

## RECORD OF THE SENATE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1990

### OPENING OF THE SESSION

*At 3:36 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 Senador Ernesto M. Maceda.

*Everybody remained standing for the opening prayer.*

### PRAYER

**Senator Maceda.**

*Let us put ourselves in the presence of the Lord.*

God our Father, as we celebrate this joyous season of Christ's birth, let us also reflect on the reason for His coming. He is our Lord yet He came down from heaven to walk among us as man, share our joys and sorrows and ultimately suffer and die for the sins of the world on the Cross.

What better inspiration than this could we ask for in these troubled times? We speak eloquently of selflessness and the nobility of courage in the face of numerous odds. Yet we stray too often.

Guide us, Lord, in the path of the One who showed us by His supreme sacrifice that the world can be a better place if each of us lives in accordance with Your word. Let Your word be the lamp to our feet and the light to our path that we may joyously proclaim, "Thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ."

Amen.

### ROLL CALL

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

\*Arrived after the roll call

\*\*On official mission

### The Secretary.

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Senator Heherson T. Alvarez .....      | Present  |
| Senator Edgardo J. Angara .....        | Present  |
| Senator Agapito A. Aquino .....        | Absent   |
| Senator Juan Ponce Enrile .....        | Present  |
| 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 .....         | Present  |
| 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 .....           | Absent   |
| The President .....                    | Present  |

**The President.** Labing-walong 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 yesterday's session and consider the same as approved.

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

The Secretary will now read the Order of Business.

### REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

#### BILLS ON FIRST READING

**The Secretary.** Senate Bill No. 1686, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING INCENTIVE BENEFITS FOR EARLY RETIREMENT AND VOLUNTARY SEPARATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

**Senator Guingona.** ...suspend consideration of this matter.

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

**BILL ON SECOND READING**  
**Senate Bill No. 209 - National Language Commission**  
(Continuation)

**Senator Guingona.** I move that we resumed consideration of Senate Bill No. 209 as reported out under Committee Report No. 329.

**The President.** Resumption of consideration of Senate Bill No. 209 is now in order.

**Senator Guingona.** We are in the period of interpellations. I ask that we recognize Senator Mercado.

**The President.** Senator Mercado is recognized.

**Senator Mercado.** As we had previously pointed out in our Sponsorship Speech, the program on national language started actually in 1935, but in spite of these years, we have not been successful in implementing the program to achieve national unity through a national language.

Mr. President, we are now ready to answer some questions, if there are any.

**The President.** The Chair would like to ask some questions. There are two versions of this same bill, one in English, and the other one in the National Language. For purposes of discussions and amendments, what shall be the basis?

**Senator Mercado.** I leave that to the Body. We have filed a bill using both our National Language and the English version.

**The President.** Bakit hindi natin gawin na ang English ang magiging saligan ng ating amendments, pati na ang ating pagtatalo, and then a corresponding translation can be made authorized by the Body?

**Senator Mercado.** That would be acceptable to this

Representation, Mr. President.

**The President.** So, let us make the English version as the working basis of the amendments and the discussion.

Are all the Committee Amendments already here?

**Senator Mercado.** Not yet.

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Guingona is recognized.

**Senator Guingona.** Will the distinguished Sponsor yield to a few questions?

**Senator Mercado.** Gladly.

**Senator Guingona.** As we understand it, the formulation of the National Language was started in 1935, under the constitutional mandate of the 1935 Constitution. May we know from the distinguished Sponsor what are the basic causes for the failure of the evolution and implementation into a national language of that constitutional mandate?

**Senator Mercado.** I believe, one of the reasons why a truly national language has not evolved through the years is the rather limited interpretation of the mandate, as implemented by the *Surian*, where Tagalog was almost exclusively the basis of the National Language. I believe, too, that there was a drift towards what could be called "purism" in efforts to purge Filipino of foreign terms. I guess, this redirection of the National Language Commission may, hopefully, correct what I feel was one of the flaws in the past implementation of this measure.

**Senator Guingona.** The Constitution now says that the National Language of the Philippines is "Filipino" as distinguished from the previous 1973 Constitution which said "Pilipino". Is there a marked difference between the "P" and the "F"?

**Senator Mercado.** The Constitution is silent on the definition of the word "Filipino". I reviewed the proceedings of the Constitutional Commission on the topic and my impression is that, "Filipino" was the

name given to whatever National Language the country would evolve in the coming years. My impression is that the charge from "P" to "F" is a silent statement that pure Tagalog is not the sole basis of a national language, because in Tagalog there is no letter "F". We only have the letter "P".

**Senator Guingona.** Yes. As a matter of fact, it is followed by the mandate that it shall evolve or develop and enrich on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. May we know how many languages the Philippines has?

**Senator Mercado.** We have about 103 dialects of which eight are major dialects.

**Senator Guingona.** The Constitution speaks of languages. Is there any distinction or marked distinction between languages and dialects?

