

JOURNAL No. 18

VOL. I, August 21, 1934

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/eb997bd28fea/>

APERTURA DE LA SESION

Se abre la sesion a las 4:25 p.m., ocupando el estrado el President,, Hon. Claro M. Recto.

EL PRESIDENTE: Se abre la sesion.

LECTURA DE LA LISTA

Se lee la lista de los Sres. Delegados. Hubo quorum.

APROBACION DEL ACTA

Se lee el acta correspondiente a la sesion del dia 20 de agosto de 1934, la cual es aprobada,

DESPACHO DE LOS ASUNTOS QUE ESTAN SOBRE LA
MESA DEL SR. PRESIDENTE

EL FRESIDENTE: Leanse los documentos recibidos.

EL SECRETARIO los lee:

MOCION SOTTO DE POSPOSICION, SU APROBACION

EL PRESIDENTE: Esta en orden la consideracion del proyecto de resolucion numero 3.

SR. SOTTO (P.): Sr. Presidente.

EL PRESIDENTE: Sr. Delegado por Cebu.

SR. SOTTO (F.): For hallarse ausente de la Sala de Sesiones el autor del proyecto de resolucion, el Comite de Reglamentos pide que sea pospuesto, sin fecha fija, la consideracion de dicho proyecto de resolucion.

EL PRESIDENTE: En vista de la ausencia del autor del proyecto de resolucion, el Comite de Reglamentos pide que sea pospuesta su consideracion para otro dia. Tiene la Asamblea alguna objecion a la mocion? (Silencio.) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Queda Aprobada.

SPEECH OF MR. CUADERNO ON “LANDED ESTATES
AND TRUSTS IN PERPETUITY”

MR. CUADERNO: Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: The gentleman from Bataan has the floor.

MR. CUADERNO: Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: I must confess that it is with trepidation that today I make use of the privilege, the gracious grant of your generosity, to say a few words. It would seem that

speeches in this Convention have become a valueless commodity, something that cannot be made equable to public welfare or to public policy.

But, Mr. President, we would be reminded that speeches and debates are the fundamentals in the activities of this body for the simple reason that they remain the only vital means for the exposition of their views, the only vital means for the examination of the principles that this Convention must analyze, the only vital means for the transactions of business in all deliberative bodies. We cannot well jettison them and hope for the success of our work.

We have all heard of the Malolos Constitution. A great many of us have read it, and pondered the resolute decisions or the ramifications of wisdom on statecraft in that historic document. Unquestionably, there is inspiring rectitude in the ideals expressed in its preamble. It tells us of the common aspiration "to establish justice" and of the nation's purpose through the Constitution, "to promote the general welfare."

These are not meaningless words to us here foregathered under mandate of the people to draft the most important law governing their life. We must search out of these words the virtuality of their power to contribute to the public welfare.

And to me these words are a command that, as we write the Constitution, there must be in that instrument a safeguard that insures domestic tranquillity.

This I say and assert for a historic reason which is the historic fact of the endless conflicts between landlords and tenants in these Islands. There has been an impairment of public tranquility and, to be sure, a continuous impairment of it, because of the existence of these conflicts. In our folklore the oppression and exploitation of the tenants are vividly referred to; their suffering at the hands of the landlords are emotionally pictured in our drama; and even in the native movies and talkies of today, this theme of economic slavery has been touched upon. In official documents these same conflicts are narrated and exhaustively explained as a threat to social order and stability. William H. Taft as Secretary of War, in a special report to the President of the United States, which led to the purchase by the Philippine Government of a part of the Friar Lands in 1903, said:

"A most potential source of disorder in the Islands was the ownership of what were called the 'friar lands' by three of the religious orders of the Islands The attitude of the people toward the friars' lands was shown by the fact that the so-called Constitutional Convention assembled by Aguinaldo at Malolos nationalized the friar lands ..."

But we should go to Rizal for inspiration and illumination in this problem of the conflicts between landlords and tenants. The national hero and his family were persecuted because of these same conflicts in Calamba, and Rizal himself met a martyr's death because of his espousal of the cause of the tenant class, because he would not close his eyes to oppression and persecution with his own people as victims.

I ask you, Gentlemen of the Convention, knowing this as you do and feeling deeply, as you must feel, a regret over the immolation of the hero's life, would you not regret in the Constitution the provision on large estates and trust in perpetuity, so that you would be the very instrument of Providence to complete the labors of Rizal to insure domestic tranquillity for the masses of our people?

