

## RECORD OF THE SENATE

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 1990

### OPENING OF THE SESSION

*At 4:20 p.m., the Honorable Jovito R. Salonga, President of the Senate, called the session to order.*

**The President.** Binubuksan ang pulong ng Senado.

Pangungunahan tayo sa panalangin ni Senator Neptali A. Gonzales.

*Everybody remained standing for the opening prayer.*

### PRAYER

**Senator Gonzales.**

Eternal God who hears even before we pray and who opens even before we knock:

Open to our minds Your vast spiritual resources, bound in the daily event of life. Your plan and purpose are written everywhere, if we only have eyes to see.

We see Your hands in the eyes of little children. We see Your wrath in the roaring sea. We feel Your love in the opening of a flower.

Lord, we are a witness to the living contradiction in our midst.

We are a nation rich in natural resources yet we are mired in poverty;

We are a state but we are not sovereign;

We have rebellion all around us;

Our land is dotted with colleges and schools of higher learning, yet we are sadly deficient in moral values.

Forgive us, Lord, for all of these paradoxes.

Deliver us from being intellectual giants but moral infants.

Save us from weak resignations to the evil we deplore.

Let the search for Thy salvation be our glory ever more.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days.

Amen.

### ROLL CALL

**The President.** Babasahin ng Kalihim ang talaan ng mga Senador.

### The Secretary.

Senator Heherson T. Alvarez .....	Present
Senator Edgardo J. Angara .....	Present
Senator Agapito A. Aquino .....	Present*
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile .....	Absent
Senator Joseph Ejercito Estrada .....	Present
Senator Neptali A. Gonzales .....	Present
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr. ....	Present
Senator Ernesto F. Herrera .....	Present
Senator Sotero H. Laurel .....	Absent
Senator Jose D. Lina, Jr. ....	Present
Senator Ernesto M. Maceda .....	Present
Senator Orlando S. Mercado .....	Present
Senator John H. Osmeña .....	Present
Senator Vicente T. Paterno .....	Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. ....	Present
Senator Santanina T. Rasul .....	**
Senator Alberto G. Romulo .....	Present
Senator Rene A. V. Saguisag .....	Present
Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani .....	**
Senator Mamintal Abdul J. Tamano .....	Present*
Senator Wigberto E. Tañada .....	Present
Senator Victor S. Ziga .....	Present
The President .....	Present

**The President.** Labimpitong mga Senador ang dumalo sa ating pagpupulong; mayroon tayong korum.

### THE JOURNAL

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of the previous session and consider the same as approved.

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

The Secretary will please proceed with the reading of the Order of Business.

### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### The Secretary.

March 5, 1990

Mr. President:

\*Arrived after the roll call

\*\*On official mission

Senator Osmeña  
 Senator Paterno  
 Senator Pimentel, Jr.  
 Senator Romulo

Senator Saguisag  
 Senator Tañada  
 Senator Ziga  
 The President

NO - 0

ABSTENTION - 0

#### RESULT OF THE VOTING

**The President.** With 16 affirmative votes, no negative vote, and no abstention, House Bill No. 28635 is approved on Third Reading.

**Senator Alvarez.** Mr. President, may I ask the Secretary how my vote was recorded?

**The Secretary.** No vote, Mr. President.

**Senator Alvarez.** I would like to enter my vote affirmatively.

**The President.** Let the intention of Senator Alvarez be placed on the record.

#### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 28635

(Postponing the First Regular Election for the Cordilleras)

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I move that we form a Conference Committee concerning the bill just passed, with Senator Pimentel as Chairman, and Senators Gonzales and Enrile as Members.

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

**Senator Guingona.** Unless, of course, the House accepts the amendments earlier, just for the record, we will create it anyway.

**The President.** All right.

#### BILL ON SECOND READING Senate Bill No. 1430 — National Women's Day

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I move that we consider Senate Bill No. 1430 as reported out under Committee Report No. 987.

**The President.** Consideration of Senate Bill No. 1430 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. 1430, entitled

AN ACT TO DECLARE MARCH EIGHT OF EVERY YEAR AS AN OFFICIAL HOLIDAY TO BE KNOWN AS NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.

*The following is the whole text of Senate Bill No. 1430:*

SECTION 1. The eighth day of March of every year is hereby declared as an official holiday FOR WOMEN to be known as the National Women's Day.

