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DAVAO —

“LARGEST CITY
IN THE WORLD”

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"MOST OUTSTANDING CITY MAYOR OF THE YEAR"
For three successive years.

Bagobo Mayor, Voted "Outstanding Mayor of the Year" for Three Successive Years, Gives Davao City Model Administration.

DAVAO CITY in southern Mindanao has formally laid claim to the distinction of being the "largest city in the world," regardless of the prior claims of London, New York City and Tokyo in that order.

Davao City and its officials led by City Mayor Elias Baguio Lopez are ready to back up their claim with the necessary facts, figures and statistics. To begin with, the burgeoning Mindanao metropolis covers an area of some 244,005 hectares, according to City Press Secretary Angelo M. Abarico.

This figure, however, was disputed by Miss Gregoria Fernandez, who is in charge of statistical information, Bureau of the Census and Statistics. According to Miss Fernandez, Davao City has an area of only 221,125 hectares or 2,211.25 square kilometers. But even then 221,125 hectares are still a lot of real estate in any language.

The territorial jurisdiction of Davao City is so vast that it includes "virgin forests and unexplored areas," again according to City Press Secretary Abarico. The city acquired this huge territorial jurisdiction when the former municipality of Davao and the former municipal district of Guianga were incorporated into the city charter to become the new city of Davao.

Davao City is so enormous that it shares a common boundary with four provinces. It is bounded by the provinces of Davao del Norte to the north, Cotabato to the west, Davao del Sur to the south, and Davao Oriental to the east. The city shares Mt. Apo, the highest volcanic peak (9,787 feet) in the Philip-

ppines, with the provinces of Cotabato and Davao del Sur.

Davao City is the only city in the world where at least three logging companies are engaged in logging operations within the city limits. Some 10 logging companies and lumber concessionaires maintain offices in Davao City.

The Mindanao metropolis also boasts of the biggest number of banking institutions operating within its territorial boundaries, outside Manila. Besides the local banks, there are some 20 other banking institutions, including the regional branches of the Central Bank, the

Philippine National Bank, the Bank of the Philippine Islands, and others.

To further show that their proud claim to having the "largest city in the world" is not an idle one, Davao City officials are ready to prove that their city is bigger in area than the following cities and provinces:

MANILA has an area of only 3,828 hectares.

CEBU CITY has an area of 28,091 hectares.

QUEZON CITY, capital of the Philippines, has a total area of 16,615 hectares.



THE LOPEZ FAMILY
After 10 children, family planning.

AKLAN province has an area of 181,789 hectares.

BATANES has a total area of only 20,928 hectares.

BATAAN has a total area of 137,296 hectares.

CATANDUANES has an area of 151,148 hectares.

CAVITE has a total area of 128,755 hectares.

MARINDUQUE has an area of only 95,925 hectares.

RIZAL province has a total area of 185,961 hectares.

The above figures, supplied by Miss Fernandez of the Bureau of the Census and Statistics, prove conclusively that Davao City with an area of 221,125 hectares is bigger than any other city in the Philippines as well as many of our provinces. But most Davaoños never realized the enormous size of their city until some four years ago when a pure-blooded Bagobo by the name of Elias Baguio Lopez was elected city mayor.

It was not the first time that the Bagobo from the barrio of Baguio, Calinan, Davao City, was elected to a public office. In 1956, Lopez was elected No. 1 city councilor of Davao for a four-year term. In 1960, he was reelected to the same position. Lopez ran for vice-mayor in 1964 and was elected. But as city councilor and later as vice-mayor, Lopez could not give full play to his ambitious program of expansion for the city.

In 1968, he ran for city mayor against a reelectionist who had been holding the position for 12 years and won. It was only then that the Bagobo-turned-politician was able to give free rein to his expansion plans for Davao City.

As a starter, Lopez initiated negotiations for the acquisition by the city government of the Davao Metropolitan Waterworks System which had been under the administration of the National Waterworks and Sewerage Administration (Nawasa). Lopez told the FREE PRESS last week that ever since he could remember the city of Davao had a water shortage problem every year and he decided to do something about it.

Lopez soon found out that it was not a simple matter to acquire the rights over the city's waterworks system. The process required long and protracted negotiations. The negotiations started only with the provincial government of Davao at that time. In the middle of the nego-



IN BAGOBO ATTIRE
Lopez as a high school boy.



TABLE SCALE MODEL OF DAVAO CITY'S COMMUNITY SUBDIVISION PLAN
Mayor Lopez has ambitious plans for expansion.

tations, what used to be the single province of Davao was divided into three separate provinces, namely, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, and Davao del Sur.

After the negotiations were finally terminated, Davao City had to pay for its waterworks system not only to one provincial government but to each of the three Davao provinces. The city government shelled out the amount of P100,000 to each of the three Davao provinces. But City Mayor Lopez said that it was well worth the investment: the city had had no water problem since.

