

## RECORD OF THE SENATE

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2000**

### RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

*At 10:24 a.m., the session was resumed with the Hon. Senate President Franklin M. Drilon, presiding.*

**The President.** The session is resumed. The Majority Leader is recognized.

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move that the Secretary read the Third Additional Reference of Business.

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

The Secretary will read the Third Additional Reference of Business.

### THIRD ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

#### BILL ON FIRST READING

**The Secretary.** Senate Bill No. 2175, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF  
A MULTI-SECTORAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION COUNCIL IN EVERY  
MUNICIPALITY IN THE PROVINCE OF  
AURORA AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
THEREFOR

Introduced by Senator Jaworski

**The President.** Referred to the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Local Government; and Finance

### RESOLUTION

**The Secretary.** Proposed Senate Resolution No. 879, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO INQUIRE,  
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE  
CONTINUING DECLINE OF THE HEALTH OF  
THE ELDERLY AND THE CONTINUING  
"GRAYING" OF THE PHILIPPINE POPULATION  
BASED ON RECENT DEMOGRAPHIC STUDIES

Introduced by Senator Flavio

**The President.** Referred to the Committee on Health and Demography

The Majority Leader is recognized.

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, on a question of personal and collective privilege, I ask that the Minority Leader be recognized.

**The President.** Sen. Teofisto T. Guingona Jr. is recognized.

### QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF SENATOR GUINGONA (I Accuse!)

**Senator Guingona.** Thank you, Mr. President.

Distinguished colleagues, I accuse Joseph Ejercito Estrada, President of the Republic of the Philippines, of betraying public trust. The people, specially the poor, reposed in him the trust that he would protect...

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President.

**The President.** The Majority Leader is recognized.

**Senator Tatad.** With the permission of the Minority Leader, since he rose on a question of personal and collective privilege, we would be honored and it would be in order for him to state why this is a matter of personal and collective privilege.

### SUSPENSION OF SESSION

**The President.** With the permission of the Chamber, the Chair declares a one-minute suspension of the session, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

*It was 10:26 a.m.*

### RESUMPTION OF SESSION

*At 10:27 a.m., the session was resumed.*

**The President.** The session is resumed. The Minority Leader is recognized.

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, in response to the query of the distinguished Majority Leader, this is a personal and collective privilege because it affects all of the lawmakers. We are crafting here legislation that would protect the nation from immoral values and illegal gambling, and graft and corruption which I will specify. I do not speak without proof.

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

BILL ON SECOND READING  
S. No. 2157—Amending the Local Government  
Code of 1991

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move that we consider Senate Bill No. 2157 as reported out under Committee Report No. 418.

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

Consideration of Senate Bill No. 2157 is now in order. With the permission of the Body, the Secretary will read only the title of the bill without prejudice to inserting in the *Record* the whole text thereof.

**The Secretary.** Senate Bill No. 2157, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 450 OF  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
CODE OF 1991, BY INCREASING THE  
AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME REQUIRE-  
MENT FOR A MUNICIPALITY OR  
CLUSTER OF BARANGAYS TO BE  
CONVERTED INTO A COMPONENT CITY

*The following is the whole text of the bill:*

Senate Bill No. 2157

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 450 OF  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
CODE OF 1991, BY INCREASING THE  
AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME REQUIRE-  
MENT FOR A MUNICIPALITY OR  
CLUSTER OF BARANGAYS TO BE  
CONVERTED INTO A COMPONENT CITY

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of  
Representatives of the Philippines in Congress  
assembled:*

SECTION 1. Section 450 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 450. *Requisites for Creation.* (a) A municipality or a cluster of barangays may be converted into a component city if it has [an] A LOCALLY GENERATED average annual income, as certified by the Department of Finance, of at least [Twenty million pesos (P20,000,000.00)] ONE HUNDRED MILLION PESOS (P100,000,000.00) for the last two (2) consecutive years based on [1991] 2000 constant prices, and if it has [either of] the following requisites:

- (i) a contiguous territory of at least one hundred (100) square kilometers, as certified by the Lands Management Bureau; [or] AND
- (ii) a population of not less than one hundred fifty thousand (150,000) inhabitants, as certified by the National Statistics Office:

*[Provided, That, t]*The creation thereof shall not reduce the land area, population, and income of the original unit or units at the time of said creation to less than the minimum requirements prescribed herein.

(b) The territorial jurisdiction of a newly-created city shall be properly identified by metes and bounds. The requirement on land area shall not apply where the city proposed to be created is composed of one (1) or more islands. The territory need not be contiguous if it comprises two (2) or more islands.