SEC. 2. TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL OBSERVANCE OF THE "HOLIDAY" AS HEREIN DECLARED, ALL HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INSTRUMENTALITIES, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND -CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS, AS WELL AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AND EMPLOYERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHALL ENCOURAGE AND AFFORD SUFFICIENT TIME AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES TO ENGAGE AND PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITY CONDUCTED IN CELEBRATION OF THE "NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY."

SEC. 3. [2] This Act shall take effect TWO (2) DAYS FOLLOWING ITS PUBLICATION IN AT LEAST TWO (2) NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS OF GENERAL CIRCULATION [upon its approval].

**Senator Guingona.** Since the two Lady Senators are not here at the moment, I ask that we recognize Senator Lina to sponsor the measure.

May I move for a minute's recess, Mr. President.

#### SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

**The President.** All right. The session is suspended, if there is no objection. [There was none.]

*It was 5:07 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

*At 5:10 p.m., the session was resumed.*

**The President.** The session is resumed. Senator Lina is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR LINA

Senator Lina. Thank you, Mr. President.

This is the sponsorship speech for Senate Bill No. No. 1430 introduced by Senators Rasul, Alvarez, Angara, Aquino, Enrile, Gonzales, Guingona, Herrera, Laurel, Lina, Maceda, Mercado, Osmeña, Paterno, Pimentel, Romulo, Saguisag, Salonga, Shahani, Tañada, and Ziga; practically, the whole membership of this august Body.

This measure declaring National Women's Day is significant because it gives rightful emphasis on some 30.5 million women as of 1990; and if approved, the Philippines will be the first among the member countries of the United Nations to declare by law National Women's Day, according to information received from the UN Information Center.

March 8 is also International Women's Day. The first officially celebrated International Women's Day took place in March 1911. It is but fitting that our country should declare by law a National Women's Day, because our country, by history and tradition, has honored the Filipino woman in the home, in the community, and in positions of national leadership.

Our President is a Lady, and she holds the leadership position in this country with others of other countries like Margaret Thatcher of England; the newly-elected President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Chamorro; the leader of the Opposition in Japan; and Burma; and the Prime Minister of Pakistan is Madame Bhutto.

In this august Chamber, we have two Senators who are women. As a matter of fact, the principal Author of this Senate bill is Senator Santanina Rasul, the Chairman of our Committee on Women and Family Relations. The Vice-Chairman of that Committee is Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani.

It is by a twist of fate that it is this Representation who is sponsoring this bill, because being an active Member of this august Chamber, Senator Rasul is representing our country as head of the delegation to a UNESCO Conference. I also understand that Senator Shahani is on official mission and therefore this Representation has to take up this bill and sponsor it, not only because this Representation is the Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws, which is the primary committee that is handling this particular bill, but because he strongly believes that we really have to declare a National Women's Day in our country.

As of date, President Aquino has signed Proclamation No. 224 on March 1, 1988, declaring the first week of March as Women's Week and March 8 as Women's Rights and International Peace Day. In declaring March 8 as National Women's Day, our

nation underscores this indispensable role of women in all facets of national life and in bringing about economic progress, political unity, and moral regeneration.

We have already enshrined the role of women in the Constitution. In Article II, the Constitution provides that the State shall protect the life of the mother, and that the role of women in nation-building is recognized, with the assurance that the fundamental equality of women and men before the law shall be recognized.

In the provisions on citizenship, we recognize that those whose mothers are citizens of the Philippines are citizens of this country. We also give suffrage to all citizens, men and women alike, which is a right not all the countries of the world give their women. Our labor laws have given women maternity leave benefits, and while there is a need to fully implement this proviso, the privilege of having day-care services at work.

Our women are active street parliamentarians, and at EDSA, they proved that they too are willing to fight for our democratic freedom and liberty. Among our gifted youth, we count many winners of the gold, not only in national competitions but in international games, such as bowling, track and field, swimming, and other games. And immediately, the names of Arianne Cerdeña, Akiko Thompson, Lydia de Vega, Elma Muros and countless others come into mind; names which have given honors to our country. Our softball contingent of women has garnered for our country many honors.

In approving this measure, we are symbolically affirming for our nation and the nations of the world that we honor and respect our women. Our women nurture our children. They are the keepers and transmitters of our valued traditions and culture. They are the heart of our homes. We need them as builders of our nation. We need them as partners in development. We love them for the beauty, love and care they bring to all of us.

