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APERTURA DE LA SESION

Se abre la sesión a las 4:30 p.m., bajo la presidencia del Presidente, Hon. Claro M. Recto.

EL PRESIDENTE: Lease la lista de Delegados.

SR. BUSLON: Señor Presidente, pido qué se dispense la lectura de la lista.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Hay alguna objeción? (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Se dispensa la lectura de la lista. Hay quorum. Lease el acta.

APROBACION DEL ACTA

SR. BUSLON: Señor Presidente, pido igualmente qué se dispense la lectura del acta y qué la misma se de por aprobada.

EL PRESIDENTE: ¿Hay alguna objeción (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Aprobada.

SR. NAVARRO: Señor Presidente, quisiera hacer uso del privilege de la media hora.

EL PRESIDENTE: Tiene la palabra el Caballero de Mindoro.

DISCURSO DEL SR. NAVARRO

SR. NAVARRO: Señor Presidente y Caballeros de la Convencion: Quizas no nos queden más qué algunos dias de sesión, y antes de separarnos quisiera aprovechar esta oportunidad para hablaros de algunos topicos de palpitante actualidad.

Comenzare por decir qué la Convencion no ha querido afrontar con valor los asuntos más vitales qué estan al alcarice de nuestras manos y dentro de nuestras facultades. Los preceptos adoptados para la nacionalizacion y conservation de los terrenos y recuraos natuiales, no reflejan el sentir del pueblo ni responden plenamente a la necesidad de asegurar el control de dichoa terrenos y recursos para el beneficio exclusivo de los filipinos. Voy a permitirnie llamar la atencion de la Convencion al hecho lamentable qué ocurre en nuestro pais. Practieamente, estamos los filipinos desposeidos de los elementos esenciales qué necesitamos conservar en nuestras manos para la estabilidad de la vida libre e independiente qué pronto hemos de afrontar. El comercio al por mayor y menor no esta en nuestras manos, las principales industrias y la agricultura misma en gran escala estan controladas por manos y capital extranos. En medio de estas tristes condiciones, creo qué la unica esperanza de nuestro pueblo son sus terrenos y las inmensas riquezas qué encierran, con los cuales podra acometer la magna y patriotica labor de levantarse de la postracion econonica en qué qué se halla, pero sin los cuales presenciaremos con toda seguridad el triste espectaculo de an pueblo qué no es más qué un verdadero extrano en el propio solar.

El acaparamiento de grandes extensiones de terreno por individuos y corporaciones es de gran significacion

politica y social, porque suele ser la excusa y origen de graves conflictos sociales. Sí el acaparamiento se hace por individuos y corporaciones extranjeros, no hay duda de qué el hecho constituye una amenaza real a la vida economica de nuestro pueblo. Sin ir muy lejos, ahí tenemos el episodio sensacional denunciado recientemente desde las columnas de la prensa. Me refiero a los sensacionales escandalos promovidos por la venta, traspaso y arriendo de los terrenos llamados "hacienda de los frailes" hace algunos años y qué fueron objeto de una investigacion en el Congress americano por efecto de las denuncias de la prensa filipina y la campana emprendida en Washington por los Demócratas. Pero aquí, qué, a pesar de dichos escandalos y dedicha investigacion, se reproduce actualmente la pretension del Arzobispo de la ciudad de Manila de quedarse con una buena porcion de los terrenos conocidos por "hacienda de San Jose", en la provincia de Mindoro, no obstante no haber pagado totalmente los primitivos compradores, desde hace 24 años, el precio de venta en aquella sospechosa transaction. La proposicion de Su Ilustrisima es sumamente desventajosa para el Gobierno, pues solo puede beneficiar al Arzobispo o a los intereses qué representa, porque el retendria la mayor parte de la hacienda, juntamente con las mejoras qué en ella habia cuando el Gobierno adquirio de los frailes dicha propiedad. El Arzobispo insiste en su proposicion y pide la reconsideración de la decision del Departamento de Agricultura.

He hecho mencion de esta escandalosa transaction, en la qué esta interesada una de las grandes entidades arraigadas en el pais y cuya influencia se hace sentir en todos los organismos de nuestro Gobierno y de nuestro pueblo, para demostrar el peligro a qué esta abocado nuestro pueblo por la concesion de grandes extensiones de terreno a corporaciones religiosas y extranjeras, y para demostrar, al mismo tiempo, la censurable conducta de los legisladores qué se dejaron arrastrar por los agentes de grandes intereses qué intentaron explotar a nuestro pueblo a la sombra del regimen. En relacion con este asunto, no puedo menos de tocar ahora y brevemente otro asunto qué debe saber nuestro pais.