As meet here, even if what we do should not make history, there is no question that history broods over us, and watches our steps and records our doings. Upon these conflicts of landlords and tenants, Rizal was introspective and prophetic. It remains for us to draw from his writings the travails and dignity of his life, to draw from the tragic beauty of his death, the ideals of justice and peace and write them into the pages of our Constitution in the form, of the safeguards for domestic tranquility through the regulation of large estates and trusts in perpetuity.

This question is closely related to the realities of the present. Thus allow me then to give you a picture of a case in point. I am taking you, Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention, on a short ride through the plains of Bulacan and Pampanga towards the northwest, and in two hours and a half we reach the fertile valley of Dinalupihan. We are attracted by a large group of people around the municipal building. We stop to inquire and to our surprise we find upon reaching the big hall occupied by the Justice of the Peace Court that a trial for eviction of several tenants is being held in the presence of armed constabulary guards. We hear the sad pleadings of those unfortunate ones of the soil that they were never before required to pay any rent for the places occupied by their houses (i.e. before the Church leased the estate to the private individual), except for the land they cultivate; that the rental was raised so often, notwithstanding the present depression, that it was no longer possible for them to support their families. We sense the suppressed feeling of unrest and resentment of the people who usually attend these trials in large numbers, curious as to what is to be their fate in the days to come, for it is now a matter of routine for the court of justice in that municipality to hear such cases. We also learn that practically the entire municipality is owned by a single entity. But what holds us amazement is the overbearing admonition of the attorney for the plaintiff in open court, directed to the people in the courtroom, that the tenants must heed the demands of his client or they would be driven out of their lands by the Constabulary.

How empty, Mr. President, is our reiterated loyalty to democracy and representative government! For there in Dinalupihan, autocracy holds away. The Government is helpless because the Government cannot act in violation of its own laws. And when that obtains, the Government exists as the very traducer of its own self, and public authority fades from the hands of democracy to be reincarnated in the autocracy of vested rights. Let us beware lest the government we will set up be a mockery of our bespoken decision to serve the masses of our people.

If we are to be true to our trust, if it is our purpose in drafting our Constitution to insure domestic tranquility and to provide for the well-being of our people, we cannot, we must not fail to prohibit the ownership of large estates and to provide for their acquisition by purchase or through expropriation and sale to their occupants, as has been provided in the Constitution of Mexico and Yugoslavia.

Now, Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention, I shall take you down to that historic island of Cebu, where a couple of charitable old folks in their lifetime saw fit to establish a home for the poor ones and actually set aside a good portion of their property for such a good cause. The Philippine Legislature in approving Act. 3239, not only sanctioned this undertaking but also invested it with all the powers of a corporation and even more. It was authorized to purchase and hold real estate and exempted it from the payment of real estate and income taxes, in fact of all taxes in exchange for the power of supervision by a government office to be exercised, however, without prejudice to the discretionary powers of the administration conferred by that Act.

What do we find among the activities of this entity called Hospicio de San Jose de Barili of Cebu? Deriving more income than what is required to maintain its present insignificant beneficent activities, it is now, as it has been in the past, engaged in lending money under the pacto-de-retroventa provision of our present law. Because of these activities it has enlarged considerably its land holdings in various municipalities of the province of Cebu and has thus enriched itself to the detriment of the people and government of that province as no taxes are paid by this supposedly charitable entity. And Gentlemen of the Convention, has the administrator of this entity paid any attention to the demand made upon it by the Government that the Hospicio must not continue to increase its real estate business activities without a corresponding increase in its social welfare activities? No. Why should it? Has not the government, by virtue of Act 3239, rendered itself powerless to curb these transactions of the Hospicio, which, according to a high government functionary, "are inimical to the public welfare"? Have not the Secretary of Justice and the Attorney General expressed the opinion that because of the provision in the Jones Law that "no law impairing the obligation of contracts shall be enacted," every thought of amending or repealing Act. 3239

should be abandoned?

Here, Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention, is an institution conceived primarily for charitable purposes under a perpetual trust, sanctioned and clothed with extraordinary powers by our lawmaking body, not only failing to serve the purpose for which it was created, but is now enriching itself in money-lending, increasing its landholdings which are tax-exempt to the detriment of the government and the people of Cebu.