**Senator Mercado.** In linguistic terms, I am informed, they are considered languages already.

**Senator Guingona.** Therefore, it would be the mandate of the Commission to get as many words from as many dialects and languages as possible.

**Senator Mercado.** I would presume too that that would mean that our national language shall embody even English or Spanish terms, after all, Mr. President, there is hardly any pure language today. Even English borrows from the French, the Anglo-Saxon, and the German. I guess, language is a matter of evolution and of usage. Attempts in the direction of purism was the linguists undoing.

**Senator Guingona.** Now, may we know what is the medium of instruction presently being used in the schools?

**Senator Mercado.** My understanding, is that we have bilingual policy. As a method of instruction, we use Filipino and English and other regional languages as supplementary means of communication.

**Senator Guingona.** For example, in the Muslim areas, is the Muslim the medium of instruction?

**Senator Mercado.** I am informed that English and their local language is used as media of instruction.

**Senator Guingona.** So, is Filipino only used in the higher grades or in the secondary and tertiary level?

**Senator Mercado.** We have required Filipino subjects, in elementary or high school, and social studies subjects like *Araling Panlipunan* are taught purely in Filipino.

**Senator Guingona.** In some areas, the auxiliary languages become the principal languages. Is it the intent of the proposed Commission now to reverse this?

**Senator Mercado.** The major intent of the Commission is to come up with the national language that will be enriched by the major languages. We cannot also close our eyes to the nonformal influences on the development of language. We all know that radio, television, the movies are basically in English and Filipino. Thus, it has already developed into a *lingua franca* by evolution.

I guess, it is not a matter of foisting a language on any minority group. The Language Commission will serve as a catalyst in developing the same. And if a dialect can contribute to the development of the language, meaning, in terms of words and phrases, then that would be welcome as long as it has the possibility of being integrated into the national language.

**Senator Guingona.** Now, what would be the base of this Filipino? Would it still be Tagalog?

**Senator Mercado.** The base would be Pilipino, the *lingua franca* which may draw from all major languages; but as of the moment, I think, the major portion comes from Tagalog.

**Senator Guingona.** May we know the reason why Tagalog is made the base of the Filipino language, when I understand there are more Visayans, speaking different Visayan dialects, and, as a whole, there is more populace in number than Tagalogs? Can we not make, based on numbers, the Visayan, as the base of the evolving National Language?

**Senator Mercado.** That is possible but not probable

considering how Pilipino, with Tagalog as basis is widely occupied. This is a reality we have to accept. I would agree that it should not be exclusively Tagalog, and that it should draw from other languages, and truth to tell, there are a number of words, Visayan, Bicolano, and others, that have already been incorporated in our language. I guess, this is just how it evolves; but that I want to say is, put to a test of what is the *lingua franca*. If one speaks Filipino, which is, as the Gentleman mentioned, based more on Tagalog, and goes around the country, his chances of being understood is higher than one who speaks Cebuano. This, I think, is a product of the use of the language in mass media. I hate to be anecdotal on the matter, but I remember when we were campaigning for our Senate seats. I think, I was fairly understood in the Visayas and Mindanao even if I spoke, almost exclusively, in Filipino and English.

**Senator Guingona.** This is because of the media, radio, and television, and not because of the work of the Commission.

**Senator Mercado.** That is very true. Actually, the attempt to develop a language that was "pure" tagalog hit a snag, because it did not take into consideration the vibrant process of evolution of a language, and it was overtaken actually by the movies and other forms of mass media which helped in a great way to make what Filipino is now, the *lingua franca* we speak.

**Senator Guingona.** And it would be the purpose of the Commission to try to synchronize or harmonize the different words in the different dialects. For example, the word *buli* in Ilonggo means "the ass in the back"; but in Bicol, it means "in front". So, what would the Commission do in such a case?

#### SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

**The President.** I guess it would be time to have our usual break, if there is no objection? [*There was none.*]

*It was 5:35 p.m.*

#### RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

*At 6:05 p.m., the session was resumed.*

**The President.** The session is resumed.

The interpellation will resume if there are any more questions.

**Senator Mercado.** If there are none, Mr. President, maybe, we can close the period of interpellations and proceed to the Committee amendments.

**The President.** The Chair would like to know if there is any difference between the term "official language" and the term "national language." The Constitution seems to differentiate between the two.

**Senator Mercado.** The national language is broader term than official language. A national language is that means of communication widely used that embodies a nation's identity and can help foster greater integration and cohesion. The official language, as we understand it, is what is adopted by the Government as the language that it uses in its transactions.

**Senator Herrera.** Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Herrera.

**Senator Herrera.** I just would like to know whether there is really an urgency to create this Commission now. Because, I understand, based on the bill, that there will be about 17 Commissioners and they are given a certain period to make a study and recommendation. So, I can surmise that this will entail several millions of pesos. At this time, I do not think we can afford it especially since we are in a crisis, not to mention the fact that by creating this Commission, this will only provoke objections coming from other regions, especially from non-Tagalog regions.

