

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

S e n a t e

Pasay City

Journal

SESSION NO. 32

Monday, November 8, 2004

**THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 32
Monday, November 8, 2004

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:29 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Franklin M. Drilon, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile read the "Prayer for the Faithful" by St. Patrick:

May the strength of God guide us
May the power of God preserve us
May the wisdom of God instruct us
May the hand of God protect us;

May the way of God direct us
May the shield of God defend us
May the angels of God guard us
against the snares of the evil one;

May Christ be with us
May Christ be before us
May Christ be in us
Christ be over all;

May Thy grace, Lord, always be ours
This day, O Lord, and forevermore.
Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Jaranian Music and Arts Guild led the singing of the national anthem and thereafter rendered the song entitled *Ati*.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Secretary of the Senate, Oscar G. Yabes, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Angara, E. J.	Ejercito Estrada, J.
Arroyo, J. P.	Ejercito Estrada, L. L. P.
Cayetano, C. P. S.	Enrile, J. P.
Defensor Santiago, M.	Flavier, J. M.
Drilon, F. M.	Gordon, R. J.

Lacson, P. M.	Pimentel Jr., A. Q.
Lapid, M. L. M.	Recto, R. G.
Lim, A. S.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Magsaysay Jr., R. B.	Roxas, M.
Osmeña III, S. R.	Villar Jr., M. B.
Pangilinan, F. N.	

With 21 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.

Senator Biazon was on official mission.

Senator Madrigal was absent on account of illness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS

At this juncture, Senator Pangilinan acknowledged the presence of members of the following organizations:

- Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) headed by Gov. Ric Aumentado of Bohol;
- League of Provinces of the Philippines headed by Gov. Chavit Singson, Chairman of the Board, and Gov. Tommy Joso, Executive Vice President;
- League of Vice Governors of the Philippines headed by Vice Gov. Mon Lakbayin;
- Mayors League of Municipalities of the Philippines headed by Mayor Ramon Juico of Binalonan, Pangasinan;
- Mayors League of Cities of the Philippines headed by Mayor Jerry Triñas of Iloilo City;
- Philippine Councilors League headed by Councilor Carlo Fortuna of Mandaue City;

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- National Movement of Young Legislators headed by Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista of Quezon City;
- Lady Local Legislators League headed by Board Member Marianne Villegas of Dumaguete City; and,
- Pambansang Pederasyon ng Sangguniang Kabataan headed by Councilor Glenn Abuntuyan.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 3:39 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:41 p.m., the session was resumed.

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 31 and considered it approved.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR ARROYO

Senator Arroyo noted that the senators have new archfolders colored maroon, the U.P. color. He asked whether this was a way of pressuring the Senate into passing Senate Bill No. 1833 (U.P. Charter Bill).

Noting that the archfolders were light blue in the previous Congress, Senator Pangilinan replied that he welcomed the new color if it would help in the passage of the bill into law.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Secretary of the Senate read the following matters and the Chair made the corresponding referrals:

MESSAGES OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Letter of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo dated October 26, 2004, submitting to the Senate for its consideration and immediate concurrence, a certified true copy of the CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN and its Annexes which was signed by the Philippines on 5 September 2000.

To the Committee on Foreign Relations

Letter of Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dated November 2, 2004, certifying to the necessity of the immediate enactment of Senate Bill No. 1833, entitled

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES AS THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY,

to address the urgent need to update and revise the University of the Philippines' 96-year old charter to ensure its institutional flexibility and fiscal autonomy to effectively perform its function as a national university with distinct leadership in higher education and as the foremost graduate university on research and public service.

To the Committee on Rules

BILLS ON FIRST READING

Senate Bill No. 1844, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE RETIREMENT BENEFITS OF MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 1 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 910, AS AMENDED

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Introduced by Senator Pangilinan

To the Committees on Justice and Human Rights; Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Finance

Senate Bill No. 1845, entitled

THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLY ACT OF 2004

Introduced by Senator Jingo Ejerico Estrada

To the Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Senate Bill No. 1846, entitled

AN ACT CREATING A TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION, TO INVESTIGATE CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT, GRANT IMMUNITY AND REWARDS TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND RECOMMEND ACTION TO CURB GRAFT AND CORRUPTION, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION ACT OF 2004

Introduced by Senators Magsaysay Jr. and Serge Osmeña

To the Committees on Civil Service and Government Reorganization; and Finance

RESOLUTIONS

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 123, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) PROCUREMENT AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Introduced by Senator Biazon

To the Committees on National Defense and Security; and Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 124, entitled

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE DECLARATION OF YEAR 2005 AS YEAR OF MICROFINANCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Introduced by Senator Drilon

To the Committee on Rules

COMMUNICATION

Letter from Officer-in-Charge Armando L. Suratos of the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, submitting to the Senate the data on outstanding Philippine external debt as of 30 June 2004, as noted by the Monetary Board under its Resolution No. 1393 dated 23 September 2004.

To the Committees on Finance; and Economic Affairs

PRIVILEGE SPEECH OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

Availing himself of the privilege hour, Senator Pimentel delivered the following speech:

THE NORTH RAIL PROJECT: Development vs. People's Rights?

The North Rail is a multibillion peso project that is meant to help modernize the places it passes through or reaches.

Unfortunately, thousands of people now occupy not only the railroad tracks of the old railway that will still be used for the Project but also the space on both sides of the railway that is a part of the railroad right-of-way.

Sentiment in favor

Fortunately, though, the people whose shanties, lean-tos, houses or *sari-sari* stores that would be hit by the construction of the North Rail Project appear ready to accept it, although with worry-filled hearts.

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In general, their worry is that the government-announced relocation sites for them are not yet ready. Haunted by the specter of demolition, these people worry specifically about where their next meal would be coming from, the jobs that would be available to them, the schools where their children could continue with their studies. In short, they worry about the stability of their lives. And their worries echo the primal, anguished cry of the deprived around the world -- from the Yanomanis of the Rain Forests of the Amazon to the Dani tribe of Iryan Jaya to the Lumads of Mindanao -- "Why does government development take away from us even the little things that have helped us to survive in the past?" In brief, they ask, "For whose benefit is the railroad being constructed?"

