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CP-Senate

TSP - September 16, 1987

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SENATE ARCHIVES (LRAS)

38-27

Wednesday, September 16, 1987

CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES
SENATE
RECORDS AND ARCHIVES DIVISION

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1st _____ C R P
REGULAR SESSION

CP-SENATE
TSP
38

At 4:04 p.m., the Honorable Jovito R. Salonga, President of the Senate, called the Senate to order.

THE PRESIDENT. The Senate session is called to order.

Senator Herrera will lead us in the opening prayer.

PAGAMPO

SENATOR HERRERA. Dios, nga makagagahum; Dios nga Amahan namo, karong panahona nga nagkaguliyang ang among Gabinete, hinaut unta nga dili mo kami biyaan. Ikaw man ang tuboran sa kaayohan, pasensya ug kaligdong. Hinaut nga imong tagaan ug kaligdong, imong tagaan ug igong kusog, dili lang ang mga Miyembro sa Gabinete, dili lang ang Bise Presidente, dili lang ang Presidente, kung dili usab kaming mga Miyembro sa Kongreso nga unta matambangan mo kami sa pagpangita ug sulusyon niining nagkalainlaing problema nga nag-atubang sa among nasud karon, kay ang among kapait dili malalim.

Ginoo, salamat sa tanan mo nga giya ug mga kaayohan nga imong ihatag kanamo.

Amen.

NOT TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THE
RECORDS AND ARCHIVES DIVISION

2
SM I-2 Sept. 16, 1987 4:05 p.m. 2

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT. The Secretary will please call the
roll.

THE SECRETARY.

SENATE ARCHIVES (LRAS)

*They arrived after the roll call.

Wed, September , 1987

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 4:04 pm the Honorable Jovito R. Salonga, President of the Senate, called the Senate to order.

THE PRESIDENT. The session is called to order.

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT. The Secretary will please call the roll.

THE SECRETARY.

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

THE PRESIDENT. With 21 Senators present, there is a quorum.

*They arrived after the roll call.

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CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES
SENATE
M a n i l a

9/16/87

N a m e	:Present:	Absent :	Yes :	No :	Abstained
1. ALVAREZ, Heherson T.	*	:	:	:	:
2. ANGARA, Edgardo J.	:	:	:	:	:
3. AQUINO, Agapito A.	✓	:	:	:	:
4. ENRILE, Juan P.	✓	:	:	:	:
5. ESTRADA, Joseph E.	✓	:	:	:	:
6. GONZALES, Neptali A.	✓	:	:	:	:
7. GUINGONA, Teofisto Jr. T.	✓	:	:	:	:
8. HERRERA, Ernesto F.	✓	:	:	:	:
9. LAUREL, Sotero H.	✓	:	:	:	:
10. LINA, Jose Jr. D.	✓	:	:	:	:
11. MACEDA, Ernesto M.	✓	:	:	:	:
12. MANGLAPUS, Raul S.	*	:	:	:	:
13. MERCADO, Orlando S.	✓	:	:	:	:
14. OSMEÑA, John H.	✓	:	:	:	:
15. PATERNO, Vicente T.	✓	:	:	:	:
16. PIMENTEL, Aquilino Jr. Q.	✓	:	:	:	:
17. RASUL, Santanina T.	✓	:	:	:	:
18. ROMULO, Alberto G.	✓	:	:	:	:
19. SAGUISAG, Rene A. V.	✓	:	:	:	:
20. SALONGA, Jovito R.	✓	:	:	:	:
21. SHAHANI, Leticia R.	✓	:	:	:	:
22. TAMANO, Mamintal A. J.	✓	:	:	:	:
23. TAÑADA, Wigberto E.	✓	:	:	:	:
24. ZIGA, Victor S.	✓	:	:	:	:
T O T A L	21	:	:	:	:

THE PRESIDENT. With 21 Senators present, there is a quorum.

THE JOURNAL

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

THE PRESIDENT. Is there any objection? (Silence.)
The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

THE PRESIDENT. The Secretary will now proceed with the reading of the Order of Business.