(c) The average annual income shall include the income accruing to the general fund, exclusive of special funds, transfers, and non-recurring income."

SEC. 2. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 3. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, for the sponsorship, I ask that Senator Pimentel be recognized.

**The President.** Senator Pimentel is recognized.

#### SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

**Senator Pimentel.** Mr. President, I would have wanted this bill to be included in the whole set of proposed amendments that we have introduced to precisely amend the Local Government Code of 1991. However, it is a fact that there is a mad rush of municipalities wanting to be converted into cities. Whereas in 1991, when the Local Government Code was approved, there were only 60 cities, today the number has increased to 85 cities, with 41 more municipalities applying for conversion to the same status. At the rate we are going, I am apprehensive that before long this nation will be a nation of all cities and no municipalities.

It is for that reason, Mr. President, that we are proposing among other things, that the financial requirement, which, under the Local Government Code, is fixed at P20 million, be raised to P100 million to enable a municipality to have the right to be converted into a city, and the P100 million should be sourced from locally generated funds.

What has been happening, Mr. President, is, the municipalities aspiring to become cities say that they qualify in terms of financial requirements by incorporating the Internal Revenue share of the taxes of the nation added on to their regularly generated revenue. Under that requirement, it looks clear to me that practically all the municipalities of this country would qualify to become cities.

It is precisely for that reason, therefore, that we are seeking the approval of this Chamber to amend, particularly Section 450 of Republic Act No. 7160, the requisite for the average annual income of a municipality to be converted into a city or cluster of barangays which may seek to be converted into a city, raising that revenue requirement from P20 million to P100 million for the last two consecutive years based on 2000 constant prices.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

We are now amending the reference point of "1991" to change that to 2000 CONSTANT PRICES.

Also, Mr. President, we are seeking to amend the provision that requires an alternative compliance by the municipality seeking to be a city. Meaning, under the old requirement, what was stated was "a municipality must have a contiguous territory

of at least 100 square kilometers as certified by the Land Management Bureau or"—and I would like to emphasize that the word "or" is indicated in this law—"a population of not less than 150,000 inhabitants as certified by the National Statistics Office."

Therefore, under this provision, Mr. President, for as long as a municipality has a contiguous territory of at least 100 square kilometers or a population of not less than 150,000 along with the financial capability indicated by at least P20 million annual income based on 1991 constant prices, that municipality would already be qualified. So aside from proposing that the financial requirement be raised from P20 million to P100 million of locally generated income, the committee also recommends that the word "or" in the phrase "territory or population" found in the other requisite be changed into AND.

So that under the proposal, for a municipality or a cluster of barangays to be converted into a city, it has to have a locally generated annual income of at least P100 million as certified by the Department of Finance; a contiguous territory of at least 100 square kilometers as certified by the Land Management Bureau; and a population of not less than 150,000 inhabitants as certified by the National Statistics Office.

That is the thrust of the proposed amendments that we are seeking, Mr. President, as regards Section 450 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, may I ask that the Minority Leader be recognized.

**The President.** The Minority Leader, Sen. Teofisto T. Guingona Jr., is recognized.

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, will the distinguished sponsor yield for some questions?

**Senator Pimentel.** As long as he has no more bombshells to explode this morning, willingly, Mr. President.

**Senator Guingona.** No more. The proposal seeks to change the amount or the ceiling from P20 million to P100 million. But I heard the distinguished sponsor say that it should be from local sources. Would this be correct?

**Senator Pimentel.** That is correct, Mr. President. It is precisely formulated to address our concern that in the

estimation of the amount of the annual income of the municipalities seeking to be converted into cities, they would include in their submission to our committee the internal revenue share that comes from the central government precisely to come up with the requirement or even surpass the financial requirement.

So our intention is to make sure that this time around, only locally generated income would be considered. Because the idea is, if a municipality has so much locally generated money, it is more than qualified to become a city even if there is no internal revenue share that is coming its way.

**Senator Guingona.** For example, a municipality discovers a natural resource that is a valuable asset which generates income, may we know the proportion which goes to the national government and the local government?

**Senator Pimentel.** It is also 60 percent, Mr. President.

**Senator Guingona.** Is it 60 percent to the local government?

**Senator Pimentel.** No, Mr. President. It is 40 percent to the local government.

**Senator Guingona.** It is 40 percent for the local government. That is for the municipality or for the province?

**Senator Pimentel.** There is a formula for sharing. I think 45 percent goes to the municipality, 20 percent goes to the barangay, if I am not mistaken, and 35 percent goes to the province.