No comprendo la pasiva e indifferente actitud de nuestros lideres ante los planes de protection economica qué quiere adoptar nuestro pueblo. Los preceptos consitucionales encaminados a conservar para los hijos del pais nuestros recursos naturales y economicos son rechazados y combatidos, pretexto de qué no contamos con Escuadra y Ejercito qué nos protejan. ¿Es razonable y logico para un pueblo qué quiere salvar su vida economica y politica, cruzarse de brazos ante el triste espectaculo de qué su comercio y su industria estan en manos extranas y sus terrenos vayan pasando también a manos extranas? La penetracion economica es el mayor de los peligros qué hoy amenazan a nuestro pais; la invasion armada solo vendra cuando, por nuestra desidia y negligencia, ya este consumada la penetracion economica so pretexto de proteger los intereses creados.

La adopcion de medidas qué despierten y aviven el interes de los filipinos por el comercio y el desenvolvimiento de los recursos naturales del pais, no es más qué el ejercicio de un derecho natural y legitimo, y es absurdo y antipatriotico creer qué, por el mero hecho de ejercer dicho derecho, hemos de provocar la ira de otros pueblos y naciones y por este motivo envíen aquí sus escuadras y demas fuerzas armadas.

Es una desgracia qué nuestro pueblo no cuente siempre, como en el pasado, con lideres dispuestos a sacrificar su comodidad, su bienestar, e inclusive su vida por el bienestar y felicidad de sus compatriotas. Un pueblo qué por cuatrocientos años, en medio de grandes miserias y sufrimientos, no solo ha podido sobrevivir y conservar su vitalidad, sino qué supo, ademas, resistir y repeler los duros golpes de la opresion colonial, es un pueblo qué ciertamente posee grandes cualidades qué aún no se han cultivado y desarrollado por falta de oportunidad y buenos guias. Cuando Bonifacio y Aguinaldo, inspirandose en las enseñanzas y ejemplos del acendrado y desinteresado patriotismo de Rizal, Del Pilar y de otros grandes patriotas, quisieron acabar, por medio de las armas, con nuestra esclavitud y buscar remedio a los males sociales de entonces, hallaron un pueblo qué, aunque pobre y desarmado, supo morir en defensa de su honor, de su derecho y de su territorio. ¿Como no ha de responder ese mismo pueblo al llamamiento del deber en el terreno economico si hubiera lideres qué sacrificando

conveniencias personales y dejando a un lado inteligencias con los intereses que son la remora de nuestro progreso, se dedicaran a guiarle por el tortuoso camino que conduce a la conquista del comercio y de la industria del pais y al desarrollo de nuestra agricultura?

Para mi, la misma pasividad o indiferencia de la clase directora del pais es la que mata la iniciativa de los filipinos en este particular, porque ven con dolor que, tras de quedar abandonados a merced de los elementos del imperialismo economico que privan en nuestro Gobierno y en nuestra sociedad, todavia son tildados de radicales, si no de tendencias comunistas, los pequenos medios que se quieren adoptar para la proteccion del incipiente comercio nativo.

MR. ROMERO: Mr. President, I move that the session of the Convention be suspended to receive the President of the Senate, and that a committee of three be appointed to escort him.

EL PRESIDENTE: Sí no hay objeción, la Mesa designa un comité compuesto de los Delegados Cuenco, Laurel y Francisco para que se sirvan acompañar al salón al Presidente del Senado. (No hubo objeción.)

SUSPENSION DE LA SESION

EL PRESIDENTE: Se suspende la sesión por algunos minutos.

(El Comité abandona el salón, volviendo a los pocos minutos acompañando al Presidente Quezon, quien es saludado con una salva de aplausos al subir al estrado presidencial.)

THE PRESIDENT: Gentlemen of the Convention: The President of the Philippine Senate and leader of the Filipino people, Honorable Manuel L. Quezon.

DISCURSO DEL PRESIDENTE QUEZON

MR. QUEZON: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: It is a great privilege and honor to be asked to address this Convention. This invitation, I take it, has been extended to me as the present leader of our people, and it is in this capacity that I wish to bear testimony for our posterity that your work has been admirably well done, and that you have deserved the congratulations and the gratitude of our people.

For the first time in the history of an Oriental people, they are to have a Constitution framed by their own chosen Delegates and approved by them. Our wonderful neighbor, Japan, has a constitution, but it is a grant of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor.

