrator promulgated many orders. He was constrained to raise the price of rice to P200 a cavan. The authorities even confiscated 122,401 cavans of rice and palay during May and June, 1944. Such an official action, however, did not scare the rice hoarders and profiteers. Executive Orders Nos. 55 and 78 were issued with a view to extenuating the gravity of the situation. The Food Administration office was ordered to take possession of all stocks of rice and palay, except such quantities as might be needed for the consumption of families and their dependents. Eating places were required to close from 8 p.m. since August 10, 1944. Serving of different courses was tabooed. Night clubs and dance halls were closed. Fishponds were commanded to stabilise the fish supply.

And after the abolition of the Food Administration office, Executive Order No. 85 was issued, giving special powers to the Ministry of Economic Affairs in shaping national economies. Executive Order No. 62 established the National Commodities Procurement and Distribution Corporation (NADISCO), while Ordinance No. 8 created the Consumers' Cooperative Associations in the City of Manila (MCCA).

On August 15, 1944, the first general defense drill was held in the city. Mayor Leon G. Guinto advised that Manila residents should store sufficient foods for the next coming drills. Suddenly, the prices of commodities skyrocketed. On September 21 and 22, 1944, certain parts of the City were bombed. During the air-raids and the days following, prices soared higher and higher with the sky as the limit. The price of rice rose to ₱4,000 a cavan; a ganta of corn cost ₱120; and a coconut, ₱10.

On the night of September 29, 1944, representatives of the Bureau of Investigation, accompanied by Japanese soldiers, confiscated hoarded rice in the City. Subsequently, President Laurel issued Proclamation No. 31 ordering that five days from October 2, 1944, all rice in excess of one-half sack for every Manila resident should be surrendered to the BIBA and that after the period so fixed, a house-to-house search might be done again to confiscate excess hoarded rice and penalize the holders thereof according to law.

As a result of such drastic action and use of the "iron hand" by the government, the price of rice immediately dropped to ₱2,000 a cavan. The prices of corn and other foodstuffs also dropped.

The foregoing facts merely go to prove that all the appeals, concessions and solicitude of the government for the welfare of the people were nothing to, and had no effect whatsoever on the heartless hoarders of rice and

other foodstuffs, and on the unscrupulous profiteers whose only god is Mammon. The norm of conduct of these human sharks seems to be wholly based on selfishness and cupidity so that they do not mind if the majority of their countrymen perish, provided they can survive and live in comfort even at the expense of the latter. The hoarders and profiteers are the veritable enemies of public peace and order; their pernicious acts are but the manifestations of their disloyalty to their own people and to the Republic which protects their very lives and those of their children.

So, in his extemporaneous speech over the radio on the evening of October 4, 1944, President Laurel made a stirring appeal to the people, touched their hearts with his eloquence, so to speak, especially those of the profiteers, and reminded them that all the Filipinos are brothers and for this reason, we should love and help each other and should "survive together or perish together in the present crisis". After all, what is the moral value of money and wealth?

So long as the man at the helm of the Republic of the Philippines is one who shares in the privations of his people; so long as our President is one who feels what we feel and suffers what we suffer, we should not lose hope. We must always bear in mind that our economic problems are but temporary in nature; they can be solved satisfactorily in due time, but not immediately under the present circumstances.

Let us therefore make sacrifices willingly in the meantime. We have every reason to hope for a rosy future. Let us hope and wait.

4. ERADICATION OF BRIBERY, ETC. In his inaugural address, President Laurel said that "government employment is neither a sinecure nor an instrument for self-enrichment, but a noble calling of service to the peo-

ple. Dishonesty, bribery and corruption have no place in the government and they shall be eradicated without quarter". In accordance with this policy, the National Assembly passed Act No. 65 which was approved on March 3, 1944. This Act imposes heavier penalties for crimes involving robbery, bribery, falsification, illegal exactions and transactions, malversation of public funds and infidelity, and violations of food control laws, when committed by private individuals or entities, including hoarding and profiteering.

To carry out the purposes contained in Ordinance No. 7 and Act No. 65, President Laurel appointed two judges and two special prosecutors of the new Courts of Special Criminal Jurisdiction. At their induction into office, the President said that "the service they can render to the Republic of the Philippines is to prosecute those persons who, though rich, want to grow richer at the expense of the masses of the people." Six violators of the foodstuffs control law were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and P10,000 fine each. Then the Bureau of Investigation was created by Executive Order No. 59 to purge all government offices. As a result of the activities of this new office, 42 officers and employees of the Food Administration office, 4 officers and 71 enlisted men of the Philippine Constabulary were dismissed during June, 1944. It is expected that the government can gradually get rid of the undesirable elements in the service and that only the honest and loyal ones will eventually remain therein.