Mr. President, I submit that this is an important piece of legislation that we have to approve and, in fact, should have been approved yesterday.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Are there any interpellations?

Senator Guingona. Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Floor Leader is recognized, and then Senator Herrera.

Senator Guingona. Will the distinguished Sponsor answer just a few questions?

**Senator Lina.** Willingly and with pleasure, Mr. President.

**Senator Guingona.** Is there any significance to March 8, why it was chosen as the proposed National Women's Day?

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President. March 8 has been the choice of the various women groups through their representatives in hearings conducted by the Committee on Women and Family Relations. March 8 has been observed as the International Women's Day. The origin of this date can be traced to that day on March 8, 1857 when a group of women workers in a garment factory in New York, protesting about the substandard conditions of their place of work, banded together and asserted their rights for better living and working conditions. From then on, the date has been celebrated to mark that important day to honor the women, and the practice has been repeated until other countries have joined the celebration. In fact, the United Nations has chosen the first week of March as the Women's Week.

In this country, our national leadership has followed suit. In fact, the President of our country, President Cory Aquino, through Proclamation No. 224, has also declared the first week of March of every year as Women's Week, and March 8, 1988 and every year thereafter as Women's Rights and International Peace Day.

**Senator Guingona.** The proposal is to give recognition to the role of women and it is not intended, really, to have a separate nonworking holiday. Therefore, the Sponsor will not mind if we limit it to a working holiday. Because the intent, I understand, is to give recognition to the role of women which can be done without adding to our long list of nonworking holidays. We have noticed that even private employers are enjoined to cooperate, which would mean a difference in pay.

**Senator Lina.** Initially, this Representation believes that women in our country — compared with women in other countries — are treated fairly well. But after consultations with the leaders of the various women groups who explained to this Representation that there is still so much to be done to really elevate the status of women in our country, and to give due importance to the role that women play in our homes, communities, and society as a whole, there is still need to further emphasize their role in our society. Therefore, a nonworking holiday is suggested.

**Senator Guingona.** Would that be acceptable to the distinguished Sponsor during the period of amendments?

**Senator Lina.** I said that they will not work. That is different from....

**Senator Guingona.** Nonworking.

**Senator Lina.** Yes, I said nonworking. Initially, this Representation is of the view that maybe, the day can be marked

with a simple celebration without declaring a day of "no-work." But I submit that there is basis for the request coming from these various women groups to set aside a special day for our women so that they can truly, through their NGOs, celebrate this day and really give a fitting celebration to women on March 8 of every year.

**Senator Guingona.** I understood from one of the Sponsors, Senator Shahani, that, first, she was in favor of a working holiday; second, because we have too many holidays already; and third, if equality is the drive of some Senators, like Senator Tamano, who is battling for paternity leave, in the same manner as maternity leave is given to women, he might ask and propose for a National Men's Day which would be another holiday. And so, can we give due recognition to the women without impairing the working of the economy and the nation? I think, even the women themselves will support this.

**Senator Lina.** After reviewing the record, there is preponderance of the view that a nonworking holiday is preferred. Under Executive Order No. 203, this executive order which provides a list of regular holidays and special days to be observed throughout the Philippines, there are only 10 regular holidays and two nationwide special days. And adding one for the celebration of the Women's Day will not be too much to add to our calendar of holidays.

This argument is being advanced, anchored on the view that our women in Philippine society, though better off compared with their counterparts in other countries, still deserve to be honored and given recognition for their immeasurable contribution to the economic recovery of our country by doing their share in the family home, in the factories, in the society as a whole, even on the level of national leadership. The purpose of declaring a holiday is really to focus the attention of the people to the special role that women play in our society so that that day will not just pass without being noticed, to be treated like any other day without therefore raising the level of consciousness among our people for the special role that our Filipino women play in our national life.

**Senator Guingona.** Yes. I know of some countries which have only three or four or five holidays. I do not think that the women will mind it if we dedicate this day, especially by working because that is what we need to progress. I will not press the point, Mr. President.

Thank you.

**The President.** Senator Herrera is recognized, then Senators Pimentel, Paterno and Estrada.

**Senator Herrera.** May I have a few questions, Mr. President. I would appreciate very much if the champion of the women

liberation movement, Senator Lina, would care to answer these few questions.

