



# Congressional Record

PLENARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND REGULAR SESSION

## House of Representatives

Vol. 1

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

No. 5

### CALL TO ORDER

*At 4:00 p.m., Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn F. Garcia called the session to order.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is now called to order.

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Everyone will please rise for the singing of the Philippine National Anthem.

*Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Everyone will please remain standing for the Invocation to be led by our Representative from the Second District of Misamis Oriental, the Hon. Juliette T. Uy.

*Everybody remained standing for the Invocation.*

### INVOCATION

REP. UY (J.). Let us put ourselves in the presence of the Lord Almighty.

We live and continue to represent our respective and common constituents in interesting and challenging times.

In Mark, Chapter 4, Verse 22, the Lord Jesus said that “Whatever is hidden away will be brought out into the open; and whatever is covered up will be uncovered.”

Likewise, the Holy Father said that “if there is no truth, we have no compass and do not know where to go.” Governance and leadership, and life in general, can be rich and beautiful only if there is truth.

Thus, we all pray that Congress shall continue in pushing priority legislations in pursuit of uplifting the lives of our people and pursuing a lasting peace for the land based on the needs of the country. We all pray for continuing discernment and enlightenment as elected servants to continue working for the common good.

May the Holy Spirit of wisdom, justice and love guide us all. May Mother Mary and all the saints support

us. We all do this in the name of God and our country. Amen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

### ROLL CALL

REP. DEFENSOR. Good afternoon, Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, I move that we call the roll.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please call the roll.

*The Secretary General called the roll, and the result is as follows, per Journal No. 5, dated August 1, 2017:*

### PRESENT

Abaya	Antonio
Abayon	Aquino-Magsaysay
Abellanos	Aragones
Abu	Arbison
Abueg	Arenas
Acharon	Atienza
Acop	Aumentado
Acosta	Baguilat
Acosta-Alba	Banal
Adiong	Barbers
Advincula	Barzaga
Agarao	Bataoil
Aggabao	Batocabe
Aglipay-Villar	Bautista-Bandigan
Alejano	Belmonte (F.)
Almonte	Belmonte (J.C.)
Alvarez (F.)	Belmonte (R.)
Alvarez (P.)	Benitez
Amatong	Bernos
Angara-Castillo	Bertiz
Antonino	Biazon

Billones	Fernando	Mercado	Sambar
Biron	Ferrer (J.)	Mirasol	Santos-Recto
Bolilia	Ferrer (L.)	Montoro	Sarmiento (C.)
Bondoc	Ferriol-Pascual	Nieto	Sarmiento (E.M.)
Bordado	Floirendo	Noel	Savellano
Bravo (A.)	Flores	Nogralas (J.J.)	Sema
Bravo (M.V.)	Fortun	Nogralas (K.A.)	Siao
Brosas	Fortuno	Nolasco	Singson
Bulut-Begtang	Fuentebella	Nuñez-Malanyaon	Suansing (E.)
Calderon	Garbin	Oaminal	Suansing (H.)
Calixto-Rubiano	Garcia (G.)	Olivarez	Suarez
Caminero	Garcia (J.E.)	Ong (E.)	Sy-Alvarado
Campos	Garin (R.)	Ong (H.)	Tambunting
Canama	Garin (S.)	Ortega (P.)	Tan (A.)
Cari	Gasataya	Ortega (V.N.)	Tejada
Casilao	Geron	Pacquiao	Teves
Castelo	Go (A.C.)	Paduano	Tiangco
Castro (F.L.)	Go (M.)	Palma	Ting
Castro (F.H.)	Gomez	Pancho	Tinio
Catamco	Gonzaga	Panganiban	Tugna
Cayetano	Gonzales (A.P.)	Panotes	Tupas
Celeste	Gonzales (A.D.)	Papandayan	Turabin-Hataman
Cerafica	Gonzalez	Pichay	Ty
Cerilles	Gullas	Pimentel	Ungab
Chavez	Hernandez	Pineda	Unico
Co	Herrera-Dy	Plaza	Uy (J.)
Cojuangco	Hofer	Primicias-Agabas	Uy (R.)
Cortes	Javier	Radaza	Uybarreta
Cosalan	Kho	Ramos	Vargas
Crisologo	Khonghun	Relampagos	Vargas-Alfonso
Cua	Labadlabad	Revilla	Velarde
Cuaresma	Lacson	Roa-Puno	Velasco
Cueva	Lagman	Robes	Velasco-Catera
Dalipe	Lanete	Rocamora	Veloso
Datol	Laogan	Rodriguez (I.)	Villafuerte
Daza	Lazatin	Rodriguez (M.)	Villanueva
De Jesus	Lee	Roman	Villaraza-Suarez
De Venecia	Limkaichong	Romualdez	Villarica
De Vera	Lobregat	Romualdo	Villarín
Defensor	Lopez (B.)	Roque (H.)	Violago
Del Mar	Lopez (M.L.)	Roque (R.)	Yap (A.)
Del Rosario	Macapagal-Arroyo	Sacdalan	Yap (M.)
Deloso-Montalla	Maceda	Sagarbarria	Yap (V.)
Dimaporo (A.)	Madrona	Salceda	Yu
Dimaporo (M.K.)	Malapitan	Salo	Zarate
Durano	Manalo	Salon	Zubiri
Dy	Mangaoang		
Elago	Mangudadatu (S.)		
Enverga	Marcoleta		
Eriguel	Marcos		
Ermita-Buhain	Mariño		
Escudero	Marquez		
Espino	Martinez		
Estrella	Matugas		
Evardone	Mellana		
Fariñas	Mendoza		

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. The Speaker is present.

The roll call shows that 246 Members responded to the call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). With 246 Members present, the Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the Reference of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will please read the Reference of Business.

#### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

*The Secretary General read the following House Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, Communications and Committee Report, and the Deputy Speaker made the corresponding references:*

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

House Bill No. 6062, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) ROMBLON PROVINCIAL TRAINING CENTERS IN THE PROVINCE OF ROMBLON, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”

By Representative Madrona  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6063, entitled:

“AN ACT IN RECOGNITION OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL MANILA AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER, GRANTING CERTAIN PREROGATIVES CONDUCTIVE TO ITS GROWTH AND EXPANSION AS SUCH, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Escudero  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6064, entitled:

“AN ACT SEEKING TO ADJUST, UPDATE AND RATIONALIZE THE ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS OF THE PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL”

By Representative Belaro  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

House Bill No. 6066, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE OFFICE OF THE TOURISM OFFICER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS FROM THE PROVINCIAL, CITY, AND MUNICIPAL

LEVELS AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PERTINENT SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 7610, OR OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Ortega (V.N.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Bill No. 6067, entitled:

“AN ACT PROMOTING LEGAL AWARENESS AMONG THE YOUTH BY INCLUDING BASIC LAW EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULA OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Ortega (V.N.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE

House Bill No. 6068, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FREE EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF UNIFORMED PERSONNEL KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY”

By Representative Campos  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

House Bill No. 6069, entitled:

“AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SKYWAY IN DAVAO CITY”

By Representative Almario  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS

House Bill No. 6070, entitled:

“AN ACT REQUIRING ALL TELEVISION AND RADIO FACILITIES TO ALLOCATE AT LEAST FIVE (5) MINUTES A DAY FOR AIRTIME FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFOMERCIALS ON LAWS, SOCIAL WELFARE, PUBLIC SAFETY, PROCEDURES AND OTHER MATTERS OF NATIONAL INTEREST TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THEIR RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS CITIZENS OF THE COUNTRY AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF”

By Representative Mariño  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

House Bill No. 6071, entitled:

“AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TESDA PROVINCIAL TRAINING CENTER, MARINDUQUE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE”

By Representative Velasco  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO LOOK INTO THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY ON THE LIVES OF THE RURAL FOLKS AND ITS POTENTIAL AS AN ALTERNATIVE TOOL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS”

By Representative Mangaoang  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 6072, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RATIONALIZED SYSTEM OF TIMELY, EVIDENCE-BASED, AND PEOPLE-CENTRIC SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION OF CLASSES AND OPERATIONS OF WORKPLACES”

By Representative Belaro  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

House Resolution No. 1148, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE WORKFORCE TO PROVIDE LAW DEGREE SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS FOR PROSPECTIVE LAWYER POLICEMEN IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES”

By Representative Ortega (V.N.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND SAFETY

House Bill No. 6074, entitled:

“AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE INTEGRATED NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM”

By Representative Castelo  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON POPULATION AND FAMILY RELATIONS

House Resolution No. 1149, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO LOOK INTO THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY ON THE LIVES OF THE RURAL FOLKS AND ITS POTENTIAL AS AN ALTERNATIVE TOOL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS”

By Representatives Batocabe, Co and Garbin  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Bill No. 6075, entitled:

“AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER RESILIENCY AND DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

By Representative Salceda  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

House Resolution No. 1150, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING WARMEST FELICITATIONS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO ON ITS 103RD FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION”

By Representative Olivarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

RESOLUTIONS

House Resolution No. 1146, entitled:

“RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION BY THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE SETTLEMENT OFFER OF THE MIGHTY CORPORATION FOR THE TAX EVASION CASES FILED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE”

By Representative Suarez  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1151, entitled:

“A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE APPROPRIATE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSPORT NETWORK COMPANIES AND TRANSPORT NETWORK VEHICLE SERVICES”

By Representative Sarmiento (E.M.)  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

House Resolution No. 1147, entitled:

“RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE

## ADDITIONAL COAUTHORS

Rep. Juliette T. Uy for House Bill No. 263;  
 Rep. Lorna C. Silverio for House Bills No. 2068, 2909, 2910, 2945, 3005, 4084, 5201, and 5226, and House Resolution No. 786;  
 Reps. Michelle M. Antonio, Christopher V.P. De Venecia, Edwin C. Ong, Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong, Fernando V. Gonzalez, Jennifer Austria Barzaga, and Francisco Jose F. Matugas II for House Bill No. 5549;  
 Rep. Franz E. Alvarez for House Bill No. 5614;  
 Rep. Estrellita B. Suansing for House Bills No. 584, 1203, 5061, and 5433;  
 Rep. Manuel Monsour T. Del Rosario III for House Bills No. 2622, 2624, and 5549;  
 Rep. Orestes T. Salon for House Bill No. 4722;  
 Reps. Eleanor C. Bulut-Begtang and Alfred D. Vargas for House Bill No. 5811;  
 Rep. Micaela S. Violago for House Bills No. 5099, 5121, 5334, 5345, 5363, 5488, and 5811, and House Resolution No. 938;  
 Rep. Gus S. Tambunting for House Bills No. 2281 and 5631;  
 Rep. Jose Antonio “Kuya Jonathan” R. Sy-Alvarado for House Bills No. 4960, 4966, 5111, 5311, 5696, 5697, 5720, and 5843;  
 Rep. Jesus “Boying” F. Celeste for House Bill No. 2165;  
 Rep. Gwendolyn F. Garcia for House Bills No. 5018 and 5019;  
 Rep. Sol Aragon for House Bills No. 4349 and 5549;  
 Reps. Arnel M. Cerafica and Sandra Y. Eriguel, M.D. for House Bill No. 2531;  
 Rep. Gavini “Apol” C. Pancho for House Bill No. 4167;  
 Rep. Deogracias Victor “DV” B. Savellano for House Bill No. 4742;  
 Rep. Florencio T. Flores Jr., M.D. for House Bills No. 1858 and 1859;  
 Rep. Delphine Gan Lee for House Bill No. 3468;  
 Rep. Karlo Alexei B. Nograles for House Bills No. 4274, 4848, 4853, and 4856;  
 Reps. Isidro S. Rodriguez Jr. and Benjamin C. Agarao Jr. for House Bills No. 3468, 5164, and 5523; and  
 Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo for House Bill No. 695.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Letter dated June 19, 2017 of Atty. Usmin P. Diamel, Director IV, Regional Director, Regional Office No. XIII, Commission on Audit, furnishing copies of the Annual Audit Reports (AARs) for CY 2016

on the following Water Districts (WDs) under the audit jurisdiction of this Regional Office:

1. Butuan City Water District
2. Surigao Metropolitan Water District
3. Bayugan Water District
4. Bunawan Water District
5. San Francisco Water District
6. Sibagat Water District
7. Carmen Water District

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated June 21, 2017 of Catalino S. Cuy, Officer-in-Charge, DILG, Department of the Interior and Local Government, submitting a copy of the Statement of Allotments, Obligations and Balances (Current and Cont. Appropriations) of the Office of the Secretary, this Department, as of May 31, 2017, in compliance with Section 91 of the General Provisions of R.A. 10924 (FY 2017 GAA).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated June 22, 2017 of Thelma S. Timbol, State Auditor IV, Audit Team Leader, Commission on Audit, furnishing a copy of Annual Audit Report on the Ramon Magsaysay Technological University, Iba, Zambales for the year ended December 31, 2016.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated June 30, 2017 of Mary Grace D. Reyes, State Auditor III, Audit Team Leader, NGS SUCs and Other NGS Stand-Alone Agencies, Team R16-08, Commission on Audit, furnishing copies of the Annual Audit Report (AAR) for CY 2016 on the following agencies:

1. Carlos A. Hilado Memorial State College (CHMSC), Talisay City, Negros Occidental.
2. Northern Negros State College of Science and Technology (NONESCOST), Sagay City, Negros Occidental.