I submit, Mr. President, that such a condition of affairs requires more than a passing thought in this Convention; that in our proposed Constitution means should be provided not only to put a stop to such an anomalous situation, but also to prevent its repetition. As provided in the Constitution of Spain, the government should be given ample power to intervene in cases of this kind. In any event, suitable constitutional limitations should be placed in the creation of trusts in perpetuity.

Mr. President, unless and until this atrocious state of affairs, which with your indulgence I have tried to picture this afternoon, are properly and adequately taken care of in the Constitution that we are about to draft, it would be sheer mockery to write in its preamble such beautiful ideals as "to establish justice", "promote the general welfare," or "to insure domestic tranquility."

MR. BALILI: Mr. President, I wish to make use of the half-hour privilege granted to members of the Assembly.

THE PRESIDENT: The Delegate from Bohol has the floor.

SPEECH OF MR. PERFECTO BALILI AGAINST WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: If the great orators of the world tremble when they speak before an audience, I think you will not be surprised to hear my trembling voice and to see my whole frame quiver as I stand before you, for conscious of my insignificance, I feel embarrassed to speak before this august body which is composed of the highest talents of the Filipino race. But, honorable Members of this Convention, you and I have received a specific mandate from the people whom we represent and it is for this reason that I feel I would be recreant to my duty and to the trust reposed in me if I do not express and convey to this Assembly the wishes of the people whom I humbly represent. I wish, therefore, to set forth my views against woman suffrage and the fundamental reasons that have led to me to propose that suffrage be given only to men.

With all due respect to the women leaders in Manila, who, because of their influence, fame, skill and learning, succeeded in convincing the Ninth Legislature to pass the law on woman suffrage now known as Act No. 4112, an Act which met a cold reception, indifference and disapproval in all places in the Philippine Archipelago and particularly in my district, I wish to say to them with regret that the great majority of the women in the provinces, particularly in my own province of Bohol, are, as far as I know, against woman suffrage. In fact, when I left my province for Manila to attend this Constitutional Convention, I received specific instructions from my people and especially from our women to work for the inclusion in the Constitution of a provision extending the right of suffrage to men only. And again I wish to say to our women leaders that the time has not yet come for our women to leave their sacred duties and invade the realm of men and for the men to perform the duties and assume the obligations of women.

Men and women have different duties to perform. God made man and He created woman to live with him, but He gave each a different and distinct set of duties to perform. The man goes to the field of battle in the struggle for existence to earn a living by the sweat of his brow, while the woman takes care of the home and children, rearing them that they become good and useful citizens. Any encroachment on the part of either sex upon the duties which Nature has assigned to each of them and which God imposed on Adam and Eve when they ate the

forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, would result in squabble, misunderstanding and unhappiness and the once progressive and happy homes will become a place of misery and discontentment, conditions that will bring about the ultimate ruin of our national structure.

Woman suffrage is a big drainage on our treasury and is unnecessary. Now the greatest problem of our Commonwealth and the future independent government is, and will be, finance. We need money, money and more money. We have to exercise the greatest economy in our governmental activities and see to it that we do not incur unnecessary expenses. By allowing our women to vote, which is not necessary as it is a mere duplication without changing or improving our political condition, we shall be throwing and wasting our money at a time when we need it most.

As a matter of fact, we cannot see any material benefit from the granting of the right to vote to our women. This is too advanced a step in our democracy and I am afraid it may cause its failure. The United States of America, the greatest and the most powerful democratic nation in the world today, enfranchised her women only after she became fully convinced of the necessity of granting it due to various important problems arising in the States which warranted the extension of suffrage to her women. But this was done by the United States of America only after more than two hundred years of her independent existence. This is because America had to attend, first and above all things, to her more fundamental and absolute necessities.

Now, the Philippine Republic is yet in the dawning. We are still in the serious task of preparing our country so as to enable her to join the family of independent nations. Our fundamental need at present is not the enfranchisement of our women, but making our country economically independent and financially sound so that she will be able to stand as a strong, independent nation capable of maintaining peace and order, prosperity and happiness, which are the real blessings of liberty. Our women can help our country better towards achieving our ideals and aspirations and crystallizing them into full realization by shunning the dirty battle field of politics and by being ever alert in the performance of their daily duties which God or Nature has assigned to them: otherwise, they will do more harm than good to our cause. There are more women voting than men, and if we allow them to vote simply for the sake of voting, our election expenses will be more than doubled and millions of pesos which could be used for the dire needs of our country in its infancy, will be wasted without compensatory benefits and, on the contrary, such extension of suffrage to them may cause the failure of our Commonwealth and perhaps the doom of our real and complete independence.