5. HEALTH AND SANITATION. The fact that the people cannot be happy unless they enjoy good health, has not been overlooked by the newly-born Republic even during this time of stress and crisis. The government is ever vigilant and takes all the necessary steps to control diseases and to preserve health by educating the public on the needs of hygiene and

sanitation.

The Bureau of Health is entrusted with that work. Due to the strict enforcement of food inspection, and extensive campaign for the immunisation as well as for sanitary toilets in Manila and provinces the outbreak of epidemics has been averted. It may be mentioned that from October 15, 1943 to August 18, 1944, the Bureau of Health had given 4,000,000 injections against cholera, dysentery and typhoid, and 400,000 small pox vaccines. In different government hospitals, 300,000 persons were treated for various maladies, while 70,000 were treated for malaria.

The sanitary conditions of factories were looked into and improved.

6. PUBLIC WELFARE AND RELIEF. As in other countries, we have here a social class that should get the constant attention and help of the government. We refer to the orphaned and destitute children, delinquent minors, beggars, the aged and the invalids without anybody to take care of them. The Bureau of Public Welfare is in charge of the rehabilitation of these people. In addition, this office has established more than 120 puericulture centers in different places which look after the health of indigent mothers and children. It rounds up from time to time the poor and sick people roaming in the streets of the City and places them under the care of the government. On October 18, 1943, it gave relief to the poor. On October 21, same year, it distributed foodstuffs, clothes and medicine costing P2,000,000 to war widows and indigent folk. Executive Order No. 81 created the Veterans' Bureau, and the sum of P416,700 was set aside to be given as gifts to the veterans' war widows and orphans on the first anniversary of the Republic of the Philippines.

The Bureau of Public Welfare supervises more than 60 community kitchens which distribute food to approximately 90,000 old people and children. Likewise, it supervises the

so called "tinbulans". The said office extended help to about 660,000 people from October, 1943 to July, 1944.

The City Hall distributed cash gifts on July 6, 1944 to 1,200 war prisoners, war widows and orphans.

7. SCIENCE AND RESEARCH. This is an important phase in the program of the Republic. The Institute of Science and Technology has found cures and prevention of horse and chicken diseases. Scientific researches have so far produced good result, namely: calcium lactate out of coconut; absorbent cotton dewaxed from cotton refuse in cotton mills; vitamin A from the liver of fish; substitute for tikitiki; preservative of perishable food; reconditioning of worn-out batteries and foiled electric bulbs; anti-diphtheric serum; coconut milk for purgative; decoction of guava leaves for wounds and skin irritation; coconut oil mixed with mustard rub for cold and slight fever; dita bark for antifebrile drugs. The *Tribune* also published on October 6, 1944 the following achievements made by the National Research Center: making of hypochloride disinfectant, and of an effective germicide extracted from the berberine plant for the treatment of tropical ulcers and athlete's foot, and also the cottonisation of abaca fibers through biological method.

8. COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. Awakening from long lethargy, many Filipinos have been forced by circumstances to engage in retail trade and have by this time controlled the *sari-sari* business, while others are now big-scale merchants. Last year (1943), 1,613 industrial establishments were registered in the Bureau of Commerce and Industries, with a total capital of P16,440,000 and monthly output of P2,072,000; they hired 10,491 laborers. The said office has also under its supervision 14 buri- and sack-making projects.

9. EDUCATION. Even amidst troubles and anxiety, the government has

not neglected the development of the minds of the youth. The Appropriation Law for 1944 provides the sum of P10,021,230 for educational purposes. Attendance at least in the primary grades, according to the President, must be made compulsory for all children of school age in order to turn out not only good but also useful and capable citizens. The *Tribune* published on July 22, 1944 that approximately 800,000 children were expected to enroll and that 145 public and private schools would open in the City of Manila.

The Institute for Tagalog Teachers and the Institute for Nippongo were opened on January 4, 1944 in the Gregorio del Filar and San Andres Elementary School buildings, respectively.

Executive Order No. 5 created the National Education Board to make a study and recommend the necessary reforms in existing educational systems. Upon recommendation of this Board, Executive Order No. 10 was issued, requiring a license before a teacher can teach, and providing that only Filipinos can teach the national language, Philippine history and character education.

The President established on May 1, 1944 through Ordinance No. 18 a national youth brotherhood known as "Kabataan Pangarap ni Rizal" (KAPARIZ). Its principal purposes are to disseminate the teachings and examples of Dr. Jose Rizal and to develop in the Filipino youth "belief in God, love of country, honour and respect to parents, and such cardinal virtues as honesty, courtesy, truthfulness, charity, frugality, simplicity, and neighbourliness.