The Secretary read the following Bills and Resolutions on First Reading, the President making the corresponding references:

SENATE ARCHIVES (LRPS)

CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES

SENATE

MANILA

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Session No. 36

Wednesday, September 16, 1987

- I. PRAYER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION
- IV. REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILLS ON FIRST READING

S. No. 103, entitled:

"AN ACT PLACING THE ACCOUNTING UNITS AND OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES"

Introduced by Senators Romulo, Tanada, Pimentel, Jr., and Rasul

TO THE COMMITTEES ON FINANCE, AND CIVIL SERVICE AND GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

S. No. 104, entitled:

"AN ACT ~~TO~~ ^{ING} ESTABLISH ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ALL PUBLIC OFFICERS AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF"

Introduced by Senators Salonga, Guingona, Jr., Mercado, and Saguisag

TO THE COMMITTEES ON CIVIL SERVICE AND GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION; ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC OFFICERS AND INVESTIGATIONS; AND ETHICS AND PRIVILEGES

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SENATE

MANILA

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

CALENDAR FOR SPECIAL ORDERS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Senate Bill No. 38 (Committee Report No. 4), introduced by Senator Gonzales, entitled:

"AN ACT REPEALING SECTION FORTY OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NUMBERED EIGHT HUNDRED SEVEN, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE CIVIL SERVICE DECREE"

Sponsor : Senator Gonzales

Dissenting : Senator Osmeña

Senate Bill No. 17 (Committee Report No. 7), introduced by Senators Gonzales and Romulo, entitled:

"AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A SYSTEM OF INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM AND THE EXCEPTIONS THEREFROM, WHEREBY THE PEOPLE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS CAN DIRECTLY PROPOSE AND ENACT RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES OR APPROVE OR REJECT ANY ORDINANCE OR RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE BODY"

Sponsors: Senators Gonzales, Pimentel, Jr., and Lina, Jr.

--oOo--

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, to speak on a Question of Personal and Collective Privilege, I request that we recognize Senator Santanina Rasul.

THE PRESIDENT. Senator Rasul is recognized.

RASUL PRIVILEGE SPEECH

(On the Council of State)

SENATOR RASUL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to a Question of Personal and Collective Privilege affecting this Assembly.

The Philippine Leader, a newspaper which covers both the Senate and the bigger House, in its September 14-20 issue on page 13, in an item entitled: "Aquino Convenes Council of State even without yet EO for its being".

It proceeded to say, Mr. President, and I quote:

"But even as the Council has been constituted, questions on its formulation remained unanswered. Malacañang was silent on whether or not President Aquino has signed an executive order creating the Council as suggested by Congress.

"It was even ironic that some of those who were appointed as members of the powerful body were at a loss on what their official functions are."

And I continue to quote:

"Emerging from the first session of the Council that lasted two and a half hours, palace Press Secretary Teodoro Benigno declined to say in clear terms whether the Council was set up in response to the political issues raised by the Aug. 28 military mutineers led by Lt. Col.

SM

I-5

Sept. 16, 1987

4:05 p.m.

5

Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan who is now the object of a nationwide manhunt by the law enforcers."

The MALAYA today, Mr. President, in its issue came out with an item, entitled:

"PnB charges:

DE FACTO UNTA...

SENATE ARCHIVES (LRAS)

SENATOR RASUL:

entitled, "PNB Charges De Facto Junta Now In Place," and I will read:

Leaders of four cause-oriented groups tagged by the military as front organizations of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines, yesterday said the Aquino Government has adopted a ~~(and I quote)~~ "military agenda in a de facto junta to the Council of State."

The four organizations: Kilusang Mayo Uno, Partido Ng Bayan, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, and League of Filipino Students, claimed that the recent creation of a State Council catered to the demands of renegade Col. Gregorio Honasan, leader of the August 28 failed coup, whose group is reportedly set to mount another attack. Leandro Alejandro, Secretary General of Bayan, also said his group, which was among the organizers of the successful transport strike last month, has been drawing up security measures against the possible crackdown and a declaration of a state of emergency.

"The de facto junta now in place," Alejandro said, "has the military dictating policies and actions to civilian authorities."

"The civilian government," ~~(the paper continues)~~ "is increasingly adopting a military agenda." Fidel Agcaoili, Chairman of the PNB, added in a press conference: "Military sources said the Armed Forces High Command is bent on the crackdown to neutralize right wing forces that have been critical of the government's kid glove treatment of Communists and their front groups."