But what I said, Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention, is but a portion of the great calamity that is to come. The moment that suffrage is extended to our women, our men, particularly the young, will become politicians, political leaders and demagogues since our women will be their great inducement and inspiration to select the political career or to become political leaders with the hope of winning a woman's favor. We shall witness the sad day when the men whom you formerly saw daily with some plows and carpenter's tools in their hands, or engaged in some profitable and wise pursuits, shall roam the streets in their polished white shoes and Sunday clothes with fine collars and ties and canes. Oh! what a horrible sight.

And I now invite every one of you to ride with me on an imaginary airplane so that we might have a view of that glorious day, as others term it, when our women shall have been enfranchised. What a fascinating sight we see. Here and there are men and women in the vigor of their youth gathering in groups on a bright working day discussing important or worthless political issues, going happily together to distant barrios to carry on political campaigns, going home late at night and of course, every young man with a lady's hand on his arm for it is his duty to protect her, and the young woman breathing a sigh of relief and grateful for the favor, political or otherwise, which this gentleman has rendered to her. Yes! and what a fascinating sight I repeat! Yes, these and many other things are the evils of woman suffrage. Let us go back to our airplane ride and take another look. Now

we see husband and wife quarreling over certain political issues; another husband in a very angry mood throws all the pots from the stove because his wife has not yet returned from a political campaign, leaving no food for her husband who has just come home from his work in the hot open field and for her children that have arrived from school. In a corner of the street, we see a multitude of young men and women witnessing a drama, a fight between women for alleged slanderous utterances which one or the other has made. Still in another place we witness husbands deserting their wives and wives their husbands for various reasons—unfaithfulness to the marriage vow; political differences which they could not settle amicably arising from a learning of the past and present life of the wife which cruel politics has revealed; and various other causes.

Thus, what we see in our panoramic view will be the inevitable results if we enfranchise our women. The essential activities of our country will be paralyzed, our industries, commerce, and natural resources will remain neglected and undeveloped, and our country, instead of progressing, will go backward, and instead of realizing our coveted independence, we shall find ourselves forever a subject people. It is not only because of the fact that by allowing our women to enter politics our government will incur tremendous and unnecessary expenses, but it is because woman suffrage will ruin the bright future of our country and because the Filipino youth, the only hope of our motherland, will be lured to the temptations which I have already enumerated.

Gentlemen of the Convention, at this critical moment of our history, let us be broadminded enough so that we can visualize the immediate and absolute needs of our country, the fundamental and dire necessities, the prerequisites for her stable and independent existence. Let us bend all our efforts and energies towards building these stepping stones which we must necessarily accomplish before our ideals and aspirations can fully blossom into full realization.

Nature, our customs, traditions, and the environment have made our women unfit to wade or wallow in the muddy battlefields of politics. In this drama of life, where all of us, men and women, are actors and actresses, each has different duties to perform. Way back to the very beginning of the world when Eve was brought by God into Adam filled with the Holy Spirit, He gave woman the most sanctified, the most glorious, and the most precious name, Eve, the mother. Motherhood is the most sacred duty which she is destined by God to perform. "To be a mother, that is the most precious ornament of woman," said the great Luther. Mother, that in itself and that alone carries manifold duties and tremendous responsibilities, not to mention her other duties to her husband and to her home. Filipino women, upon you rests the hope of our motherland. The future destiny of the Filipino people is in your hands. Gentlemen of the Convention, mindful and conscious of the great burdens and difficulties which our women are made to bear as well as of the duties they are destined to perform, let us not be too cruel to them by giving them additional burden and responsibilities which will surely work havoc on our cause and wreck our ship of destiny on the huge rock of failure.