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated July 3, 2017 of Madonna S. Atencion, State Auditor IV, Audit Team Leader, Office of the Auditor, Commission on Audit, furnishing a copy of the 2016 Annual Audit Report on the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Letter dated July 4, 2017 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, furnishing copies of the 2016 Annual Audit Reports on 8 national government agencies:

1. Department of the Interior and Local Government
2. National Police Commission
3. Bureau of Fire Protection

4. General Headquarters – Armed Forces of the Philippines
5. Philippine Army
6. Philippine Navy
7. Philippine Air Force
8. Bureau of Corrections

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
A P P R O P R I A T I O N S

Letter dated July 6, 2017 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, furnishing copies of the CY 2016 audit reports on the results of audit of the accounts and operations of 26 Government-Owned or Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) in the National Capital Region enumerated in the attached list:

1. AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS) (CY 2015-2016)
2. Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank of the Philippines (AAIIBP) (CY 2015-2016)
3. Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSoP) (CY 2015-2016)
4. Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA)
5. Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM)
6. Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP)
7. DBP Data Center, Inc. (DCI)
8. Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP)
9. DISC Contractors, Builders and General Services, Inc. (DISC)
10. Duty Free Philippines Corporation (DFPC)
11. Human Settlements Development Corporation (HSDC)
12. Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA)
13. LBP Leasing and Finance Corporation (LLFC) (CY 2015-2016)
14. National Dairy Authority (NDA)
15. National Livelihood Development Corporation (NLDC) (CY 2015-2016)
16. Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF)
17. Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)
18. PEA Tollway Corporation (PEATC)
19. People's Television Network, Inc. (PTNI)
20. Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC)
21. Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA)
22. Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC)
23. Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC)
24. Philippine Mining Development Corporation (PMDC)

25. Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA)
26. Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR)

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
A P P R O P R I A T I O N S

Letter dated July 13, 2017 of Joyce E. Martir, State Auditor III, OIC-Audit Team Leader, Regional Office No. XVI, Commission on Audit, furnishing a copy of the transmitted Calendar Year 2016 Annual Audit Report on the Central Philippines State University, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N  
A P P R O P R I A T I O N S

Letters dated July 20, 2017 of Roger E. Dino, Deputy Director, Office of the General Counsel and Legal Services, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, furnishing the House of Representatives with duly certified and authenticated BSP issuances, to wit:

1. Circular No. 966 dated 11 July 2017;
2. Circular Letter No. CL-2017-042 dated 7 July 2017;
3. Circular Letter No. CL-2017-043 dated 11 July 2017;
4. Circular Letter No. CL-2017-044 dated 12 July 2017;
5. Memorandum No. M-2017-019 dated 9 June 2017;
6. Memorandum No. M-2017-021 dated 12 July 2017; and
7. Memorandum No. M-2017-022 dated 12 July 2017.

T O T H E C O M M I T T E E O N B A N K S A N D  
F I N A N C I A L I N T E R M E D I A R I E S

Letter dated June 21, 2017 of Michael G. Aguinaldo, Chairperson, Commission on Audit, furnishing copies of the 2016 Annual Audit Reports and Management Letter on the following government agencies, pursuant to Section 4, Article IX-D of the Constitution of the Philippines.

- A. Annual Audit Reports
  1. Bureau of Communications Services
  2. Commission on the Filipino Language
  3. Commission on Filipinos Overseas
  4. Film Development Council of the Philippines
  5. Foreign Service Institute
  6. Governance Commission for GOCCs
  7. Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
  8. Movie and Television Review and Classification Board
  9. National Commission for Culture and the Arts
  10. National Intelligence Coordinating Agency
  11. National Printing Office
  12. National Security Council

- 13. National Youth Commission
  - 14. Presidential Management Staff
  - 15. Philippine Commission on Women
  - 16. Philippine Competition Commission
  - 17. Presidential Broadcast Staff-RTVM
  - 18. Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
  - 19. Technical Cooperation Council of the Philippines
  - 20. UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines
  - B. Management Letter
    - 1. Optical Media Board
- TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report by the Committee on Revision of Laws (Committee Report No. 332), re H.B. No. 6084, entitled:

“AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 16 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF NAVOTAS IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY”

recommending its approval in substitution of House Bill No. 945

Sponsors: Representative Primicias-Agabas and Tiangco

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, we have been informed by the plenary secretariat that they inadvertently have left out as present in today’s session the Members of the House of Representatives who are attending meetings of the Commission on Appointments. So, in accordance with Section 71 of our Rules, and I will read the pertinent section:

Attendance in Sessions. - x x x While the House is in session, the following shall be deemed present:

x x x

- b. Members who are attending meetings of:
  - b.1. The Commission on Appointments; x x x

There is an ongoing meeting of the Commission on Appointments. They have submitted to the plenary secretariat the Members who are present there. I move that now we correct our attendance to reflect the presence in the session of those who are attending the meeting of the Commission on Appointments, and I ask

the secretariat now for the new number of those who answered the roll call, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General is directed to correct the attendance of Members and hereby give us the new number of Representatives present.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Mme. Speaker, in view of the attendance of the Members in the Commission on Appointments, the roll call shows that 258 Members are deemed present.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). With 258 Members present, the Chair, again, declares a quorum.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up items in our Calendar of Business.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5799  
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5799, contained in Committee Report No. 283, as reported out by the Committee on Natural Resources.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.\*

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

*With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5799, entitled: AN ACT REVERTING FISH PONDS WHICH HAVE BEEN UNUTILIZED OR ABANDONED FOR A PERIOD OF THREE

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

YEARS TO FOREST LANDS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 43 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 705 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE REVISED FORESTRY REFORM CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, to sponsor the measure, we have here today the distinguished Gentleman or the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, the Hon. Arnel U. Ty. I move that the Gentleman be recognized to sponsor the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Arnel U. Ty is recognized.

REP. TY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, it is the desire of the distinguished Chairman to have the Explanatory Note of the Bill considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. TY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

The Sponsor is now ready to accept any questions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, may we recognize the Gentleman from BUHAY, the Hon. Jose “Lito” L. Atienza, for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, the Hon. Lito Atienza, is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, we are taking advantage of this opportunity to allow the Chairman of the Committee sponsoring the measure to enlighten

us some more on the benefits of this amendment that he is seeking to liberalize further the law covering land conversion from agricultural to disposable and alienable, commercial, residential; from fisheries to agriculture, and so on and so forth. Kung puwede lang ay ipaliwanag pa niya kung ano ang benepisyong nitong ating pinag-uusapang amendment.

REP. TY. Salamat po, G. Atienza, Mme. Speaker.

Ang isinasabatas po sa ngayon ay House Bill No. 5799, under Committee Report No. 283, reverting fish ponds which have been unutilized or abandoned for a period of three years to forestlands, amending for the purpose Section 43 of Presidential Decree No. 705. Ang akin lang pong gusto baguhin ay ito pong under sa Section 43, sapagkat under paragraph 3 of Section 43 ay kailangan pa maghintay ng limang taon bago po ito ibalik as forestland or mangrove, sapagkat kapag ito po ay nabigyan ng award ng fishpond lease agreement sa isa pong nag-apply, at kung ito po ay napabayaan niya at hindi na po ginagamit ay kailangan pa natin maghintay ng limang taon upang ito po ay maibalik sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Habang ito po ay isang fishpond, ito po ay nasa Bureau of Fisheries at nakikita po namin na marami na pong mga cancelled fishpond lease agreement at saka mga abandoned fishpond lease agreement ang sa kasalukuyan ay naghihintay lamang ho ng limang taon upang ito po ay maibalik as forestland.

In fact, mayroon po tayong datos na galing sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources na sa 91,000 ektaryang nabigyan ng fishpond lease agreement, 8,900 ang kanselado na at naghihintay na lamang po ng limang taon. Mayroon din po namang abandoned na halos 2,300 na ganoon din po—naghihintay po na ito ay maibalik sa pagiging mangrove or forestland.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, ang nabanggit po ng ating kagalang-galang na Rep. Arnel U. Ty ay iyong praktikalidad ng paggamit ng lupa. Sabi nga niya, it is defined as fishpond pero hindi ginagamit kaya sa tingin po nitong batas ay mas makabubuti kung ilalagay na natin as forestland. We can expect in the next measure that the people, in asking for this amendment, later on, will move for the conversion of the agricultural or forestland to one with a disposable and alienable character so that it may be disposed to interested parties.

At this point in time in our national food situation, hindi po ba totoo na ang kailangan natin ngayon ay more fishponds, more opportunities for the fisherfolk, more investments in fish and aquaculture development so that the supply of fish in our blessed archipelago—where aquaculture should feed all of us easily and probably, the rest of the world if we put more efforts in giving fishpond owners all the support that they need. If they

are indeed deserted and unused today, one of the main reasons for this, Mme. Speaker, is that for a businessman to develop the fishpond and maintain the same, he will have to spend a lot of money, unlike if he will just occupy a portion of any waterbody like Laguna de Bay, Bulacan River, Pampanga River, Lake Lanao, Lake Cebu, Taal Lake, Sampaloc Lake, and all the other waterbodies in the country which are now appropriated by the unscrupulous businessmen to be their fishpond rather than develop their own fishpond as they earlier engaged in. Wala na po talagang nag-e-engage ngayon sa development ng fishpond dahil puwede po namang bakuran nila iyong karagatan, lawa, ilog at sapa, angkinin ang bahaging iyon, ay bakit naman po sila gagastos pa nga naman sa fishpond development?

Ang problema ngayon is how to curb this and put a stop to the further destruction of our waterbodies in the country. One wealth of the nation today would be our waterbodies and we are blessed with so much of these. Hindi po lahat ng bansa ay katulad natin. Mayroon tayong Manila Bay, mayroon tayong Laguna de Bay, mayroon tayong Pasig River, at nasa loob lamang ang mga ito ng Metro Manila. Outside, we have an abundance of waterbodies which can supply fish and not only that, can provide livelihood to the poorest sector of our society now which are the fisherfolk. Sila po ang pinakamahirap ngayon sa buong Pilipinas, iyong mga mangingisda, dahil wala na po silang mapangisdaan. Iyon po namang mga fishpond owners, nag-a-adjust lamang sila kung saan ang mas murang paraan para maipagpatuloy ang kanilang negosyo. Ngayon, luluwagan pa natin ang pagbabago ng lupa from fishpond to agricultural or forestland. Hindi po ba iyon ay nagbibigay daan sa isang napakalaking pagkakamali na nagaganap po ngayon sa ating bansa?

So, I would like to ask the Sponsor: what will be the benefit, really, of this measure as far as the development of our fish and food supply as compared to converting them into forestland? My second question would be: would the forestland be convertible later on to residential, commercial and other uses, and changing the character of the forestland to that of a commercial property? Third question is: sino po ba ang talagang interesado rito sa mga ganitong klaseng batas? Ang akin pong agam-agam, ang interesado dito ay iyong mga nagtayo ng hotel sa mga swampland, swamp areas, dati-rati ay fishpond pero ngayon po ay tinayuan na ng buildings, hotels and restaurants. Marami pong ganyan. Sa Boracay, in particular, nawala po iyong pitong swamp areas doon kaya binabaha po ngayon ang Boracay island. Ngayon, baha po sa main avenue road. Bakit? Nawala po iyong natural basins ng tubig. Wala pang conversion, e tinayuan na ng hotel. Hindi lamang po iyan malaking kakulangan sa ating mga mamamayan kung hindi malaking kababalaghan kung bakit natin pinapayagan.

I hope the Gentleman would clarify all of these issues before we even consider the measure for approval.

REP. TY. Maraming salamat po, Mme. Speaker, at sa atin pong iginagalang na Sr. Dep. Minority Leader. Ang atin pong unang katanungan ay, dahil sa mas maraming investment ho na kailangang igugol sa pagggawa ng fishpond at baka ito po ay pumunta sa pagbabakod ng ating karagatan. Ang akin pong nakikitang aksiyon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa ngayon, at kahit na po noong naunang naging Secretary po ng DENR na si Gng. Gina Lopez, under sa administrasyon po ni Pangulong Duterte, ay kaagad-agad ho niyang ipinasara o tinanggal ang lahat po ng illegal fish cages sa Manila Bay o Laguna de Bay. Iyon po siguro ang isa sa katunayan na ang ating gobyerno po ngayon ay istrikto ho sa ating pagtugon doon sa mga reklamo ng ating mamamayan na napo-pollute po iyong ating mga karagatan at ilog dahil po dito sa illegal fish cages. Sa pananaw po naman namin, base po doon sa report ng ating bagong Secretary of DENR, Sec. Roy Cimatu, ay ipagpapatuloy po niya ang ginawang pagtatanggal ng fish cages sa mga iligal na naglalagay dito po sa ating mga karagatan at ilog.

