GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES OF INTEREST

Ocean Exploration

In the age of burgeoning science we know very little about what lies on the more than 100 million square miles of the deep ocean floor. But there is reason to suspect that the ocean floor is a treasure trove of natural resources.

The little that is known concerning resources on the seabeds and the ocean floor beyond the continental shelf is contained in a U. N. report now before Committee I, which is discussing the question of the peaceful uses of the seabed and the ocean floor.

According to this report, placer deposits of gold, iron, and titanium in the form of ilmenite, diamonds and other industrial minerals may be present in the depths near the mouths of major rivers. Petroleum may be present in some of the sedimentary deposits extending beyond the continental shelf. Manganese nodules have been found on the floors of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, and these contain higher admixtures of other important elements — notably cobalt, nickel, and copper — than similar nodules found in shallower waters. Phosphorites are found on various parts of the continental shelf, the continental slope, and submarine banks. Recently in the depths of the Red Sea metal-bearing muds have been found, rich in copper and zinc.

Unfortunately, formidable economic and technological obstacles stand between us and the wealth of the seabeds. Sheer economics usually dictate that the dryland deposits should be worked first. As the U. N. report makes clear, the first requirement today is more knowledge through research. The realm to be explored is so great, and our knowledge of it is now in such an early stage, that the task of research before us demands a worldwide effort.

Department of State, Foreign Policy Briefs, XVIII, 13 (December 16, 1968) Journal of Geography, Feb. 1969, No. 2.

Soy Beans

At nearly a billion bushels, U. S. soybean output in 1967 was up almost 400 percent from the average annual output during the 1940's.

Acreage, too, has risen over the years — from a range of 10 million to 12 million acres during 1942-49 to about 40 million acres last year.

The Corn Belt is still the center of soybean production in the United States.

Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, and Minnesota together accounted for about three-fifths of harvested acreage in 1967.

The Corn Belt's share of total acreage, however, has slipped since the late 1940's when the region had 86 percent of total harvested acreage.

Gaining in importance, meanwhile, were two South Central States — Arkansas and Mississippi.

In the past 20 years, soybean acreage in these States has risen 1,613 percent — from 0.4 million acres in 1945 - 49 to 6.2 million last year.

Arkansas and Mississippi together accounted for about 15 percent of total harvested U. S. soybean acreage in 1967.

Why the regional shift in soybean production?

In the Corn Belt, soybeans are a good No. 2 crop, but in most areas they just don't produce the income possible from corn. And soybean yields have not increased as fast as corn yields in recent years. Hence, in the heart of the Corn Belt, soybeans must play second fiddle.

In the South Central States, soybeans were introduced initially to take up the slack as cotton acreage declined in the 1950's. Though cotton acreage in these States has held fairly constant during the 1960's, soybean acreage has continued to increase. Obviously, once welcomed, soybeans stayed on to replace other crops in this area.

Introduction of new varieties which mature in a shorter growing season have helped soybeans move north, too.

Actually, Minnesota has expanded its soybean acreage faster than the Corn Belt States have, in general.

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, The Farm Index, November 1968. From Journal of Geography, Feb. 1969, No. 2.

Philippines Worst Drought in 100 Years

May 8, 1969 Manila Daily Bulletin reports the worst drought in the Philippines in 100 years. The Weather Bureau confirmed this worst condition the country is experiencing since the later part of 1968 and may continue to exist for the next two or three months more.

This worst phenomenon has taken heavy toll on the food crops such as rice, corn, and sugar crops. It is believed that due to this damage, the Philippines may not be able to fill its sugar quota to the United States this year.

The Weather Bureau Chief Climatologist, Mr. Eugenio B. Manalo, said, the drought was responsible for a tangible drop in electric power supply that had caused brownouts in the cities and the suburbs and the towns served by the National Power Corporation. Production of electricity had fallen due to rivers providing water to the hydroelectric power dams were fast drying up.

Damages estimated by the government Bureau of Agricultural Eonomics showed that losses from the rice crop would run up to about 10 million cavans of palay or one tenth of the total production of about 110 million cavans and that losses on the corn crop would run up to about two million cavans, or about one tenth of the estimated production of 27 million cavans this year.

Manalo attributed the drought to the shifting of the axis of high pressure areas from Central Communist China to the border of Soviet Russia and the inactivity of the Southeast and Northeast monsoons that bring heavy rainfall to the country. He said the country began to feel the effects of the drought in June last year. It is

further stressed that although some rain had falling over some parts of the country during the dry period, it did not fall in what he called "normal quantity". When the country does not receive the normal amount of rainfall, it goes through what is called a drought, whose intensity is measured by points.

If the rain falls less than two points below normal the country suffers from what the Weather Bureau calls a moderate drought. This occurs frequently when the drought falls three to more than four points below normal the country undergoes what is called either as severe or extreme drought.

This year, the drought has fallen more than four points below normal. Weather men said this was a condition of extreme drought, the worst the country has experienced in 100 years. The last time the country experienced a serious drought was in 1955 but it was not as intense as the one causing havoc to the country today. — D. Z. ROSELL

PGS Elects New Officers

The new members of the Council of Directors of the Philippine Geographical Society have been recently sworn into office by the Assistant Director, Bureau of Soils, as follows:

President	Prof. Dominador Z. Rosell
Vice-President	Prof. Domingo C. Salita
Secretary	Mr. Jose O. Jaug
Treasurer	Mrs. Aurora S. Tolentino
Directors	Mr. Arturo Alcaraz
	Mr. Juan A. Mariano
	Dr. Levy Trinidad

Prof. Dominador Z. Rosell has recently retired on his 63rd birthday. He had served the government service for 40 continuous years. His last position was supervising Scientist and Chief, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources Research, in the National Science Development Board. He is also presently President of the Philippine Association for the Advancement of Science; the Soil Science Society of the Philippines; VITAPHIL Inc. (Volunteer for Technical Assistance, Philippines Inc.); and AGRITECH (Agricultural and Technological Corporation). He is also Lecturer on Economic Geography at the Philippine Women's University, Manila.

Dr. Domingo C. Salita is a full-time Associate Professor of Geology and Geography at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. He is a registered civil and mining engineer, lawyer, geographer, and holder of a doctorate in economics.

Mr. Jose O. Jaug is Senior Scientist for Agricultural Research, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources Research, National Science Development Board; Executive Secretary of the National Committee on Geographical Sciences; Executive Secretary of the Advisory Committee of Agricultural Research both under the NSDB; Secretary of the Soil Science Society of the Philippines, and Chairman of the Division of Soil Geography of the SSSP; and Managing Editor, Philippine Geographical Journal.

Mrs. Aurora S. Tolentino is a chemist by profession and is holding the position of Technical Assistant in the DANRR, NSDB.

Mr. Arturo Alcaraz is Commissioner, Commission on Volcanology, Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines.

Mr. Juan A. Mariano is Chief, Division of Soil Survey, Bureau of Soil, DANR.

Dr. Levy Trinidad is Agricultural Economist of the Bureau of Agriculture Economics, DANR.

It is noted that the officers composing the Council of the Philippine Geographical Society are fully familiar with the works of the offices they respectively occupy. No doubt the members of the Society have full trust and confidence on them. It is expected that these officers will readily meet the challenge in the discharge of their respective duties with the aim at attaining the objectives of the Philippine Geographical Society with unselfish devotion.

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(To be continued)