Good mother are what our country really needs and not woman suffrage. We need our women in our homes at all times for the great and patriotic task they are called upon by the rising Philippines to undertake without failure the building up of strong, manhood and womanhood, Filipino men and women of character, strong character imbued with the undying flame of patriotism and love of country and "the place where such character is built should be founded upon solid rock and not upon frail sand, which, like the singular aspect of Mt. Arayat and the impregnable rock of Gibraltar, shall never be torn down by any wind and rain, and it shall never be corroded by the elements of time for generations yet unborn." Our women, our mothers, are the ones called upon to accomplish this honorable and patriotic mission which must continue from childhood to manhood and old age. They are the greatest and most desirable elements of our country to awaken and spur our young men and women to pursue profitable calling in industry, agriculture, commerce, and otherwise pursuits—if we ever wish to see our beloved Philippines become the home of the brave and the land of the free. It is neither woman suffrage nor the

active participation of women in politics that is the order of the day. One writer wisely said: "whoever can make two ears of corn, the blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together." Why do Manila women leaders still insist in meddling in politics when they are already rendering more essential service to our country than all our politicians put together? I heard a prominent woman leader say, "Give us a chance." What chance are they still clamoring for when in the free air of democracy, they are enjoying all the chances to render service to our country? In fact, they enjoy more rights and privileges than men. Men are only the slaves of women. They give women all the adoration, veneration, honor, respect, courtesy, love, protection and support that are due them. They are the real rulers in the world of democracy, in the dominion of the home. They play the role of a dictator in the home kingdom for what man, high though his title, proud though his name, has the nerve to resist the will of the mistress of the house? And what more do these women want? Do they want to be the President of our Republic, a governor, and in other words, do they want to replace our men in the management of the affairs of our state? Although I believe in the educational capacities of our women, I greatly doubt their ability to run the affairs of the state. This ideal goes already beyond the boundary which God has so wisely planted. When I make this assertion, I wish to refer you to the highest, the greatest of all democracies, the perfect government which is the Kingdom of heaven, where equality, justice and fairness always prevail. In that kingdom we see that the rulers are all men, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And if we refer to the history of the world, we find that all the nations, great and small, democratic or otherwise, which existed for ages, always placed men to run the affairs of the state. Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and Elizabeth of England once assumed the management of their respective kingdoms but history tells us that their reigns were not successful. These rulers became conspicuous in history for their immoral activities, particularly Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. Of course, Catherine the Great of Russia is an exception. She was an extra-ordinary woman like Joan of Arc of France who saw in her vision that she was called upon by God to lead the army of France.

By giving our women the right of suffrage and making them participate in the rough and tumble game of politics our country will witness a deluge of tears and sorrows and possible bloodshed. Our women are too sacred, too tender, too precious, too delicate, too dear, and too sublime to be permitted to sail on the treacherous and dangerous sea of politics. Nature, as well as our customs and traditions, has made our women in general unfit to play an active part in the political arena where all sorts of cruel denunciations, slanderous, calumnious utterances, intrigues and tricks and attacks on personalities instead of principles are made. They can-not endure these things and all the courts in the world would not be able to accommodate them in their effort, to set their grievances against those odds which are inevitable and unpreventable in the course and thorny pathway of politics. To many others who maintain that if our women are permitted to be in politics they may stand as the mighty dike which will prevent this natural current of political hullabaloo from engulfing the political ground, it is just the same as to say that the Pasig River will stop flowing tomorrow. Instead, experience has taught us that they will make matters worse. And I am not talking by theory but from actual observations based on my experiences ever since I took an active part and played the role of a principal character in the political drama staged from 1923 to this date. I am in a position to cite instances where troubles which almost resulted in bloodshed occurred because of the participation of women in political activities. Yes, history has taught us that it was a woman who revealed the secrets of the Katipunan. And this weakness, general among women, may cause no end of troubles.

Woman suffrage, in my opinion, will serve as an open sesame to immorality, vice, divorce, birth control, and idleness. It is irreligious. It is the key to immorality because our young men and women are given chances to habitually come into close contact with one another, thus placing the evils of temptation always within their reach. It is just the same as placing fire and gunpowder near each other. Naturally they will at once burst into bigger flame. Now, do we want to see our beloved country inundated with mothers who are not wives? Do we want to

see many Filipino children born but deprived of the means necessities for wholesome and healthy growth? Of course, women leaders may maintain that this will not happen. But my experiences and observations have convinced me that such an outcome will be as certain as the fact that the sun will rise tomorrow. When this matter comes up for discussion in our assembly I may reveal the proof in my possession to prove my assertion. Suffice at this time to call your attention to the fact that even right now there are already hundreds and thousands of our fair sex wallowing in the mire of immorality and vice.