Pangalawa naman po ay dito po sa katanungan na itong mga fishpond, na kung ibinalik natin ito as forestland ay mako-convert ngayon to become agricultural or alienable and disposable. Sa kaalaman po ng ating iginagalang na Sr. Dep. Minority Leader, nakailang committee report po kaming isinusulong sa ating Rules Committee, subalit mayroon ho kaming nakuhang direktiba mula sa ating Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez na hihigpitan po niya ngayon iyong pagko-convert ng mga protected areas at forestlands, mangroves bago ang mga ito ay ma-convert into an agricultural land or kaya ay maging alienable and disposable. In fact, marami po ngayon na ire-commit ng Committee on Natural Resources dito po sa mga naisalang na sa Committee na pumasa na po—nagkaroon na po ng mga Committee Report subalit dahil po doon sa direktiba po ng ating butihing Speaker, iyon po ang gagawin ngayon ng Committee on Natural Resources, na sundin ang direktiba at ang direksiyon ng ating Speaker na hihigpitan natin ang pagko-convert po nitong forestlands, mangrove areas at saka protected areas. At doon ho sa pangatlong katanungan, kung maaari po sana ay maulit po dahil po nakalimutan ko po iyong pangatlong katanungan ng ating ginagalang na Sr. Dep. Minority Leader.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, we commend the Speaker for reacting to the problem growing in the country today that conversion of land is one of the biggest anomalous malpractices which guarantees that our public domain, the parcels of land in the country,

will only benefit the enterprising, the bright, the rich, thus depriving the poor the opportunity for the equal utilization of and benefits from our abundant natural wealth.

Ang lupa ay pinaka-importante po sa lahat—we know that—at iyan po naman ay na-classify na ng mga nakaraang administrasyon. Sa pagpupunyagi ng mga sektor, na-define po iyong fishpond areas. Ang pagkukulang ng gobyerno, hindi na po ginagamit ngayon iyan. Sa ilog na lamang sila at sa mga lawa at sa bay areas naglalagay ng mga baklad. Wala pong puhunan diyan, ang puhunan lamang ay iyong paglalagay doon sa mga ahensiya ng gobyerno na nagpapakabo nito.

Kaya ang gobyerno ngayon ay dapat mag-react, and no less than the Speaker is reacting and we congratulate him. It shows sensitivity, common sense and practicality in putting a stop to any conversion at this point. Anyway, the good Gentleman, I am sure, labored in crafting this proposed Bill before he attempted presenting it to us.

Allow me just to put in the guarantee that this measure will not open the floodgates to the sectors that I have mentioned—those who have illegally constructed hotels in swamplands defined as fishponds; those who have already applied for these parcels of land even before we discussed this in Congress; and those who are poised to apply the moment we act on this piece of legislation—and that before anyone can act, that parcel of land of 91,000 hectares will immediately be made available for any enterprising Filipino who has an eye for land development.

Nasa atin po ang pag-iingat, and I hope the Gentleman realizes the gravity of the destructive and social impact of this piece of law which looks very innocent. In fact, it could even look to be beneficial to the poor. Again, the poor will be exploited and utilized as the buffer for an evil desire because the real purpose is to be able to own the land and not to distribute this to the poor.

Kaya ang akin pong hihingin sa kanya in the period of amendments, puwede po bang ilagay natin na huwag ninyong paikliin iyong period wherein it should be contested, wherein it can be contested by any party. The law says six weeks of publication. The law says that we have to publish it in two national periodicals and two Spanish newspapers. Iyong Spanish newspapers, sa palagay ko ay dapat baguhin na natin iyon, I agree to that. Hindi na naman po tayo nagsasalita sa ngayon ng Spanish.

Pangalawa, kung papayag po siya, at ako po naman ay magbibigay daan, kung ilalagay nating probisyon iyong conversion na magaganap pagkatapos nating aprobahan ito, hindi puwedeng mayroon nang nakatayo roon na nakikinabang at magbabayad na lamang sa DENR. Itong racket po na ito, matagal na po ginagawa ito. Pinilit ko pong labanan ito pero

hindi kami nagtagumpay sapagkat maikli iyong ating panunungkulan. Kaya ngayon sa Kongresong ito, ako ay tumatayo sa depensa ng ating lupain na hindi ito magamit ng iilan lang kundi ng buong sambayanang Pilipino. Ngayon, kung mag-iikot po kayo sa ating kapuluan, take a banca ride or ride a yacht to go around the islands, point to the most beautiful spots that you will encounter and sasabihin sa inyo ng bangkero, “hindi na po available iyan dahil pag-aari na po iyan ni ganoon, ni ganito.” Ilang pangalan lang ang naririnig mo, ito ay pag-aari na ni ganoon, pag-aari na ni ganito. E, ito ay luluwagan pa natin, ay talagang pag-aari na lang ng ilang tao, at ito ang nagdadala sa ating mga kababayang mamundok at sumama sa NPA dahil nawawalan na sila ng pag-asa sa batas.

So, if the Gentleman will agree that this conversion will not be made available, this converted land will not be made alienable and disposable thereafter, then we will see the nobility of the purpose of this measure. If we are quiet on that, then we will also conclude that there are interested parties here who will benefit from the law that we will be passing innocently. Alam ko marami sa ating mag-aaproba, may *ayes* and *nays*, and later on, we will be approving this on Third Reading, then some people will be celebrating and toasting champagne because they will be able to acquire the land which they are already enjoying at the moment. But if Congress—bless these people—will legalize our illegal action, papayag po ba kayong ilagay natin na hindi puwedeng i-dispose ang mga parselang ito after the conversion?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, G. Atienza, your wisdom po na nasi-share po ninyo sa amin, being a former Secretary of the DENR, ay napakalaking tulong dahil nakakapagbigay po sa amin ng ideya dito po sa mga ginagawa ho nating batas. Subalit, mayroon po tayong batas, Commonwealth Act No. 141, na nagsasaad din ho kasi na may pagkakataon at paraan upang ma-convert po ang isang protected land, forestland, mangrove area, hindi naman ho practically ito pong mangrove areas kung hindi iyon pong mga drylands na kung minsan po, noon, itong batas ng Commonwealth Act No. 141 or even during the passage of 1991 NIPAS Law, maraming mga lugar na wholesale po noon na ginawang protected areas na sa ngayon ay mayroong mga komunidad na nakatira pero makakatiyak po kayo na ang pagbabago po ng kategorya ng lupa ay hihigpitan, lalong-lalo na po sa administrasyon ni President Duterte at ng ating ginagalang na Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez. Dito ho naman ay makikita po ninyo na kahit na po ito ay may Committee Report na, hindi ho lulusot ito sa Rules Committee, at kayo po ay nandoon sa bawat meeting natin sa Rules Committee at ni minsan ay wala hong nakalusot na mga parcels of land that will be converted to agricultural or be disposable due to the directives of our Speaker.

Dahil diyan, tayo po naman bilang Chairman ng Committee on Natural Resources ay sumusunod doon. In fact, iyon po ang dahilan kung bakit ire-recommit na namin sa Committee ang lahat na naaprobahan sa Committee na nagkaroon ng committee reports, as long as ang mga lupang ito ay iko-convert into disposable agricultural land—uulitin po namin—ay hihigpitan ang mga proseso ng pagtingin sa mga lupang ito.

Lahat naman po iyan, makakatiyak kayo na hindi ito mako-convert ng dahil walang pangangailangan ang community. Sabi nga nila, in the end it is the people who will benefit kung ano man po ang ipapasa ng ating Kongreso. Maliban naman doon, kahit pumasa ito dito sa Kongreso, dadaan pa iyan sa Senado at ang pinakahuli po ay ang pirma ng ating Pangulo. Kadalasan naman po ito ay nangyayari sa maraming pagkakataon. Even during the time of the previous administration, maraming bini-veto ang ating Presidente pagdating sa mga ganitong pagko-convert ng lupa, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, I will reiterate my question if the Gentleman would be willing to put a control in this measure, that after we convert the swampland, the fishpond into something else, it would not be declared alienable and disposable and therefore, there will be no private beneficiary of this measure. If we do not control it in that manner as I expressed earlier, like the old manner of making so much money out of our national patrimony, ganoon din po ang mangyayari dito. Imagine, swampland, e hindi po talaga ginagamit dahil may nakatayo nang hotel. Mangrove areas, wala na rin pong gamit dahil inubos na iyong mangroves po doon. Kaya binigyan ng five-year gestation iyan ay para kumapal ang mangrove dahil kailangan po natin ang mangrove. Iyan po ang natural na proteksyon ng ating kapuluan from climate change disaster. Hindi tayo tatamaan kailanman ng ano mang tidal waves o storm surges if the mangroves were still around. Sad to say that the nation, in the islands today, had already lost about 95 percent of our mangrove areas. Papunta na po iyan sa negosyo. Nabenta na po iyan sa Japan.

Ngayon lamang binubuo ng gobyerno ito ay aalisin pa natin iyong definition ng “area.” E babalik po tayo sa panganib at banta sa buhay ng mga Pilipino, na iyong mga mahihirap na mangingisda, wala na nga pong makain, ay exposed pa sa panganib ng tidal waves and storm surges.

So, I will insist on that amendment, in the proper time, that we put a stop to all of these. If the Gentleman is similarly intentioned as this Representation, there should be no problem that, after converting the 91,000 hectares, these cannot be declared disposable and these will form part of the national forestland. Tataniman natin ng puno iyan, pakinabang po ng bansa at hindi ng negosyo. Kung papayag po siya, I will definitely support

the measure. Kung hindi po siya papayag e kokontrahin ko po ito. Hindi lang ngayon, kokontrahin ko po ito sa loob at labas ng Kongreso para ipaliwanag na tuloy na naman ang ligaya ng mga mangungulimbat ng lupa ng Pilipinas. Papayag po ba siya na magkaroon tayo ng ganoong klaseng colatilla o hindi?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, G. Atienza, under House Bill No. 5799, pumapayag po ang Representanteng ito doon po sa suggestion ninyo sapagkat ito po talaga ang intensiyon ng House Bill No. 5799, ang mga abandoned fishpond are to be converted into forestland. Iyan naman po ang intensiyon ng panukalang batas na ito.

Ang tinutukoy po marahil ng ating iginagalang na Sr. Dep. Minority Leader ay ang Commonwealth Act No. 141. Dalawa po ang aking i-sponsor ngayong araw na ito. Ang isa po ay ito pong pagko-convert nitong abandoned fishpond to become forestland under House Bill No. 5799, at iyon pong isa, mamaya, ay another bill naman po iyon, House Bill No. 691. So, dito po sa House Bill No. 5799, ako po ay sumasang-ayon sa iginagalang nating Sr. Dep. Minority Leader na ito po ay po-proteksiyunan—from being abandoned fishpond to be converted into forestlands at tatamnan po ito ng mga punong-kahoy, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. I will repeat what I said. Many fishponds today are unutilized for the purpose of fish development simply because businessmen have already put up hotels, motels and other business ventures over swamplands. A good example of this is Palawan and Boracay and all the other beautiful islands of the nation, na may nakatayo na roon sa swamps na dati ay proteksiyon natin mula sa baha. Dahil po tinayuan ng hotel, nagkapatayan po roon recently dahil nga sa hindi makapayag iyong mga kumontra na nawala na iyong swampland nila at mayroon na ngayong hotel.

With this measure, without the clause that I am trying to inject into, male-legalize po lahat ito. Ano po ang mangyayari sa atin? We are now legalizing an act depriving, not only this generation, but future generations of the benefit of swamplands and fishponds, and other areas which have already been defined as such.

Ang tinutukoy po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay mga batas na umiiral na. Tama po iyon. Ang hamon sa atin ngayon, paano natin babaguhin ang batas para palakasin ang ating karapatan sa lupa ng ating bansa, at kapag binago natin para luwagan, hindi po maganda ang maibubunga niyan. So, I hope the Gentleman will join me in our common stand, if ever, that it will not be given to private ownership and instead of that, it will be the common Filipino, the poor fisherfolk, the poor Filipino who will finally benefit out of that land conversion.

Sasamahan ninyo po ba kami or patuloy tayong

magdedebate? Sapagkat hindi ko po masasang-ayunan ito kapag ito ay open-ended, na walang limitasyon po ang ownership sa binabago nating batas. Binabago natin iyong batas covering 91,000 hectares of land.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, under Section 43 of House Bill No. 5799, mangroves and other swamps released to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources for fishpond purposes which are not utilized or which have been abandoned, ang gusto ho natin sa House Bill No. 5799, after three years nang ito ay napabayaan, ay ito po ay maibalik sa pagiging forestland and shall be immediately rehabilitated and restored.

Ang pananaw ko po, kung ano po iyong suggestion at direksiyon ng ating iginagalang na Sr. Dep. Minority Leader ay pareho dito sa panukalang batas na ito. Kaya ako po ay sumasang-ayon doon sa inyong suggestion na ang mga fishpond na ito, once na naibalik po sa lalong madaling panahon, na dati po ay limang taon ang kailangan gugulin bago ho maging forestland muli, ay gawin na lang ho natin itong tatlong taon, kapag ito po ay inabandona ng isang negosyante at hindi na ho niya kayang magpatakbo ng isang fishpond ay maibigay na po o ibalik natin sa Department of Environment at saka Department of Agriculture at sila po iyong magmementena na ibalik ho ito sa pagiging forestland, at ito po ay ire-rehabilitate nila at nakasaad ito sa panukalang batas na muling tatamnan ho ng mga punong kahoy, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Iyong sinabi po ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay kaiga-igaya. We will support that particular clause: “The land will be reverted to forestland.” Idadagdag lang natin, “and not to be declared disposable and alienable.” Puwede po ba iyon, Mme. Speaker?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, mayroon po tayong isang batas that covers ang karapatan po ng sinuman na mag-convert ng isang lupa. Kung iyon po ang ipapa-commit sa akin, Mme. Speaker, wala po sa kapangyarihan ko po iyon. Ito po ay kailangan muling isalang sa panibagong batas. Ang atin lang ina-amend sa ngayon ay isang simpleng seksiyon, which is Section 43 of Presidential Decree No. 705, na gusto lang natin mapabilis ang pagre-rehabilitate ng mga inabandonang fishpond, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker, that simple provision says, that one provision is the key to all the concerns that we have on protecting national patrimonial properties. Kapag inalis mo ang provision na iyon, maaaring magbukas ito ng floodgates para samantalain na nga ng mga marurunong at malamangan naman iyong mga hindi nakakaalam ng bisa ng batas.