Personally, I do not see the urgency of creating this Commission now. While I agree and understand that there is this constitutional mandate, but whether there is that urgency, I doubt, I personally feel that, maybe, this can wait until we have a better time. Maybe, after 1992, we can create this Commission.

**Senator Mercado.** It is precisely at this time that we need to create a Commission to veer away from the

failures of the past. This time, we will have to redirect the National Language Commission, to serve as a catalyst in the development of a true language not drawing from Tagalog alone.

The strict interpretation of the Commonwealth Act in the past has been the source of our problem. If we do not start now, when will we have a national language? Indonesia, in 30 years, was able to develop the Bahasa, Indonesia. Unfortunately we started on the wrong road--but we have corrected our course. Once and for all, we must tackle this question.

With regard to the budget, the current budget of the Institute is P10 million. But if we do not redirect its mandate, I think the P10 million that is already allocated may not be well spent. I think, it is for Congress to define what we should do to develop a truly national language.

**Senator Herrera.** Wala akong duda, that the budget appropriated for that purpose is properly spent, but when there are other urgent matters that need the immediate attention of the Government, especially there are very recent incidents na kahit na iyong mga tseke natin ay tumatalbog na, maybe we should give more preference to problems like the typhoon and earthquake damages rather than using our limited resources to activities like this which may not really be that urgent as of now.

In fact, I feel that we must let time evolve a national language. I am very sure that even if the Commission will come out tomorrow or a year from now with a recommendation or study on this, still that cannot be immediately accepted by our people. It is always the evolution that is more, to me, advisable or a more effective way of evolving a national language rather than imposing it.

**Senator Mercado.** We are in complete agreement with Senator Herrera that we cannot legislate language, that language is a matter of evolution. There is no doubt about that. That is precisely what we are doing here. We are not legislating language, but we are creating the Body that will be the catalyst towards developing a language that draws from the major languages that are in existence in the Philippines.

There may be validity and logic in the argument that

a language bill may not be the most urgent thing that we need now. Why should we bother about language? We have typhoons, we have the recent earthquake. That is true. But we cannot put a value on national identity, on things that would help make our country more cohesive. I think it is high time that we face this problem. Let us try to help spur the development of an acceptable national language and not postpone the matter for tomorrow. This is not going to be a year's work on the part of the National Language Commission. This is going to be something that will be done over time.

We would like to see this as a measure that goes even beyond our term when it ends in 1992.

**Senator Herrera.** In fact, this is not my only concern. I think this is the concern of many Filipinos that activities like this will only create more division, especially at this time that there are several issues which tend to divide the country. We have the U.S. Bases issue; and now, we have the language issue. Because the perception of the non-Tagalog-speaking Filipinos is that when we talk of Pilipino, it will be Tagalog-based. Very recently, we learned about the rejection of Tagalog by the people in Central Visayas, or in Cebu, in particular. And so, I feel that at this time, especially that soon we will have election, and then we have that bases issue, we should not make this bill a priority. We are only creating additional reasons to divide our people. So, I feel, that there is no urgency to approve or pass this bill.

The truth of the matter is that, if we go all over the Philippines, people now speak Tagalog; they understand Tagalog. And it is not because of the Commission; it is because of the media. I feel that even without this Commission, we will be able to evolve a common language. Maybe, the cost that will be involved in creating this Commission can be used for better projects and programs of the Government.

Personally, I feel, that maghintay muna ito, we will delay this. This is not very urgent. In fact, ang mangyayari rito, maybe some of those who will be supporting the Tagalog-based Pilipino language, some of us might deny our support during election in 1992 when we will be campaigning in the Visayas. So, we might be only making a mockery out of this. I would rather suggest that let us wait after the election in 1992. Let us

settle first the issue on the US Bases, let us settle the election, and use whatever limited resources we have to pay the cost of rehabilitation and reconstruction in damaged areas because of the natural calamities.

**Senator Mercado.** Senator Herrera proceeds from a wrong premise. The National Language in the past was largely based on Tagalog. We want to correct this with a new mandate that we are going to give the National Language Commission. This move should be welcomed by the non-Tagalog-speaking provinces. I think, it will make our language a lot richer, more acceptable, and more vibrant.

The language question is an emotional issue only when we make it a choice between Tagalog and Cebuano or other languages. But that is not the case. We refuse to accept that this is a choice between languages. But we cannot shirk from our responsibility of developing a national language. If we postpone this bill until after 1992, then we would have lost valuable time.

**Senator Herrera.** I am not against the idea of having this Commission and to conduct a serious study in order to, as the Gentleman said, correct the misconception now of what is a Filipino language. But it is a question of timing.

The other point is that right now, even without this study, there is now gradually evolving a Filipino language. Sometimes it pricks me being a Cebuano. I have always my bias for a Cebuano language. But wherever we go now, it is not only that we can be understood if you speak in Tagalog; they communicate with you in Tagalog.