I say that woman suffrage is a key to vice because of the reasons I have already stated. I wish only to add here that politics is really the principal cause of the serious unemployment problem in our country. Right now we see hundreds of young men loitering around the city jobless because of politics. They were promised by our politicians employment in fine jobs and others of their own volition, expecting some aid from the politicians who owed them some favor, came only to find disappointment for the city is too small to accommodate them. These young men and women should have been in their respective homes doing some profitable business or work which would help build the stepping stones of our independent Philippines.

I say it is a key to divorce because the corollary to woman suffrage is a liberalized divorce law. This is too obvious to need further explanation.

It is the key to birth control because once our women are granted the right of suffrage and become drunk with the seemingly sweet but evil wine of politics they will forget their important duties and shun or avoid motherhood. They will find it a hindrance and an obstacle to their political activities to still bear children and take care of them.

I say it is a key to idleness because politics is so charming and attractive that even the lowest class of men forget their daily work and mingle in the political melee. Many pretenders to power and influence will come out in time of politics. And is it not true, Gentlemen of the Convention, that even a year before election time we see already considerable number of men daily telling and discussing political issues, the merits and demerits of probable candidates, etc., in broad daylight, wasting their golden hours and sacrificing the welfare of their respective families? And if this is really the fact as I know it to be, do we have still the nerve to aggravate the situation by allowing our women to take active part in politics? Abraham Lincoln rightly said, "If ever this people—if this government itself is utterly demoralized, it will come from the incessant human wriggle and struggle for office, which is but a way to live without work."

Finally but not the least, I say it is irreligious because summarizing all that I have said, the evil effects of woman suffrage are all contrary to our religion and God.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: In this supreme moment of our history, let us be mindful and cognizant of the serious criticism launched against us that we, Filipinos, are far advanced in politics but lag far behind in our economic stability and progress. Thanks to Divine Providence we are now assembled here in this historic hall for the great and sacred purpose of drafting the fundamental law of our land upon which hangs the destiny of our race. This is the opportune time for us to ponder and act and write in letters of gold those wise principles and policies which will serve like bright torches that will illumine our pathway towards the goal of complete liberty planted on solid rock of economic stability. Then and only then shall we be able to see our beloved country, the real patrimony of our race, become the home of a happy and prosperous people. Let us always be cautious and vigilant so that in this critical period of our history, nothing will be written in our magna carta that will impair or hinder the wholesome and healthy growth of our motherland.

Let us forget woman suffrage for it is highly repugnant to and inconsistent with our democracy, destructive of our economic stability, and inconsistent with our customs, traditions and ideals of womanhood. To say that we have provided for universal suffrage in our Constitution because all civilized countries profit by it, is to demonstrate

our lack of comprehension and thorough knowledge of our history, customs, traditions, conditions and environment. Let us be initiators and not imitators. What is good for other countries may be bad for us, as in the case of woman suffrage, if we but pause for a moment and study the present condition of our women under our laws, in society, in our homes, and anywhere else, we have absolutely no ground to believe that suffrage is necessary for their welfare. In fact, the vast majority of our fair sex have never manifested any desire to possess it, and there is no just or expedient reason under the sun why we should the risk of giving our women so dangerous and heavy a burden, a right which they do not desire to possess except a few in certain sections of Manila according to the press statement of our active and most able President, Honorable Claro M. Recto.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of this Convention, for the good of our country, for the best interest, welfare and happiness of our women, for the eternal joy, peace and prosperity of our homes, for the preservation of our high respect, veneration and love for our women, the moulders of our youth, and for the early realization of our desire, let us unite, one and all, to support my proposed constitutional precept giving the right of suffrage to men only.

MANIFESTACIONES DEL SR. ALONTO

(El Sr. Alonto pronuncio un discurso en su dialecto, que fue vertido en el acto al ingles por su secretario, como sigue:)

SPEECH OF MR. ALONTO ON THE PROBLEMS OF MINDANAO

(Interpreted from Moro to English by Datu
Mariaga Sa Ragain Alonto.)

MR. ALONTO. Being one of the elected Delegates from the Province of Lanao, which I have the honor to represent in this Convention, I appear before you in a mood of enthusiasm to present to you the problems that confront the people of Mindanao and Sulu. You are aware of the fact that I am a Mohammedan by birth and by blood, that I am one of the Delegates representing one of the provinces in the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu. The Island of Luzon and the Visayas are predominantly inhabited by Christian Filipinos, the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu are also inhabited by Christian Filipinos. Mindanao, one of the three islands, is inhabited by Mohammedan Filipinos.