**Senator Guingona.** So the computation will be on the 45 percent?

**Senator Pimentel.** The computation is based on the 40 percent share of the local government.

**Senator Guingona.** I just want to clarify that because in the proposed ARMM amendment, any income from natural resources would automatically go to the local government. Is there a difference? Is there an incentive on the part of...

**Senator Pimentel.** Mr. President, the point of the distinguished gentleman is well-taken.

In the amendments to the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the formula is different. But that is only a proposal up to now and we are hewing as closely as possible to the present provisions of the Local Government Code in relation to the specific proposals so as not to complicate the situation. So for the moment, this is

what will be the sharing as proposed by us as far as the matter of sharing the wealth of the nation is concerned between the central government and the local government unit where that resource might be located.

**Senator Guingona.** I thank the distinguished sponsor for that answer.

This refers not only to natural resources but to any income. For example, if the municipality decides to adopt a "Reno-type" class of generating funds...

**Senator Pimentel.** Gambling?

**Senator Guingona.** Yes, Mr. President.

**Senator Pimentel.** I think all the revenues will go to the local government unit, unless, of course, Pagcor objects. Aside from any complications arising from the franchise of Pagcor, all revenues generated by act of the local government would go to the local government concerned. That is a principle that we can safely say, Mr. President.

**Senator Guingona.** I see. So later on, when we consider the ARMM, perhaps we can jibe this.

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes, Mr. President. We can jibe it with the general principles.

**Senator Guingona.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**Senator Sotto.** Mr. President, before we terminate the period of interpellations, may I ask some clarificatory questions if the distinguished sponsor from Mindanao will agree.

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes. Surely, Mr. President.

**Senator Sotto.** Mr. President, we just want to be enlightened again on the previous qualification and the present one being proposed. Before there were three...

**Senator Pimentel.** There are three requisites for a municipality to become a city. Let us start with the finance.

**Senator Sotto.** Will the distinguished sponsor please refresh us? I used to be the chairman of the Committee on Local Government, but the new job that was given to me by the Senate has erased completely my memory as far as the Local Government Code is concerned.

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes, Mr. President, with pleasure. There are three requirements. One is financial.

**Senator Sotto.** All right. It used to be P20 million.

**Senator Pimentel.** It is P20 million. Now we are raising it to P100 million of locally generated funds.

**Senator Sotto.** In other words, the P20 million before includes the IRA.

**Senator Pimentel.** No, Mr. President.

**Senator Sotto.** It should not have been included?

**Senator Pimentel.** The internal revenue share should never have been included. That was not the intention when we first crafted the Local Government Code. The financial capacity was supposed to be demonstrated by the municipality wishing to become a city by its own effort, meaning to say, it should not rely on the internal revenue share that comes from the government. Unfortunately, I think what happened in past conversions of municipalities into cities was, the Department of Budget and Management, along with the Department of Finance, had included the internal revenue share as a part of the municipality, demonstration that they are now financially capable and can measure up to the requirement of the Local Government Code of having a revenue of at least P20 million.

**Senator Sotto.** I am glad that the sponsor, Mr. President, has spread that into the *Record* because otherwise, if he did not mention the Department of Finance and the Department of Budget and Management, then I would have been blamed for the misinterpretation. But anyway, the gentleman is correct. That was the interpretation given to us during the hearings.

So, now, from P20 million, we make it P100 million from locally generated income as far as population is concerned.

**Senator Pimentel.** As far as population is concerned, there will be no change, Mr. President. Still 150,000.

**Senator Sotto.** Still 150,000?

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes.

**Senator Sotto.** And then the land area?

**Senator Pimentel.** As to the land area, there is no change; it is still 100 square kilometers.

**Senator Sotto.** But before it was "either/or"?

**Senator Pimentel.** That is correct. As long as it has one of the three requirements, basically, as long as it meets

the financial requirement, then it may meet the territorial requirement or the population requirement.

**Senator Sotto.** So, it remains "or"?

**Senator Pimentel.** We are now changing it into AND.

**Senator Sotto.** AND?

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes.

**Senator Sotto.** I see.

**Senator Pimentel.** That is the proposal, Mr. President. In other words...

**Senator Sotto.** Does the gentleman not think there will no longer be any municipality that will qualify, Mr. President?

**Senator Pimentel.** There may still be municipalities which can qualify, but it will take a little time. They will have to produce more babies. I do not know—expand their territories, whatever, by reclamation or otherwise. But the whole proposal is geared towards making it difficult for municipalities to convert into cities.

