



IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

by PEDRO CASTILLO

The *Reader's Digest* for February 1947 contains an article entitled "How Georgia's Teachers Got a Raise" by Blake Clark. This one might tell the PPSTA a thing or two about strategy for social justice. Let us draw parallels:

1. Teacher George Thomas of Georgia resigned in order to earn six times more as a laborer in a railroad company. Many a Filipino teacher also prefers to stay out of this cul-de-sac called Philippine public-school teaching.

2. "The Principal and 12 of the 16 teachers at Conyers High School, were preparing to leave... In Harris County a one-room school saw five teachers come and go in as many months." Same here. Teacher turnover is high. Teachers do not give a dam if they quit, get absent, or go on leave.

3. "The increase which seemed necessary to keep Georgia teachers from quitting wholesale was staggering. Getting it seemed almost hopeless." That's what our Congressmen are thinking right now. They want to give a raise, but they can not see how the raises for teachers can be met by the government.

4. Pay increase of 50 percent would mean for Georgia taxpayers an additional \$12,500,000 — an unheard-of sum for a single raise. In the Philippines, raising the salaries of all teachers by P10 a month would mean at least P700,000 a year. Raising the salaries of teachers by 50% would mean something like P5,000,000 a year — also an unheard-of sum for a single raise.

5. "Editors pointed out that the schools already received nearly half of

every state tax dollars; there just weren't enough dollars." Same pessimistic cry around here just now.

6. "Collins and a committee of educators... were in the office of Governor Ellis Arnall, urging him to use the liquor funds to save the schools." Replied Arnall: "But, gentlemen... the heads of 21 other agencies are trying to get their hands on that money. There'll be only a trickle left for the teachers." Striking resemblance to local situation. Health, foreign affairs, labor strikes, peace and order, etc.— they all try to clutch at "that money." Education, which does not fight and grab, is conveniently slashed.

7. "Collins realized that his tactics were outmoded, that the only way he could get the money was through aroused public opinion." The PPSTA is inclined to believe in this. Wait and see.

8. "Thousands of underpaid teachers contributed \$2 each to finance a state-wide information campaign." Here, teachers are fast chipping in their P1 for the PPSTA. They know that if they can only get a P10 raise a month, that would mean that their yearly fee of P1 will have been paid 120 times over for the first year alone. They know that they stand to gain everything by joining.

9. "Collins set out to enlist the aid of businessmen, farmers, religious groups and parents. Leaders of these groups joined him in a six weeks' whirlwind campaign." This the PPSTA might do, too. It all depends upon the type of Executive Secretary the Association will choose. He will be the Collins of the Philippines.

10. Collins convinced Georgia businessmen that the exodus of educated people away from Georgia was damaging local business. As a result, "the state's 5000 Lions petitioned Governor Arnall to grant the 50 percent increase immediately." Our local businessmen might see likewise.

11. Next, Collins campaigned among farmers, "politically, one of the most important groups in Georgia." "You can't learn subjects like soil erosion, conservation and crop diversification from teachers who haven't gone further than the fifth grade." Neither can we expect education from ill-prepared teachers, mere high-school students without professional training.

12. "Collins appealed to fathers and mothers through the Parent-Teacher Association." 'Nearly half our children are being taught by uncertified teachers.' I just can't bring myself to send my seventh-grade child to a teacher who went no further than the fourth grade herself.' "As a result, a large proportion of 86,000 members of the PTA in Georgia wrote their local candidates for the legislature, telling in words straight from the heart why they wanted more pay for their children's teachers." PTA members all over the Philippines might take the hint and overwhelm even the toughest Congress.

13. "In April of last year, candidates for the legislature began their campaign speeches. 'Georgia occasionally misses a cotton harvest, but never a crop of children,' one opened, and he pledged himself to do his part to raise teachers' pay 50 percent." Already, many of our Congressmen have written letters of sympathy and have made promises of help.