**Senator Lina.** Willingly, Mr. President.

**Senator Herrera.** Mr. President, may I know if there were public hearings conducted when this bill was discussed in his Committee?

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President, especially in the Committee on Women and Family Relations and also in the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws of which I am the Chairman.

**Senator Herrera.** May I know, Mr. President, if the leaders of the daily-paid women workers have been invited to attend and participate in the public hearing?

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President, the Federation of Free Workers which is — if I am not mistaken — also under the umbrella of the TUCP.

**Senator Herrera.** It is not under the umbrella of the TUCP, but it is one of the women organizations.

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President. The women workers of the Federation of Free Workers attended and, in fact, submitted a position on the matter. The Women's Desk, Concerned Artists of the Philippines and the Stop Trafficking of Filipinos Foundation. The Employers Confederation of the Philippines is not definite as to whether it is going to be a paid holiday or not, to be fair to them. The GABRIELA was represented. The Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women was also present. The Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees or the group that goes by the acronym COURAGE strongly proposes March 8 as the National Women's Day; and as such, it should be declared as an official, nonworking holiday. The Friends of Filipino Migrant Workers or KAIBIGAN is also in accord with the proposal.

**Senator Herrera.** My concern why I asked this question is, this would mean that the daily paid women workers would be deprived of their income if we declare this date as a nonworking holiday. I would like to know whether this organization had pointed out to the Members of the Committee of the consequence by declaring Women's Day as an official holiday.

**Senator Lina.** I presume that the matter was brought up during the public hearing conducted by the Committee on Women and Family Relations. In the short term, maybe, one will arrive at the conclusion that a wage earned for the day may be lost, but the benefit that may be derived out of the ever-growing consciousness on the part of the entire population on the role of women in society

will far outweigh the measly salary or wage that will be earned for one day that is lost.

The women need a break, and they deserve a break. A one-day break against 365 days, I believe is insignificant, considering the overall impact that this bill, if enacted into law, will produce as far as Philippine society is concerned and, in particular, as far as our Filipino women are concerned.

**Senator Herrera.** I would like to assure the Gentleman that in general principle, I have no objection for declaring this as an official holiday. However, I am just concerned about these women workers who are paid on the daily basis.

If we would consider a garment company, Gelmart, for instance, which has, in a peak season, about 10,000 to 12,000 women workers receiving all in all about P100, which includes the other benefits, we are talking of not less than P1,000,000 that these women will lose in one day, not to mention the working hours lost to the economy and the productivity. If we will quantify this, this might not be a small amount that we can just ignore. That is why, I am very concerned about these issues.

I am wondering whether the Committee has really conducted a serious study as to how many women workers now are daily paid workers, so that we can quantify how much would be the loss in terms of one-day benefits. May we know, if we have data on this particular matter?

**Senator Lina.** I must admit that the kind of data has not been made available to the Committee. But, as I said, and I would like to stress the fact, that we cannot just go by the statistics on this matter of how much is earned and how much will be lost in a day's time. But on a micro level, if we count the individual, we may say that, at the very minimum, the minimum wage is lost in terms of money value.

But as I already stressed in my answer earlier, the advantages, although they may not be quantified in terms of peso value, far outweigh the money value that is lost, and the advantage that can be derived out of this proposal is that, this country will be able to further elevate the status of our women in society by making everybody aware of the hardships, difficulties, the role that our women play in the home, in the community, and in society as a whole.

While we place our women on a higher status, I cannot but remember the sacrifices that our mothers, our partners in life, contribute in the rearing of the family. Although the womenfolk are trying to earn the resources to support the family, their contribution has not been given enough importance. If at best it is recognized and being paid lip service too, in reality, their contribution, sacrifices, are not given the due importance that they deserve.

**Senator Herrera.** That is precisely my concern; because, as I have said earlier, I have no quarrel with the intention of the bill. I think, we have to honor our women, and we have to recognize their sacrifices. But, I am just concerned whether by depriving the daily-paid women workers of their income, especially if that is their only source of income, would be the right way to honor our women workers.

Even assuming that those who participated in the public hearing represent the majority of the women workers who are daily paid earners, what if the minority would like to work on that day, because they cannot afford to lose the P100 they earn for that day, because it is needed by their children, and needed by their family? Does not the Gentleman think it would not be advisable for us to deprive even those belonging to the minority of the daily income which the members of their families, not just themselves, need?