Prior to the Spanish regime in the Philippines the Mohammedan Filipinos had been living a life in an independent way. They had their own activities and civilization, the so-called Mohammedan civilization. History tells us that Spaniards failed to penetrate their civilization in that part of the Philippine Islands because the Mohammedan Filipinos refused to fly the Spanish flag in their midst. The Mohammedan Filipinos fought against the Spaniards, brandishing their bolos and kampilan. Also it is to be regretted that the people of Luzon and the Visayas had been subjugated by Spaniards, but in the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu the people resisted until the Spanish regime in the Islands was ended. Although there has been propaganda that Mohammedans are against the independence of our country, during the Spanish regime they also demonstrated their love for liberty because some of the sons of Mindanao and Sulu died for no other cause than the immortal glory of our country. Now came the American regime. You are aware of the facts of history of the Moroland under the American and Filipino governments. Due to the diplomacy and farsightedness of the American people they adopted the policy of attraction and won the confidence of the Mohammedan Filipinos. The Americans came to our shores with a promise that as soon as we are able to maintain self-government they will grant us independence. This is manifested by the approval of the Tydings-McDuffie Law which grants us our cherished dream to be free and independent.

I wish to bring to the attention of the Members of this Convention as representatives of the Filipino people that the

Mohammedan Filipinos have been protesting against the name "Moro". We do not like to be called "Moro" because when we are called "Moros" we feel that we are not considered as part of the Filipino people. You also know that the name Moro was given to us by the Spaniards because Morocco had been under the rule of Spain like Mindanao and Sulu. Therefore, I would like to tell the Members of this Convention that we prefer to be called Mohammedan Filipinos, and not "Moros" because if we are called Moros we will be considered as enemies, for the name "Moro" was given to us by the Spaniards because they failed to penetrate the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu. Another fallacious theory that I would like to invite your attention to is the impression that the Moros are warlike marauding criminals branded as "juramentados". That is not true, my friends. In the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu there are many Christian inhabitants and they can get along all right with the Mohammedan Filipinos. It is natural that even among brothers, there is quarrel; so, how much more among people? I would like to call your attention to the fact that we expect much from the Members of this Constitutional Convention; that the customs and traditions of the Mohammedans are granted to them by the present government should not be ignored by the Members of this Convention. Religion does not in any way bar us from joining one another, for anybody can profess any religion he wishes to. It is true that the men assembled in this historic hall are going to draft the Constitution for the future Philippine Republic and it is true that the Constitution to be drafted is not to last for only one year but for all ages; and upon us rests the serious responsibility to give to our beloved country an enduring constitutional foundation in this period of transition. The Constitution to be drafted must not only be for the satisfaction of a tribe or of a particular group of people but must be for the satisfaction of the whole Filipino people.

I also demand the permanent and final solution of the so-called "Moro problem" which has been confronting the Filipino people time and again, and if we fail to solve this problem it will be interpreted that we are incapable of managing our local affairs. We also demand that the Mohammedan Filipinos be given equal rights in the Constitution, because, as it is now, we are not given equal rights. We can count by the tip of the fingers the Mohammedan Filipinos who are thinking whether or not—now that our independence is being given—we shall be given more rights by our Christian brothers. It is a fact that in Luzon and the Visayas, you have good roads, good hospitals, good schools, etc., but in the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu, my friends, there are no good roads, no good schools and hospitals. A beautiful Manila will not make a beautiful Philippines if Mindanao and Sulu are behind in improvements. To be frank with you, there was a time when not even a soul among the Mohammedan Filipinos was for the independence of our country. It was the only one who worked for the independence of our country, sacrificing everything, and I never turned traitor to my country, because I believe that through independence the higher destinies of our people can be attained.

The Government has not been expending much money on the islands of Mindanao and Sulu, but if the Government will spend money on these islands, the returns will be great, because you are aware of the fact that the natural resources of Mindanao have not been developed; and if these natural resources are developed, they will be sufficient to support the whole Philippine Islands.

I am also, in behalf of Mindanao and Sulu, inviting our Christian brothers in Luzon and the Visayas to migrate to Mindanao and Sulu, if they have no lands of their own. In these most trying days in our history, we must advocate national unity among the Christian and the Mohammedan Filipinos, especially during the transition period, because if there is going to be trouble, that will be interpreted in America that we are not yet capable of independent existence.