Vice President's problem

The President has placed the burden of solving the matter in the hands of Vice President Noli de Castro. The local government units have thrown their support to the Project.

Last Friday, upon his invitation, I accompanied the Vice President in visiting the sites. There we met with the people and discussed possible solutions. It is a good thing that I went with the Vice President. For one thing, I saw firsthand his genuine concern for the people who are affected by the Project. For another, I also heard the commitment of mayors like Lito Sarmiento of San Jose del Monte City and Tito Oreta of Malabon City to help solve the problem. I also received information that Gov. Josie de la Cruz of Bulacan has set aside a relocation area for those who might be displaced by the Project within the province. Understandably, however, they are all constrained by limited local government funds. And lastly and more important, I heard firsthand the basic concerns of the people.

Thousands affected

While as of Friday last week, the National Housing Authority claims to have accommodated some 3,905 families in Towerville Resettlement Project in San Jose del Monte City, still about 1,872 families await relocation.

This bit of positive news is but a small part of the picture. It only speaks of one relocation area that is located in San Jose del Monte. City Mayor Sarmiento, however, discourages the suggestion that more families should be relocated there. He says that relocating so many families uprooted from elsewhere into his city will spawn so many problems and will strain the city's already meager resources. He, of course, has a point there.

For his part, the Mayor of Malabon City, Tito Oreta, has suggested a relocation site for the thousands in his jurisdiction who would need to be relocated because of the Project. The problem is that the place suggested by the mayor is partially a fishpond that still has to be purchased, filled up and developed before it is made fit as a relocation area.

NHA relocation costs

To give the Senate an idea of the costs involved in the relocation effort, let me share the following NHA data: (A) the relocatees may borrow through the NHA loans of P50 thousand each family to buy construction materials and pay for the labor needed to build their relocation houses. While unclear, it was also mentioned that they may use the money to go back to their respective provinces. They may also borrow P25 thousand for livelihood assistance; P700 for individual water connection; and P1200 for individual power connection. (B) The relocation lots are classified for socialized pricing as follows: (a) Social lots, P1500/sq.m., (but I am told that

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some are priced at P2100/sq.m.); (b) Economic lots (i), P1970; (ii), P2167 and (iii), P2200/sq m. Lots are normally 50 square meters in size.

Cooperatives needed

I am apprehensive, though, that the amounts offered as loans to the relocatees might go to naught unless these are properly supervised and perhaps coursed through cooperatives for their effective management and disbursement.

The intent of the Vice President, the governor and the mayors while good is not enough.

I guess the Vice President, no matter if he means well, just does not have the adequate means to do justice even to meet the simple needs of the people who are to be relocated. Neither have the local government officials whose names I have already mentioned.

People alarmed

In addition to their worry that the relocation sites -- although being rushed for completion -- are not yet really ready, the people are afraid that they might be evicted before the end of the year pursuant to the notices sent to them in writing by some government offices that do not seem to have coordinated their moves with the Vice President. Specifically, in Malolos, some 16,000 families are upset over the notice purportedly sent to them by the Philippine National Railroad Authority that whether they like it or not their houses would be demolished by the end of December. Happily, last Friday, in Barangay Bignay, Valenzuela City, the Vice President told Fr. Jose Dennis Espejo of the Commission on Service of the Diocese of Malolos, who represented the Bulacan-based prospective relocatees, that they need not worry because the notices were not authorized by his office.

Why the committee hearings

In view of the prevalent sense of unease among the people in the areas where the North Rail will pass, I suggest that the Senate Committees on Finance, Industry and Housing should come in and conduct the proper hearings to help the Vice President, the departments of the government and the LGUs concerned provide a responsible solution to the fundamental issues that surround the Project.

The Senate hearings will bring out facts about the Project that are hardly known to the people.

Are project costs true?

For instance, the hearings will give the Senate the opportunity to determine whether the costs of the project as revealed by NEDA are true.

- (1) Is it true that for Phase I of the North Rail Project covering roughly 32 kilometers from Caloocan to Bulacan, and then eventually to the Clark Economic Zone, the cost is something like \$503 million?
- (2) Is it true that of this amount, \$395.22 million will come from the China National Machinery and Equipment Corporation and the China Import and Export Bank? Our Bases Conversion Development Authority will reportedly shoulder \$107.8 million.
- (3) Is it true that of the amount of \$503 million, the actual construction cost is \$244.745 million leaving some \$258.26 million or roughly P14.47 billion to cover the costs of relocation?

If these figures are correct, then, there may be less causes, rather than more, for worry that the people concerned may

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not be properly relocated. There appears to be more than enough money to set up the relocation sites.

But precisely because there is a lot of money involved here, the Senate should adopt a supervisory role over the matter so that the Project is properly implemented and the rights of the people are properly protected.

Second look at policy

For another, the hearings would also enable the Senate to take a serious look at the propriety, if not the constitutionality, of the contracts that the Executive Department has been entering into that obligate the government to pay billions of dollars over several years to certain parties without as much as a by-your-leave being offered to the Congress. Should we not, as Senate, demand that congressional authority be first secured before agreements of the kind that we see here are entered into by the administration?

I submit that there is more than meets the eye here. And that it is only by our collective effort to promote the development of our country without sacrificing the rights of our people that we, as members of the Senate, can truly claim that we have any right to represent the nation in this Chamber.

Suggested Committees

I, therefore, call upon the three Committees of Finance, Housing and Local Government to conduct hearings, in aid of legislation, on the North Rail Project so that some dubious ramifications of this otherwise beneficial project may be discussed thoroughly and just solutions to the problems encountered by the government, the contractors and the people in the implementation of the Project may be provided.

