

President Quezon and the State University

Because Manila is seductive, President Quezon talks of removing the state university to the country—where he also assumes more faculty research would be undertaken. Because undergraduates tend to be articulate, the presidential warning has gone out that their business is with their books and not with politics. Both these presidential ambitions seem destined to end in little, if anything at all. Both are inevitably subject to material adjustments. Yet both have some meat in them. While the state university should not be moved, a different secondary school ought to be founded in the country. While a normal modern social order will give youth its major attention, there is no short-cut to knowledge and the materials of wisdom—books and midnight oil can not be escaped.

If we take up research first, it will be found that Manila is the best of all places in the Islands for a great deal of it. The fact that the state university is in Manila is not a reason for the alleged poverty of research. This poverty is lamentable enough, and has two basic causes. Full professors along with their assistants carry too heavy a teaching load at the university. The burden leaves neither time nor endurance for research. In some cases, too, faculty members are lazy about research. This is not a reason for moving the university, but for using the pruning knife.

The faculty member who when asked to research counters with a demand for more compensation is not inspired by his work and invites separation from it.

But Manila is by long odds the place for the university so far as it relates to the professions. There is education merely in living in a city, weaklings who succumb are not strong when they come to town. To deplore urban temptations is to admit a native weakness of character, or at least to assert it, respecting Philippine youth. The admission is gratuitous, the assertion can not be sustained. Men and women who pursue the professions will pursue them most notably in Manila. They deserve the advantage of undergraduate years here, as a period of experience. Their colleagues who hang out shingles in the provinces deserve the same advantage, their towns will all benefit from the impressions the city gives them.

This will be more and more in point as Manila grows older and larger and more friendly toward the arts. Meanwhile she is a laboratory for all the professions: law, medicine and surgery, engineering, architecture, and what is offered for painting and music.

President Quezon finds the College of Agriculture and the School of Forestry well located at Los Baños at the foot of Mount Makiling and in the midst of the zoological and botanical reservation there. The student there who will be a farmer can experiment with crops at all altitudes, the one who will be a forester can study forests

from the valley to Makiling's misty summit. Nature provides these laboratories, and Manila provides hers for the urban professions.

The School of Fisheries should leave Manila and ensconce itself on some cove off one of the Islands' better fishing banks. There it should be found with schooners and every equipment essential for the scientific challenging of the sea for its commercial products. Schools should all be located where the challenge is greatest. Craft schools such as the Philippine School of Arts and Trades, and all the professional colleges are eminently well located in Manila.

But another school is needed, its place is in the country. It should be for the hosts of young Philippine men and women who have their cultural education in mind and aim at none of the professions. For those who later decide to pursue professions, it should be coordinated with the state university. This school could be the first of its type in the Islands, and might soon attract the world's favorable attention. Proposing it, the fundamental that youth will today be served whether elders yield gracefully or not, is kept vividly in mind; and along with it, President Quezon's conjecture that a great deal of so-called secondary education in the Philippines is getting nowhere.

There is great fault here. President Quezon has put his finger on the sore spot, but the drastic remedy he proposes would be dubious therapy.

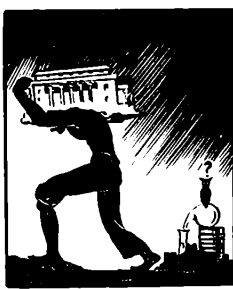
Briefly, it is not believed that freshmen, boys and girls matriculating at the universities, are ever recognized. They are not seen, only their highschool credentials are seen, and they as automatons holding them out for examination and approval. No one seems to see the Philippine youth, a woeful circumstance that is a curse of tutelage if ever there was one. If anyone at a university ever really saw these young folk, every course of study would be scrapped forthwith and secondary education would get down to business.

Let us take a look at these young men and women, or say just the men.

Who is your Philippine freshman?

He is of the Malay race, and wishes to know something of his own culture and something of that of the universe. He owns a perfectly bronzed skin. All his antecedents are those of lusty outdoor men, the dextrous masters of a hundred cunning arts. His forebears conquered limitless seas and the primeval tropical jungle. He inherits the courage of these astonishing achievements. He weighs around 120 pounds, is short, but not stocky. He has no fat on his lean flesh. Proud of this, he should be kept proud of it. His slender muscles affixed to light bone structure are graceful and flexible. Again he is secretly proud that this is so. It should

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President Quezon...

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always remain so, the man who fattens a Malay does a great race an ill turn.