This is not, however, the first time in the history of the Filipino people that we adopt a Constitution. During the first Philippine Republic we adopted a Constitution for it. The work of that Constitutional Assembly is written large in the pages of our history, and I assume that you have taken into consideration the Constitution they adopted then, as well as all the other constitutions written in modern times.

But the Constitution which you are about to pass is your own work. It is the expression of the genius of our people; it expresses our political ideals; and it meets the requirements of the age in which we and our children will live. You have shown in writing this constitution a vision that will save our country from very serious and great difficulties. It will help the future government of the Commonwealth, and later the government of the Republic, to meet the problems of the day.

The first thing I wish to comment upon is the absolute lack of partisanship in the debates of this Convention. It will be impossible to find in the records of your debate even a hint that within this Hall two great political parties recently faced each other and staged one of the greatest political battles ever witnessed in the Philippines. The

complete freedom of expression and the tolerance and respect for the opinion of others, — all testify to the fact that our people believe in democracy and practice it actually. The impartiality, the unfailing courtesy and justice with which the Chair has dealt with the Members of this Convention, has justly won for its occupant the affection, respect and admiration of all. When the history of the Convention is written, it will be very difficult for the historian to determine whether the Majority, in its sense of justice and fair dealing and self-sacrifice, or the Minority, which has responded so generously to that spirit, is more worthy of credit for this happy situation which has given such beneficent results.

The second thing I want to mention, if only in a general way, is about some salient features of this Constitution. This world today is facing great social revolutions. Every day we learn of radical changes in government. More and more the daily affairs of men are being controlled partly, or almost totally, by the State. And it is because the productive resources of man have so increased during the last century and the present one that the social and political institutions which he has evolved to control and direct the distribution of this wealth so produced, have proved to be partly insufficient.

You all have in mind the situation existing all over the world today; and in framing the Constitution, while you have set definite barriers against any possible encroachment upon the rights of individuals which every free-loving people consider as more precious than life itself, you have however given to the government you are creating sufficient powers that will enable it — whenever necessary — to efficiently and properly direct our social activities so that the public welfare may be promoted and defended at all times.

It is with this end in view, I take it, that you have given the National Assembly under the Commonwealth and under the law, powers to provide for the control and operation of public utilities, powers to determine the size of agricultural land — as you have already done in the Constitution — that may be owned by corporations, and of agricultural land owned privately; and to expropriate large landed estates when necessary in the public interest.

There are many other provisions in the Constitution which show that the intent of the framers is to create a government that will be self-sufficient, having all the powers necessary to meet the modern problems confronting it. The Legislative Department is given all the means to promote and protect the well-being of our people; you have also created an Executive Department which, in ordinary times as well as during periods of crises, will have the power necessary to lead our country successfully through all the difficulties that it may encounter along its path. In some countries where democracy has ceased to exist, the immediate cause was lack of strong executive power. The confusion created misguided, misled parliaments. I suppose that you have had in mind these recent historical events in investing the Executive Department of this government with great executive powers.

There is one great danger in having a strong executive department, and that is the danger of dictatorship. Once again this Convention has shown its vision and wisdom when it provided that there shall be no re-election for the position of Chief Executive. This clause in the Constitution guarantees to the Filipino people the impossibility or at least the improbability of having a Chief Executive who will try to perpetuate himself in power. We are familiar with the history of some of the Central and South American Republics and our conclusion is that to a large extent the revolutions that have taken place there were caused by the fact that their Chief Executives are permitted to present themselves as candidates for re-election. I have had close contact with the membership of this Convention and one of the greatest satisfactions that I have received in listening to their ideas and purposes with reference to this work is the unanimity in providing the Commonwealth and later on the Republic with an independent Judiciary. I have yet to find a single Member of this Convention who has not shown a very deep and sincere concern for the establishment of a strong and independent Judiciary.

Mr. President, with a Constitution such as the one that has been framed here, you will hand over to our people an

instrument which, if properly used, will grant them freedom, happiness and prosperity. Gentlemen of the Convention, you have done everything within your power to assure the future of the people of the Philippines. However, the Constitution by itself cannot vouchsafe to our people a good and efficient government that will promote and protect our best interests. It is necessary that the people at all times be behind the Constitution in its letter and spirit, and be on its guard so that no human conspiracy may defeat it and its purpose.