Aside from taking a hard look at the financial and social costs of the Project, the hearings will also give the Senate a singular opportunity to coordinate the efforts of several government housing agencies that are all involved in the relocation of those affected by the Project. And, perhaps, by compelling them, by law, to organize themselves into one workable housing outfit, we eliminate the overlap of functions, lessen expenses, and even reduce the alphabet-soup acronyms that bureaucrats are wont to use simply to justify their existence.

Resource persons

And so I would like to suggest that the following be invited, serially, that means, not all of them at the same time so that we can give those who are invited ample opportunity to answer questions to the hearings that the proper Senate Committees will call:

1. The Vice President;
2. The Executive Secretary;
3. The Secretary of Finance;
4. The Secretary of Trade and Industry;
5. The Secretary of the NEDA;
6. The Heads of the NHA, the National Home Mutual Development Fund, the National Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation, the Housing Finance Guaranty Corporation, and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, and any other agency that may be involved in the funding and implementation of the project;
7. The Heads of the Manila-Clark Rapid Railways System;
8. The Head of the Philippine National Railroad Corporation;
9. The Most Senior Representative in Manila of the China National Machinery and Equipment Corporation;
10. The Most Senior Representative in Manila of the China Export-Import Bank;

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11. The Head of the National Land Registration Commission;
12. The Provincial Governor of Bulacan;
13. The Mayor of San Jose del Monte City;
14. The Mayor of Valenzuela City;
15. The Mayor of Malabon City;
16. The Mayor of Caloocan City;
17. Fr. Jose Dennis Espejo of the Commission on Service, Diocese of Bulacan;
18. The authorized representatives of the Bulacan Urban Poor Federation; the Malolos Urban Poor Association; the Guiguinto Urban Poor for Action; the *Kilusan ng Maralita sa Meycauayan*;
19. The authorized representatives of the various urban poor groups in Caloocan, San Jose del Monte City, Valenzuela City and Malabon City; and;
20. Other individuals or groups that the Committees may deem proper to invite.

If the Senate would do what we suggest, we might be able to show that promoting development projects is not necessarily incompatible with protecting the rights of our people. The senators, hopefully, will also be seen as helping put our nation in order without regard to our political persuasions.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ARROYO

At the outset, Senator Arroyo congratulated Senator Pimentel for raising a timely issue. Asked if the North Rail Project costs around US\$503 million or P28 billion, Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative, saying that the figure was provided by the NHA.

Noting that there has been much discussion about the lack of funds and the need to raise taxes in view thereof, Senator Arroyo asked if the government is embarking on a P28-billion project without much consultation. Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative, stating that eventually,

it is the people who would shoulder the cost of the North Rail Project. He stressed that it is but proper that the Executive department, especially the cabinet members, consult the Senate and the House of Representatives considering that they are proposing to bind the country to a huge undertaking that would eventually affect the lives of the present and future generations of Filipinos.

Senator Arroyo expressed concern that the government is embarking on a misplaced priority by rushing the North Rail Project that would be funded from borrowed money.

Queried on the need to rush the project, Senator Pimentel replied that while the North Rail Project is not a priority, the Executive department entered into a commitment and got itself into a bind because if it does not start the project soon, the Philippines would begin paying millions of pesos on penalties on the loan. He stressed that even before it embarked on borrowing such a huge amount of money, the Executive department should have identified possible problems that the project would encounter not the least of which is the relocation of the people who have occupied the railways in the belief that the government had already abandoned the site. He added that the squatters who are now referred to as the "informal sector" are being blamed for slowing down the implementation of the project.

Asked when the government entered into the agreements, Senator Pimentel stated that the agreements were signed during President Macapagal Arroyo's last state visit to China, more or less two months ago. He affirmed that the administration agreed to borrow US\$503 million.

As for the duration of the project, Senator Pimentel informed the Body that the present phase of the project is the laying of the railroad tracks from Caloocan to Malolos, Bulacan and another phase, the extension of the railroad tracks all the way to Clark, and possibly all the way to Pangasinan.

Asked on the importance of constructing a railroad system all the way to Malolos, Bulacan, Senator Pimentel replied that historically, railroads are seen throughout the world as a harbinger of development and progress.

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Senator Arroyo informed the Body that as the Chairman of the Finance Subcommittee on Transportation and Communications that considered the budget of the Philippine National Railway, his studies showed that no money is being allocated to PNR anymore because the government considers the railroad system as practically a dead industry. He explained that part of the reason why the Bicol region is a very depressed area is that its railroad system is outdated and in disrepair; it is a safety hazard; and there is no money to fix it.

Senator Arroyo questioned how the government could embark on a new 40-70 kilometer railway project when it does not even have the funds to fix the existing railway system. Moreover, he wondered at the sudden interest in developing the railway system when the Philippine National Railway, based on its studies, has given up the plan to rehabilitate the North railway system as the existing North highway system already serves the purpose.

Senator Pimentel agreed with Senator Arroyo that the priorities of the administration are misplaced. He pointed out that no specific studies support the decision to embark on the North Rail Project at this time, which is why he has asked the Senate committees to look into why the project was being prioritized as well as the cost of construction and its effect on the lives of about 20,000 families who are threatened with eviction.

Commending Senator Pimentel for raising the social problem related to the project, Senator Arroyo expressed concern over the government's plan to embark on another billion dollar debt at a time the Body has been discussing how to pay the national debt. To the suggestion that the debt issue be included in the proposed inquiry, Senator Pimentel agreed, adding that the country's ballooning external debt is one of the causes behind its continued underdevelopment. He expressed the view that the Executive department could have benefited from the advice of economic experts such as Senators Villar, Enrile, Angara and Arroyo if it had made any effort to consult them.