And the article continues, Mr. President.

Mr. President, allow me please to recall in retrospect some events that led to the formulation of the Council of State, in fairness to the President, and to set the records straight.

Mr. President, as a nation we underwent a crisis such as we have never known before. We went through a bloody and harrowing event in which 53 people died and hundreds were wounded; an event in which the very fate of our constitutional democracy hang in the balance.

For the greater part of a whole day on August 28, the nation teetered between the fold of a duly constituted Government that sprung from people power, and the grasp of a military junta that rode on the legitimate grievance of our suffering and neglected soldiery.

We were saved, Mr. President, by the fidelity to duty of the majority of our soldiers, the skill and coolheadedness of our loyal military officers, and of course, by the grace of the Almighty. Yet, the sense of grievance among our soldiers that made that Black Friday possible at all is still there, and remains a threat to the very life of our democracy.

Mr. President, the grievances of our soldiers are only a part of the total dismal picture. We are forced to maintain a huge military establishment because we are confronted on one side by a Communist insurgency that has flourished for the most part of two decades and on the other, rebellion in my native Mindanao that has persisted in spite of our peace-making initiatives.

I venture to say, Mr. President, that the Communist insurgency, the Bangsa Moro rebellion, and the simmering discontent in the military stem from one and the same thing--a common sense of outrage, a common sense of being victims of injustice. And what is the nature of that injustice? The injustice is that they are not equal with their more fortunate and dominant countrymen in terms of status of economic opportunities.

And that is the reason, Mr. President, that we are here in this august Chamber, to fashion a set of laws that will bring about social, economic, and political reforms, including reforms in the functioning

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of the government machinery so that it might be cleansed of the grime of corruption, of ineptitude, callousness, indifference.

We have splendid opportunities and possibilities unfolding in the Legislature. For if we are able to address the very roots of our problems and fashion effective and practicable reforms, then it is our honor and privilege, Mr. President, to have achieved nothing less than a revolution--the true revolution that will bring about the long-term stability that we all have longed^{for} and which EDSA was only the promise.

The stakes are high, Mr. President. No less than the long-term viability of this nation is involved. The question is; are we using all available resources of human intelligence to use in the pursuit of these vital reforms? I am afraid not, Mr. President. I am afraid that the cause of the incompleteness of our consultations, lack of dialogue

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~~SENATOR RASUL~~ *W* incompleteness of our consultations, lack of dialogue with the Executive, we may here and there apply rather simple solutions to problems that are immensely complex, that, of course, is dangerous.

The mutiny of a segment of the military last August 28, the communist insurgency, and the rebellion in Mindanao are extreme examples of an attempt to do away with complex problems through simple solutions. Since they do not have social influence and economic power, since they neither have the respect of their fellows nor access to some of the amenities of life that is due ~~the~~ dignity they aspire for, ~~they~~ they have resorted to grabbing political power ~~unlawfully and by force~~ in order to acquire the very things they lack. The solution is simple, Mr. President, but it leads to tragic consequences.

Mr. President, allow me to recall, in retrospect, some events that led to the formation of the Council of State, in fairness to the President, and to set the record straight.

Mr. President, when the Committee on National Defense and Security of which this humble Representation is ^{the} Vice Chairman, when we met after the aborted coup, the Committee was briefed by the Chief of Staff, Secretary Ilto, General De Villa, General Ermita on the state of the nation's security.

Even before this briefing, Mr. President, this humble Representation already received reports from various parts of the country concerning the breakdown in peace and order. In my own region, ~~Region IX~~, what comes out in the national dailies is but the tip of the iceberg -- and yet, ~~these~~ ^{is} are alarming enough. We read about the continuing armed

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confrontation in Basilan, the poisoning of young trainees in Zamboanga City, 26 of whom have died and 106 hospitalized for various stages of poisoning. In my own province of Sulu, where the votes of two towns remain uncounted up to this day, ^{the} curfew from 9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. has been imposed, and grenade-launching occurs right in the capital town of Jolo. This untenable situation is aggravated by the lack of electricity for quite a long time now.