However, I have faith and confidence in the Members of this Convention, because I know and I am certain that you will not ignore our rights, customs, practices and traditions. I know that you will work for the welfare not only of the Christian Filipinos, but also of the Mohammedan Filipinos of Mindanao and Sulu.

I appeal to the Members of this Convention that if there is something to be incorporated in our proposed Constitution, like the customs, practices, rights and traditions of the Mohammedan Filipinos. I believe that we should be asked with respect to any changes regarding them.

Last week, my co-Delegate Mr. Cabili, spoke about the extension of suffrage to Mindanao and Sulu. With respect to that, I think the Delegates representing Mindanao and Sulu should be asked as to whether complete suffrage should be extended to the people of Mindanao and Sulu.

You are also aware of the fact that, polygamy has been existing among the Mohammedan Filipinos because it has been sanctioned by our religion; that is, each man is allowed to marry four during abnormal times. I think when something is to be done with regards to the practice of polygamy among the Mohammedan Filipinos, i.e., if you are going to stop it, that needs and should be given serious deliberation by the Members of this Convention. I am also a Mohammedan like them, but allow me to tell you that I have only one wife, and if there is a way to abolish polygamy without encountering the contrary opinion of those people, I will be the first man to do it; but, my friends, we have to be patient and so we have to do it in a gradual way, step by step, because if we are going to surprise them by abolishing polygamy immediately, I am sure that there will be trouble among the Mohammedan Filipinos. Although there is nothing wrong with polygamy because, if polygamy is to be practiced as provided in the Holy Koran of the Mohammedan Filipinos, it should only be per-mitted during abnormal conditions. Take for granted in time of war when there are so many women and so many men die, it is natural for a woman to crave for a companion. It is also a fact that although my Christian brothers do not practice polygamy, they have what they call the querida system and yet the law does not say anything about the querida system; hence, my friends, the law must not be sentimental. A Mohammedan can have four wives legally in accordance with Mohammedan rights but polygamy is only sanctioned by the Koran under certain conditions in the life of a man, as for example, a man marries a woman and she turns out to be not capable of bearing him a child. With the Mohammedans a man having a family without a child is like a man in the grave, and so it is natural for a man to marry another woman who will bear him such child..

Mr. President and Members of this Convention, I appeal to you again to reiterate once more that the final and permanent solution of the Moro problem must be made at last. More appropriations should be given to Mindanao and Sulu in order that they may have more schools to educate their children and that they may have good roads so that there will be easy transpor-tation, and so that the Mohammedan Filipinos may go to Luzon and the Visayas and exchange ideas with their Christian brothers.

MR. GUEVARA: Mr. President, I ask for the immediate consideration of a resolution on the desk of the Secretary of the Convention.

EL PRESIDENTE: Lease el proyecto de resolucion.

EL SECRETARIO, lee:

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONMANILA

P. R. C. C. NO. 56

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCE OP THE CONSTI-TUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE DEATH OP THE HONORABLE HENRY T. RAINEY, SPEAKER OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

WHEREAS, news have been received of the demise of the Hon. Henry T. Rainey, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress;

WHEREAS, Speaker Rainey showed keen interest in the freedom and welfare of the Filipino people;

WHEREAS, his demise is a real loss not only to the United States of America but also to the Philippines; Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, That the Constitutional Convention, do as it hereby does, express its most heartfelt condolence for the death of the Honorable Henry T. Rainey, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress;

Resolved, further, That the Constitutional Convention adjourn its session immediately upon the approval of this Resolution as a token of respect and sorrow; and

Resolved, finally, That a certified copy of this Resolution be transmitted thru the Governor General, to the President of the United States, to the American Congress and to Mrs. Henry T. Rainey.

MR. GUEVARA: Mr. President, I ask the unanimous consent of the Convention that the Resolution be passed and that I be given time to extend my remarks in the records.

EL PRESIDENTE: Los que estan en favor del proyecto de resolucion, que digan Si.

LA ASAMBLEA: Si.

EL PRESIDENTE: Los que estan en contra, sirvanse decir No. (Silencio.) Aprobado por unanimidad.

LEVANTAMIENTO DE LA SESION

EL PRESIDENTE: De acuerdo con los terminos de esta resolucion, se levanta la sesion de la Convencion hasta mañana a las 5 de la tarde.

Eran las 6:12 p.m.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.