**Senator Lina.** If I can interpret the question before I answer it, is the Gentleman saying that if they are made to work on that particular day, he is open to the idea of giving a premium pay?

**Senator Herrera.** There are several options. One is, let us put in the bill that it will be a special holiday, but the daily paid worker will not lose his pay. It means he will be paid. But the question is: Can the employers afford that? Can the economy afford that? I am more inclined to this option. It is an official holiday, but the daily paid workers will be assured of their pay, although it is a nonworking holiday.

**Senator Lina.** At the appropriate time, maybe, that amendment can be introduced and this Representation is open to that kind of suggestion.

**Mr. President,** may I move for a one-minute suspension? Is the Gentleman through?

**Senator Herrera.** I would just like to raise one more question.

**Senator Lina.** Yes.

**Senator Herrera.** The second question is: Has this matter been discussed in a public hearing? Did we invite the employers to present their side?

**Senator Lina.** I mentioned the ECOP, Mr. President. If I am not mistaken, that is a group representing the employers.

**Senator Herrera.** What I would like to know is whether the daily-paid women workers will not stand to lose their pay during the celebration of National Women's Day that, at least, they will be paid although it will be nonworking holiday and whether the

employers were given a chance to express their opinion on this issue. Because, if they agreed to it, then I will propose that, as an amendment to the bill, let us make this an official holiday but the daily-paid workers will be paid their salary on that day.

**Senator Lina.** In fairness, Mr. President, the ECOP was not precise on this point.

**Senator Herrera.** May I know if this was discussed also in the public hearing?

**Senator Lina.** In fact, ECOP has not shown in the summary of points made by the Committee on Women and Family Relations that ECOP does not look with favor on the proposal, in fairness to this group.

**Senator Herrera.** I expected that, Mr. President. My last question is: Although this is Women's Day, it does not mean that only the women workers will be exempted from work. Because in many companies, especially in garments and electronics, we have a minimal number of men workers. So that, if women workers will not report, there is no sense for the company to operate the plant. In effect, all the workers will have a holiday.

**Senator Lina.** That may be true in some instances, Mr. President.

**Senator Herrera.** I would say in many of the big companies.

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President. But that does not change my position that a date should be set aside for them even if a day's work will be lost.

**Senator Herrera.** Yes, I know. But this will mean that we will have much more working hours lost as a result of this, because the men workers will not be reporting for work also.

**Senator Lina.** As I said, I am arguing not on the basis of money being lost. I am arguing on the basis of creating an atmosphere in our society that gives greater awareness among our people as to the vital role that our women play in our society; and in the process, in fact, raises their productivity if they are further encouraged and inspired by the society and by the government, in particular.

**Senator Herrera.** In fact, that is the reason I am touching on the economic aspect of this bill, because in a country like ours, where our workers could hardly survive with their meager income, every centavo counts, and, also, we have to be concerned with the impact on the economy, whether it is on a macro level or on a micro level. That is why I am inviting the attention of the distinguished Gentleman to this economic aspect of the bill.

The other important concern here is that this will trigger pressures from the unions to insist that all workers, men and women will be exempted from reporting to work. I am expressing this as a caution, as a consequence of this bill.

I would like to reiterate that I am supporting this bill in principle. I intend to present some amendments. I am one of the Sponsors. I would like to associate myself with the Sponsor of the bill that we have to honor the women workers; but on the other hand, I feel that we must also be concerned, in fact, with the economic aspect of the bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Senator Lina.** Thank you, Mr. President. Just a comment on that last point raised by Senator Herrera, as to the possible objection coming from the menfolk who will say that they are being discriminated against through this bill. Let me just say with conviction, that although we have treated our women fairly, there is still much to be done to erase the remaining condescending attitude or unfairness that we have done to our Filipino women. Therefore, the menfolk cannot really raise a justifiable objection — from my point of view, anyway.

**Senator Paterno.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Paterno is recognized.

**Senator Paterno.** Will Senator Lina yield for a few questions?

**Senator Lina.** Willingly, Mr. President.

**Senator Paterno.** This is the first legislation I have seen where a nonworking holiday is proposed to be declared for a segment only of society, namely, the female segment of society. Is this intentional? Does this not strike one as a sexist bill?

**Senator Lina.** I do not believe so. It just so happened that there is a reality that the Sponsor sees in this society where we live, and the bill is an answer to this reality that women, through their sacrifices, through their contributions to our general well-being, and home, and community and society, have to be honored.