10. NATIONAL LANGUAGE. Executive Order No. 10 also provides for compulsory teaching of Tagalog in all schools. Proclamation No. 7 issued on December 24 to 30 of each year as "National Language Week." Through the efforts of the Director of the Institute of National Language, the Institute for Tagalog Instructors for

bureaus and offices of the National Government was opened on April 13, 1944. Another school known as the Institute of Government Employees was also opened on June 19, 1944 under the supervision of the Institute of National Language. The prescribed subjects were Tagalog Official Correspondence, Grammar and Composition.

Because of these training schools, the representatives of government bureaus and offices in Manila who have graduated therefrom may prepare now official correspondence in the national language as desired by the President.

11. EMPLOYEES AND LABORERS. The interest of the President in the welfare of government employees and laborers cannot be discounted. Due to the high cost of living, Act No. 23 was passed, providing bonuses for employees in the government service effective January 1, 1944. Executive Order No. 77 dated August 5, 1944 fixes the amount of P100 as the minimum monthly compensation in the employment of the government. Next is the living bonus of P20 a month for each minor child of an employee, effective June 1, 1944; then the 3-month bonuses for all employees. Lastly, Executive Order No. 69 provides payment to the heirs of slain constabulary men in line of duty.

Executive Order No. 76 fixes the wages of laborers in government projects at P5 and P10 a day.

Government officers and employees in the city some time ago received gifts of clothes from the President.

12. TRANSPORTATION This is also a difficult problem during emergency. On August 11, 1944, the Board of Information announced that under Act No. 50, the President organized the Land and Maritime Transportation Company known as LAMATRA, to manage land-water transportation and to bring foodstuffs to Manila from the provinces. During normal

times, it would mobilise commerce and industries throughout the Philippines.

13. OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC. President Laurel's administration program is extensive and important. But as he intimated in his inaugural address, "during the infancy of the Republic, we should not expect the immediate accomplishment in a single stroke of the vast and vital projects that I have outlined to guide my administration". Moreover, we are still in the field of battle. We cannot escape hardships and sacrifices arising from the war.

The National Assembly, pursuant to the provisions of section 13, Article III of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines granted emergency powers to the President. The President created the Council of State, the National Planning Board, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Flood Control Board, the Relief Committee, the Medicinal Plants Committee, the Central Bank of the Philippines, the Committee on Filipino Civic Code, the Civilian Protection Service, the Philippine Sugar Association, the Board of Information and the Economic Planning Board.

From promulgation of Ordinance No. 27 authorising the sale of lots comprised within the Buenavista Estate in Bulacan to bonafide occupants and tenants therein, the President fulfilled the long-cherished dream of the people who were born and have grown up there since childhood, to own their respective holdings. Inasmuch as the root-cause of troubles in that estate, centered on the disputes as to ownership, the decision of the government to sell the same solved wisely the problem of social unrest in Buenavista, thereby making Buenavista people contented and happy folk.

Finally, the evacuation of the Manila residents to the provinces, following the warning and advice of the administration is helping relieve to

a certain extent the precarious situation in the City, especially with respect to the food problem.

14. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE REPUBLIC. The achievements of the Republic during the first year of its existence clearly reflect the basic philosophy of our Constitution, to wit: that "the welfare of the people is its main purpose". From the be-

ginning up to the present, such has been the guiding principle of the administration in all its plans and projects. We must thank Providence that during this period of crisis, we have as our President Dr. Jose P. Laurel a man whose dream it has always been to translate Bonifacio's concept of sound government into reality and action.



Composite War Results —

Below is a tabulation of the composite war results achieved by the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy units from October 12 to December 4. The total includes the exploits in the Air Battle off Taiwan, the Naval Battle off the Philippines, the enemy losses in Leyte Gulf, and enemy craft blasted by units of the Special Attack Squadrons. Only figures announced by the communiques of the Imperial General Headquarters, Tokyo, are included in this tabulation.*

		Off Taiwan	Off P.I.	Total	Grand Total
Carriers	Sunk	10	17	27	
Aircraft	Damaged	5	26	31	58
Battleships	Sunk	2	4	6	
	Damaged	2	12	14	21
	Aground	0	1	1	
Cruisers	Sunk	3	19	22	
	Damaged	4	10	14	36
Battleships or Cruisers	Sunk	0	1	1	
	Damaged	0	3	3	4
Cruisers or Destroyers	Sunk	1	2	2	
	Damaged	0	7	7	10
Unidentified Warships	Sunk	0	0	0	
	Damaged	13	11	24	24
Destroyers	Sunk	0	12	12	
	Damaged	0	4	4	16
Transports	Sunk	0	23	23	
	Damaged	0	89	89	126
	Aground	0	4	4	
Tankers	Sunk	0	0	0	
	Damaged	0	1	1	1
Landing Ships and Barges	Sunk	0	19	19	
	Damaged	0	2	2	
	Sunk or Damaged	0	115	115	136
Motor Torpedo Boats	Sunk	0	7	7	
	Damaged	0	4	4	11
Grand Total		40	407	447	447