

Camarines Sur Craftsmen's Exhibition^{*}

By Hon. Manuel Lim

A FEW years ago a few outstanding leaders of our country led by our late President Ramon Mag-saysay, who have shown deep and sincere concern for the welfare of the common people living in the rural areas, decided to take definite steps for the promotion and development of the home industries program through our community schools. The aim is to utilize the people's idle hours between the harvesting and the planting season in the agricultural areas, to give employment to idle but skilled hands, to encourage the growth of dollar-producing industries in order to balance our economy, and to increase the earning capacity of the homes. The realization of these objectives will enable the homes to improve their standard of living and translate into action what the schools are teaching.

During the last two years there were many problems that our home industries program faced, and these problems are mostly concerned with vital questions pertaining to problems affecting financing, standardization, production, and marketing, of home industries products.

The basic problem is financing because without funds to capitalize the program, we cannot have the personnel and materials that are needed for production. It is estimated that an initial capital of P300,000.00 will be sufficient to give the program a good start. After two or three years of government financing, enough income will be accumulated to create a revolving fund that will put the program on its feet and will be able to broaden its scope on a national scale thereby creating self employment to thousands of people and giving them permanent sources of income.

Standardization is next in importance. The solution of this problem is partly solved through the creation of a section in the home industries division that has been working on research, designing, and standardization. With the necessary funds, this section can be enlarged and the problem of standardization can be solved. We already have some of our products standardized which can now be mass produced.

Mass production is of course dependent upon the two problems cited above. We have given training to

thousands of teachers, men, women, and out-of-school youths. When funds are available this trained manpower can be utilized effectively for mass production to meet market demands locally and abroad.

Marketing is another important problem. We should have an organization that will locate, stimulate, study trends, prices, and demands of local and foreign markets. This agency should work closely with producers of home industries products in order to attain the greatest possible efficiency in the production and marketing of such products.

In the solution of these problems, we have utilized the facilities available in our schools and communities and have taken a realistic approach to their solution. Since 1956, we have made reasonable and steady progress in every corner of the country. Public officials and citizens have set together to make plans to promote the home industries program; schoolmen, professionals and laymen shared their training and experiences to contribute to the realization of the objectives; and provincial and municipal governments have given portions of their income for home industries equipment, training programs, and research; Division and Vocational Superintendents have taken steps to organize and administer the program in their respective schools; and civic and non-profit organizations were organized in different parts of the country to assist in the promotion and development of home industries.

However, I must hasten to add, the problems do not defy solution. The Bureau of Public Schools, through its Home Industries Division, has fully recognized these difficulties and has been exploiting all local resources and potentials to place our home industries on a stable and profitable basis. The opening here of a Permanent Exhibition of Philippine Crafts, now sponsored by Camarines Sur, which is not a mere exhibition but rather a test of craft products turned out by each region, is certainly a significant step. This permanent exhibition gives one an idea of the production capacity of the craftsmen of each region, the variety and quality of its products, and the further possibilities for development. I do hope that this exhibition will be an effective instrument for the national patronization of local home industry

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products and for the building up of domestic and foreign markets for them.

I shall see to it that the five-year home industry program of the Department of Education, which has been responsible for the establishment of production centers in various regions and provinces of the country, where people could be trained in the production of various handicraft articles, is pursued with con-

tinued vigor and greater utilization of the resources at our command.

I understand that this exhibition is a cooperative enterprise jointly sponsored by the different social elements of Camarines Sur, — citizens, craftsmen, schoolmen, and government officials. All of you deserve our country's congratulations for you are realizing one of the goals of the program with facilities in the hands of our schools, communities and people.