**Senator Paterno.** I thought that we were striving for an equality of the sexes. But let me leave that point and ask whether this bill would enable mothers, housewives, self-employed women to also enjoy a nonworking holiday from their work.

**Senator Lina.** Definitely, Mr. President.

**Senator Paterno.** How?

**Senator Lina.** The various NGOs that were present during the public hearing have, through their own declaration, and I believe that they will do the proposed programs. They will really go out of their way to organize activities not only for working or career women, but also to those who are staying in the homes looking after the children. So the mothers, the parents, even the grandmothers will be included in the overall celebration of this day.

**Senator Paterno.** Perhaps, we overestimate the force of our law. Declaring a day as an official holiday or a nonworking holiday does not remove the need for housework, does not remove the need for cooking, does not remove the need for taking care of the children, and so on. So, it is only those who have employment, who go to the offices who will enjoy a nonworking holiday. The rest will still celebrate National Women's Day in work and with work.

**Senator Lina.** Yes, in a sense, that is correct. However, the day is set aside to remind us and also to give the necessary break for the women to enjoy this day. One proposal that has been aired is that, it is about time that men, during that day, will take over the house chores.

**Senator Paterno.** Can the distinguished Gentleman provide this in law and enforce it?

**Senator Lina.** No, Mr. President. But it can be part of the whole celebration, and this can be discussed, propagated, and included in the proposed celebration.

**Senator Paterno.** I would just like to say that the women whom I honor and respect, invariably, have been hardworking. They were not women of idleness. And the way I honor the women in my life is not by being idle, but by working hard for them.

So my question is whether the idea of a nonworking holiday to honor and respect our women should be spent not working? I wonder whether it should rather be spent working doubly hard to show our love, our respect, and our honor for the Filipino women.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Senator Lina.** I respect the view of our dear Colleague, Senator Paterno, and I thank him for his candor.

**The President.** Si Senador Estrada naman.

**Senator Estrada.** Salamat po, Ginoong Pangulo. Kung papayag po ang pinakabatang Senador sa Pilipinas, magtatanong lamang ako ng ilang mga katanungan.

**Senator Lina.** Pumapayag po sa pinakamatsong Senador.  
[Laughter]

**Senator Estrada.** Unang-unang po, Ginoong Pangulo, ay ibig kong itanong kung maaari nating palitan itong titulong "National Women's Day" sa ating sariling wika, "ARAW NG KABABAIHANG PILIPINA."

**Senator Lina.** Sa period of amendments, maaaring tanggapin ng inyong lingkod ang ganyang klaseng susog.

**Senator Estrada.** Pangalawa, ibig ko po lamang ipaabot sa magiting na Senador na bagamat ako ay hindi niya isinama bilang isa sa mga sponsor, buong-puso ko namang sinusupportahan ito. Gising man o tulog ang inyong lingkod, ang mga kababaihan ay may pitak at matimbang sa kanyang puso.

Salamat po. [Applause]

**The President.** Tila alam ng lahat ang bagay na iyan.

**Senator Lina.** Marahil ay may typographical error lamang dito. Hindi po sinasadya iyon. Pero alam na po namin at nabanggit na ng ating Senate President na talagang kayo ay tagapagtaguyod ng karapatan ng ating mga kababaihan.

**The President.** Hindi lamang tagapagtaguyod, idolo ng mga kababaihan. [Laughter]

**Senator Lina.** I stand corrected, Mr. President.

**Senator Ziga.** Mr. President.

**Senator Saguisag.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Ziga is recognized first, then Senator Saguisag.

**Senator Ziga.** Thank you, Mr. President. Would the distinguished Sponsor yield for a few questions?

**Senator Lina.** Willingly, Mr. President.

**Senator Ziga.** Thank you. I strongly support this bill, not only as one of its coauthors but with modesty, my mother has always been at the forefront of the struggle for more women's rights and in upgrading the status of women in the country.

So, it is my honor to be a cosponsor of this bill, even if only to set aside the day of the recognition of our women, even though it is a small token that we can give to the special role that women play in our everyday lives.

Distinguished Sponsor and Mr. President, I wonder, on this special day that we are setting aside which is proposed in this bill as March 8, what kind of activities or specific activities are geared for the enhancement and recognition of the role of women? What are being planned or programmed for this designated day?

