



MONTHLY NEWS LETTER

MARCH 1954. The event of the month was our ninth Commencement, which took place on Saturday the 6th. How rapidly these Commencements follow one another! To us of the Administration it seems that the Monthly News Letters have to be done every week, and every month we have to prepare for a new graduation. To the students it probably seems ten years between matriculation and graduation (it is only three). During these years one has to study, one has to plant and grow vegetables, learn to propagate and grow fruit trees, plant and harvest field crops, milk cows, make butter and cheese, feed pigs, care for chickens, and a host of other things.

But to go back to the ninth Commencement: It was perhaps the best we have ever had. Fifty boys were given their diplomas. Nine of these boys were from Guatemala, six from Colombia, three from Cuba, seven from Nicaragua, five from El Salvador, two from Panama, three from Costa Rica, two from Ecuador, one from the Dominican Republic, and twelve from Honduras.

Event of the occasion was the presence of the Honorable Galo Plaza, ex-President of the Republic of Ecuador, who made the leading speech, in which he argued strongly for practical training in agriculture - the kind of training we are attempting to provide. His talk was given wide and favorable comment in the Central American press. He was followed by Doris Stone, speaking for our Board of Regents, who as usual received a warm ovation. Elías Serrano of Nicaragua delivered the farewell address for the Class of 1954 - the most numerous group which has been graduated since our first class, that of 1946.

On the platform during the graduation exercises, in addition to the speakers, were the President of Honduras, Dr. Juan Manuel Galvez; the Vice President, Don Julio Lozano; members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the government of Honduras, and Walter E. Turnbull, recently-retired Vice President of the United Fruit Company (which founded and supports this school). Nearly five hundred guests were entertained at luncheon, which was followed by the customary dance for the students and their girl friends.

When visitors were asked, "Why did you think this year's graduation was good?" several of them replied, "So many boys in the graduating class, and the speeches were so short!"

More than half of the fifty graduates have gone into government service in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Several will go to the United States later this year to continue their studies. In connection with the aims of this latter group, Dr. J. Wayne Reitz, Provost for Agriculture at the University of Florida, spent two days with us, discussing the close relationship which has developed between the University and this school.

We also had a visit from a very interesting group of teachers. These men are working at the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura y Ganadería near Managua, Nicaragua - a school which is making an enviable record. Incidentally, we wish to congratulate the Servicio Tecnico Agrícola de Nicaragua for turning out one of the most interesting Monthly News Letters which comes across our editorial desk. The thumb-nail sketches add greatly to the attractiveness of this little publication. Monthly News Letters seem to be growing in popularity here in tropical America. We believe they do a lot of good.

At the end of the month, we are engaged in selecting about 60 new students from about 600 applicants. The Director and his assistant, Amado Pelén, went to Salvador to work on this problem, since more applications are received from that country than from any other.