

NAVAL GOVERNMENT OF GUAM
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
GUAM

SCHOOL CLOSING

June 22, 1918

The Governor spoke in substance as follows:

Another school year has now come to a close. I hope that all of you feel that you have accomplished something to the good.

Certainly the exercises just finished indicate that you have worked hard. They reflect credit on you and your teachers.

In all my talks I have tried to impress on you the object of education. The first object is to train the mind. The second object is to acquire some useful information. Both objects are important, but the first is more important.

You must expect to work and study all your lives, in order to be useful men and women. In this day and generation there is no place for idlers. If you have learned at school how to use your mind it will be easy hereafter to continue to acquire knowledge and information. The useful information you acquire at school is very limited. You must expect to add to it all the rest of your lives.

In your progress through school the thought sometimes comes to you, what am I going to do when I graduate? In the earlier classes you do not pause often to think about this. But your work in these classes will help you, whatever decision you reach later. As you get older you begin to think more of your future, especially when you get into the highschool. Among the highschool pupils the problem becomes serious.

And now let me say something about your selection. You wish to benefit yourselves of course. What is the greatest benefit? Mental content and a fair share of this world's goods. What will produce it? I will tell you first that the secret of content is in doing useful work.

In the old days people were divided into educated and uneducated. The gentlemen belonged to the former class. The latter class worked with their hands. This was a bad distinction. The latter class produced nearly everything of value, materially.

This condition has changed. Education is now free to all. Everybody can read and write and study and improve himself, whether he works with his hands or with his brain, or with both.

The brain is the main thing, whether applied to the so-called professions or to manual labor. As a matter of fact the professions are limited. Only a few at the top become distinguished. The rest barely make a living. For one successful professional man think of the army of clerks who never get anywhere.

With manual labor it is different. There is room for everybody. A good mechanic gets more pay than a good clerk. He adds more to the world's wealth.

Manual labor also leads to the industrial pursuits, as distinguished from the professions. The good workman who uses his brain soon becomes a foreman, and directs other men; and if he has it in him he goes to the top.

But the point is, the professional and clerical positions are limited and the average rewards are small; whereas the manual and industrial positions are unlimited and the rewards are large.

Dismiss from your minds the idea that manual labor is not gentlemanly. In the United States young men of the best families enter industrial pursuits at the bottom and work with their hands. Those who reach the top are those who deserve it, whether they start rich or poor.

Now to apply this to Guam: There are at present a few lawyers and clerks and traders and farmers and mechanics who are successful, but there are not many of them and they are not wealthy. The rest of the inhabitants are abjectly poor.

What is the trouble? The trouble is that the Island itself is poor. No one can be very well off when the Island is poor.

How can the Island be rich? There are no minerals of importance. There are no manufactures as yet. Manufactures depend on materials, imported or the products of the soil. The soil is all that there is in Guam. The soil is rich. The Island could be rich if the soil were cultivated. The soil is not now cultivated, except to a very limited extent.

Here lies the future of the Island. Cultivate all the fertile soil and the Island will be rich. Manufactures can then be started. The people will then be rich.

Many farmers are wanted. Go out on your ranches and live there. Cultivate all your ground. Bring in your products to market and sell them. Then buy more land and cultivate it. When it is all cultivated, and there are people enough on the Island to do it, the Island will be rich. Many valuable crops may then be exported. I mention only coffee and copra.

If you will do this faithfully you are bound to succeed. You will be able to acquire more land and hire laborers. You can build comfortable country houses, in pleasant surroundings. You will have your horses, and even motor cars. You will not want to come into town, except occasionally, as for instance Sundays for church, unless you have chapels in the country. There will also be schools in the country districts.

One reason that more land is not cultivated is that 60 per cent of the inhabitants of the Island live in Agana alone. Some of these have occupations in town, perhaps a fifth part. The rest of them make occasional trips to their ranches in bull carts, going and returning the same day, and spending two to ten hours on the road, time absolutely wasted; or else, and this is a very large part, they do nothing at all.

So I advise you to be farmers first, for your own good and the good of the Island. After this the industrial occupations promise most. The course in carpentry that has been established in the schools has proved very successful - under Mr. Holly. You will need wood. Save your trees, plant two others for each one cut down. I hope other courses may be established in time. Another industry is basketry, weaving, mat-making, lace-making. Courses in these subjects, inaugurated a year ago, have been very ably conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Ocampo. The Island possesses a wealth of material suitable for these purposes, hitherto all going to waste. This occupation is suitable for women and girls, as well as boys and men. It should bring in a considerable revenue when well inaugurated. Of the highschool graduates this year 67 per cent intend to take up carpentry and 33 per cent the work of machinist in some branch. This is a good showing.

But in the words of Mr. Bryan, "Farming is the best." You have the placards, with his eight reasons, posted in the school rooms. We may not agree with Mr. Bryan in all his ideas for the good of the world, but he is everlastingly right about farming. Here are his eight reasons:

1. Farming is the most independent way of living.
2. Less capital is required to start farming than to enter any other independent business.
3. All members of the family can participate in some way in the work of the farm.
4. Farm life is healthful.
5. Farming develops useful habits of industry and application.
6. The farm provides the most wholesome environment for growing children.
7. Farm life teaches the true philosophy that labor is honorable and worthy of reward.
8. The farmer is the most independent factor in our political life.

There is just one other subject I will mention before closing; it is the study of English. The exercises just finished show progress, but there is room for improvement. Not one word except English must be spoken in the schools. English conversations must take up a large part of the school hours. None of the rest counts if you do not learn how to speak English well. It will help you in all your future life. It is now the great world language and will become so more and more after the war.

Your thanks are due to the Head of Department of Education, to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and to your able corps of teachers who have worked without stint and given you of their best.

I now wish you the pleasantest sort of a vacation, which you have fully earned.