Acknowledging that he had heard that the \$503 million project was negotiated during President Macapagal Arroyo's state visit to China last August, Senator Arroyo expressed surprise at the speed of its realization. In closing, he expressed support for Senator Pimentel's proposal.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ANGARA

Noting that the North Rail Project was pegged at a cost of US\$503 million, Senator Angara asked whether Senator Pimentel had comparative figures on similar projects. Senator Pimentel replied in the negative, noting, however, that such projects would certainly be much lower than US\$503 million. Moreover, he disclosed an ongoing joke that because of the high project cost, the proposed railway must either be goldplated or made of solid gold.

At this point, Senator Osmeña volunteered the information that the cost per kilometer of the project is US\$16 million or P875 million.

In reaction, Senator Angara remarked that at the cost of US\$16 million or about P875 million per kilometer, the project could probably qualify for the records of "Ripley's Believe it Or Not."

Senator Angara observed that based on Senator Pimentel's calculation, US\$244.7 million of the US\$503 million would be the cost for the actual construction of the railway while US\$259 million would be allocated for the relocation of families affected by the project. Senator Pimentel expressed amazement at the huge amount allegedly being set aside for relocation when the government is still clueless as to the relocation site. He clarified that the 5,700 families mentioned in his speech would only cover the affected families in Valenzuela, San Jose del Monte and another town of Bulacan.

On the assumption that some 20,000 families would be affected by the project and an average of 50-square meter per family would be allotted, Senator Angara said that the relocation site would require about one million square meters or 100 hectares. He wondered how P15 billion

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could be spent for the relocation, considering that the average cost of land per square meter in Sta. Maria or San Jose, Bulacan is P50-P100 so the total relocation cost would amount to only P50 million for 100 hectares.

Asked to identify the project leader, Senator Pimentel replied that the director of the National Housing Authority is very much involved in the North Rail Project. Senator Angara pointed out that the project could be a classic example of clashing development plans and human rights which are not necessarily inconsistent concepts as arrangements can be made to harmonize development while satisfying human wants. However, he noted that the tilt is heavily in favor of those who will profit from the project through commissions.

In reply, Senator Pimentel admitted that such a possibility could not be ruled out. He pointed out that the huge US\$16 million per kilometer construction cost of railroad is way beyond the industrial cost; it is a good example of the dubious ramifications of the project.

Asked about the terms and conditions of the loan transaction, Senator Pimentel admitted that he had not seen the contract and that even the people he had talked with in the affected areas of Malolos, San Jose, Malabon and Valenzuela have no information to share.

At this juncture, the Chair informed the Body that newspaper advertisements had stated that the loan carries a 3% interest and is payable in 15 years. It assumed that the loan carries a sovereign guarantee.

In case the government defaults on the loan, Senator Angara expressed concern that the loan would eventually become an outstanding foreign debt of the country. Moreover, he observed that the 3% interest rate may seem low compared to rates on loans offered by commercial banks and investment houses to the government which are usually 5% above the London Interbank Overnight Rate (LIBOR) of 7%. However, given the nature of the project which will probably not pay back as quickly, and even setting aside the tremendous benefit it would give to the country, he opined that it would have been better for the

government to obtain a loan through a Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) which stands at only 1% for a period of 30 years. He asked why the government chose a short-term loan at a high 3% interest rate which is even backed up by a sovereign guarantee.

Senator Pimentel agreed to the observation that a loan from the ODA would be much more manageable. He decried the Executive department's cavalier treatment of Congress. He observed that the Executive department has entered into similar contracts and that the North Rail Project is probably the latest example of such contracts. He believed that Congress would have had much to say on the matter had the Executive department bothered to consult it instead of rushing pell-mell into the situation.

Senator Angara stressed that the two aspects of the project concern its expensive cost and the debt problem, and the bad precedent it sets. Such a pattern, he said, would make it difficult to realize Senator Pimentel's dream of having a railway system for Mindanao. Senator Pimentel agreed to the observation, as he noted that many cities in Mindanao are not yet connected with one another through a sufficient road network. For instance, he explained that a resident of Cagayan de Oro who plans to go to Zamboanga province, would rather take a flight to Cebu or to Manila and from either of these airports take a flight to Zamboanga.

Senator Pimentel stressed the importance of having a railroad network encircling the entire island of Mindanao so that the travel time for the goods that are intended for Mindanao would be much shorter. To date, he said, sending goods by ship to Davao, for instance, would require one to go around the Zamboanga Peninsula before he/she can get to Davao.

Senator Angara underscored the need for railways for the entire country in order to bring down the cost of transporting people and goods. But the North Rail is one excellent development project with dubious ramifications, he said.

On a related matter, Senator Angara informed the Body that the Iloilo International Airport was funded by the ODA which was extended

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for 40 years at an interest rate of .75% with 7-year grace period equivalent to half of the life of the North Rail loan. He asked whether the mobilization fund for the North Rail Project had been released and whether it was true that 5% or P1 billion had been released for relocation. Senator Pimentel replied that he himself wanted to find these out.

Senator Angara noted that there had been good development projects in the country which would have helped the Philippines develop as fast as Malaysia had those projects been pursued with care, prudence and integrity.

Replying to a query, Senator Pimentel believed that the problem began with the President who was not elected properly. He noted that there was also a certain cavalier attitude among some people in government, especially in the Executive branch, who believe that since the projects are in their turf, nobody has any right to question how they are going to implement them. He expressed the view that the government should not lose sight of the need to consult Congress and the people on these matters. Relative to contracts that are entered into by the government, he believed that it is high time that Congress enacted a law that will order the full implementation of a project once it is begun after it shall have been duly scrutinized by the proper officials of the government, as he noted that something is wrong in the manner with which the government has been handling contracts, as in the PIATCO case. He stressed that the government should give business a certain degree of stability and predictability of policies to attract investments and create job opportunities.

Senator Angara informed the Body that he just came back from an official trip to Germany upon the invitation of the German government. He recalled that when the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Bundestag welcomed the delegation, his first statement was, "The Philippines has been unfair to us," citing the PIATCO case. He said that while he was only a guest, he was forced to explain because at stake were the reputation and credibility of the country.

