

F L O O D S

In a country, like the Philippines, where agriculture is the main source of revenue, the floods that damage or destroy important crops, are considered a national calamity. It was logical for the chroniclers to record, in the minutes of the town, the floods that in the recollection of the inhabitants of the region very likely would go down in history as having been the cause of destruction of the crops and of suffering and privation to the people. In many cases, the floods undoubtedly were the result of typhoons: in other cases, they were associated with prolonged rains, although not necessarily with strong winds. Many floods, the existence of which we know from other sources, have not been recorded in the minutes: on the other hand, many of the floods mentioned in the minutes by the various chroniclers are not described by other historians and therefore are a valuable addition to our knowledge of Philippine Hydrology.

Since the islands of our archipelago are relatively small, the rivers cannot be very long. Three hundred rivers of the length of the largest river in Luzon would not equal the length of the Yangtze, in China. Rivers perpendicular to the direction of the cordilleras cannot be very long, because a coastal plain more than 16 kilometers wide is an exception in the Philippines. (P) The courses of the rivers are controlled mainly by tectonic lines, folding and faulting. Among the larger rivers like ^{the} Agusan, Bicol, Abra and Cagayan, the predominance to flow northward is noticeable. With the exception of some streams in the mountains, the rivers are short, sluggish and shallow. In general two types of floods occur in the Philippines. To the first type belong the floods resulting from rainfall of short duration and