Simultaneously undertaken with the acquisition of the city's waterworks system were the following projects:

- Removal of sidewalk vendors;
- Relocation of squatters from public as well as private properties;
- Widening of city streets and construction of more feeder roads;
- Rehabilitation and improvement of city markets;
- Establishment of more barrio high schools and pre-fab schoolbuildings;
- Establishment of additional rural health centers;
- Expansion and beautification of Magsaysay Park, Davao City's equivalent of Manila's Luneta, which will soon be renamed Peoples' Park;
- Payment of overdue salary differentials of all city government employees; and

—Involvement of the citizenry, civic organizations, youth and student groups in all city projects beneficial to the general public.

After his first year in office as city mayor, Lopez won the coveted award of "Most Outstanding City Mayor of the Year" of the Presidential Arm for Community Development (PACD).

Lopez was likewise given the award of "Most Outstanding Mayor and Politico-Civic Leader of the Year" by the Far East Commentators. A similar award was given to him by the Latama Press Association.

Before his initial projects as city mayor were completed, Lopez launched addi-

tional public works and beautification projects:

—A five-year plan for the development of city highways that would connect all the 130 barrios which comprise Davao City;

—Development of tourist attractions like the Eden Bayabas, Mt. Apo, the Iñigo Fish Farm or Caroland Park and other places of interest;

—Construction of district emergency hospitals;

—Construction of district markets and fish landing sites; and

—A P3-million program for cementing all streets and thoroughfares in the city proper.

After his second year in office as Davao City mayor, Lopez was again presented with the award of the "Most Outstanding City Mayor of the Year" by the PACD. It was the second time he received such award in as many years for his achievements in community development in Davao City.

In addition, Mayor Lopez was award-

ed a one-month travel grant in the Foreign Visitors Program of the U.S. State Department. As an official guest of the U.S. government, Lopez and his wife, the former Alma Jalandoni Concepcion of Iloilo City, visited 15 American cities where he observed local government administration and conferred with their executives.

In the third year of his administration, Lopez followed up his many projects with renewed vigor and started new ones. He caused the construction of a city jail which Davao City could call its own. At the same time he called upon the provincial governments of the three Davao provinces to remove their respective provincial prisoners from the provincial jail which is still located in Davao City. When finally completed, the Davao City jail would cost about P400,000.

Lopez said he was not building a modern city jail in Davao City in anticipation of a crime wave in that area. He claimed that Davao City "has about the lowest if not the lowest crime rate among

the cities of the Philippines or anywhere in the world."

Mayor Lopez said that the Davao City police department has only a total of 430 police officers and men as against more than 3,000 in the Manila police department and more than 1,500 in the Quezon City police department.

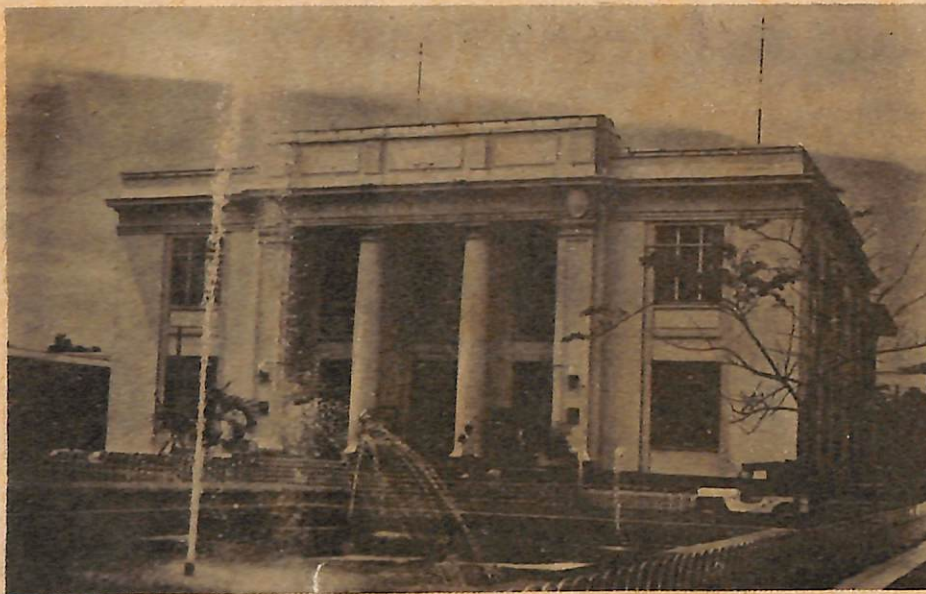
The Davao City mayor has started the ball rolling on what he calls a "Diversionary Superhighway." This project calls for the construction of another bridge across Davao River. He realized, he said, that Davao City was expanding rapidly and vehicular as well as pedestrian traffic across the only bridge in the city was becoming more and more heavily congested. The "Diversionary Highway" together with the projected bridge would cost somewhere around P33 million, according to the mayor.