Kaya po iyong hinihingi ko, dahil tayo ang nakakaintindi, ay proteksiyonan natin iyong interes ng pangkalahatan because we have the right and the authority to amend whatever law that is now existing. That is the whole reason we are now discussing this particular amendment. That is why we are now considering this measure because we have the power to amend.

So, the challenge to all of us is how to even be stricter in conversion and not to provide an open-ended conversion, iyong basta kino-convert natin sa forestland, pagkatapos, bahala na kung i-dispose iyan ng agency concerned. Hindi po ba mas maganda, Mme. Speaker, if we put in the law what the Gentleman is sponsoring—that this amendment should not be misconstrued as an opportunity for the disposal of said forestlands which will be the result of this good, well-intentioned law. Kung well-intentioned po iyong proposed law, proteksiyonan natin iyong intention noong law. Forestlands, they will forever remain forestlands because we also know that conversion sometimes takes two steps. You cannot convert an abandoned fishpond to disposable and alienable kind in one step. Kailangan po i-convert ninyo muna sa forestland. Pagkatapos noon, ang susunod na—kung sinuman iyong nakikiusap kay Congressman Ty—is converting the forestland into alienable and disposable parcel of land. Iyon ang ibinibigay ko sa inyong impormasyon na pag-ingatan natin dahil magagamit ang Kongreso, magagamit ang batas sa kapakinabangan ng iilan.

Again, we will be stating in the future that the law, as amended by Congressman Ty and his Committee was well-intentioned, but somebody else took advantage of whatever is kept open. We are trying to put a stop to all of that. We are trying to put a closure on conversion. This conversion will remain as a conversion of abandoned fishponds and mangrove areas into forestlands. Maganda po iyon. Idadagdag lang natin na hindi na po ito puwedeng ibenta kanino pa man. I do not see any reason the Gentleman and Chairman will not join me in that particular guarantee because it is going to be good for him, good for his Committee, and a credit to this Congress. Of course, the direction that the Speaker also wants us to take is to be very prudent in converting lands, the character of lands, because today, there are already very big discrepancies on land ownership, on lands owned by certain individuals and corporations even before the common Filipino gains anything from these. Kapag nagbukas ng highway, lahat po ng bundok na dinaanan ng highway, pag-aari na po ng isang malaking land developer. Iyan po naman ay hindi guni-guni. I can cite concrete examples of this disadvantageous exploitation of power, and I would even say greed, because sobra-sobra na po ang pera ng mga taong ito e sila pa ang nakakaisip ng land conversion.

So, I urge and I beg the Gentleman to join me in that particular provision on limitation. This conversion does not mean or disallows the sale of any parcel or any piece of these 91,000 hectares of affected lands to anybody, to anyone. Hindi pupuwede pumiraso diyan; hindi puwedeng pagsamantalahan iyan; iyan po ay mananatiling forestland ngayon para patunayan natin to all and future generations that this piece of legislation is a credit to Congressman Ty, to this Congress, and to the Filipino nation which remain vigilant of their rights.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, much as I want to, but under Presidential Decree No. 705, there are Sections 1 to 91 and what we are just amending is Section 43. There are other sections that answer the questions of the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List. If we will look at Section 43, there is a sentence there saying that all abandoned fishponds shall be maintained as forestlands and shall not be alienated. I hope that sentence can suffice.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. ATIENZA. May I ask for a suspension of the session. I would like to see the provision that he is putting on record.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is suspended.

*It was 4:57 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:00 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is resumed.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, may we recognize again Rep. Arnel U. Ty.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Rep. Arnel Ty is recognized.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, as our respected Sr. Dep. Minority Leader requested that there be an additional sentence to be put on the third paragraph that reads, "shall be maintained and shall not be alienated and solely for the purpose of forestland," the Sponsor accepts, but it will depend on the style.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Subject to style.

REP. TY. Subject to the style, Mme. Speaker.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). May we hear from the Gentleman of BUHAY Party-List.

REP. ATIENZA. To settle the issue of protecting the ordinary Filipino from exploitation by the super powerful and the rich, I am begging the Gentleman to put on record and to put in this law that he is proposing that after the conversion, the character of the land will remain inalienable. Iyon lamang po. That guarantees already that the land cannot be sold to anyone afterwards. The land cannot be reconverted to something else, and it will remain inalienable. That is stressing the earlier provision of the original law. But what actually is bothering me, and which I cannot accept, is that the original provision of the original law, as the Gentleman says, remains in effect. The legal defense or provision and issues that the interested parties will use later on, since the Sponsor changed the character of the land, the provision earlier stated is no longer in effect. So, ulitin lang natin. The land in question will remain inalienable, para bang reiterating the obvious but anticipating na puwede nila talagang gamitin na naman ito. Where there is no clarity, sasabihin nila, the law can be interpreted in any which way. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. If we want to really help the national economy and protect the rights of every Filipino, there should be no issue.

I appeal to the Gentleman to agree to put the clause that this conversion remains and does not change the character of the land, and that the land remains inalienable.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Rep. Arnel Ty will please respond.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, again, like what is indicated in Section 43, it has already been indicated that the land shall be maintained and shall not be alienated. I am afraid that if I continue to agree to put other words on it, then it might have a different meaning or it will contradict other sections of this Bill. So, what this Sponsor is just amending is actually the terms of the conversion year—from five years to three years. This is an existing law, Mme. Speaker. This House Bill No. 5799 only seeks to fast-track the abandoned fishponds to be maintained by the DENR so that they can again replant trees, just like what our Sr. Dep. Minority Leader is also supporting that any piece of land that is abandoned should be maintained and should be converted to become a forestland. I believe, under this Presidential Decree 705, that it is there to protect the forestlands, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Rep. Arnel Ty, it was the understanding of the Chair that you were ready to accept the colatilla proposed by the BUHAY Party-List—the Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List, Rep. Lito Atienza—in that fishponds converted into forestlands would no longer be subject to conversion into alienable and disposable lands, subject to style.

That was the understanding of the Chair. Did the Chair misapprehend it?

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker, that is the agreement.

REP. ATIENZA. Let me just ...

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Did you just ...

REP. ATIENZA. Minor correction, Mme. Speaker. Our agreement was to put the phrase “will remain inalienable” kasi, sabi nga niya, ay “inalienable naman iyan e.”

Okay. Uulitin na lang natin. Even with the change of character and definition of the land, the land will remain inalienable.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Yes.

REP. ATIENZA. Puwede na po ba iyon?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Yes, it was clarified that such fishponds converted to forestlands will remain inalienable.

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). It was the understanding of the Chair that the honorable Sponsor was willing to accept this colatilla.

REP. TY. I accept, Mme. Speaker, because it is already also indicated in Section 43. I totally accept.

REP. ATIENZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Gentleman from BUHAY Party-List is recognized.

REP. ATIENZA. With that, Mme. Speaker, I congratulate the Gentleman for seeing the broader view on this issue of conversion. It is not as simple as that. It is not as simple as helping the poor. If we want to convert it, we want the poor to benefit. Iyan e, instead of fast-tracking development, it is fast-tracking

graft and corruption. With this agreement that the converted land will remain inalienable, I congratulate the Sponsor for that and we will pursue this piece of legislation together.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). We thank both Gentlemen for the resolution of the issue.

The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor is the Gentleman from the First District of Tarlac, the Hon. Carlos O. Cojuangco.

I move that we recognize him for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The distinguished Gentleman from Tarlac, the Hon. Carlos Cojuangco is recognized.

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, will the Gentleman from LPG Party-List yield to a few questions?

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker, with pleasure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Please proceed.

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, I would like to inquire from the distinguished author if this amendment of an existing law takes into effect the conversion or the reassignment of certain fishponds located in rivers or natural waterways. Will these be also maintained as reforested areas?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, I believe that these fishponds are located inland, and are not those which are in the waterways or in the rivers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. COJUANGCO. Okay. So, how will this Bill or this proposed law, once it is enacted, go about identifying which fishponds will be reverted as forestlands and which fishponds can continue as fishponds or will be removed because they are not located in ideal areas and affect our waterways?

REP. TY. Well, Mme. Speaker, these are identified by the fishpond lease agreements issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources once these are awarded to individuals. Now, the Bureau of Fisheries will be the one to set—the monitoring will be set by the Department of Environment and the Bureau of Fisheries. Now, once this fishpond owner

violates the lease agreement like abandonment or it has been cancelled by the Bureau of Fisheries, then the awardee has five years to fix the problem; if not, it will revert to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to become forestland.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, may I request for a one-minute suspension of the session to confer with the Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:11 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:13 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is resumed.

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, I would like to ask the distinguished author if he would concur with our suggested amendment to his Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Gentleman-Sponsor will please respond.

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker, we will agree to some of the suggestions of Representative Cojuangco.

REP. COJUANGCO. May we, just for the record, hear the author to stipulate the specific suggestion he agrees to?

REP. TY. Well, Mme. Speaker, those fishponds which are in the waterways, which are supposed to be not there, if these fishponds will be removed or will revert to become forestlands, then the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will not plant trees on the waterways. That is the idea of Representative Cojuangco.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Representative Cojuangco is recognized.

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, this Representation is satisfied with the response.

REP. DAZA. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Honorable Daza, but right now, the Hon. Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco has the floor, unless the Gentleman is raising a point of order.

REP. COJUANGCO. Mme. Speaker, can I just end my interpellation?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Honorable Cojuangco will please continue.

REP. COJUANGCO. Okay. Just to close, I thank the author for his agreeing to the said amendments and I wish him well in the Committee to pass this important bill. If I may be of support to the Bill, I do welcome supporting the Bill.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Thank you.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. May we know the pleasure of the Honorable Daza, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Raul A. Daza is recognized.

REP. DAZA. Mme. Speaker, will the distinguished Sponsor yield to a few questions?

REP. TY. With pleasure, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Honorable Daza is recognized.

REP. DAZA. In our province in Northern Samar, there are a good number of unutilized or abandoned fishponds, but these are fishponds that have been foreclosed by the Development Bank of the Philippines or having been foreclosed by the Development Bank of the Philippines, have been bought by private owners but have not been developed. How will this Bill treat such fishponds?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, this Bill is only for those lands that are owned by the government, and the reason we have existing fishponds is that the fishpond lease agreement issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to an individual interested to develop a parcel of land that can be usable and can be maximized to become a source of income by that individual in developing it to become a fishpond.

REP. DAZA. Will the Sponsor or the sponsoring

Committee be open to certain amendments in order to ensure that there is no ambiguity that would lead to controversy on fishponds that have been foreclosed by the Development Bank of the Philippines or having been foreclosed, have been bought by private persons but, nevertheless, have not yet been utilized?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, I do not know if a bank can extend a loan facility to an individual who does not own a land. In this Section 43 that we are amending, it is a parcel of land owned by the government. They just gave an authority to an individual through a fishpond lease agreement. I think if that is foreclosed by a bank, then probably, it is a private ownership, or a private land that is the subject of that foreclosure.

REP. DAZA. In other words, the Sponsor is saying that this kind of fishponds which I had described are outside the ambit of the intended operation of this Bill if it becomes a law.

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker, this did not include privately-owned lands. This only covers government land which has been issued a fishpond lease agreement to an individual.

REP. DAZA. In other words, further, the Sponsor is putting on record that these fishponds which have been foreclosed by the Development Bank of the Philippines, which is a government bank, are not within the coverage of this Bill.

REP. TY. I believe so, yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DAZA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker; and thank you for the clarification, distinguished Sponsor.

REP. TY. Thank you, Representative Daza, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we recognize the distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman to interpellate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Honorable Edcel Lagman is recognized.

REP. LAGMAN. Before I go to my short interpellation, this is just a point of information. With respect to the provisions of Section 2 and Section 3 of

Article XII of the Constitution on National Economy and Patrimony, Section 2 provides:

All lands of the public domain, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum, and other mineral oils, all forces of potential energy, fisheries, forests or timber X X X are owned by the State. With the exception of agricultural lands, all other natural resources shall not be alienated.

Section 3 of the same article provides, “Alienable lands of the public domain shall be limited to agricultural lands.” What is the import of these provisions? By operation of the Constitution, timberlands are not alienable or disposable, only agricultural lands of the public domain can be subject to alienation.

Consequently, there is no need for any colatilla on your Bill because that would be redundant since the Constitution says that only agricultural lands of the public domain can be alienated. Once a fishpond which has been abandoned or unutilized is reverted to a forestland, it remains a forestland and it cannot be alienated, according to the Constitution.

REP. TY. Thank you for the information, Representative Lagman.

REP. LAGMAN. Now, let me go to my brief interpellation.