14. "When the smoke of the July primary had cleared away, it was found that every one of Georgia's 205 state legislators who were to take their seats in January 1947 had pledged himself to grant the raise." Our 56,000 teachers and several million parents can see to it that this can happen here also.

15. "Governor Arnall, convinced that taxpayers demanded the increase, did not make teachers wait upon these campaign promises... He announced that teachers... would find the extra money in their pay envelopes. The governor kept his promise." President Roxas also made a promise: "I know of no more underpaid group of government employees that the teachers... I know of no more important function than theirs." There are signs at this writing that he intends to keep the promise.

16. "Today no child in Georgia is going untaught for lack of teachers." Here, it all depends upon the Executive Secretary which the PPSTA selects.

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How Congress can be persuaded that every adult citizen is willing to pay a nominal school tax of, say, fifty centavos just to ensure public education all depends upon how the PPSTA will handle its public relations. The nation's 56,851 teachers are rallying be-

hind the Association, and the Association is girding its loins for "an historic victory" similar to that one that happened in Georgia.

It can happen here. Let us wait and see.

WORDS OF
for the



COMFORT
little man

February 20, 1947

In working for the interest of the teachers, I have considered the sad plight of many a temporary teacher who has been in the service for as long as 10 to 15 years. And although they perform the same kind of patriotic service and shoulder the same degree of responsibility in the performance of their duties devoting most of their time to their profession, working more than 15 hours a day, even outside the classroom, this unhappy lot of people have been to date deprived of many benefits, rights, and privileges which would otherwise accrue to them if they were Civil Service eligibles.

(SGD.) TORIBIO PEREZ
Congressman
2nd District, Albay

February 20, 1947

Teacher's respectable profession lead in the honor roll of our progress and civilization. It has been dragged along to inattention and insufficiency for sometime now. We aim to standardize their pay and re-block their spirit for the educational patronage of our youth and return them to their usual decent call of duty. We seek to extend to them securities which will serve as impetus in their restless intellectual mission and to provide for them certain privileges which will enable them to exercise such without inequitable experiences that may arise in the future for their well-being.

(Sgd.) DATU MANALO MINDALANO
Congressman for Lanao

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P. M. CADSAWAN
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February 20, 1947

The approval of the educational and teachers' bills last session should speak well of the good faith and high regards of the Congressman towards the welfare of the Public School Teachers. This teachers' bill which seeks to standardize the salaries and give automatic increase has been recalled from the Senate by virtue of a resolution passed a few days ago precisely to improve same in connection with the proposed bills mentioned in your letter.

(SGD.) JOSE MENCIO
Congressman, 2nd District,
Mountain Province

February 19, 1947

I wish to inform you that I am in favor of all legislation towards the betterment of the teaching profession. I am fully aware of the hardships of the public school teachers and their group constitutes the underpaid employees of the government and because of this personal conviction you can count with my humble support on any measure or bill which is expected to be discussed on the floor of the House after our recess.

(SGD.) ANASTACIO AGAN
Congressman for Batanes

February 20, 1947

H. Bills Nos. 886 and 820 are social legislations in character tending to ameliorate the present plight of our public school teachers. I realize the pitiful situation of our public mentors and you can rest assured that I will support any bill in the House that would raise the standard and, especially, the basic salary of public school teachers.

(SGD.) PASCUAL BELTRAN
Congressman
3rd District, Pangasinan

I have at heart the interests of my fellow-teachers. I say fellow-teachers because I was a teacher myself way back in 1920.

(Sgd.) ADRIANO D. LOMUNTAD
Congressman
3rd District, Samar

February 19, 1947

I wish to assure you that I have committed myself in support of any movement designed to improve the lot of our public school teachers. They can count on my whole hearted support in Congress of all bills for their improvement.

(SGD.) TOMAS S. CLEMENTE
Congressman
2nd District, Sorsogon

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