On the other hand, I would like to advert to the fact that in the amendments that we are proposing for the entire Local Government Code, we are also raising the internal revenue share of the municipalities.

**Senator Sotto.** I see.

**Senator Pimentel.** So that, more or less, *hindi naman sila dehado* in this particular instance.

**Senator Sotto.** Well, then, because of that information, Mr. President, I throw my full support behind the measure.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Senator Pimentel.** Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I ask that Sen. Sergio R. Osmeña III be recognized.

**The President.** Senator Serge R. Osmeña III is recognized.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Thank you. Will the distinguished sponsor yield for a few questions?

**Senator Pimentel.** Certainly, Mr. President.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Mr. President, do we have a listing of how many municipalities would still qualify today under these new criteria?

**Senator Pimentel.** We do not have that right now, but we can provide the gentleman with that data.

**Senator Osmeña III.** And could the gentleman help clarify why a municipality would want to be converted into a city?

**Senator Pimentel.** There is only one reason, Mr. President, and it is not hidden. It is the fact that once converted into a city, the municipality will have roughly more than three times the share that it would be receiving over the internal revenue allotment than it would have if it were to remain a municipality. So more or less three times or more.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Is it the additional funding that they will be able to enjoy from a larger share from the internal revenue allocations?

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes, Mr. President.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Now, could the gentleman clarify, Mr. President, why in the original Republic Act No. 7160, known as the Local Government Code of 1991, such a wide gap was made between a municipality—what a municipality would earn—and a city? Because essentially, to any person's mind, even with this new requirement, if approved by Congress, if a municipality is earning P100 million and has a population of more than 150,000 inhabitants but has less than 100 square kilometers, it would not qualify as a city.

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Now, would that not be quite arbitrary on the part of the municipality?

**Senator Pimentel.** In fact, Mr. President, the House version restores the "or". So, this is a matter that we can very well take up as a policy issue. The chair of the committee does not say that we should, as we know, not listen to arguments for the restoration of the word "or" in the population or territorial requirement.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Mr. President, my point is that, I agree with the gentleman's "and", but perhaps we should bring down the area. There are certainly very crowded places in this country that are less than 10,000 hectares—100 square kilometers is 10,000 hectares. There might only be 9,000 hectares or 8,000 hectares. And it would be unfair if these municipalities already earning P100,000,000 in locally generated funds and

have a population of over 150,000 would not be qualified because of the simple fact that the physical area does not cover 10,000 hectares.

**Senator Pimentel.** Mr. President, in fact, in Metro Manila there are any number of municipalities. San Juan is a specific example which, if we apply the present requirements, would not qualify: 100 square kilometers and a population of not less than 150,000.

But my reply to that, Mr. President, is that they do not have to become a city. I mean, why do they have to become a city?

**Senator Osmeña III.** Because of the income.

**Senator Pimentel.** But they are already earning a lot, as the gentleman said. Otherwise, the danger here, if we become lax in the requirements, is the metropolis-located local governments would have more priority in terms of funding because they would have more qualifications to become a city compared to far-flung areas in Mindanao or in the Cordilleras, or whatever.

Therefore, I think we should not probably ease up on the requirements. Maybe we can restore the word "or" so that if they do not have the 100 square kilometers of territory, then, if they qualify in terms of population and income, that would be all right, Mr. President.

**Senator Osmeña III.** Mr. President, I will not belabor the point at this time. I know that the distinguished gentleman is considering several amendments to the Local Government Code. Perhaps this is something that could be further refined at a later time, with his permission.

So I would like to thank the gentleman for his graciousness in answering our questions.

**Senator Pimentel.** I also thank the gentleman, Mr. President.

**The President.** The Chair would like to ask for some clarificatory point.

**Senator Pimentel.** Yes, Mr. President.

**The President.** This is just on the point of the pending bills in the Senate which propose the conversion of a number of municipalities into cities and which qualify under the present standard.

We would like to know the view of the sponsor: Assuming

that this bill becomes a law, will the Chamber apply the standard as proposed in this bill to those bills which are pending for consideration?

**Senator Pimentel.** Mr. President, it might not be fair to make this bill, on the assumption that it is approved, retroact to the bills that are pending in the Senate for conversion from municipalities to cities.

**The President.** Will there be an appropriate language crafted to reflect that view? Or does it not become a policy of the Chamber, assuming that this bill becomes a law tomorrow, that it will apply to those bills which are already approved by the House under the old version of the Local Government Code and are now pending in the Senate? The Chair does not know if we can craft a language which will limit the application to those which are not yet in the Senate. Or is that a policy that the Chamber will adopt?