Before the session, I was in the ground floor and I met some public school teachers from Cebu. They talked to me in Tagalog. And it is not because of the Commission, it is because of media. The contribution of media. In that, without necessarily imposing it; but because of media's work... Now, if you evolve the language without imposing it then the tendency is that it will be accepted. But once we start imposing, this can be misunderstood, especially that this is now an emotional issue not just in Cebu but in some areas, the Cebuano-speaking areas, where the majority of the population comes from Cebu.

So, I would rather delay this; there is no urgency on this, Mr. President. I feel that because of media's contribution in less than 20 years, I am very confident that wherever one goes, people will be speaking in Tagalog or what one calls "Pilipino" even without this commission.

I do not see any point why we have to insist on this and then be misunderstood because of this problem now in the Central Visayas. We have so many problems now. Why do we not concentrate on the economic problems? Why do we not concentrate on this U.S. Bases problem, rather than waste our resources at this time on this activity which, anyway, can be achieved by what media is doing now?

As I said, this afternoon, when I arrived here at the Senate I met these teachers coming from Cebu. I was happy that here in Manila they were talking to me in Tagalog.

**The President.** They probably thought that you were already a Tagalog.

**Senator Herrera.** Frankly, I am trying my best to learn Tagalog; I am just being practical. If one goes to Mindanao, to the Muslim areas, he can be understood better in Tagalog than in Cebuano. Or if one goes to Waray-Waray Leyte or in Western Visayas, they would rather talk in Tagalog than in Cebuano. But once we start giving the semblance that we are imposing this, then there will be rejection. Then, those purist Cebuanos in the Cebuano-speaking provinces will not only reject a Pilipino language based on Tagalog, they insist that we should be using Cebuano. Then we will be putting an obstacle to the acceptance of a tagalog based national language.

**Senator Mercado.** We filed this measure because we believe that it is our responsibility to comply with the mandate of the Constitution as stated in Article XIV, Section 9 which reads:

The Congress shall establish a national language commission composed of representatives of various regions and disciplines which shall undertake, coordinate, and promote researches for the development, propagation, and preservation of Filipino and other languages.

This is the reason for the existence of this particular measure, Mr. President.

Now, if Congress feels that we can forego this particular mandate of the Constitution for the moment, I leave it up to our Colleagues. I agree, having recently gone to Cebu, that, we should attend to the problems of the calamity-stricken areas. But it is not a matter of choosing a language over another; it is a matter of research; it is a matter of study, we should have done that yesterday; we should have done that 53 years ago. We are late; we are just trying to play a catch up game.

**Senator Herrera.** I recognize the fact that there is this constitutional mandate; but, the Constitution does not say that we have to do it now. Besides, if it is happening now that gradually all Filipinos are using the tagalog based Pilipino. I do not see now why do we have to insist on the government's spending for this Commission? I would not be surprised next year when the election is about to come when Senator Osmeña will start talking in Tagalog; because, it is a matter of necessity. One cannot escape from it. If I go to the Muslim areas, I speak either in Tagalog or in English. So, why spend government resources for the Commission and create problem later when we can achieve the same purpose by gradual evolution of the Pilipino language which the media is very effective in hastening this evolution?

**Senator Mercado.** Whether we like it or not, the Filipino language that will be evolving will be Tagalog-based because that is the language now that is understood by most Filipinos. It can never be Waray-based. It can never be Hiligaynon-based. It can never be Cebuano-based. It will be Tagalog-based. So, let us not kid ourselves. Let us confront that reality. But when we start imposing it, then we develop resentment in certain area. They would just like to learn. Whether they like it or not, the traders of Cebu, when they come to Manila and make business here, have to speak in Tagalog. Ninety percent of the movie houses in Cebu are showing Tagalog movies.

As I said, in less than 20 years, I think, Tagalog will be spoken in all places in the Philippines.

I was in Davao last Saturday. I had a meeting with the Cebuano public officials in Davao: Mayor Duterte, Ca-

ballero and all of them, and we talked about this matter because I always bring this issue. Do you know what they told me? "You have to be practical. You can be understood anywhere when you speak in Tagalog."

And so, the National Language, the Filipino language, will definitely be Tagalog-based. So, why legislate this and only create problems? Why unnecessarily use the limited resources of the Government when we can use these for more needed programs in the Government?

That is all, Mr. President.

**Senator Mercado.** I think, the so-called resentment will be generated only because of the mistaken belief that we are going to choose among the existing languages in the country today. That is not mandated in this particular measure. We just want to create a commission to study and start the work towards developing our National Language.

**The President.** All right, Senator Paterno.

**Senator Mercado.** Before Senator Paterno asks his question, I just would like to make a short comment with regard to the word "imposition" as used by Senator Herrera.

We are cognizant of the danger mentioned thus we have included safeguards that would cause the imposition of a language upon our nation. This will be done through the representation of the various ethnolinguistic groups in the country in the commission.

