



ESCUELA AGRICOLA PANAMERICANA
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS

MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

APRIL 1956. We are completing the selection of about 70 new students, who will come from eleven countries. About half are already on the campus. When we tackle this annual job, we naturally think of many factors (aside from agriculture itself) which stand out in the development of Escuela Agricola Panamericana.

When the school was opened in 1943 the idea was to educate poor boys, who without our scholarships would not have a chance to go beyond primary school. Then it occurred to us, Why refuse a good boy just because he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth? And would it not make for real democracy, would it not show that after all, what counts is ability and industry more than social position, if we brought together boys representing a cross section of tropical American society? The rich boys would be in the minority, and they would have no privileges not enjoyed by the poor boys.

It has worked. Some of our students have come here barefoot, but on the other hand we have had a student whose grandfather was President of a South American republic, whose great grandfather was President of the same republic, and whose second cousin was President of the same republic. This boy weighed about 200 lbs. He was as strong as an ox and he worked like a mule.

Those of us who have travelled realize that if it were not for getting your passport stamped and going through the customs house, it would oftentimes be pretty hard to know when you are passing from one country to another. The people in general look about the same. But prejudices, favorable and unfavorable, can be built upon weak foundations at times! We are interested in favorable prejudices, so it pleases us when one of our graduates, let us say he is from Salvador, says to a friend "Oh, I know the Venezuelans; they are fine people. My roommate at Escuela Agricola Panamericana was a Venezuelan."

And now for manual labor. When this school was founded, many people thought we might have trouble in getting the boys to do the various kinds of jobs which are necessary on a farm - cleaning the stables, feeding the pigs, and so on. We started with the idea, put into Spanish by our good friend Ciro Molina Garcés of Colombia, "Aquel que no supo hacer, jamás sabrá mandar" (He who has not learned how to do the job, can never boss the job). Admittedly, we have lost a few boys who just simply did not like manual labor - certainly not as much as five percent, and where in the world will you find a country with much less than five percent of its inhabitants congenitally averse to manual labor?

There are few jobs in connection with tropical agriculture as hard as cutting sugar cane. You are leaning down with a machete, where the breeze (if any) cannot reach you, and you sweat like a horse. But at the end of the day our boys go up to the Club, and over their refrescos exhibit the blisters on their hands and try to out-brag each other regarding the quantity of cane they have cut. And when we tried to make the rest of the job easier, by starting the boiling of sugar at 6 a.m. instead of 2 a.m., they came around and protested. No, it was a fine thing to show that you could get out of bed at 2 a.m., go down and light the fires and boil sugar!

Such spirit we believe, helps to make men.