

# "EL QUE NO LLORA..."

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It is sad but true that for many years there has been "hard feelings" between public school teachers and other public servants as well as the general public. This is especially true with those whose position and earning capacity are superior compared with the meager salaries of public school teachers. Both in public and private enterprises, teachers are often discriminated against and sometimes, in official and personal conversations, they are referred to as "mere teachers," underpaid, suffering from low standard of living and even privation. Such attitude of discrimination against so-called "mere teachers" common even among the responsible, intelligent and well-to-do people of all nationalities, forgetting the fact that these underprivileged servants of the government (as most of the critics call them) are the molders of the ethical character of the Filipino youth, including the critics and commentators themselves.

This condition of public school teachers is undeniable. This is particularly so with those teaching in the elementary schools whose basic monthly entrance salary is as low as P45.00, without hope of increase until they become civil service employees no matter how efficient they may be. Precluded by existing rules and regulations, the division superintendents of schools, and even the Director of Education, are not in a position to remedy this disquieting situation. Eventually the poor but hard-working teachers have to be contented with their salaries, and unless he has another means of livelihood it is next to impossible for him to maintain a desirable standard of living and to keep a high social standing in the community. Who is to blame for this? Will the division superintendent of schools or the Director of Education

be held officially responsible? The answer to the last question is "No," and the answer to the first one is "Congress." It is regretted that the writer is constrained to "talk" like this, but it is an undeniable fact that the law makers are the members of the Philippine Congress whose duty it should be to protect the teachers' welfare by enacting a law standardizing substantially the salaries of teacher so as to enable them to have a presentable front as loyal educators and dependable care-takers of the youth. Congressmen can very well see from all angles the imperative need of teachers. When the public needs schools for the education of the children and for the uplift of the country, teachers are imminently indispensable, no matter whether they are civil service employees or not, because the schools can not function without them. During elections the teachers are counted the most honest and most powerful group of intelligent voters to support those candidates whom they believe interested in the improvement of the country regardless of whether their (teachers') lot and welfare are taken care of. By chance, however, teachers heard speeches of some political campaigners, besides campaign letters that they received from a number of candidates, that legislations would be introduced by them the moment they were elected to Congress, promises which were not asked by the teachers; but it is regretted that after the elections they got nothing out of those promises, for those who enjoyed the wholehearted support of teachers have forgotten their promises and failed to fulfill their assurances to their loyal maestros.

The school administrators are fully aware of the perpetual critical conditions of public school teachers, but in spite

of their eagerness to provide their subordinates with adequate compensations, their good intentions do good only as far as the allocation of salaries based on the available funds allotted by the Philippine Congress. However, they are not prevented from submitting to the Philippine Congress for congressional and presidential action their recommendations for salary increases and other measures intended to improve the lot of teachers, but the approval of their recommendations alone seems remote. Therefore, we 57,000 public school teachers, must have a united strength and undivided determination to be militant. We have always been too timid and reluctant to

reveal to the law-making body our hardships as teachers; we have forgotten, it seems, the Spanish saying "El que no llora no mama." It is for all of us to declare together our desire to solve our economic and social strangulations and to back up anybody who can see our point of view. If we still fail after our earnest pleadings have been consummated, then it will be for us to hold our peace until the time comes again for us to meet our deceptive "liberators" in the booths of the next election precincts. I am sure we shall not forget. And we rely on the Philippine Educator to keep us reminded of our real friends.

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