So, let them come together. Let the Tagalogs, Cebuanos, Ilocanos, Pangalatok, Kapampangans, Bicolanos, Hiligaynons, Waray representatives come together.

**The President.** Senator Paterno.

**Senator Paterno.** Will my Colleague yield to a few questions?

**Senator Mercado.** Gladly.

**Senator Paterno.** I tend to be in the Herrera school in this question, although, from a different perspective, since, unfortunately, I am not fluent at all in Cebuano. It

is my sense that, in the last 20 years, since 1970, there has been a very free and unanticipated flowering of the Filipino language. A number of terms used at the present time are quite new, I mean in the perspective of 20 years. Whereas, from 1950 to 1970, the progress of the language was, it seems to me constricted by the *salipaopao*, and *salumpuwit* terminologies of Lope K. Santos.

In other words, is not Senator Herrera, perhaps, also correct from the point of view of having a development of Filipino language which is more spontaneous, and integrates by usage the phrases and words from other languages of this country other than Tagalog? What would the distinguished Senator say to this?

**Senator Mercado.** No doubt, under Commonwealth Act No. 333, which amended Commonwealth Act No. 184, the mandate then was towards a more puristic approach in the development of language. In fact, if I remember right, there were provisions to purge the national language of foreign terms. That, I believe, was the Achilles heel of the effort to establish a national language; hence, as the distinguished Senator has mentioned, the move towards purism and the almost ludicrous result which became the butt of jokes amongst our people. But, precisely, it is that mistake that is being corrected here.

While I do admit that the *lingua franca* is a product largely of the electronic revolution, we must have a body that will put this together, of scholars who will be able to analyze, study, and, propagate by serving as the catalyst in implementing our mandate. If we leave it totally to media, then, I believe, we may not be doing justice to that discipline of linguistics.

I agree, we cannot legislate language. The purpose of language is to communicate and if it does communicate its message, then, I believe, the battle between the correct "interpretation" of the meaning of the term will lose out to the existing usage. But, that has to be documented; that has to be put in a structure. There must be paradigms under which we can study this development in language.

**Senator Paterno.** I beg to differ, because the greatest deterrent to speaking a language is somebody who tells you and smiles at you when you say something wrong.

Try to speak French in France, and say something with a wrong accent. The people smile at you and you just stop speaking French. If you speak Pilipino and somebody says that is not grammatical, et cetera, you will stop speaking Pilipino. That is what I am saying. Perhaps, the reason for the flowering of the language in unexpected ways in the last 20 years has been, precisely, the absence of an institute of national language so that Pilipino has been able to develop freely. Different people have different ways of saying things, but as long as communication is effected, then it is valid.

I wonder whether we would be militating against the more widespread adoption of Pilipino, and the more widespread usage of Pilipino by, at this time, putting up a National Language Commission, because it would inhibit the flowering of the language in a way that would be more widely used.

**Senator Mercado.** There would be a need, for putting some structures in the language, considering that our objective is to develop the language, not only to be able to communicate with each other; but, hopefully, as time goes on, to be able to use that language as our medium of instruction, as a means of documenting our thoughts, of developing our own literature which, to a great extent, embodies the ideals and the yearnings of our people. This is, actually, the soul of a nation.

Leaving it totally, I believe, to the forces of time, through the electronic media may be putting a lot of it in the informal structure and losing our opportunity of documenting, and studying, its development as time goes on.

I would like to believe that whatever language we may adopt, whatever mixture it may be, we submit that it will be basically Tagalog; but, only because it is the most developed, documented and widely used.

**The President.** Nais ko po lamang sundan iyong sinabi ni Senador Paterno kanina. Kailan po ba tayo nagkaroon ng Institute of National Language? Parang narinig ko kaninang...

**Senator Mercado.** Noong 1937 po yata, G. Pangulo.



**The President.** Noong 1937 pa. Noong araw pa po iyan, hindi ba?

**Senator Mercado.** Opo.

**The President.** Mayroon po bang saligan iyong paniniwala na namulaklak lamang itong Tagalog o iyong National Language during the last 20 years, from 1970 to 1990?

**Senator Paterno.** I am referring to the free-form development of the language. It used to be a very structured and dictated development. Kung ano ang sinabi ng Institute of National Language, kung ano ang nakalagay doon sa Balarila, iyon ang itinuturo sa mga eskuwelahan.

**The President.** Alam po ninyo, iyong Balarila ay noong panahon pa ni Lope K. Santos, noong mga 1935, 1936 hanggang 1940. Kaya ko hinabol iyong sinabi ninyo ay dahil noong kami ay nangangampanya noong 1965, limang taon bago dumating iyong sinasabi ninyong "flowering" o "pamumulaklak," napuna kong saan man kami magpunta ay naiintindihan kami sa wikang Tagalog. Sa katotohanan, noong kami ay nasa Jolo, habang nagsasalita ako sa wikang Ingles sa ibabaw ng plataporma, ang hinihingi ng madla ay: "Magsalita kayo sa Tagalog." And that was Sulu in 1965.