**Senator Lina.** I understand that there will be mass gatherings in various centers of the country, so that the history of the struggle of Filipino women for equality and for other political and civil rights will be explained to all, so that the significance of the struggle of Filipino women can be better appreciated. And when they are aware of the struggle that they went through to enjoy some of the rights that they are enjoying, then they will be more protective of those rights. So, there will be mass gathering, programs and other activities, which I understand, have been lined up: symposia, seminars, exhibits, cultural shows and the like.

Anyway, March 8 is on Thursday and even if we pass this bill, there is little time; there is no certification from the Office of the President as to the urgency of this bill. So, a longer time to prepare for the celebration can be done, maybe next year, if we enact this bill into law and make it a nonworking holiday.

**Senator Ziga.** So, I take it therefore, that the proposal here is a nonworking holiday.

**Senator Lina.** Yes, Mr. President.

**Senator Ziga.** Even if we decide for a March 8 or probably any other date, can we not at least consider to have this Women's Day coincide with some significant day, aside from just being chosen as International Women's Day, to coincide with a date that has some significance in our country, such as the birthday of a heroine or the day of the granting of suffrage to our women? Or probably, even the date of the effectivity of the Family Code might be one of the more significant days to attach this declaration of a National Women's Day?

**Senator Lina.** Several dates were discussed during the public hearing, and the birthday of a heroine was suggested. For example, the birthday of Gabriela Silang; after that, the birthday of another heroine was proposed, that of Teodora Alonso; and after that, another birthday of another heroine was proposed, leading to the conclusion that if we choose the birthday of one heroine as against the other, then there may result a division even among the women as to whose birthday should be observed as to the date when our women first enjoyed the right of suffrage. That was also brought up. However, the date that was finally chosen was March 8, in view of the fact that even in our country, under the Proclamation issued by the President last year, March 8 had already been set aside as the United Nations Day For Women's Rights and International Peace.



**Senator Ziga.** So, the designation of March 8 is more of the reason that it was declared by the International Women's Day and also of the Executive Order by the President.

**Senator Lina.** That day, March 8, 1857 can be marked as the date, the earliest time in known history when the women in a particular country first stood up to protest, and at the same time protect their rights. That is a date that can be considered as the birthday of this struggle altogether, of civil rights, political rights, economic rights, and therefore, a good day to set aside as the day for honoring the women not only in this country but throughout the world.

The struggle for rights takes different dates: the right to suffrage, the right to human working conditions, the right to civil rights and others. The start of the struggle happened on different dates. But what should be marked really is that date, the first time as recorded when women really stood up for their rights — whatever it is, and this time it can be classified as economic rights.

**Senator Ziga.** Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Gentleman.

**Senator Saguisag.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Saguisag is recognized.

**Senator Saguisag.** Will the Gentleman yield for a few questions?

**Senator Lina.** Definitely, to the Chairman of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges.

**Senator Saguisag.** Salamat po. May I just pursue that point? I precisely signed as a coauthor with reservations, firstly, because of the date.

In Resolution 32142 of the UN, precisely, it invites — I am now quoting from the Resolution; this is the pertinent portion:

"It invites all States to proclaim in accordance with their historical and national traditions and customs any day of the year as UN Day For Womens' Rights and International Peace."

Can we not really come up with a better rationale than the fact that — I know that the Gentleman mentioned 1866; my own information is that March 8 is significant because in 1857 — a group of New York Women Garment Workers held a demonstration protesting their working conditions? But considering that we are supposedly independent, ano po ang kinalaman ng mga nangyari sa Estados Unidos in relation to our own historical and national traditions and customs?

**Senator Lina.** Nabanggit ko na po, Ginoong Pangulo, sa sagot na ibinigay ko kay Senator Ziga na iyon ay araw na pangmundong pakikibaka upang makamtan ng mga kababaihan ang mga karapatang matagal na ipinagkait sa kanila. Naganap iyon sa isang makasaysayang araw na Marso 8 ang panimula, ayon sa ating pagkakasaliksik at pagkakaalaala.

**Senator Saguisag.** I hope that we may be able to pursue that in the period of amendment. Pero iyon pong punto na tinugis kanina ni Senator Herrera, is it really realistic, for instance, assuming that this becomes a law tomorrow, to hold sessions two days from now? And Attorney Orquiola is not here; the women debate reporters are not here; my secretaries will not work. Hindi po ba medyo, it is a little awkward? I mean, to say the least, because sometimes, really, it affects the efficiency, the integrity of the activities in a certain office if people are treated differently?