Senator Angara theorized that the Macapagal Arroyo administration, compared with the Ramos

and Estrada administrations, has the highest rate of borrowing and deficit because almost all of its financial managers are investment bankers who are only after a deal or a transaction, so much so that part of its mindset is to borrow without considering the deficit. He noted that the government has piled up foreign debts but has forgotten to mobilize domestic resources to be able to pay loan amortization.

Adverting to the list of the resource persons enumerated in the speech, Senator Angara believed there might be a need to subpoena the entire Cabinet to shed light on the North Rail Project.

In closing, Senator Angara reiterated that a railroad system is needed in the country as it will significantly lower the cost of transporting cargo and people, noting that the country's terrain is ideally suited. He pointed out that there are many sources of railroad financing—India, Czechoslovakia, and Japan, and he wondered why the government zeroed in on one country at so high a cost.

REMARKS OF SENATOR ARROYO

Senator Arroyo stated that dividing the P14 billion cost of relocation by 20,000 families would translate to P700,000 per squatter or person; since there are roughly 5,000 families and if there are about four persons to a family, each family will therefore get P2.7 million for the relocation. He commented that the squatters might as well get the P2.7 million and go. Whether or not it is a grossly immoral proposition remains to be seen during the inquiry, he said.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR ENRILE

At the outset, Senator Enrile calculated that the 32-kilometer railway system from Tutuban to Malolos at an aggregate amount of US\$503 million will cost P885,752,000 per kilometer at an exchange rate of P56.35 to \$1.00, while the per capita cost of relocating 20,000 families, each family with an average of five members per family will be P145,397 per capital or P727,000 per family.

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Replying to queries, Senator Pimentel admitted that he has no information about the repayment period of the \$503 million loan, or the type of loan.

Senator Enrile surmised that the loan might be a tied loan where the rolling stocks as well as the people who will execute the contract, including the engineering consultants, will be coming from the lending country.

On whether the 32-kilometer railroad project would mean a change of the gauge of the present tracks, Senator Pimentel said that his understanding was that the old tracks would be upgraded, but he has no information as to the track size and the type of rolling stocks that would be used. He said that the rolling stocks would accommodate both cargo and passengers.

At this juncture, the Senate President relinquished the Chair to Senator Gordon

Asked what cargo would be transported; if studies had been done as regards the volume of traffic from one point to another; the number of drivers, conductors and transportation operators who would be dislocated; and the fare structure for passengers and cargo, Senator Pimentel replied that precisely one of the serious criticisms is that no serious study was conducted to back up the project.

Senator Enrile inquired on the effect of the railroad project on the north diversion project, specifically the San Fernando-Olongapo road system. He opined that the project would be another white elephant like the Light Railway Transit systems in Metro Manila. He also asked who would shoulder the cost of stranded losses that would arise from the contract entered into by the Philippine government and the PNCC for the modernization of the north diversion road. Senator Pimentel replied that no study has been made addressing those issues.

On the matter of a comparative study between riding a bus and the railway system, Senator Pimentel said that bus rates are readily available; however, he doubted if the rail fare was taken into account when the government entered into said contract.

Senator Enrile expressed disappointment over the insufficient data, adding that it seemed to be another "spur-of-the-moment" government project.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR OSMEÑA

Senator Osmeña commended Senator Pimentel for bringing the issue of the railway project to the attention of the Body, noting that the land thereon is already owned by the PNR. As regards another project, he pointed out that the P300 million per kilometer Subic-Clark-Concepcion, Tarlac elevated highway is about to commence. He asked if a comparative study has been made between the cost of the MRT — built 6 to 10 years ago — and the P880 million per kilometer construction of the railway system at grade level. Replying in the negative, Senator Pimentel stated that the amounts involved in the North Rail Project were atrocious by their own terms.

Asked if he was aware that the MRT is being subsidized by the national government in the amount of P3 billion to P4 billion a year, Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative. He added that there have been proposals to increase the MRT fares to lessen the government subsidies.

Asked if he has seen studies so he could determine when the project would break-even or if it would require a certain amount of money in annual subsidies for a number of years, Senator Pimentel replied in the negative.

On whether any Member has seen the costing for capital expenditures, Senator Pimentel stated that he was not aware of any costing since the Executive Department did not consult the Senate.

Queried about the total liabilities such as the annual and the total payouts in the subsidies required to keep operations going for a certain number of years, Senator Pimentel replied that no figures were made available to the Members as he suggested that an investigation by the Senate would compel the production of these documents. *W*

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Senator Osmeña stated that during the discussion between Senator Angara and Senator Pimentel, he heard that the interest rate on the Yuan loan is 3%. He then informed the Body that the going rate in Japan is .75% for Yen loans, so that there is no real concession to speak of. He added that at present, the Yuan is being pressured to revalue by 50% so if that happens, the interest would become 4.5% to 5% on the Yuan loan. Senator Pimentel clarified that at the moment, the Chinese government is resisting any attempt to revalue the Yuan which would still depend on market forces. He added that if the Chinese revalue their money, this would mean a bigger obligation on the loan.

Senator Osmeña said that with the pressure that the U.S. and European Union have been putting on the Chinese to revalue the Yuan, it would not take long before they consider it, and this would be the right step for the U.S. because it has a huge trade deficit with China. He said that during hearings, he always tells resource persons that the duty of Congress is to enact laws appropriating money and enhancing revenues to cover appropriations. He added that it is incumbent upon the Members to ensure where the money goes and that it is being spent wisely. He said that anomalous contracts like the Casecan and PIATCO are being investigated because they are horrendously overpriced on their face value and he cautioned that the North Rail Project could be a similar case.

Agreeing with Senator Osmeña, Senator Pimentel stated that precisely, he raised the issue so that the proper committees would seriously look into the facts. He added that the Senate would be acting on behalf of the people to make sure that no anomalous transaction would be foisted upon them.