**Senator Pimentel.** Mr. President, personally, I do not think it is necessary to put that proviso because what we are saying here will form part of the interpretation of this bill. Besides, if there is no retroactivity clause, I do not think that the bill would have any retroactive effect.

**The President.** So the understanding is that those bills which are already pending in the Chamber will not be affected.

**Senator Pimentel.** These will not be affected, Mr. President.

**The President.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, there being no further interpellations, I move that the period of interpellations be closed.

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

**Senator Tatad.** There being no further committee amendments, I move that the period of committee amendments be closed.

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

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I believe there is an individual amendment on page 1, line 11. I heard the sponsor say that he is amenable to restoring the word "or".

**Senator Pimentel.** The House version insists on the word "or", so we will probably just talk with them, Mr. President.

**Senator Tatad.** So this will require an amendment to our text.

**Senator Pimentel.** All right. We eliminate the word "AND" on page 1, line 11, Mr. President, and restore the word "or". And also in line 8, the brackets [ ] on the words "either of" should be eliminated.

So why do we not start with that, Mr. President?

**Senator Tatad.** Yes, Mr. President.

**The President.** There is a motion to amend line 8 on page 1 by deleting the brackets [ ] enclosing the word "either" and the word "of".

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

**Senator Pimentel.** In line 11, Mr. President, the committee proposes the elimination of the brackets [ ] on the word "or" and the deletion of the word "AND" following the word "or".

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

Therefore, the wordings of the present statute will be retained.

**Senator Tatad.** There being no further amendments, Mr. President, I move that the period of amendments be closed.

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

#### MOTION OF SENATOR TATAD (All Senators Present Be Made Coauthors of S. No. 2157)

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move that the Senate President and all the other senators present be made coauthors of this measure.

**The President.** Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the senators present in today's session are made coauthors of the measure.

#### APPROVAL OF S. NO. 2157 ON SECOND READING

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move that we vote on Second Reading on Senate Bill No. 2157, as amended.

**The President.** Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, we shall now vote on Second Reading on Senate Bill No. 2157, as amended.

As many as are in favor of the bill, say *aye*.

**Several Members.** *Aye*.

**The President.** As many as are against the bill, say *nay*. *[Silence]*

Senate Bill No. 2157, as amended, is approved on Second Reading.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF S. NO. 2157

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move that we suspend consideration of Senate Bill No. 2157.

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

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

**Senator Tatad.** Mr. President, I move to transfer from the Calendar for Ordinary Business to the Calendar for Special Orders Committee Report No. 407 on House Concurrent Resolution No. 26, entitled

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TRANSFER AND ASSIGNMENT OF CONTROLLING INTEREST IN RGMA NETWORK, INC. TO TELEVISION INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION, FL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND RACHEL ESPIRITU.

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

#### BILLS AND RESOLUTION ON SECOND READING (Nine House Bills and One House Concurrent Resolution on Franchises)

**Senator Tatad.** I move that we consider 10 House bills granting franchises. There is a request from the chairman of the Committee on Public Services that the franchise bills be treated under one omnibus sponsorship.

I therefore amend the motion to include consideration on Second Reading of House Bill No. 5493 under Committee Report No. 419; House Bill No. 7517 under Committee Report No. 381;

House Bill No. 5805 under Committee Report No. 389; House Bill No. 6568 under Committee Report No. 390; House Bill No. 6571 under Committee Report No. 391; House Bill No. 8444 under Committee Report No. 403; House Bill No. 9425 under Committee Report No. 404; House Bill No. 9918 under Committee Report No. 405; House Bill No. 8394 under Committee Report No. 406; and House Concurrent Resolution No. 26 under Committee Report No. 407.

I move that the Secretary read the titles of these various measures.

**The President.** Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the Secretary will read the titles of these franchise bills, without prejudice to inserting in the *Record* the whole texts thereof.

**The Secretary.** House Bill No. 5493, entitled

AN ACT GRANTING FIRST GAS HOLDINGS CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OWN, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL GAS TO DIFFERENT AREAS IN THE ISLANDS OF LUZON

*The following is the whole text of the bill:*

House Bill No. 5493

AN ACT GRANTING FIRST GAS HOLDINGS CORPORATION A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL, OWN, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL GAS TO DIFFERENT AREAS IN THE ISLANDS OF LUZON

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

**SECTION 1. Nature and Scope of Franchise.** - Subject to the provisions of the Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, there is hereby granted to First Gas Holdings Corporation, its successors or assigns, hereunder referred to as the grantee, a franchise to construct, install, own, operate