Is that going to be a concern? I thought that Senator Herrera raised a good point and we can start from there. Ang ibig po bang sabihin nito ay pagmimiting namin sa Ethics sa makalawa ay maghahagilap kami ng mga male stenographers at baka hindi supisyente sa bilang. Or we should really call it off dahil sa una, we will not have the proper inspiration at, pangalawa, maybe, talagang kulang sa staff support.

**Senator Lina.** The world will not stop, if in one day we cannot have the pleasure of women working with us. Adjustments can be made, especially if we know one year in advance that there is such a date set aside for women and, on that date, they will be exempted from work in offices and in factories.

**Senator Saguisag.** Just two more points: Should we not really be working towards the day when we will strengthen the work ethics in this country, that even the election day itself should not be a holiday?

Sa mga progresibong bansa po ay walang isang katutak na holidays kundi, manapa, ang isang guro, halimbawa, ay boboto ng alas siyete ng umaga at pagkatapos ay tuloy-tuloy sa eskuwelahan. And, by coincidence, these are the countries that are very progressive. Should we really expand on the holidays or try to reduce their number? Dahil iyon pong January 1988, sampung araw na walang pasok ang mga estudyante dahil sa halalan. Ano po ba?

We keep saying that we should develop and strengthen the work ethics in this country. Is this measure consistent with that goal?

**Senator Lina.** In the long run it will be consistent. It may not be foreseen or felt immediately because we are viewing things from a static point of view in the sense that we already take for

granted that women are really equal and are being treated fairly; that they are recognized for what they have done for us, for their sacrifices and their contributions.

But we are not starting from that point. We are starting from the fact that we have really ignored and, sometimes, take for granted the contributions and share of our women in the task of nation-building. That is the point that we are stressing. This does not really go into the discussion of work ethics because, eventually, when men and women are more or less treated on a fair scale, then we can talk about work ethics.

**Senator Saguisag.** Tayo lamang po ba ang kauna-unahang bansa na gagawa nito?

**Senator Lina.** As I understand it, by law, yes, Mr. President.

**Senator Saguisag.** So, we will be the leader in something that is really so new. The only small technical point here is, on Thursday, we will take up the matter about how to treat the absence of Senator Enrile in marking his status in the *Journal*. Pero, halimbawa holiday na po sa makalawa, nonworking, kung hindi sumipot si Senator Rasul at si Senator Shahani, absent po ba sila?

**Senator Lina.** Kapag hindi po sumipot si Senator Rasul at si Senator Shahani, sa palagay ko sila ay busy at nakikipag-ugnayan sa iba-ibang women's organization in connection with the celebration of March 8 as the National Women's Day.

**Senator Saguisag.** But are they excused from attending because it is a holiday?

**Senator Lina.** Sa palagay ko po, sapagkat holiday, they will be excused. But, I am sure, they will not be idle. They will be in the forefront helping their colleagues, the women, in the celebration of this special day.

**Senator Saguisag.** So, let me just make it clear that I am really in favor of the concept; but if it is made a nonworking holiday, so many grotesque, even unfair consequences that we may not have fully studied may follow.

Maraming salamat po.

#### SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

**The President.** The Chair is declaring a recess for our usual break, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

*It was 6:11 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

*At 6:39 p.m., the session was resumed.*

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

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 1430

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I ask that we suspend consideration of Committee Report No. 987 on Senate Bill No. 1430.

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

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I move that we place Proposed Senate Resolution No. 762 in the Calendar for Special Orders..

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

#### CONSIDERATION OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 762 (Commending the Late Brig. Gen. Oscar Florendo)

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, this is a Resolution commending the late Brig. Gen. Oscar Florendo, chief of the Civil Relations Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, for his unselfish dedication to duty. I move that we suspend the Rules, to consider this Resolution.

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

**Senator Guingona.** I ask that we recognize Senator Maceda to sponsor this measure.

**The President.** Senator Maceda is recognized.

#### SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR MACEDA

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

May I just read the Resolution:

RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LATE BRIG.  
GEN. OSCAR FLORENDO, CHIEF OF THE CIVIL  
RELATIONS SERVICE OF THE ARMED  
FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, FOR HIS