

[Acts No. 4197, February 12, 1935]

AN ACT TO FACILITATE AND PROMOTE THE OCCUPATION AND CULTIVATION OF PUBLIC LAND AT PRESENT UNOCCUPIED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENT DISTRICTS, APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF ONE MILLION PESOS FOR SAID PURPOSE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Legislature assembled and by the authority of the same:

SECTION 1. Six months after the approval of this Act and from time to time thereafter, the Director of Lands, with the concurrence of the Directors of Forestry, Plant Industry, Health and Public Works, shall recommend to the Governor-General the reservation of tracts of public land of not less than three hundred hectares each, taking into consideration their conditions as regards fertility, accessibility, proximity to markets, and sanitation and hygiene, for the establishment of such settlement districts as may be approved by the Governor-General, subject to the conditions hereinafter specified.

SEC. 2. Immediately upon the reservation of a settlement district by the Governor-General, the Director of Lands shall order the same to be surveyed and subdivided into four-hectare lots. Upon receipt by the Governor-General of the certificate of the Director of Lands that a settlement district has been properly surveyed and subdivided into lots, the said Governor-General, by proclamation or executive order, shall declare said district open for settlement and shall turn the administration thereof over to the Secretary of Labor. The Secretary of Labor shall in due time announce and publish the lots surveyed in the vernacular of the province in which said districts are located, and in two newspapers, one in English and the other in Spanish, of general circulation in the Philippine Islands.

SEC. 3. Any citizen of the Philippine Islands or of the United States, over the age of twenty-one years, who has the other qualifications required by existing law of homestead applicants may apply to the Secretary of Labor for the occupation and cultivation of four lots of the land subdivided as provided in the next preceding section. When a reasonable number of applications has been received and the Secretary of Labor is satisfied with regard to the good faith of the applicants and their capacity to properly cultivate the land applied for, said Secretary shall address a request for the preparation for cultivation of said lots to the Director of Plant Industry, who shall order the lots included in the approved applications to be cleared and broken. As soon as the lots applied for have been cleared and broken or when an applicant is ready to take possession immediately, the Secretary of Labor shall place the applicants concerned in possession of said lots. The Secretary of Labor may, if he deems it necessary, provide for the construction of a suitable house for each applicant and his family, which houses shall be built at a cost not to exceed fifty pesos each, and he may also turn over to the applicants one carabao for each lot applied for, as well as the agricultural implements and the seeds required by the applicants for the first crop year, in the judgment of the Director of Plant Industry. The Secretary of Labor may also grant to each applicant a loan not to exceed two hundred pesos during the first year of occupation, which shall be paid in periodical monthly payments and shall be repaid beginning with the first harvest, with interest

at the rate of four per centum per annum: *Provided*, That naturalized citizens shall not be entitled to the benefits of this Act until five years after the date of their naturalization.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of Labor shall concentrate as many settlers as possible on contiguous land in a locality, organizing them into settlements in such manner that the Government aid and cooperative action between them shall be easiest and most effective. Whenever such settlements are founded, the Secretary of Labor may, if he should deem it advisable, set aside a suitable portion of the lands selected for townsites and the necessary area for roads, schools and other public necessities.

SEC. 5. The Secretary of Labor is authorized to appoint for each district or for two or more contiguous districts a superintendent with a salary not to exceed thirty-six hundred pesos per annum, and such additional personnel as may from time to time be approved by the Governor-General, on recommendation of the Secretary of Labor. When necessary, the Secretary of Labor may also provide for the construction of a house for the office and residence of the superintendent, at a cost not to exceed one hundred pesos.

SEC. 6. Each applicant shall state in his application: (a) that he binds himself to cultivate and plant not less than sixty per centum of the area of the land applied for and assigned to him, to such crops or products as the district superintendent, with the advice of the Director of Plant Industry, may prescribe; (b) that in case he should be declared incompetent to engage in agriculture, or for any other good reason, his application may be cancelled, in which case his rights and interest in the land assigned to him under the provisions hereof shall revert to the Government; (c) that he, his successors or assigns, will not sell, assign or transfer the land awarded to him to any person not a citizen of the Philippine Islands or the United States; and (d) that he will strictly comply with the regulations and by-laws of the settlement and with the orders and instructions issued from time to time by the superintendent thereof.

SEC. 7. Whenever in the judgment of the district superintendent the number of settlers in any of the settlement districts established hereunder warrants it, it shall be his duty to establish therein an organization whereby a cooperative spirit and action can be easily encouraged among the occupants and through which Government aid can be efficiently extended to them, and for this purpose he may, with the approval of the Secretary of Labor, purchase tractors, agricultural implements, draft animals and other equipment, to be used under his administration and control or under those of his authorized representative, for tilling the land and, in general, for carrying on such work as the individual settlers cannot carry on unaided, with their own resources and of their own initiative. In the performance of this duty, the settlement district superintendent shall to the greatest extent possible employ as laborers the settlers of the respective districts at such wages as are generally paid by agricultural concerns in the locality. In case the laborers are the settlers themselves, they shall be paid only the portion of their wages considered necessary for the subsistence of each and his family, and the balance shall be retained and credited as payment on their indebtedness to the settlement. The district superintendent shall debit each settler with the cost of the survey, clearing, and breaking of the land he occupies, including all expenses defrayed by the Government for the construction of his house, the cost of the carabaos and implements issued to him or purchased on his account, and the unpaid balance of