Since his arrival from his visit to 15 American cities on a travel grant, Lopez has introduced the concept of decentralization in the city government of Davao. In view of the vastness of Davao City, the city mayor had designated deputy mayors and district officers to help him discharge the functions of government in the different districts of the city. Davao City is composed of the districts of Toril, Talomo, Tugbok, Baguio, Buhangin, Bunawan, Pakibato, and Calinan.

The 130 barrios which comprise Davao City are distributed among the eight districts as follows: Toril, 25 barrios; Talomo 14; Tugbok 17; Baguio 14; Bunawan 9; Buhangin 13; Pakibato 14; and Calinan 14.

The deputy mayors in the different districts of the city are assisted by other functionaries like district treasurers, district assessors, and all other district officers down to district market collectors. Because of this decentralization of powers, Mayor Lopez has made it standard practice to hold conferences with all department heads and other key officials of the city government every Monday.

In these conferences, all department heads and deputy mayors are required to render their individual reports to the city mayor. The reports must cover their



CITY HALL OF DAVAO CITY
Has an annual income of P15 million.

individual activities during the preceding week. After the individual reports have been rendered, an open forum follows and individual problems of each district is thoroughly threshed out. A pep talk by the city mayor usually caps the weekly conferences.

After his third year in office as Davao City mayor, Lopez was again presented with the award of the "Most Outstanding City Mayor of the Year" by the PACD. It was the third time he was presented with such an award in as many years for his achievements in the development of Davao City's rural areas.

Now in his fourth year as Davao City executive, Lopez has not slackened a bit in following up his many projects designed to justify the city's claim to being the "largest city in the world" in point of size. He wants to prove to all and sundry that the 244,005 hectares (221,125 hectares, according to Miss Fernandez of the Bureau of the Census and Statistics) covered by Davao City could be developed and made useful to all Davaoños.

Last week, Lopez was engrossed in his "Project Hope" designed to help the pre-school-aged children of the poor of Davao City. The project involves holding of

combination nursery and kindergarten classes for the under-privileged children of the city.

As of last week, a total of 38 classes are being conducted under the sponsorship of "Project Hope." The classes are being held in the district chapels which are not used for religious purposes except on Sundays. The classes are being handled by no less than holders of BSE (Bachelor of Science in Education) graduates. The teachers of "Project Hope" classes are paid their salaries out of the discretionary fund of the city mayor.

Lopez said that everything in "Project Hope" classes are provided free of charge except the chairs used by the children. The mayor has made it an absolute requirement for the father of each child to provide a chair for the exclusive use of his own child while attending classes.

Mrs. Lopez, the mayor's wife, has become very much involved in "Project Hope" not so much to help her husband as to encourage other women in the community to involve themselves in worthwhile community projects. Mrs. Lopez has taken steps to limit each class to 50 children after she noted that some classes

were composed of more than 60.

How are the finances of Davao City? "Splendid," Mayor Lopez answered readily.

He added:

"Davao City has an annual income of more than P15 million. This is more than the combined annual income of the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Davao del Sur. The city government does not have any financial problems like other cities in the Philippines today."

Who is this Bagobo mayor of the "largest city in the world" anyway?

The incumbent mayor of Davao City is Elias Baguio Lopez. He was born on February 28, 1930, in the barrio of Baguio, Calinan, Davao City. His mother is Layagan Baguio and his father is Dian-sig Lopez, both pure-blooded Bagobos. His grandfather on his mother's side was a great Bagobo chieftain known simply as Baguio.

As a boy, Lopez took and finished his elementary education at the Baguio Elementary School and later at the Davao Central Elementary School. He took his secondary education at the Davao City High School. Then he went to the Uni-

versity of the Philippines where he took his Bachelor of Laws (LL. B.) degree in 1955.

Lopez took and passed the bar the following year with flying colors.

As a student at the UP, Lopez was —
—Elected president of the UP Student Council in 1954-1955.

—Recipient of Vice-President Carlos P. Garcia's Medal for being the "Outstanding Student of the U.P." for 1954-55.

—SCAP Medal Awardee for being the "Outstanding Student Leader of the Year" for 1954-1955.

—Member, President Magsaysay's Consultative Council of Students in Malacañang in 1954-1955.

—Managing Editor, Philippine Collegian, U.P., 1954-1955.

Lopez is married to the former Alma Jalandoni Concepcion of Iloilo City by whom he has 10 children.

"After 10 children," Mayor Lopez said, "I hope to practice family planning."

As a pure-blooded Bagobo, Elias Baguio Lopez is proud of his noble heritage, let alone his being the incumbent mayor of the "largest city in the world."

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