Before areas are granted under a fishpond lease agreement, I would surmise that the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources had fully studied and validated that such areas will be more productive as fishponds. Am I correct?

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Consequently, abandoned or unutilized fishponds under a fishpond lease agreement should not be reverted as forestlands except after the lapse of five years and they should be open to subsequent fishpond lease agreements. Is that correct?

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. What is the reason for waiting for five years – the lapse of five years before an abandoned or unutilized fishpond is reverted as forestland? There must be a reason for the law.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, that is precisely what House Bill No. 5799 wants to do because under Section 43, it needs five years before an abandoned fishpond can be reverted to a forestland. That is why the Sponsor and author of this Bill is requesting or is moving for three years after abandonment of the fishpond before it reverts into a forestland.

REP. LAGMAN. I think the reason there should be a lapse of five years before an unutilized or abandoned fishpond can be reverted into forestland is that should give time for interested parties to subsequently enter into a lease agreement over said fishpond because it has already been validated by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources that such areas are more productive as fishponds. It is only after five years when there are no takers that the reversion can be made. Is that correct?

REP. TY. Yes, Mme. Speaker. The issue is that, based on those fishponds that are abandoned, out of the 91,000, around 2,300 was abandoned, and the purpose of this Bill is, because when we look at the data, there are more areas awarded a fishpond lease agreement, which is around 9,000 hectares, that are cancelled due to violations committed or abandonment or those awarded these fishpond lease agreements do not pay the share of the government. That is the reason they cancelled them and the reason for shortening the five years to three years is so that we can immediately maintain the fishpond as forestland.

REP. LAGMAN. Well, it is precisely, Mme. Speaker, that there is a five-year lapse so that these areas which have been validated as being more productive as fishponds should be made available for subsequent fishpond lease agreements. So, I do not think there is any need to reduce the five years to three years.

Let me go to my last question. What is the beneficial effect of the reversion to forestlands of fishponds which had been unutilized or abandoned for a period of five years which were previously covered by a fishpond lease agreement?

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, the explanation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is so that they can maintain and again, transform the abandoned fishpond into forestland, because while it is still a fishpond, it is under the Bureau of Fisheries, under the DA. The intention of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is that they want to develop this again to become a forestland because originally, it was a forestland before when they awarded it to an individual who used it as a fishpond, Mme. Speaker.

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, I think that since these abandoned fishponds or unutilized fishponds, under fishpond lease agreements, had already been validated as being more productive to be used as fishponds, then I would suppose that there is no overriding reason to have the conversion even after three or five years.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker, for this opportunity to express these views, and let me again reiterate that by operation of law, forestlands cannot be alienated.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Thank you, Congressman Lagman.

REP. TY. Thank you, Representative Lagman.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, there being no other interpellators and no one has registered to speak against the Bill, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments to consider Committee and individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. There being no Committee or individual amendments, Mme. Speaker, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 5799 on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

As many as are in favor of House Bill No. 5799, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

#### APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5799 ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 5799 is approved on Second Reading.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, before we proceed, Mme. Speaker, may we acknowledge the presence of the guests of the distinguished Lady from the Lone District of Pasay, the Hon. Emi G. Calixto-Rubiano. They are guests from the World Youth Alliance Asia Pacific headed by Ms. Mary Imbong and Ms. Zarina San Jose, together with guest delegates from Taiwan. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The guests of the Honorable Calixto-Rubiano, welcome to the House of Representatives.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

#### CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 691 ON SECOND READING

#### PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 691, contained in Committee Report No. 292, as reported out by the Committee on Natural Resources.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.\*

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

*With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 691, entitled: AN ACT SIMPLIFYING THE PROCEDURE IN THE DISPOSITION OF PUBLIC AGRICULTURAL LANDS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 24 OF COMMONWEALTH ACT NO. 141, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE PUBLIC LAND ACT."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is

there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. To sponsor the measure, Mme. Speaker, I move that we again recognize the Hon. Arnel U. Ty.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* Hearing none, the motion is carried.

The Hon. Arnel Ty is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. For this measure, Mme. Speaker, likewise the distinguished Chairman wishes to have the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as the sponsorship speech on the measure. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Hon. Arnel Ty is recognized.

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, the Sponsor is ready to accept questions.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, to interpellate, may we recognize the distinguished Gentleman from the First District of Albay, the Hon. Edcel C. Lagman.

#### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. LAGMAN. Mme. Speaker, may we request for a short suspension of the session because we are asking for a copy of the Bill.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:33 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:34 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. There being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against the measure, Mme. Speaker, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments and consider the Committee amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments ...

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, there are minor Committee amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, may we allow the distinguished Sponsor to proceed with the Committee amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Arnel Ty will please proceed.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

REP. TY. Mme. Speaker, the Committee amendments are as follows: to insert the words CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE before the word "DENR" on page 1, line 10.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the amendment is approved.

REP. TY. The second Committee amendment is to delete the phrase on Section 1, page 2, line 1; thus, it shall read "shall fix a date"— it shall read as SHALL STATE THAT THE SALE SHALL BE HELD ON A DATE AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE NOTICE.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, with that, I move that we approve the following Committee amendments:

1. To add the term METRO before the word "Manila" on page 1, line 8;

2. To add the words CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE before the word "DENR" on page 1, line 10; and

3. To delete the phrase in Section 1, page 2, line 1, which is, to quote, "shall fix a date [not earlier than] THIRTY [sixty] days after the date of the notice upon the land will be awarded to the highest bidder, or public bids will be called for, or other action will be taken as provided in this Chapter."

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the Committee amendments are approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I would like to move for the reconsideration of my motion for the approval of the last amendment because I overlooked the last portion.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. To add to that, Mme. Speaker, the said line should be replaced by the following: SHALL STATE THAT THE SALE SHALL BE HELD ON A DATE AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THE NOTICE.

I so move for the approval of the Committee amendment, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the amendment is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we proceed to the individual amendments. However, there being no individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve House Bill No. 691, as amended, on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

APPROVAL OF H. B. NO. 691, AS AMENDED,  
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The ayes have it; the motion is approved.

House Bill No. 691, as amended, is hereby approved on Second Reading.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move for a suspension of the session.

REP. TY. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is suspended.

*It was 5:38 p.m.*

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 5:39 p.m., the session was resumed.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is resumed.

The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H. B. NO. 5745  
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. DEFENSOR. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5745, contained in Committee Report No. 262, as reported out by the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and Appropriations.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.\*

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of the measure.

*With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5745, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND AND PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, to sponsor the measure, I move that we recognize the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, the Gentleman from ANAC-IP, the Hon. Jose T. Panganiban Jr., CPA, LLB.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Jose Panganiban is recognized.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

REP. DEFENSOR. For this measure, Mme. Speaker, the Chairman wishes to have the Explanatory Note of the Bill as the sponsorship speech thereon.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Likewise, Mme. Speaker, and this is with the approval of the Chairman, I move that we recognize the Hon. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora to sponsor the measure and deliver his sponsorship speech.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Rav Rocamora is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF REP. ROCAMORA

REP. ROCAMORA. Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

It is my privilege to be one of the sponsors of this very important measure. This Bill is not just about inclusive growth but more than that, this Bill brings justice that is long sought by the coconut farmers. They were the ones whose copras were levied during the Marcos era purportedly to develop the coco industry and lift coco farmers out of poverty.

The fund that we are talking about now is more than P70 billion—yes, I stand corrected, P100 billion na daw. Companies that were using the coco levy flourished. In the meantime, farmers languish in poverty. It is high time we put in place a mechanism that will ensure the deliverance of justice to our coconut farmers. Let us pass this Bill now.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. BONDOC. Mme. Speaker, our parliamentary status is that we are in consideration of House Bill No. 5745, as embodied in Committee Report No. 262.

I move for the recognition of the Gentleman from the Party-List ANAKPAWIS, the Hon. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao, for his interpellation of the honorable Sponsor.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Ariel Casilao is recognized.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, Mme. Speaker and the Dep. Majority Leader.

Will the Gentleman, the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, yield to some interpellations?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Gladly, Representative Casilao, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Mme. Speaker, sa totoo lang po, naging bahagi ako nitong pagsisikap para magkaroon ng katarungan doon sa bilyun-bilyong perang ninakaw mula sa ating mga magniniyog. In fact, this Representation, and even the previous Representatives of ANAKPAWIS, already filed House bills pertaining to this—para maibalik iyong pera ng ating mga magniniyog. Naging bahagi din po ako ng ilang ulit ng technical working groups and in fact, we had four ...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Four.

REP. CASILAO. ... technical working groups. Tatlo po ang aking nasalihan, isa lang po iyong absent ako.

Ngunit noong nabuo na po itong buong substitute bill at ako po ay nag-ikot sa iba’t ibang chapters ng ANAKPAWIS, ng Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, para ipaliwanag at kunin ang kanilang sentimyento at kunin ang kanilang pagtingin sa substitute bill na ito, ang sa pinakahuling komperensiya na dinaluhan ko po noong July 12, ang natanggap ko po ay isang malaking pagtutol sa substitute bill na ito. Una, dahil maging sa technical working groups ay nais nating i-assert, sa deklarasyon pa lang ng prinsipyo, na nais ng batas na ito na dapat ay kilalanin iyong panlipunang katarungan at, explicitly, mailagay na ito ay isang panlipunang katarungan at pagkilala sa mahabang inhustisyang naranasan ng ating mga magniniyog dahil ninakaw nga ang pondo ng coco levy ng nakaraang administrasyong Marcos.

Kaya po nais nating mairehistro at maitanong na kinikilala ba, at mula doon sa Supreme Court ruling, ng ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na para mailathala at mailagay na ito ay isang social justice

move ng Kongreso para magawan ng enabling law ang panunumbalik ng pera para sa kanila. Maaari po ba nating mailagay, explicitly, ang usapin ng social justice provision, hindi lamang ang pag-quote ng Supreme Court ruling kundi ang pagkilala na ang perang ito ay galing sa magniniyog, na ninakaw ng administrasyong Marcos at kinakailangan ng batas para maibalik ito sa kamay ng ating mga magniniyog?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, gusto ko lang pong sabihin sa kagalang-galang na Representante ng ANAKPAWIS Party-List that ang House Bill na ito ay para matugunan ang matagal nang hinaing ng ating mga magsasaka ng niyog na iyong perang galing sa coconut levy magmula pa po noong 1971 ay maibalik na sa kanila. Kaya nga po ang House Bill na ito, okay, ang unang obhetibo nitong House Bill ay para matugunan ang gustong mangyari ng ating Korte Suprema na dapat magkaroon ng batas para magamit ang matagal nang nakabinbing pondo, na humigit-kumulang P100 bilyon na ngayon, para magamit para matulungan ang ating mga magsasaka.

Ngayon, sa tinatanong ng ating kagalang-galang na Cong. Ayik Casilao, kung pupuwede nating sabihin, explicitly, dito sa ating Declaration ng Policy under Section 2 na ito ay mayroong kinalaman sa social justice, subject to style, Mme. Speaker, wala po akong problema. Ang hindi ko lang po siguro masang-ayunan ay iyong pagsasabi na ang perang ito ay galing sa nakaw dahil ito nga pong batas ay ginagawa natin parang reparasyon sa ating mga magsasaka, sa ating mga magniniyog, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Yes, Mme. Speaker, I may not agree to the disagreement of the distinguished Sponsor that, whether he likes it or not, this money has been already declared by the Supreme Court as a public fund dahil nga doon sa mga irregularities noong pagkolekta at paggamit nito. Hindi na po debatable iyan dahil nandiyan na po iyan, nakamarka na po iyan sa ruling ng Supreme Court, although I understand it will not be reflected, in toto, the merits of how the fund was already declared such by the Supreme Court.

However, I would also like to register the reservation of this Representation doon sa certain provisions that the technical working group started from day one, and I have consistently registered and manifested opposition to the role of the Privatization and Management Office or the PMO in terms of defining those assets or those to be declared as liabilities subject for disposal under the terms of privatization. Again, however, repeatedly, that has been maintained in the role of the Privatization and Management Office and there is the danger of a very vague definition of privatization which is not only limited to the disposal of liabilities or non-performing assets of this fund. I understand that there are the

realities of the existing assets, and even liabilities of the fund, especially those that are operational at the moment, operational assets.

The moment that this definition, as vague as it is manifested in this substitute Bill—those that could be defined as liabilities or non-performing assets will be automatically subjected to privatization. Again, when we questioned, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, the veracity and the role of the Privatization and Management Office, and especially the definition, we forgot, in the succeeding technical working groups, the clarity or defining the clear role and function of this PMO, especially in the context of their particular specific role in disposing assets or liabilities of the entire fund, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, una po, doon sa tinuran ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng ANAKPAWIS, hindi po automatic iyong pagpa-privatize ng coco levy assets. In fact, if we scrutinize the provision of this Bill, the fund which included all coco levy assets, shall be managed by the Coconut Industry Trust Fund Committee and in that committee, the total membership is 15, nine of which are representatives of coconut farmers.

So, doon po sa takot ng ating Kagalang-galang na Casilao na iyong mga coco levy assets ay automatic na mapa-privatize, hindi po mangyayari iyon kapag hindi pinayagan ng committee na siyang nagma-manage nitong coco levy fund, which includes those coco levy assets, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor, Mme. Speaker. I hope, during the period of amendments, that we can instill or we can insert safeguard measures with regard to the mechanism or the role of the PMO, subject to the approval or to the decision of the committee, in terms of disposing assets of the fund.