**Senator Paterno.** Opo, kayo po ay nagsasalita sa Tagalog, ngunit ilan sa mga nakikinig sa inyo ang nakapagsasalita ng Tagalog kahambing ng proportion ng nagsasalita ng Tagalog sa ngayon sa Sulu?

**The President.** Tiyak na marami ngayon. Pero ang ibig ko pong sabihin, noon pang panahong iyon ay talagang laganap na laganap na ang pagsasalita at ang pagkakaunawa sa salitang Tagalog.

**Senator Paterno.** I beg to differ. Laganap na po ang pag-uunawa ng salita, but I doubt whether laganap na ang pagsasalita ng Tagalog.

**The President.** Of course, it is very hard to quantify all this.

**Senator Herrera** is recognized.

**Senator Herrera.** With the permission of the two Gentlemen, I agree with Senator Paterno's assessment that for the past 20 years, it was really a fast flowering of the Tagalog language. Because, I can still remember when I was a student during the '60s, iyong mga classmates namin na nanonood ng sineng Tagalog would be ridiculed by us. That was the feeling in Cebu at that time. Pag nanood ka ng movie na Tagalog, low class ka. Ngunit ngayon ay hindi na. For the past 20 years, there is now acceptance. But before that, iyong mga Tagalog na nagpupunta doon sa Cebu para magbenta lamang ng mga kumot, they were ridiculed. But, it is different now. The feeling all over the country is that there is acceptance of Tagalog-based Pilipino language.

**The President.** Senator Gonzales wanted to say something.

**Senator Paterno.** Tatapusin ko po lamang ang aking mga pananalita, if I may.

**The President.** Please proceed.

**Senator Paterno.** In other words, what I am suggesting that we look at is: What is the way to develop the language so that it will truly become a National Language, spoken and understood by as many people as possible? Ang isa ko pong puna rito ay para bang kulang ng statement of policy and direction of how that National Language should develop, so that the enactment of legislation will contain thrusts and directions for the development of the language instead of leaving it up to academicians who may have their own ideas which may be contrary to the interests that we seek to promote?

Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Senator Gonzales is recognized.

**Senator Gonzales.** G. Pangulo, maaari po bang makagpagtanong sa mabunying Isponsor ng panukalang-batas na ito?

**Senator Mercado.** Sisikapin ko pong makasagot sa inyong mga katanungan, G. Pangulo.

**Senator Gonzales.** Napag-aralan po ba ng inyong

Komite kung ano ang ginawa at kung ano ang naging karanasan ng Indonesia sa pagkakaroon ng isang Wikang Pambansa? Alam po ninyo, tinukoy ko ang Indonesia dahil ito ngayon ay may sariling wikang tinatawag na *Bahasa Indonesia*, at kinuha ko ito bilang halimbawa sapagkat ang Indonesia ay isang bansang higit na malaki kaysa atin. Ang bilang ng kanilang mga mamamayan ay 185 milyon. Sila ay isang archipelago katulad ng Pilipinas at higit na malaki kaysa atin, at marami rin silang wika at dialektong ginagamit doon. Pero ang ipinagtataka ko, sa loob ng napakaiksing panahon sila ay nagkaroon ng isang Wikang Pambansang tinatawag na *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Ngayon, ibig ko pong malaman kung paano nila ginawa iyon nang hindi naman nahati ang kanilang mga mamamayan. Sa katunayan, ito ay isang bansang nagsasarili at nagkakaisa ang mga mamamayan, na taliwas naman doon sa ating paniniwala na kung sisikapin ng ating Pamahalaan na magkaroon ng isang Wikang Pambansa ay baka lalong mahati ang ating mga mamamayan.

**Senator Mercado.** Ngunit sa aking kaunting nalalaman tungkol sa Indonesia, malaki po ang contribution ni G. Sukarno sa development ng *Bahasa Indonesia*. It has only been some 30 years or three decades and yet the language has been fully developed. Indonesian territory is a lot larger than the Philippines, yet they have been able to overcome the difficulties. But, I feel, my impression is that it was because there was the political will and desire to really develop and catalyze the development of a national language on the part of the national leadership. To that, we give a lot of credit to Sukarno.

**Senator Gonzales.** Samakatwid, nauuwi na namang lahat doon sa katarungan ng pangunguna o leadership, political will, sang-ayon sa inyo, kung talagang gusto ng isang bansang magkaroon ng isang sariling wika.

**Senator Mercado.** Tama po iyon. At dito po sa ating panukala, maaaring sa gagawing pag-aaral ng Komisyon ay doon magsimula ang tinatawag nating pangunguna, at tuloy ay mahimay na maigi ang mga isyung napapaloob sa problema tungo sa aking pagkakaroon ng isang Wikang Pambansa.