Senator Osmeña stated that although the President is authorized by the Constitution to sign and contract, on behalf of the Republic, foreign loans, these loans go into the National Treasury and may not be expended except when Congress approves an appropriation which must be tied to a particular project or service. He then invited Senator Pimentel to join him and the other senators in telling the Executive department

that unless the project is properly explained, no tax measure would be considered by the Senate.

Senator Pimentel agreed that the Senate has the power to prevent the wanton expense that is being saddled upon the people through contracts.

Asked if he was aware that Senator Villar, chairman of the Committee on Finance, has been conducting hearings on the debt cap which, in the U.S., is being used by Congress to control the Executive from overspending, Senator Pimentel replied in the affirmative. He said that he shares the view of Senator Osmeña that the Senate should not pass any tax measures unless the money would be put to good use.

Senator Osmeña suggested that the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications be included in the list of resource persons to be invited to the hearings since the PNR is an attached agency of the DOTC. Senator Pimentel agreed.

At this juncture, Senator Gordon relinquished the Chair to Senate President Pro Tempore Flavio.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR GORDON

At the outset, Senator Gordon stated that government projects like the PIATCO have been finished but its operations were put on hold. He also reminded the Body of the Bataan nuclear plant that was mothballed after it was built because of exposés and objections from some sectors. He added that interest rates keep piling up on these projects that were funded from loans.

Senator Gordon decried that the Philippines is perhaps the only country in the world that cannot finish a project that it has started as the NAIA Terminal III and Westinghouse, and even lose infrastructure like the railroad system. Stating that he supports the construction of railways to ease the gargantuan traffic problem that besets Metro Manila and to bring products to and from Subic, Clark and Manila, he agreed on the need for the national government to

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explain to the people what the project is all about even as he took note of the staggering cost.

Asked how many railroad tracks would be constructed, Senator Pimentel said that he did not have any knowledge on the nature of the railroad tracks that would be built. However, he believed that this information would emerge during the course of the investigation. At the moment, he said, some knowledgeable people had criticized the project for lack of a good feasibility study.

Senator Gordon affirmed that economic planners have hardly discussed the project with Congress. In fact, he said that one of the programs he proposed during the campaign period was the creation of a railroad system connecting General Santos to Davao and Davao to Cagayan de Oro to maximize the utilization of the airports and, more importantly, the container port that had been built in Cagayan de Oro which up to now has not developed its own market. Senator Pimentel disclosed that the container port is at a standstill because of a TRO issued against it.

Senator Gordon observed that everytime a big project is about to be finished, a congressional investigation ensues or a TRO is issued. He added that projects in the country were designed to fail for lack of attention because people who built them did not involve the people as part of the process of change. Senator Pimentel affirmed that there indeed was lack of consultation not only with the people directly affected by the project but even with the congressional leaders.

Replying to another query, Senator Pimentel stressed the need to relocate people at least 20 meters from the edge of the railroad tracks to prevent accidents. Senator Gordon disclosed that based on the 1996-2004 data provided by the Philippine National Railways, there had been 445 incidents involving people who were ran over or sideswiped and 467 cars that were rammed by trains. Senator Pimentel said that this is very possible considering that in the Malolos, Bulacan, 16,000 families have lived along the railroad tracks for years.

Noting that historical sites such as Intramuros are not spared from squatter problems, Senator Gordon asked whether the government has no

similar relocation plan for the so-called informal settlers along railroad tracks and under the bridges of Manila. Senator Pimentel said that he has noticed the same problems even in Balara, a government land filled with so many people who could not possibly be removed without causing riots.

Senator Gordon said that for many years government has totally neglected the planning of development sites for cities. He pointed out that people troop to the area where a project would be started in search of a job and end up living in that area whether or not they get jobs. He said that this practice has become a racket on the part of many of those who are working in the DPWH or the DOTC. Senator Pimentel said that there is also a racket among the poor in that some of those who live in the squatter areas are not the original claimants to the land.

Senator Gordon posited that the country has become poor because people take advantage of situations which the leadership does not care to address. He said that this has eventually caused the moral decay in values, in planning and in management. Senator Pimentel said that there are some leaders indeed who want a good portion of the people to remain poor to keep them perpetually indebted aside from the fact that they are a good source of votes.

Senator Gordon said that when he was dreaming of a Subic Bay Free Port in the 1980s, no one cared to listen except for a few because he was then an inexperienced mayor. He said that he filed a bill in pursuance of that vision where three airports and two seaports would be connected and the PEZA could convert 200 hectares of agricultural lands into export processing or tourist enterprise zones. He recalled that even as he agreed to the building of a highway between Clark and Subic which was very costly, he was against the plan to build a port in Subic because it already has piers.

Asked whether there are efforts to develop areas surrounding infrastructure such as ports and airports so that they could be utilized to the fullest, like building of factories or agricultural extension programs, Senator Pimentel replied in

the negative. He believed that up to this time, no such plans have been inputted even in the North Rail Project. Senator Gordon recalled that former Senator Benigno S. Aquino, in one of his speeches in the Chamber, referred to such projects as "pantheons" that were being built for the leaders of the country. He expressed high expectations that infrastructure would be built to uplift the lives of the poor, as he noted that the Senate has begun to act the way it should act to uplift the welfare of the people.

REFERRAL OF SPEECH TO COMMITTEES

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Chair referred the privilege speech of Senator Pimentel and the interpellations to the Committee on Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement as the primary committee, and to the Committees on Finance, and Local Government as the secondary committees.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 3 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1837

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body considered, on Second Reading, Senate Bill No. 1837 (Committee Report No. 3), entitled

AN ACT EXTENDING THE
UTILIZATION PERIOD OF
THE AGRICULTURAL
COMPETITIVENESS ENHANCE-
MENT FUND, AMENDING FOR
THIS PURPOSE SECTION 8 OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8178,
ENTITLED "AN ACT REPLACING
QUANTITATIVE IMPORT
RESTRICTIONS ON
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS,
EXCEPT RICE, WITH TARIFFS,
CREATING THE AGRICULTURAL
COMPETITIVENESS FUND" AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Pursuant to Section 67, Rule XXIII of the *Rules of the Senate*, with the permission of the Body, upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, only the title of the bill was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

The Chair recognized Senator Magsaysay for the sponsorship.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Magsaysay, the session was suspended.