Let me go to the section pertaining to investment. In my series of consultations with coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, they have asked why the P10-billion proposed in the substitute Bill will be deducted from the principal fund and the remaining fund will be subject to a trust fund or a revolving fund, and that the interest income, by virtue of interest, will be the capital for investment. Am I correct, distinguished Sponsor?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes.

REP. CASILAO. Now, the big question is, if the decision of the Supreme Court clearly states that this fund—although this is declared a public fund, but the very purpose of creating a law in disposing this fund, the P95 billion or P75 billion in cash in the National

Treasury—should directly benefit our farmers, what is now the purpose of holding the P85 billion in the trust fund?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, this Bill entails to have a perpetual fund. Meaning, the P75 billion now in escrow and deposited in the Bureau of the Treasury, ang sinasabi po ng Bill na ito, dapat ang P75 billion na ito ay hindi mawala. Kaya nga, we have inserted here a jumpstart fund of P10 billion for the rehabilitation of our dying coconut industry, because as the Supreme Court ruling said that the coco levy fund shall be used for the benefit of the coconut farmers and the coconut industry. Kaya iyong P75 billion ay hindi pupuwede na kaagad-agad gastusin natin; otherwise, baka po kinabukasan ay maubos na iyong P75 billion kaagad ay hindi pa nare-rehabilitate iyong ating coconut industry at wala pang karagdagang benepisyo na makukuha iyong ating coconut farmers.

So, in the Committee, we saw to it that this fund should have the character of perpetuity. That is why ang puwede lamang pong gastusin—this is in addition, this is to complement the existing program of the government for our coconut industry and coconut farmers. Pantulong lang po ito at hindi ito replacement doon sa programa ng ating gobyerno. Kaya naman dapat ang gastusin lang annually will be the interest income to be derived from the remaining P65 billion. So, after 20 years, after 50 years, mayroon pa rin pondo na nakalaan para sa industriya at sa ating mga magniniyog, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Thank you, distinguished Sponsor and Mme. Speaker.

Mme. Speaker, kaya nga po ako po ay direktang tinanong, when I was in Bicol last July 11, when we had a consultation with the different farmers groups, the CLAIM, tinanong po ako, “Ka Ayik, ano po iyong mangyayari sa P65 bilyon, nakatengga lang? Iyong P10 bilyon po ba ay sapat sa aming milyun-milyong mga magniniyog?” Remember, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, that the Philippine Coconut Authority has not given us yet the final list of the supposed beneficiaries, and this Representation estimates that we have a current 12 million poorest of the coconut farmers. These are the direct families of the coconut farmers. Of course, it is not only limited to the Bicol Region but also includes those in Visayas, Luzon, and especially in Mindanao, the region where I came from.

Ngayon po, ang hindi ko po masagot na tanong, and I would like to re-echo this question to the distinguished Sponsor, nakatengga po iyong P65 billion as cash dahil dito pagkukunan iyong P10 billion from the P75 billion. Ang remaining P65 billion, ito po iyong ini-ensure na mailagay sa trust fund at hindi magagalaw. Nandoon na po ako sa usapin na hindi ito magagalaw dahil nga

malinaw naman sa anumang ipapasa na batas na ang kailangang galawin ay iyong interest lang para mag-revolve iyong pondo.

Ako din po ay sang-ayon doon sa usapin na ang tulong sa ating mga magniniyog ay dapat long term at hindi lamang short term. But the reality on the ground, the direct assistance that should be felt immediately by our coconut farmers, especially the poorest of the poor among them, sa tingin ng ating mga magniniyog, hindi po makakasapat ang P10 bilyon na ito. Ang isa pang usapin dito, doon sa proseso ng determination of qualified beneficiaries na nakalagay naman po sa succeeding provisions ng substitute Bill, ang usapin ng determination, malaki ang inaasa po natin sa ating mga opisyal ng PCA o Philippine Coconut Authority ang usapin kung sino ang kikilalanin na mga lehitimong magniniyog at mga magiging benepisyaryo nito, while there are already repeated reports from the regional offices that there has been a long-standing problem of the PCA in terms of directly or direkta silang ka-relate ng ating mga magniniyog.

So, doon po sa unang tanong, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, matetengga ang P65 bilyon sa ilang taong itatakda po ng panukalang batas. Do you agree, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, na maliit ang P10 bilyon para matamasa at directly ma-feel agad ng ating mga magniniyog na ito na po iyong perang ninakaw sa kanila, ito na po iyong ipinangako ni Pangulong Duterte na maibabalik sa kanila dahil ang nanay mismo ni Pangulong Duterte ay dapat kabahagi nito? Si Nanay Suling ay isang magniniyog. Tama po ba na ilimita natin—at ang magdedesisyon ay ang panukalang batas na ito at ang komiteng binuo—na ilimita natin sa P10 bilyon/

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, sa tingin po ng Komite, iyong P10 bilyon—uulitin ko po, ang jump-start fund po na ito o itong coco levy fund will just be a complementary fund. Additional fund po ito doon sa pondo na inilaan ng Department of Agriculture or ng PCA sa coconut industry, okay. If we look at the 2017 budget of the Department of Agriculture—when I say DA, lahat po iyan, kasama na lahat iyong ating mga usapin tungkol sa pagsasaka—it is only P49 billion. So, if P10 billion, 25 percent po iyon noong kabuuan, sa palagay ko, ay mapi-feel ng ating mga magniniyog iyong initial na pondo na P10 bilyon.

In fact, when we crafted this Bill in the TWG, wala po kaming inilagay na jump-start fund, okay. Then, we decided na maglagay kami ng jump-start fund doon po noong nasa Appropriations Committee na kami, we decided na maglagay ng P10 billion to jump-start the rehabilitation of the coconut industry, okay. Iyong P65 billion, hindi naman po masasayang iyan dahil in the long run, mayroon pa ring mapagkukunan ang ating mga magsasaka, ang ating coconut industry, na tulong

galing nga sa interes na makukuha sa pag-invest nitong P65 billion, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Kaya nga po, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ang ipinagtataka ng ating mga magniniyog, dahil tayo po ang inatasan na gumawa ng batas ayon doon sa kautusan ng Korte Suprema, ang hindi maibalik ang pera dahil itetengga ito sa isang trust fund at iyong pang jump-start o start-off fund na P10 bilyon ay walang trickling effect. Hindi masyadong matatamasa at hindi direktang makikita ng ating mga magniniyog, kaya kabaliktaran po iyan sa nais nang desisyon ng ating Korte Suprema at magiging inhustisya po iyan, or hindi makatarungan na iyong pondong idineklarang coco levy fund ay makikita lamang ng mga magniniyog na mananatili.

Nandoon na po tayo sa usapin na suportang lamang ito dahil mayroong namang regular budget under the GAA ang PCA at ang Department of Agriculture. Kaya nga po, ang pera na ito ay hindi kabilang sa General Appropriations at hindi puwedeng galawin ng General Appropriations at specific lamang ang purpose. Ngayon po, pag ide-delay natin ang direktang matatamasa at matatanggap ng ating mga magniniyog dahil nga sa 10 bilyon lamang ito, maaari po itong magresulta ng discomfort, to say the least, sa ating mga magniniyog dahil po iyong perang idineklara na ng Supreme Court pero hindi magalaw-galaw at hindi direktang ma-access ng ating mga magniniyog dahil nakatengga nga lang sa isang trust fund at saka iyong interes lamang ang ikikilos niya sa kaniyang investment, magresulta po iyan sa isang napakalaking doubt, discomfort and eventually, magagalit ang ating mga magniniyog dahil nga the very purpose of the decision of the Supreme Court is for them to directly benefit without discounting that there also should be a long term one.

Now, this Representation was open when we asked our farmers in Bicol, “Anong tingin ninyo?” Ang sabi nila, “Maaari po ba na hindi lang 10 bilyon iyan para matamasa at ma-feel talaga namin na may pakinabang kami sa desisyon ng Korte Suprema dahil iyan naman ay pera namin, ng aming mga ninuno, ng aming mga nakatatanda at maging kami.” Sabi nila, “Maaari bang baliktarin natin na mas maliit iyong isasalin natin sa trust fund for the purpose of a long-term investment in the industry?” dahil nga industriya iyong inilagay ng ating Supreme Court. Doon sa letter ng decision ng Supreme Court na dapat maka-benefit ang mga magniniyog, maaari ba nating baliktarin na dapat mas malaki ang pondong maibalik sa ating mga magniniyog kumpara doon sa isang mala-negosyong usapin na investment by the Trust Fund Committee?

So, iyon po, Mme. Speaker, nais po nating itanong muli sa ating kagalang-galang na Sponsor na para talaga ay makaramdam ng malakihan na impact o epekto ang perang ito na dinisisyunan ng Korte Suprema at ginawan

ng batas ng Kongreso. Maaari po ba nating baliktarin ang kalagayan na kaunti, minority iyong ilagay natin doon sa investment o sa trust fund at ang big chunk, dahil pera naman talaga nila ito, ay ibalik na natin sa ating mga magniniyog as per doon sa kikilalaning legitimate beneficiaries?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, gusto kong sumang-ayon sa sinasabi ng ating kagalang-galang na Rep. Ariel “Ka Ayik” B. Casilao pero ang iniisip po natin dito ay iyong long term na benepisyo para sa ating mga magsasakang magniniyog. Ngayon po, ang ating pinag-uusapang pondo ay matagal nang nakatengga. This has been in the Bureau of Treasury for more than 15 years na at hindi po kumikita ng interest. Kaya nga po gusto na nating ipasa ang batas na ito para magumpisa na iyong ating mga magsasaka na makaramdam ng tulong galing sa pondo na ito.

Ngayon, kung babaliktarin po natin, let us say the P65 billion will be the jump-start fund, okay. Sa paano—ang ibig po bang sabihin ng ating kagalang-galang na Rep. Ayik Casilao ay iyong P65 billion ay idi-divide natin, let us say, sa 12 milyong magsasaka? Baka po hindi tayo makatulong sa industriya ng niyog. Kaya nga po, ang sinasabi natin dito sa ating panukalang batas, maghiwalay tayo ng P10 bilyon para naman mayroon na kaagad-agad na tulong para sa ating mga magsasaka at sa ating industriya. Samantalang iyong P65 bilyon ay magiging perpetual fund iyan, magiging pondo iyan ng mga magsasaka at ng industriya hanggang sa kaapu-apan ng mga magniniyog dahil nasa batas na hindi puwedeng gastusin iyong P65 bilyon na nasa trust fund kundi iyon lamang pong interest.

Ngayon, kung babaliktarin po natin, magkano po ang interest ng P10 bilyon sa isang taon? Siguro, makakakuha po tayo ng P500 milyon na interest at five percent, mataas na po iyon. Ano naman po ang mangyayari doon sa P500 milyon para pantulong sa ating mga coconut farmers at pantulong sa coconut industry sa halagang P500 milyon moving forward after we have expended the P65 billion, Mme. Speaker? That is why the very purpose of this measure is to ensure that, moving forward, hanggang sa kaapu-apan ng ating mga magsasaka, ng ating mga magniniyog ay mayroong pondo na makatutulong para sa kanila, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Mme. Speaker, nandoon na po tayo doon sa usapin ng pagtulong sa industriya ng niyog and in fact, the fund should not be used for that purpose. However, the Supreme Court ruling is very clear that there should be legislation that this will directly benefit the farmers and the industry.

Ngayon po, ang purpose po kung bakit this Representation ay nag-i-insist doon sa usapin na direktang maipamahagi ang perang ito dahil nga po,

babalik tayo sa Declaration of State Principles ng panukalang batas, ito po ay pera nila, ng ating mga magniniyog. I am not saying na iyong hatian, the P65 billion divided by 12 million projected beneficiaries, the direct assistance should be there, but also, in the process, it should not only be limited to the direct assistance. Nandiyan na rin po ang usapin ng livelihood assistance, medical assistance, scholarship, at saka iyong direct cash.

Ang punto po dito, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, ay hindi po natin dapat kalimutan na sa mahabang panahong ipinagkait itong pera, huwag naman po sanang dagdagan natin ng mahabang panahon pa, na parang buto at iyong mga magniniyog ay parang mga asong gutom at nakikita nila ang P65 bilyon na naka-hang lang at tila gusto nilang kainin pero hindi nila makain dahil nga doon sa limistasyon ng panukalang batas. The investment is not bad, and even if we reverse the situation na kung sakali man P10 bilyon lang ang ilagay natin sa trust fund na iyan, for as long as the committee will manage efficiently the fund at mayroon namang regular fund na pagkukunan ang DA at ang PCA doon sa usapin ng pag-rehabilitate and pag-revitalize ng coconut industry, pero naibigay natin ang isang mahalagang makasaysayang misyon na maibalik sa ating mga magniniyog iyong pondong ninakaw.

