

Speech Delivered by Mr. Justice Villamor Before the
New Lawyers Upon Their Admission to
the Bar on October 13, 1930

Through the courtesy of Mr. Justice Malcolm, who was in charge of the Bar examinations this year, I have been afforded this opportunity to welcome, on behalf of the Supreme Court, the newly admitted members of the Philippine Bar, and to express to them our most cordial congratulations on the success they have attained in the difficult trial which they have undergone. I wish to extend our felicitations also to the Universities and Colleges of the City for the happy result of their efforts in training these new lawyers, thus adding 141 to the 3476 attorneys at present scattered throughout the Archipelago. I also desire to express to the members of the Examining Committee the deep appreciation of this Court for the excellent services rendered by them in this year's Bar Examinations.

We want to honor the successful candidates of the 1930 examinations so that, by the solemn oath of office which they have just taken, they may keep steadily in view their duty to themselves, to their clients, to the courts, and to society at large. We want to honor the new members of the Bar, so that the diploma that they will soon receive will be regarded as a permanent call for continuous research and study and thus make them worthy recipients of the privileges incident to the noble profession they have chosen. And we want to honor the new lawyers on this solemn occasion, so that when they turn their eyes to the past, they will always remember that such an honor is a sacred trust constituted by the Court under their guardianship for the benefit of the people.

New members of the Philippine Bar: You have devoted yourselves to study year after year, full of hope and promise,— hereafter you are to be called upon to demonstrate your ability to put your knowledge into practice. Heretofore you have lived in a world of ideas, with its bright dreams and pleasant illusions. Hereafter you shall enter the world of reality with its tremendous struggles and painful disappointments. As far as we are able to judge from your personal records, you have been successful in completing your legal education. But will you be also successful as practising attorneys? This is the problem which you now have before you.

In the practice of your profession, you will undoubtedly be confronted with many legal questions difficult to solve. This should suggest to you the necessity of pursuing further studies, making constant acquisitions for your environment, thus increasing your cumulative stock of knowledge and experience. If, upon entering your profession, you achieve success, this should induce you to exert even greater efforts, for the path of life is full of adversities, though adversity is not without encouragement and hope. If, on the other hand, you should be confronted with difficulties at the beginning, you must not despair, but you should put forth all your energy and determination, for success is for those who, overcoming all obstacles, strive to reach the goal of victory.

It goes without saying that Justice is the motto which members of the legal profession should adopt. To be a successful lawyer it is essential that one be familiar with the letter and spirit of the law, the study of which should, therefore, be one's constant occupation. The habit of reading legal literature and the study of psychology as applied to litigants and witnesses will supplement your college education.

In your relations with the public, honesty and fairness should prevail. In determining your fees, consider not only the nature of the cause, but also the means of the client, thus making your services available to the poor. You must not stamp a prohibitive character on your fees, for, it is your duty to share the advantages of your higher education with the less fortunate. Otherwise, what profit will society derive from the progress in juridical science, if the people, for lack of means, are not able to hire the services of lawyers to protect their rights to life, liberty and property, and instead are forced to take up their litigations with a *procurador judicial* if not with a lieutenant of the barrio?

We suppose that not all of you will practice your legal profession, as is the case with the 3,476 attorneys throughout the Philippine Islands of whom only 1,473 are in actual practice, which bears out an approximate ratio of one lawyer for every 8,000 inhabitants. Undoubtedly, many of you will enter other fields of activity, such as commerce and agriculture. But, whatever may be your choice, your fine education and scholarly culture will place you in a better position to render valuable service to the community in which you live. Let it be remembered that the presence of good lawyers in a given province, even though they are not in actual practice, is in itself a blessing to the com-

munity. They exercise a moralizing influence; they are consulted concerning local issues; they are the public defenders of the poor; they serve to correct abuses, oppressions and injustices; and they constitute the advance guard of the rights of the people.