**Senator Gonzales.** Pero kung iyon lamang ang

intensiyon ng batas na ito, baka hindi po ako bumoto rito. Ang gusto ko po ay isang kongkretong hakbang, na sa pagtatatag natin nitong tinatawag ninyong Komisyon ng Wikang Pambansa ay maging isa itong tunay at matibay na hakbang na gagawin ng Pamahalaan tungo sa isang dakilang layunin, at iyon nga ay ang pagkakaroon ng isang Wikang Pambansa, na ang ibinigay na pangalan ng ating Saligang-Batas ay "Filipino". Hindi kami komportable doon sa salitang "Filipino", pero iyon ang tadhanang nakasaad sa ating Saligang-Batas.

Alam po ninyo, mahal na Pangulo, kaming mga Tagalog, matagal nang panahong isinaksak namin sa dingding ng ating kasaysayan iyong sundang ng rehiyunalismo. Matagal na po iyon. Siguro ay nauna ho kami. Tanging kami lamang mga Tagalog ang nag-alis noon. Kaya masasabi ninyo sa lahat ng grupo na hindi nagkakaisa rito ang mga Pilipino. Sapagkat ang tingin namin sa aming sarili ay hindi na Tagalog. Ang tingin namin sa aming sarili ay Pilipino. Kung paanong ang mga Bisaya, ang mga Bikolano at ang iba nating mga kababayan ay Pilipino. Hindi namin sila tinitingnan bilang Bisaya o bilang Ilokano o bilang Pampanggo kundi bilang Pilipino.

Mangyari ay may mga salitang ginamit noon, na masasabi nating isang pagkakamali sa ating kasaysayan, at iyon ang ibig kong pag-aralan nating mabuti. Tama kaya ang mga salitang iyon? Because it is a harsh judgment, Mr. President. Ang tadhanang nakasaad sa ilalim ng 1935 Constitution tungkol sa bagay na ito ay "shall develop a national language based on one of the existing languages in the Philippines."

At may kasaysayan at may dahilan po ang tadhanang iyon, sapagkat may dalawang approaches in the development of a language. First, we have to base it on one of the existing languages in a country. Ikalawa, iyong helter-skelter, o iyong pagdampot ng ilang mga salita, o pagpu-lot ng mga salita mula sa iba, at pagkatapos ay pagsasama-samahin ito, kaya ang labas ay halu-halo system. Pero ang mga linguists ay naniniwala na ang una ang siyang pinakamagaling na paraan to develop a language. Kaya may base po. It is not accidental. It is neither, shall we say, na ang Constitutional Convention of 1934 ay may katwiran nang kanilang sabihin na "To develop a national language based on one of the existing languages of the Philippines." Samakatwid, it was a

policy choice--how to develop a National Language.

At dahil dito ay itinatag iyong tinatawag na Institute of National Language, iyong naging forerunner nitong tinatawag natin ngayong Surian ng Wikang Pambansa. And it might interest the Members of this Body to know that the first Chairman of the Institute of National Language was a Visayan--si Jaime de Veyra. Siya ay isang Visayan. At gumawa ng pag-aaral itong Institute of National Language sa lahat ng mga umiiral na languages at diyalekto sa Pilipinas. And they reached the conclusion that Tagalog is the most adequate language to serve as basis. It is not the national language, kundi batayan lamang ng isang itatalagang national language. So, I think, the Philippine Legislature enacted a law designating Tagalog as merely the basis--hindi siyang national language--of the national language. Kaya po nandoroon nga. Doon nagsimula iyong tinatawag nating "Tagalog-based national language", at pagkatapos ay binigyan ng pangalang "Filipino." Hindi po ba?

Ngayon, ang tanong ko po ay, sa ngayon, ano po ba ang katayuan nitong "Tagalog-based Filipino?" Sa panahong ito, wala na po ba iyan?

**Senator Mercado.** When we made some statements which has been interpreted by Senator Gonzales as a harsh judgment on the work of the Institute of National Language, we were speaking of its efforts as mandated by Commonwealth Act No. 184, and amended by 333 which to our mind included provisions that sought to purge the language of foreign words and influences. While we agree with Senator Gonzales that, indeed, a policy choice must be taken, we cannot also readily dismiss the fact that language is a matter of evolution. It cannot be solely imposed as has been the experience of the Institute of National Language where, as I mentioned earlier, there were translations and words that were even strange to those who spoke Tagalog extensively, which is the basis of the language.

With regard to Indonesia, they made a decision as regards Bahasa Indonesia, and they based it on Malay which is broadly accepted in Indonesia. They put up their counterpart of a National Center for Language Development equivalent to our *Surian*, which we are now trying to rename as "The National Language Commission." There was a political decision.

**Senator Gonzales.** Opo, wala po tayong pagtatalo

roon. Ang ibig ko po lamang malaman, when we use the word "evolve" and then pagkatapos "develop", ano ho iyon, mula sa wala? We evolve from nothing? Develop from nothing? Ano po ang maayos: iyong "evolve" o iyong "develop from something that is already in existence"? Because, I would like to believe that when the 1986 Constitutional Commission approved the 1987 Constitution, they were aware of the history and the developments in our national effort to have a national language. They were aware. So when they used the word "evolve", they used the word "develop" then, it is not really from thin air or from nothing but something, the existence of which is known and recognized. Hindi po kaya?

