

RECORD OF THE SENATE

MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2000

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:25 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Franklin M. Drilon, called the session to order.

The President. The 16th session of the Senate in the Third Regular Session of the Eleventh Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Blas Fajardo Ople.

After the prayer, the Commission on Audit Chorale will lead us in the singing of the national anthem. The chorale will also render another song, entitled *Bahay*.

Everybody rose for the prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Ople.

Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of Hosts, Lord of History, in the midst of our grave and critical problems, we thank You for the gift of life;

Thank You for the sun that nourishes all forms of life on this modest planet that we inhabit by Your grace;

Thank You for the gift of a beautiful land, "Pearl of the Orient Seas," the only country You have given us;

Thank You for our people's trust that has sent us to this august institution, the Senate of the Philippines, to make good laws and otherwise serve the interests of our people, especially the poor;

Thank You for the privilege of associating together for the conquest of the millennial poverty of our people in the greatest political adventure of our lives under the leadership of our friend and President, Joseph Ejercito Estrada, and the wise direction and guidance of our Senate President, Franklin M. Drilon, and the other officers of this institution.

For all these blessings, we thank You, Lord.

Amen.

The President. Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

The President. The Chair would like to thank the Commission on Audit Chorale for that beautiful rendition of the national anthem and another song, entitled *Bahay*.

ROLL CALL

The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes], reading:

Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta	Present
Senator Robert Z. Barbers	Present
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon	Present
Senator Renato L. <i>Compañero</i> Cayetano	Present
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng	Present
Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago	Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	Present**
Senator Juan M. Flavier	*
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona Jr.	Present
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan	Absent***
Senator Robert S. Jaworski	Present
Senator Loren B. Legarda-Leviste	Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr.	Present
Senator Blas F. Ople	Present
Senator John Henry R. Osmeña	Present
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III	Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr.	Present
Senator Ramon B. Revilla	Present
Senator Raul S. Roco	Present
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III	Present
Senator Francisco S. Tatad	Present
The President	Present

The President. With 19 senators present, there is a quorum.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move that we dispense

* On official mission

** On official mission but arrived after the roll call

*** On account of illness

with the reading of the *Journal* of Session No. 15 of Wednesday, 23rd of August, 2000 and consider it approved.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

Senator Tatad. Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

**MOTION OF SENATOR TATAD
(To Defer the Reading of the Reference of Business)**

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, in order to allow us to consider on Third Reading every important measure and in view of the length of the Order of Business today, I move that we defer the reading of the Reference of Business to a later hour.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

**BILL ON THIRD READING
S. No. 2117--Providing Guidelines for Expropriation
Proceedings**

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move that we vote on Third Reading on Senate Bill No. 2117. Copies of the bill were distributed to the members on August 21, 2000.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, voting on Third Reading on Senate Bill No. 2117 is in order.

The Secretary will please read only the title of the bill.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senate Bill No. 2117, entitled

**AN ACT PROVIDING GUIDELINES FOR
EXPROPRIATION PROCEEDINGS AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES**

The President. We shall now vote on the bill and the Secretary will call the roll.

The Acting Secretary [Atty. Reyes]. Senators

Aquino-Oreta	Yes
Barbers	Yes
Biazon	Yes
Cayetano	Yes
Coseteng	Yes

Defensor Santiago	Yes
Guingona Jr.	Yes
Jaworski	Yes
Legarda-Leviste	Yes
Magsaysay Jr.	Yes
Ople	Yes
Osmeña (J.)	Yes
Osmeña III	Yes
Pimentel Jr.	Yes
Revilla	Yes
Roco	Yes
Sotto III	Yes
Tatad	Yes
The President	Yes

APPROVAL OF S. NO. 2117 ON THIRD READING

The President. With 19 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, Senate Bill No. 2117 is approved on Third Reading.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President.

The President. Senator Cayetano is recognized.

**MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR CAYETANO
(Senators Roco and Barbers as Coauthors of S. No. 2117)**

Senator Cayetano. With the permission of the Majority Leader, may I put on record, Mr. President, that Sen. Raul S. Roco and Senator Barbers are coauthors of Senate Bill No. 2117.

**MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR DRILON
(All Senators Present as Coauthors of S. No. 2117)**

The President. And will the principal author and sponsor consider that all the senators present here be made coauthors of this bill?

Senator Cayetano. With pleasure, Mr. President.

The President. The Secretary will record the names of all the senators present as coauthors.

Senator Tatad. Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON S. NO. 2117/H. NO. 1422
(Providing Guidelines for Expropriation Proceedings)**

Senator Tatad. I move that we now constitute the Senate

panel to the Bicameral Conference Committee on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 2117 and its counterpart. For that purpose, I hereby nominate Sen. Renato L. *Compañero* Cayetano as chairman and Sen. Robert S. Jaworski and Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. as members.

The President. Is there any objection? [*Silence*] There being none, the Bicameral Conference Committee is so constituted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF
MIRIAM COLLEGE STUDENTS, BICOLANO
BALIKBAYAN AND OFFICIALS OF PPI AND KBP

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, we are honored to have in this Hall this afternoon a number of students from Miriam College here to observe parliamentary proceedings. And also some *balikbayan*, originally Bicolanos, now living in the United States.

The President. The Chamber welcomes our visitors. And we also take note of the presence of officials of the Philippine Press Institute and the KBP. Mr. Majority Leader, they are also around.

MOTION OF SENATOR TATAD
(Referral of S. No. 1648 to Education Committee and
S. No. 1781 to Local Government Committee)

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move to transfer Senate Bill No. 1648, which was originally referred to the Committee on Rules, to the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture; and Senate Bill No. 1781, which was originally referred to the Committee on Rules, to the Committee on Local Government.

The President. Is there any objection? [*Silence*] There being none, the motion is approved.

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, may I ask to be recognized on a question of collective privilege.

The President. The Majority Leader is so recognized.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF SENATOR TATAD
(The Agony Is Over, But Not For Us)

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, distinguished colleagues:

After four long and agonizing months, the end to the Sulu hostage crisis is finally in sight. Some of the hostages have been freed, and there is every reason to believe that the rest will soon be, following a plan that takes into account the safe

withdrawal of the Abu Sayyaf. Together with their families and friends, the released hostages can now celebrate. For us, however, the agony is not over yet, not just yet. So much more remains to be done to end the crisis and to win the peace.

First of all, we have to make sure that all the hostages are finally released without any further hitches. Thereafter, we have to make sure that this was the last kidnapping of its kind either by the Abu Sayyaf or by any other group that may wish to follow suit. With the millions of dollars reportedly paid out by the Libyans for the hostages, the Sipadan-to-Sulu kidnapping might have already spawned a new criminal industry, and this must be aborted. This must be suppressed.

Second, Mr. President, the rebellion persists—we must now end it. After seven months of fighting between government and secessionist forces, nearly a thousand people have been killed, thousands of families displaced, so much properties destroyed, so much money wasted. Rebel camps have been overrun, rebel-infested territory cleared, and our flag now flies unchallenged in what used to be the rebels' main camp. But the leader of the scattered forces has called for *jihād*, and so the killing continues.

Abroad, the painful perception is that the whole of Mindanao, if not the entire country, is on fire, that the State is under siege, and that the center can no longer hold. For many Filipinos this has been sufficient reason to rally behind their government. But some have found it more useful to savage and scoff at government for failing to prevent the hostage-taking and the outbreak of secessionist violence and stanch the negative reports that have scared off the tourists.

On his last trip to the United States, President Estrada told U.S. officials, captains of industry, and the Filipino community that the real picture is not at all bleak. They cheered and thanked him for it. But he only had to warm his seat at the end of that visit before the media announced the alleged existence of yet another group that wanted him out of office. And every minute criticism from abroad has since been magnified in the local press as a complete rubbishing of government by the greatest powers on earth.

No president can allow himself to be detained by every barking dog in the street. And to his credit, President Estrada has refused to be so detained. But so much barking has replaced honest criticism and those who rubbish the President daily think they have a duty to dream up more mischief.

In the past, they used tarot cards, tea leaves, and entrails of dead animals, and, of course, *TIME* and *Newsweek*, to predict the destruction of the President. Today more Filipinos