


SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 177

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANNY VILLAR

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE FOR THE RETURN TO THE
PHILIPPINES OF THE BALANGIGA BELLS WHICH WERE TAKEN BY THE US
TROOPS FROM THE TOWN OF BALANGIGA, PROVINCE OF SAMAR IN 1901

WHEREAS, the bells of Balangiga are church bells which used to be housed at the church in the coastal town of Balangiga, Province of Samar.

WHEREAS, the church bells of Balangiga had very special significance to a town of strong Catholic traditions as its ringing served as a call for the people to come to church to pray and worship God. However, the ringing of the bells of Balangiga in the early morning of 28 September 1901 took on a different import as it served to signal the people of Balangiga to fight for their freedom, thus the surprise attack against American soldiers by the Waray revolutionaries;

WHEREAS, on the day of the attack, Waray men dressed as pious women carrying little coffins, purportedly of children who had died of cholera, and armed with bolos, staged an attack against American soldiers belonging to the Charlie Company of the 9th US Infantry Regiment;

WHEREAS, the subsequent retaliation by American troops resulted in the killing of thousands of Filipinos in Samar, the majority of whom were civilians. The heavy-handed reprisal earned a court-martial for Gen. Jake Smith, who had ordered the killing of everyone ten (10) years old and over;


WHEREAS, after the fall of Balangiga to US troops, the latter took the bells of the Catholic church back to their home base at Fort Russell. The soldiers considered the bells as "war booty" and are displayed in a brick museum, where they remain to this day with a plaque that says the bells signaled the attack;

WHEREAS, the bells of Balangiga symbolizes an unforgettable memory to the Filipino people as it signifies courage to fight for freedom;

WHEREAS, legally, the Filipinos, more specifically the Diocese of Borongan, of which Balangiga is a parish, has a rightful stake to claim for the return of the Balangiga bells because the same is a property of the church;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES, to express its sense for the return of the Balangiga bells to the Philippines which were taken by the US Troops from the town of Balangiga, Province of Samar on 1901.

Adopted.


MANNY VILLAR
Senator