It was 5:29 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:30 p.m., the session was resumed.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR MAGSAYSAY

In sponsoring Senate Bill No. 1837, Senator Magsaysay delivered the following speech:

I stand today to sponsor Senate Bill No. 1837 under Committee Report No. 3 which proposes to strengthen the implementation of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) by extending its lifespan to another ten years, up to 2016.

ACEF, which was created under Section 8 of Republic Act 8178, otherwise known as the Agricultural Tarrification Act enacted on March 28, 1996, replaced quantitative import restrictions on agricultural products, except rice, with tariffs in 1996. The law aims to cushion the impact of the lifting of quantitative restrictions (QRs) on affected sub-sectors of agriculture. ACEF was then given nine years to exist, commencing April 1996 to 2005.

Allow me to share the following information:

ACEF is basically a funding facility aimed at helping those engaged in agriculture, farmers and fisherfolk, compete in the continued trend of globalization. The fund is intended for post-harvest equipment and facilities, irrigation, farm-to-market roads, credit, research and development, other

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marketing infrastructure, provision of market information, re-training, extension services, and other forms of assistance and support to the agriculture sector.

Proceeds of the fund come from the importation of certain agricultural products which are allowed to enter the country under the Minimum Access Volume (MAV) category which the Philippines committed to the World Trade Organization under the General Agreement On Tariffs And Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round. The MAV is the quantity of specific agricultural products allowed to be imported with a lower (in-quota) tariff which the Philippines has committed to the World Trade Organization (WTO) until June 2005.

Despite efforts to implement the program on time, the fund has not been made fully available until 2000 due to the following reasons:

First – the ACEF was not utilized for the intended purpose as collections from 1996-1998 were used instead for national budgetary support.

Collections from 1996-1998 that should have accrued to the ACEF went to the general fund since the fund then had no special account where collections could be credited to. It was only in 1999, through the initiative of then chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, Senator Sergio Osmeña III, and also former Secretary of Agriculture, Sen. Ed J. Angara, when government has been able to assign a special account number for the ACEF which is Special Account No. 183 and;

Second – the Department of Budget and Management has imposed a maximum expenditure cap of P638 million for ACEF. A total of P5.11 billion has accrued to Fund

183 including P1.14 billion from the collection of sugar conversion fees in 1999. Of this amount, only P2.35 billion has already been allocated for projects approved for ACEF assistance. Again, only P2.19 billion of the total allocation has been released. The remaining balance of P157.3 million out of the P2.35 billion allocated amount has yet to be released by the DBM. Worse, this amount may not after all be made available for the remainder of the current year due to the expenditure ceiling imposed by DBM. It is a fact that agricultural activities are season-dependent. Timing of fund releases is critical to successfully implement any agricultural undertaking.

Notwithstanding the four unproductive years, from 1996 to 2000 when ACEF received nothing to reach its target objectives, it was able to assist a total of ninety-three (93) sugar projects and fifty-six (56) regular projects from the livestock, poultry, fruits and vegetables sub-sectors. Included is the nationwide multi-sectoral project with Quedancor that retails ACEF assistance fund to answer the immediate needs of small farmers.

As of June this year, the ACEF coffer still has P2.762 billion available funds to bankroll agricultural modernization projects. But like any limited program, ACEF will expire in March 2005 as provided for in RA 8178. MAV collections will also end by June 2005 thereby abolishing the in-quota/out-quota scheme. Should a ceiling be imposed anew in 2005, huge amounts of funds from the ACEF could remain untapped for projects until its termination in March 2005.

The ten-year extension this bill is proposing will enable the government to provide the farming, fisheries and agricultural sector the opportunity to strengthen their development activities and enhance their competitiveness. May I also add that this move is consistent with Republic Act 9281, which provides for the

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continuous funding support for Republic Act 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) which will likewise be in effect until 2015. We passed this law early this year.

To ensure the availability and sustainability of the ACEF, the bill likewise makes clear that all duties collected from the importation of agricultural products under the MAV mechanism, shall be credited to the special account, Fund 183 in the general fund of the National Treasury.

Under Section 2 of the proposed bill, the fund shall be released to the official depository bank, to which collections from repayments from loan beneficiaries including interests, if any, shall be credited. The Department of Agriculture and the official depository bank are therefore mandated to draw up a plan and such other mechanisms for fund utilization and sustainability.

We live today in an open trade regime where superior quality products at competitive prices are required to secure our target "market share" – a share critical for revenue generation to spur economic growth in an agricultural country like our country, the Philippines.

We therefore cannot afford to derail further development in the agriculture sector by cutting the funding support for the intended beneficiaries of ACEF. The availability of the ACEF will relieve farmers of securing other financial sources for their competitiveness enhancement activities.

Let us continue to provide the farming sector the safety nets to prepare for and readily face the impact of liberalized trade in the agriculture sector. Let us help our small and medium agriculture enterprises cope with the challenges of globalization. After all, the ACEF is a funding facility created to help modernize agriculture – a goal mandated by AFMA but which the national government has

fallen short to fully implement because of inadequate funding support. ACEF is a clear and present source to fill in this inadequacy.

We should be reminded that once upon a time, we gave our commitment to the farming society that we will provide all the necessary measures and safety nets to mitigate the negative effect of opening the agriculture market to the world. Through the enactment of this bill, we will send a positive signal to the country's enormous farming population that their government is keeping true to its promise.

For these reasons, I seek this Chamber's support for the immediate approval and enactment of this vital policy measure affecting our humble and hardworking partners in agriculture.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

Senator Pangilinan stated that upon the request of Senator Magsaysay, the interpellation on Senate Bill No. 1837 would be scheduled the following day, November 9, to give way to the interpellation on Senate Bill No. 1833.