Ngayon po, again, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, iyong pinaka-essential na tanong ng ating mga magniniyog ay nandoon na po sa usapin na direkta nilang matamasa ito, ano. Again, maybe during the period of amendments, or should the distinguished Sponsor allow, iyon po iyong pinakapuntong nais naming mairehistro. Huwag po sana nating hayaan na makita ng ating mga magniniyog na, dinisisyunan na ito ng Korte Suprema na dapat maipamahagi na sa kanila pero dahil sa panukalang batas na ito, mauulit na P10 bilyon lamang ang maibabalik at iyan tiyak ako, sigurado po ang Kinatawang ito, na hindi ganoon kalaki ang appreciation ng ating mga magniniyog. Maliit iyong magiging trickle-down effect ng P10 bilyon na iyan samantalang makikita nila na nakatengga ang P65 bilyon at hindi nila magalaw. Malaking paulit po, inuulit po natin na iyon ay hindi makatarungang pagtrato.

Lastly, Mme. Speaker, on the composition, again, we have struggled in the technical working group and I thank Chairperson Oscar “Richard” S. Garin Jr., even the Chairperson of the Committee, with regard to ensuring a well-represented, a majority representation of our farmers. However, hihirit pa po sana tayo na tiyak iyong siyam ay kukulang dahil nga doon sa balanse ngayon, five from the government, nine from the farmers group, and two from the industry sector—nandiyan pa rin iyong pangamba na dahil nga ang naghe-head ng komiteng ito, ng Trust Fund Committee, the Chair and the co-Chair and even the Vice Chair are

still from a government agency, for example, the PCA or the Department of Agriculture, the members of the committee will be outnumbered.

Now, sa tingin po ba ng kagalang-galang na Sponsor ay, nine representatives from the farmers sector will be enough to ensure that in the process of coming up with programs in the specific year, or in the long term determination of how to utilize the fund will be subjected not only pressure from government agencies sitting as Chair or the co-Chair, or shall—is it rightful enough for the farmers to sit as co-chairperson of this committee?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I guess, doon po sa pangamba ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng ANAKPAWIS, na ma-a-outvote iyong siyam kontra amyenda, na out of 15 members, siyam na po iyong magsasaka na magniniyog and plus dalawa na manggagaling sa coconut industry, lima lamang po ang mula sa sangay ng ating gobyerno. Kahit po maglagay tayo po rito ng 100 miyembro ng magniniyog, kung sila po ay papayag na ma-pressure noong lima, sa palagay ko, hindi po maso-solve iyong pangamba ng ating kagalang-galang na Representante ng ANAKPAWIS.

Ang sinasabi po natin dito, dapat iyong siyam na magniniyog, kailangan iyong representante nila, ay iyong matitigas kagaya po noong ating mga kasama dito na galing sa Makabayan bloc para naman hindi sila—kasi binigyan na po natin sila ng sapat na representasyon. Kaya doon po sa pangamba ng ating kagalang-galang na kasama na Rep. Ayik Casilao, hindi po ako naniniwala na iyong siyam ay ma-a-outvote noong lima, kapag iyong siyam na miyembro ng komite ay siyam na magsasaka na may paninindigan at kaya nilang ipaglaban iyong kanilang karapatan dahil nga sa kanila ang pera na ito, Mme. Speaker.

REP. CASILAO. Mme. Speaker, lastly, hopefully, in the IRR, the disenfranchisement of our small coconut farmers should be ensured na hindi ito mangyayari because ang pangamba ng ating mga magniniyog, dahil nga inaasa sa PCA ang pagrehistro at pagkilala, ang pag-certify kung sino ang magiging lehitimong benipisyaryo at sino ang magiging legitimate na small coconut farmers, nandoon na po tayo na kailangang bantayan ito dahil nga kapag umabot sa punto na libo-libo, daang libo at worse, millions ang aabot sa disenfranchisement ng ating mga small coconut farmers, eventually, magresulta po ito ng matinding oposisyon.

Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, at the proper time, I will manifest my suggestion or should we say, propose amendments. However, let me register that this substitute Bill, unfortunately, halos wala pong nakuha sa aking panukalang batas, Mme. Speaker. Again, in the efforts to achieve social justice for our coconut farmers, let this substitute Bill be subjected

to further amendments in order to, para mai-ano natin, para maiangkop natin doon sa kagustuhan ng ating mga magniniyog.

Thank you, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

THE DEPUTY SEPAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.) The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, the next Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor is the Gentleman from AKBAYAN Party List, the Hon. Tomasito “Tom” S. Villarín.

May I move that we recognize him for his interpellation.

THE DEPUTY SEPAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.) The Gentleman from AKBAYAN Party List, the Hon. Tom Villarín is recognized.

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker. Thank you, Floor Leader.

Would the good Sponsor, Representative Panganiban, yield to some questions?

REP. PANGANIBAN. I would gladly yield, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor, AKBAYAN Party-List is one of the principal authors of this measure, and considering that this is timely and very relevant, we pose no major objections to this Bill. We would just like to point out certain or specific provisions that we think should be amended in the context of the general objective of this measure. Before going to my specific question, I would like to agree with the good Sponsor that the P75 billion, now held by the National Treasury, which is not earning interest income since 2012 and another P25 billion that can potentially be recovered, for a P100 billion total, would be very minimal or a very small amount if we consider the following, Mme. Speaker: First, we have 3.5 million hectares of farmlands. Am I correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, distinguished Cong. Tom Villarín, yes, I agree. Mayroon po tayong 3.5 million hectares.

REP. VILLARIN. Considering that of these 3.5 million hectares, we have close to 12 million coconut farmers and farm workers in these coconut farmlands...

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. ...If we look at the statistics, more

than 60 percent of these potential beneficiaries own farmlands which are more than five hectares.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, I do not know where the Gentleman got his data, but as far our data are concerned, 90 percent of the farm holdings are less than five hectares.

REP. VILLARIN. So, 90 percent.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, 90 percent, with less than five hectares.

REP. VILLARIN. Less than five hectares. Thank you for that information, Mme. Speaker, distinguished Sponsor.

Mme. Speaker, going back to the Declaration of Policy, may I refer the good Sponsor to the first page, line 12, on the Declaration of Policy. Section 2 states in part that:

...and ensure that the benefits due to coconut farmers, especially the poor and the marginalized under various statutes shall be consolidated and their delivery expedited.

Is this the section which we can interpret as a social justice measure?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, if I may be allowed to read the whole provision of Section 2 because what the Gentleman from Akbayan quoted is just a fragment of the whole paragraph. May I read the Declaration of Policy under Section 2.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Gentleman may please proceed.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Section 2, the Declaration of Policy, states, and I quote:

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to pursue and attain the balanced, equitable, integrated, and sustainable growth and development of the coconut industry. Towards this end, the State shall adopt the necessary measures to immediately address the serious problems besetting the coconut industry, protect the socio-economic well-being of coconut farmers, and ensure that the benefits due to coconut farmers, especially the poor and the marginalized under various statutes shall be consolidated and their delivery expedited. Any measure or program undertaken in accordance with this Act shall only be deemed complementary to and shall not be a replacement for existing and potential coconut development programs already conducted by other agencies.

So, to answer the query of my good colleague, Mme. Speaker, the phrase “and ensure that the benefits due to coconut farmers,” should be taken in context with the other parts of the paragraph. Yes, this is one of the social justice measures of this House Bill, but it should be taken in context with the other parts of the whole paragraph, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. As a social justice measure, and also given that the funds we are talking about is limited in terms of real value, in terms of the totality of the need for the industry, meaning, that this fund should be prioritized for the small coconut farmers. Am I correct, Mme. Speaker?

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, the measure is entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE COCONUT FARMERS AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND AND PROVIDING FOR ITS MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION, so, its objective is not only to aid, to help small coconut farmers, but the whole coconut industry. So, whether you are a small coconut farmer or a big coconut farmer, whatever the definition of a big or small coconut farmer is, you are part of the industry kaya kasama ka sa tutulongan ng pondong ito.

REP. VILLARIN. Mme. Speaker, as what was stated earlier by the good Sponsor, 90 percent of coconut lands are owned but less than five hectares being tilled.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. If that is the situation, then, of course, these funds should go to the 90 percent and not to the 10 percent.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Exactly, Mme. Speaker. Then again, if we want to help the coconut industry as a whole, we could not neglect the 10 percent. We are helping the 90 percent but we should not also hold back our help or aid to the other 10 percent.

In fact, Mme. Speaker, I would like to quote the decision of the Supreme Court because it is the Supreme Court which decided that in order for the fund to be utilized, there should be a legislation and this legislation shall proceed from the Supreme Court decision. In the line of cases and decisions made by the Supreme Court, it did not make any distinction between small farmers and big farmers. What the decision said is that the fund is of public nature and public interest and should be used for the development of the coconut industry and the coconut farmers, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. I will not argue with that, Mme.

Speaker. What am I saying is that because we are enacting a measure involving very limited funds, and of course, considering that as a whole Body, Congress can also enact similar measures to help the coconut industry. It would not prevent us from pushing for other measures to support the industry. What I am just reiterating is that, considering that the nature of these funds as coming from the small coconut farmers, then the thinking and the bias for this legislation would be for the small coconut farmers.

With that, Mme. Speaker, I would just like to propose a minor amendment and this would be done through an individual amendment later. What I am saying is that because the Senate, as I have known, has passed a similar measure and in that version there is really a specific focus on the definition of coconut farmer and one such definition involved delimiting, well, who are the coconut farmers that can benefit from this small trust fund. Later in the period of individual amendments, I hope that the good Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, may accommodate an amendment of maybe, five words to that effect.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, may I answer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Gentleman will please respond.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Yes, because this definition of coconut farmers has been discussed very lengthily in the Committee level, we are proceeding from the premise that this is a social justice measure. But I believe the Gentleman would agree with me that when we speak of social justice, hindi lamang po tayo dapat nakatuon doon sa small farmers because, of course, sa social justice, dapat din mayroon niyan sa lahat, hindi lamang po social justice para sa maliliit na magsasaka.

May I just remind the Gentleman, Mme. Speaker, that the coco levy fund was collected in 1971 up to 1982 mula sa lahat ng magsasaka, without distinction. Hindi sinabi roon na kapag five-and-a-half ka, hindi ka magbabayad, at kapag less than five ang ano mo, bayad ka ng coco levy. Hindi po ganoon ang nangyari, Mme. Speaker. Lahat ng magniniyog ay nagbayad, may 100 ektarya ka man o may less than five hectares. Kaya marapat lamang na ang biyaya ng coco levy fund ay para sa lahat ng nag-kontribusyon o nagbayad noong sinisingil pa itong coco levy fund.

During the discussion on the definition, whether we limit it to those farmers who own less than five hectares, we voted and majority in the Committee, all, in fact, unanimously voted that we define coconut farmers without limiting the number of hectares the farmer is tilling. Ganoon po ang nangyari, Mme. Speaker. We

believe that we are proceeding from the premise of a social justice measure, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. Mme. Speaker, just as my last point, an appeal to this august Body, because as what was mentioned, 90 percent of the 12 million farmers, farm workers, and those leaseholders in the coconut lands, 90 percent of them should directly benefit from this P75 or P100 billion. To think that the P100 billion is—ang sabi nga kanina ng Sponsor, Mme. Speaker, kung hahati-hatiin ito sa 12 million ay talagang kulang. Hindi po ba, Mme. Speaker?

Ibig lang sabihin kailangan din nating mag-prioritize. What I am saying is that if we are taking off from that premise na tulungan natin ang 90 percent, then let it be so. Then, we focus these minimal funds para sa pagtulong doon sa 90 percent at hanapan na lang natin ng paraan ang 10 percent sa ibang, sabihin nating polisiya or budget appropriations na nakikita natin para sa kanila. Iyon lang po ang appeal ko, Mme. Speaker.

REP. PANGANIBAN. Mme. Speaker, baka po ang 10 percent na may-ari ng ating limang ektarya pataas ay magsampa pa ng kaso sa Korte Suprema at mas lalo pang hindi mapayagan ang House measure na ito. Kawawa naman iyong 90 percent na magsasaka natin, Mme. Speaker.

REP. VILLARIN. We can come to that, Mme. Speaker, if we pass that legislation because, again, as a social legislation, it really has to have a bias for the poor and the poor is 90 percent of the total beneficiaries.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Are you through, Congressman Villarín?

REP. VILLARIN. Thank you, Mme. Speaker, and I reserve to propose my individual amendment during the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Thank you, Congressman Villarín. The Floor Leader is recognized.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5745

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we suspend the consideration of House Bill No. 5745.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

CONSIDERATION OF H.B. NO. 5818  
ON SECOND READING

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP AND DEBATE

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we consider House Bill No. 5818, contained in Committee Report No. 294, as reported out by the Committee on Labor and Employment.

May I ask that the Secretary General be directed to read only the title of the measure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.\*

The Secretary General is directed to read only the title of measure.

*With the permission of the Body, and since copies of the measure have been previously distributed, the Secretary General read only the title thereof without prejudice to inserting its text in the Congressional Record.*

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Bill No. 5818, entitled : AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF EMPLOYERS IN POSTING NOTICES OF TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER EMPLOYEES IN NEWSPAPERS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND OTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION VENUES.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Floor Leader is recognized.

REP. HERRERA-DY. I move that we recognize the Gentleman from the Third District of Cagayan, the Hon. Randolph S. Ting, for his sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Hon. Randolph S. Ting is recognized.