It is necessary that the government we may establish in the future should gear its policies to the high and noble ideals and purposes contained in this Constitution, and always work within the limits prescribed by the Constitution to such department of the government. This is the work to be done not by you but by others. You have done your duty, and whoever might be called upon to put into practice the precepts of this Constitution, and whatever they might do—whether they abide by it or defy it—would be already beyond your concern. Your name is secure in the history of our country. You can go back to your respective homes and face those who sent you here and with pride and satisfaction tell them that as far as your duties were concerned, you have performed to the best of your ability, which equalled the need of the hour and the requirements of our national interest.

There is one provision in this Constitution which I should like to mention particularly so that the country may know what it means and how far you went in your desire to safeguard the integrity of our nation and the independence of our people. It is that clause in the Constitution which permits the government of the Commonwealth or the government of the Republic to command the services of our citizenry in times of war and peace. This clause expresses your own individual spirit regarding the duty of every citizen to his country and to the State. It would have been impossible for a gathering like this to have inserted in the Constitution with unanimous vote such a provision if you, without thinking freely, did not with sincerity and loyalty represent the feelings and thoughts of your own district and people. The question for the country is to mean exactly what is said in that Constitution. Every man and woman of this land of ours must be ready whenever his services are needed and to give them without hesitation.

Insofar as the internal mechanism of our government is concerned, we have been fortunate in framing our own Constitution at a time when we have before us the experience of other peoples and the recent events in other countries which called for such a chance in their respective governments. We have been fortunate in this respect, but the time for our country to come into its independent existence is not quite propitious. There are clouds hanging over countries throughout the world. Everybody is talking of peace, yet everyone is preparing for war. We would not be the worthy sons of our forefathers if, because of this unsettled international situations, we were to hesitate even a moment in assuming the responsibility and in defying the risks of an independent national existence.

The Constitution is the best evidence that you are ready to go ahead and that our people are determined not to take one single step backward. In this Constitution you have given the Philippine Commonwealth all the powers needed to build an efficient national defense. No one, seeing us making ready for the eventualities of the future, which we all hope will never come, will have the slightest thought that we are imbued with other ideals than those of peace. But you have solemnly declared in this Constitution that it is the national policy of our government and of our people to renounce war under any and all circumstances, except only when war means our duty to defend ourselves against undue or illegal aggression.

Once more, Mr. President, I want to say that this Convention has done its duty. We have many things to learn not only from what you have written in the Constitution but from what you have done during the life of this Convention. The Philippine Commonwealth may well take this Convention as a norm for its future conduct. Here you have two political parties, yet both of them have acted and spoken here in mutual harmony and cooperation with but one object in view—the performance of the duty imposed upon this Convention. You have organized this

Convention by electing unanimously your President and your Vice-Presidents, by giving important positions in your committees to members of the Majority and the Minority as well. You have thus shown that it is more than practicable and convenient, if not necessary, that all the forces of our country should join together in these days when we are facing a great change in our national life and work like one man to realize our national ideals while performing our national obligations.

I should like to mention on this occasion the names of members of this Constitutional Convention whose work has made them specially worthy of appreciation on the part of our people. But I shall refrain from doing so for fear that once I start reciting names I shall find myself reading to the very end of the list of Members of this Constitutional Assembly. (Applause). Permit me, Gentlemen of the Convention, to at least pay my respects and say a few words of commendation on the able manner the distinguished President of this Convention has led this Body into the final success which will crown your deliberations. (Applause). It is a great honor you have conferred upon the Honorable Claro M. Recto when you elected him President of this Convention. You gave him a wonderful opportunity to make or unmake himself. He was preceded by his great reputation as a scholar, a man of letters, a jurist and statesman. Sometimes men with such reputation, however well deserved, when faced by the realities of actually dealing with men, do not always measure up to the situation. It is not necessary to say whether President Recto has been equal to his task. Soon every Member at this Convention will sign his name on that document, which is historical not only because the framing of the Constitution is in itself memorable, but because I confidently hope it will be the charter that will guide our Ship of State through generations until the last call of the trumpet is heard. And because you have written a Constitution, I am sure you will agree with me that you have conferred a great privilege on your President, who is also my friend! (Applause.)

REANUDACION DE LA SESION

EL PRESIDENTE: Se reanuda la sesión.

LEVANTAMIENTO DE LA SESION

SR. ROMERO: Señor Presidente, pido qué se levante la sesión hasta mañana, a las 4:00 de la tarde.

EL PRESIDENTE: Sí no hay objeción, se levanta la sesión hasta mañana, a las 4:00 de la tarde, (No la hubo.)
Eran las 5:53 p.m.

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