**Senator Mercado.** Ang totoo nito, dalawang katotohanan ang maaari nating tanggapin: na ang Pilipino base sa Tagalog ay tanggap na sa buong Bansa, at mismo ang ating mga kasamahang taga-Bisaya ang nagsasabi na ito ay malawak nang nauunawaan ng ating mga kababayan. We cannot deny that as a language, there have been some great strides that have been made, even as we acknowledge failure. In literature, in the development of the language as a medium of instruction, we have made some gains not as much as we hope we should have, but we are on the way.

The University of the Philippines, for example, now, at the tertiary level, is making great efforts to use Filipino as the medium of instruction with some difficulty but with some success in some areas. We cannot close our eyes to this. And we cannot just, I think, skirt the issue and say, "let us just postpone discussion on the matter."

**Senator Gonzales.** Iyon nga po ang aking punto rito. Ito po ang tanong ko: Sa ngayon, is there an officially declared national language? If so, what is it?

**The President.** Ito po ang nakalagay sa Saligang-Batas:

The national language of the Philippines is Filipino.

It is already there.

**Senator Gonzales.** G. Pangulo, ang sinasabi ko, bago po itong tadhanang ito ng Konstitusyon, mayroon nang umiiral. According to the law, officially and le-

gally, mayroon pong isang national language dito, although ang spelling ay hindi "Filipino" kundi "Pilipino." And in the opinion of the Secretary of Justice, basing upon this Article XVII, Section 3, it states and I quote:

All existing laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, letters of instructions, and other executive issuances not inconsistent with the Constitution shall remain operative until amended, repealed or revoked.

Ang sabi sa batas that designates or points to Pilipino, which is Tagalog-based, that continues to remain as the statute and, therefore, until that is changed, repealed or amended, then that continues to remain, bagaman ang pangalan ay "Pilipino." Kaya sa mga public schools natin, at maski na sa private schools, ginagamit pa rin, as a language of instruction under the bilingual system of education, ang Tagalog-based Pilipino. Hindi po ba?

**Senator Gonzales.** Sa diskusyon po ng Constitutional Commission, mayroon pong sinabi ang Chairman ng Komite noon, si G. Villacorta, na nauukol sa bagay na iyan. I would just like to quote one of his sentences:

**MR. VILLACORTA.** The position of the Committee, Madam President, is that there is a living *lingua franca* which is called Filipino. It is not *lingua franca* that is used by citizens of the Philippines who use different native languages or dialects. So, if a Cebuano and an Ilocano meet each other in any place in the Philippines, they would use this *lingua franca* which we call "Filipino." We call it "Filipino" and not "Pilipino" because it is not exactly Tagalog because Tagalog is a pure form. In fact, "Pilipino," according to linguists who attended our hearings, is even purer than Tagalog because it tries to coin words which are not really used.

**Senator Gonzales.** That does not answer the question, kung mayroon po tayo ngayong isang official national language as provided for by law.

**Senator Mercado.** Binanggit po ng ating Pangulo ang Section 6, Article XIV ng ating Konstitusyon, iyong probisyong na nagsasaad na "The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be

further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages." Iyan po, sa aking paniwala, ang batayan o ang kasagutan doon sa katanungan ninyo, kung mayroong basehan ang national language.

**Senator Gonzales.** Mangyari po, sa palagay ko, doon sa language development, I do not agree that there is a sharp division or interruption in point of development between the Tagalog-based national language and the Filipino, now provided for by the Constitution. Somehow, may koneksiyon. Otherwise, paano natin maipaliwanag itong expenditure of public funds na hanggang sa ngayon ay ginagawa sa pagtuturo nitong Tagalog-based Filipino as one of the medium of instructions. Ang ibig ba nating sabihin ay natapon at nawalan na ng kabuluhan ang lahat ng ito, until we shall have really developed Filipino. Terrible ang pag-aaksaya ng panahon, ang pag-aaksaya ng salapi ng bayan, ang pag-aaksaya ng kasaysayan.

Sinisenyasan na po ako ng Majority Floor Leader. Ako ay mabait na kawal, tango lamang ako ng tango basta sinabi ng ating lider. Kaya, siguro, kung maaari isuspendi muna natin ito. Ayaw ko namang huminto dahil may punto pa po ako. Umaasa ako na hindi ipagkakait sa akin ang pagkakataong makapagtanong muli. So, I request that the interpellations be suspended for the next session.

#### SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION ON SENATE BILL NO. 209

**Senator Guingona.** With that reservation, Mr. President, I move that we suspend consideration of Senate Bill No. 209.

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

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

**Senator Guingona.** Mr. President, I move that we transfer to the Calendar for Special Orders Committee Report No. 5646 on Senate Bill No. 1063.

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