At this juncture, Senator Pimentel questioned the practice of postponing the interpellation on speeches that were just delivered as he pointed out that it puts a lot of pressure on the senators who have to review the record. He added that Senator Enrile has been criticizing this procedure because of the tendency to lose focus when the interpellation is set days after the speech was delivered.

Senator Pangilinan said that he appreciates the observation of Senator Pimentel as he added that his manifestation was premised on his request to Senator Magsaysay who generously acceded. He noted that if Senator Pimentel wished to interpellate Senator Magsaysay, he could do so. He explained that before the sponsorship speech, he consulted Senator Enrile who agreed to interpellate the following day.

According to Senator Pimentel, he raised the issues not because he wanted to interpellate but because it is a matter of good practice. Further, he pointed out that this new procedure should not be tolerated because it creates unnecessary burden on some senators who have to recall what they said in their speeches. He noted that there seems to be an attempt to rush the approval of the U.P. Charter Bill but that should not derail a legitimate practice.

Senator Magsaysay stated that he would be willing to be interpellated the following day. He explained that he agreed to the request of Senator Pangilinan to continue the consideration of the U.P. Charter Bill.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1873

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended.

It was 5:46 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5:47 p.m., the session was resumed.

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2 ON SENATE BILL NO. 1833

(Continuation)

Upon motion of Senator Gordon, there being no objection, the Body resumed consideration, on Second Reading, of Senate Bill No. 1833 (Committee Report No. 2), entitled

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES AS THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Senator Gordon stated that the parliamentary status was still the period of interpellations.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Pangilinan, Sponsor of the measure.

REMARKS OF SENATOR ENRILE

At this juncture, Senator Enrile observed that the required number of senators were not present in the Session Hall. He said that he would not raise a question of quorum but warned that the members should be present during the deliberations, otherwise, he said, the Opposition would raise question. He said that it is an act of discourtesy for senators to be out of the Session Hall during the deliberations on the floor.

REMARKS OF SENATOR ROXAS

Senator Roxas stated that when he interpellated Senator Pangilinan last Wednesday, he requested numerous documents. He made reservation to continue his interpellation after the requested information shall have been made available.

INTERPELLATION OF SENATOR REVILLA

Senator Revilla expressed full support for the effort of the Senate to give U.P. full autonomy. He agreed with Senator Gordon that U.P. would be unable to pursue academic excellence without being financially capable.

Asked whether the term "sale" as used in Section 20 (c) contemplates the sale of any and all of the real and personal assets of the University, Senator Pangilinan said that the particular provision contemplates the disposal of selected assets of the University subject to the limitations in the deed of conveyance, deed of donation, or congressional act.

Asked why U.P. should be empowered to sell its assets in exceptional cases when it would be best to let it enter into joint ventures and long-term lease agreements where the University retains ownership of its properties, Senator Pangilinan replied that the provision gives U.P. enough leeway to utilize its assets as it may deem necessary in the fulfillment of its primary objective. However, he said that he would welcome any amendment

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that would safeguard the University from a Board that could be negligent in the exercise of its powers.

On whether a national university is conceived to be the country's most advanced institution of higher learning not only in teaching but also in research and development, Senator Pangilinan replied in the affirmative.

Asked what funds are being used by the University to finance its research and development programs, Senator Pangilinan said that these funds, including research grants, come from the government and the private sector.

Queried how the research outputs are utilized, Senator Pangilinan informed the Body that these are used for teaching, and policy formulation by government entities.

On whether some of the research projects are patented, Senator Pangilinan replied in the affirmative as he stated that the patents are owned by the University and those who conducted the research who share the royalties.

Under exceptional cases, asked whether the University can sell these research outputs such as a cutting-edge technology as assets, Senator Pangilinan replied in the affirmative, saying that the matter would be decided by the Board.

Senator Revilla expressed concern that because of financial constraints, a situation might arise where the Board could be forced to sell valuable assets, invoking Section 20 (c). He said that he was opposing the provision and recommended the deletion in the bill of any reference to the sale of any asset save that which is considered junk or scrap.

Senator Pangilinan said that he would welcome any amendment that would safeguard the University from any form of abuse in the sale of its assets.

Senator Revilla said that the measure should provide that any sale of University assets, particularly lands and intellectual properties, should require presidential consent or congressional approval as he believed that the fate of such

valuable assets should not be left in the hands of a few. He believed that there should be limitations on the "unlimited" power of the Board.

On another matter, Senator Revilla asked what safeguards are provided in the measure that would prevent a situation where U.P. would go bankrupt like some corporations as a result of certain financial transactions. Senator Pangilinan said that to put U.P. in the same league as bankrupt or losing government-owned and controlled corporations is unfair to the University because since its founding, U.P. has not been involved in any financial scandal. He pointed out that the U.P. leadership, from the very beginning, has seen to it that the University pursue its mandate effectively, and it has been very conscientious in ensuring that the resources allocated to the University were put to good use. He expressed hope that the Members would not lump U.P. together with government-owned and controlled corporations that have not been performing well.

In closing, Senator Revilla expressed his desire to be a coauthor of the measure.

REQUEST OF SENATOR GORDON

At this juncture, Senator Gordon requested U.P. to provide the Senate copies of its formal replies to the queries of Senators Roxas and Defensor Santiago to ensure that the interpellation on the bill would go smoothly in the succeeding days.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1833

Upon motion of Senator Gordon, there being no objection, the Body suspended consideration of the bill.

REMARKS OF SENATOR PANGILINAN

At this juncture, Senator Pangilinan informed the Body that U.P. had submitted its response to the requests of Senator Roxas.

Handwritten initials: N, PS


In addition, he said that the University had also forwarded to the Senate its reply to the questions of Senator Defensor Santiago and all the senators would be furnished with a copy of the same.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day.

It was 6:12 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


OSCAR G. YABES
Secretary of the Senate
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Approved on November 9, 2004