This young Filipino's diet is startlingly lean, probably during infancy and early childhood it was not by any means what he should have had at all. But on this diet, defective as it may be, a diet that might be emended but should never be forsaken, he has made himself, for his weight and size, as strong a man as lives. The girl who comes up to college with this young man is much like him, abstemious and ambitious. Both dissemble their powers, a prompting of Malayan pride as well as Malayan manners. Both can therefore be bulldozed, up to a point, but neither should be. Both are virile. Large families, when they marry, hold no terrors for them. They face life classically. So it should be faced.

There are many attributes of culture that the university professor can not teach these young folk. His proper forte is not to destroy or disperse the native virtues they bring with them from their homes, whether these homes be the abode of wealth or poverty.

The young man can shoulder a picul of copra weighing a third more than he, and stow it forty feet up in a warehouse or carry it to the hold of a ship over a swaying bamboo trestle. He and a companion can do the same with a bale of Manila hemp weighing 240 pounds; more than their weights combined. They can do such work every day, dawn to sunset, on a diet of boiled rice, fish and salt, with a banana or two, or perhaps with some boiled greens in lieu of fish. This is the young candidate who presents himself at the state university for the arts and sciences. See him! Look him and the girl with him over, not stopping at their classroom

credentials. They, the boy and girl themselves, are your particular problem. Their credentials are identical with millions of such papers throughout the world, but their own like you will find nowhere else but here.

They are both of the Malay race, yet both have an admixture of Chinese blood and some other exotic blood too. Pent within them is a daring as yet never fully tried, and up to the present given small chance. They are your Philippine freshmen anxious to enroll in college.

Found their Alma Mater in the Liberal Arts in some mountains nearby Manila, within a canter of three or four miles from the sea. Make the campus huge, there is free public domain for it, bordered with their separate dormitories yet providing a great many activities, including classroom work, in common. Give them outdoor freedom, under supervision, indoor discipline of their own devising. Make the gymnasium huge, for all sorts of purposes including dancing and roller-skating: you have arms and legs to tutor, as well as minds. This school would offer everything not excluded by a warm climate all year round. Stars in its sports would make up World Olympic teams. Complexes and inhibitions would slough from its undergraduates altogether, since in other lands they would not encounter their superiors. Riddance of these deficiency emotions that provoke individual and national irascibility is a smart responsibility of secondary education.

These students would hike, ride, and, besides pursuing all manner of gymnasium and campus sports, patronize the sea the year round. As much military training could be introduced as authority required, for here would be a place for it. The school could not be very old before its teams scored honorably in the Olympics. Its year-around advantages could not but tell decisively. The

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Philippines could soon aspire to be host for the World Olympics, if snow and ice were not needed. At the school, of course, would rise a city. For this the land should not be sold, and all building should be to the school's architectural and structural requirements.

Bear in mind that highlands are a natural habitat of Filipinos. Antiquities of their ancient communities are found there, and it must have been brook mosquitoes transmitting malaria that drove them to the lowlands where the Spanish missionaries encountered them. That they still find the highlands home is attested by their capture of Baguio, a city their patronage and home-buying instinct have largely made. The true environment of a great Philippine college devoted to the Liberal Arts is some dulcet *cul-de-sac* in the mountains, near the sea. The professional schools are properly in Manila, as already argued. The earliest Philippine schools could not advantage themselves of a rustic environment inviting communion with nature and absorption in her mysteries. They sought the protection of the walled city. They were agencies of pacification, and in earliest times the boys in their dormitories were hostages more than they were students.

Of such traditions come the schools in town that ought to be in the country. This situation gives a special opportunity for the state, for the school here roughly outlined. The school should be within an hour or two from town by carry-all. It would take from town all students at the state university not lining up for the professions, and make its groves distinguished for the classics. President Quezon's desire to do things his own way is very much approved. Such pioneering confidence is encouraging. The school here suggested could be a part of it, the practical answer to the presidential demands—which in sum go beyond the point of complete realization.

Cultural ends can not be reached in town, that in the country are attainable. This speaks of course entirely by the book. Sociology is in town and only smatteringly in the country, but sociology is a pillar in the professions and superfluous to the gamut of the arts. Effort to grasp the cultural fundamentals goes largely to waste in Manila because the ambient is effusively tintured with the exotic. But in the country, how different things could be: a Filipino student under a Philippine tree with his Horace, and anon with his easel and brushes, sketching a Philippine landscape—all about him all the time, nothing but his own country, his own people. Young men and women who pursue the pure arts should bask in these natural advantages, it is almost a birthright. But they should not do so to escape evil, since they are not ascetics and would merit no education by the state if they were, but solely for the material benefit of an educative environment.

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