REP. TING. Mme. Speaker, may I request that the Explanatory Note of the Bill be considered as its sponsorship speech.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate the Sponsor and

who registered an objection, I move that we terminate the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no Committee amendments, I move that we proceed to the individual amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, there being no individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. HERRERA-DY. Mme. Speaker, I move that we vote on House Bill No. 5818 on Second Reading.

VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are in favor, please say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are against, please say *nay*. *(Silence)*

APPROVAL OF H.B. NO. 5818  
ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.  
House Bill No. 5818 is approved on Second Reading.

REP. TING. Thank You, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we take up local bills.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

#### OMNIBUS CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move for the omnibus consideration of the following bills on Second Reading:

1. House Bill No. 5747, as contained in Committee Report No. 263, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING PILIS FALLS IN BARANGAY PALILI, MUNICIPALITY OF SAMAL, PROVINCE OF BATAAN AN ECOTOURISM SITE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

2. House Bill No. 5748, as contained in Committee Report No. 264, entitled: AN ACT DECLARING THE MUNICIPALITY OF JOVELLAR IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY AN ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

3. House Bill No. 5754, as contained in Committee Report No. 266, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE RIZAL NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ARTS AND TRADES-SANTOR EXTENSION IN BARANGAY SANTOR, MUNICIPALITY OF RIZAL, PROVINCE OF KALINGA FROM THE RIZAL NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ARTS AND TRADES, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SANTOR NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

4. House Bill No. 5755, as contained in Committee Report No. 267, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – DON BOSCO EXTENSION IN BARANGAY DON BOSCO, PARAÑAQUE CITY, FROM THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS DON BOSCO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

5. House Bill No. 5756, as contained in Committee Report No. 268, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BARANGAY DEPASE, MUNICIPALITY OF BAYOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR TO BE KNOWN AS DEPASE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

6. House Bill No. 5757, as contained in Committee Report No. 269, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX IN BARANGAY

SAN ANTONIO, PARAÑAQUE CITY, FROM THE PARAÑAQUE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS SAN ANTONIO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PARAÑAQUE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

7. House Bill No. 5758, as contained in Committee Report No. 270, entitled: AN ACT SEPARATING THE BOKOD NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – DAKLAN EXTENSION IN BARANGAY TUBLAY CENTER, MUNICIPALITY OF LA TRINIDAD, PROVINCE OF BENGUET FROM THE BOKOD NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CONVERTING IT INTO AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TO BE KNOWN AS DAKLAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

8. House Bill No. 4274, as contained in Committee Report No. 298, entitled: AN ACT UPGRADING THE SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL IN SANTIAGO CITY, PROVINCE OF ISABELA INTO A TERTIARY GENERAL HOSPITAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE SOUTHERN ISABELA MEDICAL CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

9. House Bill No. 5880, as contained in Committee Report No. 299, entitled: AN ACT UPGRADING THE AMAI PAKPAK MEDICAL CENTER IN MARAWI CITY, PROVINCE OF LANA DEL SUR, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

10. House Bill No. 5881, as contained in Committee Report No. 300, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SOCCSKSARGEN GENERAL HOSPITAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SURALLAH, PROVINCE OF SOUTH COTABATO, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

11. House Bill No. 5903, as contained in Committee Report No. 301, entitled: AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF LAGUNA TO BE STATIONED IN CALAMBA CITY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14 (E) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

12. House Bill No. 5904, as contained in Committee Report No. 302, entitled: AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF BATAC, PROVINCE OF ILOCOS NORTE, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (A) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

13. House Bill No. 5905, as contained in Committee Report No. 303, entitled: AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN MALABON CITY, METRO MANILA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 27 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED;

14. House Bill No. 5906, as contained in Committee Report No. 304, entitled: AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BONGABONG, AND FOUR (4) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BANSUD, BULALACAO, GLORIA, AND MANSALAY, ALL IN THE PROVINCE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14(E) AND SECTION 30 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

15. House Bill No. 5907, as contained in Committee Report No. 305, entitled: AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE THIRD JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF IBA, PROVINCE OF ZAMBALES, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (C) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

16. House Bill No. 198, as contained in Committee Report No. 306, entitled: AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL REGIONAL TRIAL COURT BRANCH IN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE TO BE STATIONED IN THE CITY OF BAYBAY, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

17. House Bill No. 5932, as contained in Committee Report No. 308, entitled: AN ACT CREATING TWO (2) ADDITIONAL BRANCHES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE TO BE STATIONED IN ORMOC CITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (I) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE

KNOWN AS THE “JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED;

18. House Bill No. 3443, as contained in Committee Report No. 309, entitled: AN ACT CREATING AN ADDITIONAL BRANCH OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL REGION TO BE STATIONED IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ASINGAN, PROVINCE OF PANGASINAN, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 14, PARAGRAPH (A) OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980”, AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

19. House Bill No. 5954, as contained in Committee Report No. 312, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) SATELLITE OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MALAY, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

20. House Bill No. 5955, as contained in Committee Report No. 313, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NARRA, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

21. House Bill No. 1924, as contained in Committee Report No. 315, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE-MEDELLIN EXTENSION OFFICE INTO A REGULAR DISTRICT OFFICE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES;

22. House Bill No. 5992, as contained in Committee Report No. 316, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE SATELLITE OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE CITY OF BAYUGAN, PROVINCE OF AGUSAN DEL SUR, INTO A REGULAR DISTRICT OFFICE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

23. House Bill No. 3169, as contained in Committee Report No. 317, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) LICENSING CENTER IN THE CITY OF BATANGAS, PROVINCE OF BATANGAS INTO A REGULAR LICENSING CENTER TO BE KNOWN AS THE BATANGAS CITY LICENSING CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

24. House Bill No. 4065, as contained in Committee Report No. 318, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGULAR DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE CITY OF PANABO, PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR;

25. House Bill No. 4166, as contained in Committee Report No. 319, entitled: AN ACT CONVERTING THE LAND TRANSPORTATION

OFFICE (LTO) LICENSING CENTER IN THE CITY OF SAN PABLO, PROVINCE OF LAGUNA INTO A REGULAR LICENSING CENTER TO BE KNOWN AS THE SAN PABLO CITY LICENSING CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR; and

26. House Bill No. 4765, as contained in Committee Report No. 323, entitled: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXTENSION OFFICE OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE (LTO) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BROOKE'S POINT, PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The Dep. Majority Leader is recognized.

REP. DEFENSOR. Before we proceed, I move that we first open the period of sponsorship and debate on these measures. I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. For these measures, I move that we have the respective Explanatory Notes of the Bills as the sponsorship speeches thereon, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, there being no Member who wishes to interpellate or speak against these measures, I move that we close the period of sponsorship and debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we open the period of amendments and that we approve the Committee amendments, if any, as contained in the respective committee reports of the aforementioned Bills.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is

there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, there being no individual amendments, I move that we close the period of amendments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move for the omnibus approval of the aforesaid local Bills on Second Reading.

#### VIVA VOCE VOTING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are in favor of the approval of the aforementioned local Bills in the omnibus motion, say *aye*.

SEVERAL MEMBERS. *Aye*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). As many as are against, please say *nay*. (*Silence*)

#### OMNIBUS APPROVAL OF LOCAL BILLS ON SECOND READING

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The *ayes* have it; the motion is approved.

The aforementioned local Bills enumerated in the omnibus motion are hereby approved on Second Reading.\*

#### APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we approve Journal No. 4 for the session on July 31, 2017.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

#### REFERRAL OF HOUSE RESOLUTIONS ON INQUIRIES IN AID OF LEGISLATION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, in accordance with our Rules Governing Inquiries in Aid of Legislation, I move that we refer the following House Resolutions to the appropriate Committees:

1. House Resolution No. 1053 re the propriety and legitimacy of Manila North Tollways Corporation's

\* See MEASURES CONSIDERED (printed separately)

request for another increase in the closed system toll rates at the North Luzon Expressway, to the Committee on Transportation;

2. House Resolution No. 1055 re the reported garlic importation by the Department of Agriculture and the possibility of hoarding, its manipulative practices and price hike that affect the consumers and income/livelihood of garlic farmers, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;

3. House Resolution No. 1056 re review of Republic Act 8042 or otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended by Republic Act 10022 to evaluate its effectivity in the promotion and protection of Filipino migrant's rights and their families and resolve the root cause of forced migration in fulfillment of Article II, Section 18 and Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

4. House Resolution No. 1058 re the deliberate sabotage by Provincial Governor Roel R. Degamo, Board Member Miguel Dungog, Provincial Director Henry Biñas, and several Chiefs of Police, all of Negros Oriental, of Small Town Lottery (STL) operations duly sanctioned by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) in the Province of Negros Oriental, to the Committee on Public Order and Safety;

5. House Resolution No. 1059 re business operations and tax payment/liabilities of fishing operators in the coastal areas of the Province of Negros Oriental, to the Committee on Ways and Means;

6. House Resolution No. 1068 re the P79 million-worth of cash and cheques recovered in Marawi City during military clearing operations and whether it is connected to drugs and terrorist operations, to the Committees on National Defense and Security, and Public Order and Safety;

7. House Resolution No. 1071 re the Philippine government's assessment of and response to the ongoing diplomatic row between the State of Qatar and three Gulf Countries, namely, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and four allied Islamic states, namely, Egypt, Libya, The Maldives and Yemen that may affect the lives of thousands of overseas Filipino workers, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

8. House Resolution No. 1072 re the security and stability of bank internal systems in light of the recent BPI internal error, to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries;

9. House Resolution No. 1073 re the arbitrary exclusion of Mary Joy Tabal, Philippine marathoner, as well as all others who may be similarly situated, from the Philippine Delegation to the 29th Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur, to the Committee on Youth and Sports Development;

10. House Resolution No. 1074 re the alleged proliferation of fake medical certificates and pre-signed medical test results of physicians in the application or renewal of driver's license at the Land Transportation Office (LTO), to the Committee on Transportation;

11. House Resolution No. 1075 re the supposed participation of United States Forces in the Marawi City operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to the Committees on National Defense and Security, and Public Order and Safety;

12. House Resolution No. 1076 re the recent diplomatic crisis in Qatar which could threaten the security and well-being of overseas Filipinos in order to propose appropriate policy recommendations as well as to urge the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to come up with contingency measures on behalf of the affected overseas Filipinos and their families, to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs;

13. House Resolution No. 1079 re alleged unpaid carriage fees of Sky Cable payable to Solar Entertainment as well as devising a scheme to facilitate the recompense of affected subscribers, to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology;

14. House Resolution No. 1080 re the Resorts World's fiasco with view to deter the same and debunk misguided accounts, to the Committees on Public Order and Safety, Games and Amusements, and Tourism;

15. House Resolution No. 1081 re the circumstances surrounding the Bank of the Philippine Islands' (BPI) technical system glitch, to the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries;

16. House Resolution No. 1084 re the alleged violation of the Iplan Nickel Corporation in Brooke's Point, Palawan, to the Committee on Natural Resources;

17. House Resolution No. 1085 re the plight of evacuees from the Islamic City of Marawi who fall victims of the ongoing siege and state of martial law in entire Mindanao, to the Committee on Human Rights;

18. House Resolution No. 1086 re the effect of artificial intelligence (AI) on workers and employment, to the Committee on Labor and Employment;

19. House Resolution No. 1087 re the roadmap, programs, projects and action plans of the Department of Tourism that aim to regulate tourist spots in order to promote sustainability, to the Committee on Tourism;

20. House Resolution No. 1095 re the reported building of Underwater Resort and Theme Park on

an island known as the Philippines Last Ecological Frontier, to the Committee on Tourism;

21. House Resolution No. 1097 re the status of the Food and Drug Administration's hearings to resolve the issue on whether or not the contraceptives in the market are abortifacients, to the Committee on Health;

22. House Resolution No. 1103 re the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), and determine its accountability relative to the unlawful distribution of water from the Angat River and violations of Article 31 of Presidential Decree No. 1067 and Section 291 of the Local Government Code, to the Committee on Agriculture and Food;

23. House Resolution No. 1106 re the anomalous and scandalous possibility of another water rate hike by Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services Inc., to the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization;

24. House Resolution No. 1107 re the possible mandatory construction of alternative roads to major highways, to the Committee on Public Works and Highways;

25. House Resolution No. 1108 re the alleged irregularities on the billings, meter readings, unexplained charges and other complaints of inefficient service of the Panay Electric Company (PECO), to the Committee on Energy;

26. House Resolution No. 1109 re constitutional violations made by elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Marawi City in the performance of their duties under Presidential Proclamation No. 216, Series of 2017, to the

Committees on National Defense and Security, and Public Order and Safety;

27. House Resolution No. 1113 re the military operations of the elements of the 39th and 72nd Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) in North Cotabato and Bukidnon that led to documented cases of human rights violations of the civilians therein under the circumstances of martial law and suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao, to the Committees on National Defense and Security, and Public Order and Safety; and

28. House Resolution No. 1145 re the alleged irregularities in respect of taxes assessed on and collected from Del Monte Philippines, Inc. resulting to revenue loss to the government, to the Committee on Ways and Means.

I so move, Mme. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). Is there any objection? (*Silence*) The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

REP. DEFENSOR. Mme. Speaker, I move that we adjourn the session until tomorrow, the 2nd of August 2017 at four o'clock in the afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Rep. Garcia, G.). The session is adjourned until tomorrow, the 2nd of August 2017, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

*It was 6:44 p.m.*