Mr. President, I could go on and on, reciting a litany of near anarchy in many parts of the country.

It was for all these reasons, Mr. President, that this humble Representation proposed to the Committee on National Defense and Security a resolution expressing the sense of the Committee that there was a need to immediately convene a Joint Executive-Legislative Council to address the growing threats to our national security, and for that Resolution to be presented at the plenary session of this august Chamber that same afternoon.

However, Mr. President, there were objections to this Resolution. It was thought that the Resolution was ^{an} alarmist and could produce a negative effect.

Mr. President, that same afternoon, the distinguished Senator from Mandaluyong spoke of the possible grant of emergency powers to the President. This distinguished Assembly felt that this was a drastic proposal. What was needed, in our view, Mr. President, was ~~for~~ a Joint Executive-Legislative Council to meet with the President, to come up with an integrated national plan to address the growing threats to our national security and to discuss matters of national importance.

Therefore, Mr. President, this Representation proposed the Resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that afternoon, that the President create and convene immediately a Joint Executive-Legislative Council, with possible representations coming from the military and the private sector.

The distinguished Senator from Batangas, Mr. President, stood up to amend this Resolution by proposing, among others, to name the Council as the Council of State. The amendments of my distinguished Colleague from Batangas truly reflect his erudition, academic excellence, and legal expertise, for which this humble servant is grateful.

Thus, Mr. President, these were the facts which led to the Resolution to create and convene immediately the Council of State. It was not the military that proposed the Council.

The fact that no less than the Press Secretary seems ^{to be} unaware of the circumstances leading to, and the urgent need ^{of the} ^{ing of} to convene ^{the} Council of State, reflect the seeming lack of communication between this august Chamber and the Executive.

Mr. President, we have no sure formula to solve the problems of this country. But, if the lines of communication among the Executive, the Legislative, the military, the private sector, and the President are strengthened and ~~kept open.~~

/bc

SENATOR RASUL.

kept open, There is no doubt some strategies can be evolved to help solve our country's pressing problems.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The Majority Floor Leader.

SENATOR MERCADO. To avail ^{himself} of the remainder of the privilege hour, I request that Senator Maceda be recognized.

THE PRESIDENT. Senator Maceda is recognized.

SENATOR MACEDA. ^{MACEDA PRIVILEGE SPEECH (resignation of the Vice President)} Mr. President, I will be very brief. I will speak on two matters: one is procedural and two, substantive.

To begin with, we ^{have} just ^{had} a meeting of the Committee on Public Services, and I found out, to my dismay, that the subject of my Privilege Speech on August 12, this year, of course, requesting that Committee to look into the domestic fare increases of Philippine Airlines, up to today, ~~it~~ has not been referred to the Committee. I checked with the Senate Secretary, and he said that it ^{had not been} ~~was not~~ referred because of oversight. That Privilege Speech was very urgent because it involves the riding public. ⁽⁶⁾ It involves something that was asking for a roll-back of domestic fare increases. And, certainly, I am sorry, Mr. President, but I have to make it on record that I want an investigation on this matter. Because, it is not only this Representation who is involved but the entire country, because ^{there} this is domestic-fare increases of ^{the} Philippine Airlines.

Mr. President, the substantive matter that I would like to bring up is, I just like to put on record ^{this} ~~in~~ in spite of the fact that I have left the UNIDO, ^{and} I was informed today that the Vice President has tendered his irrevocable resignation from the Cabinet. The Vice President, even at one time, reportedly objected to my proposed appointment as Ambassador to the United Nations. I mentioned that, Mr. President, to say that, in spite of that, I have always had the respect for him. And pursuant to what I have

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been saying these last few weeks in a Cabinet, where he is the only member with political orientation left, if he will be allowed to leave the Cabinet as he has tendered his irrevocable resignation, I think this is a very unwelcome development. And, therefore,

I would like to appeal to the Vice President -- who was one of the closer friends of Ninoy Aquino ^{and the President and their} -- to reconsider his decision, to bend over backwards, and to patch up their differences because, at this point in time, we need both of them as a team to work out our problems. I have the highest respect for the Vice President, who has done his job well as Minister and Secretary of Foreign Affairs. I see no reason why he should leave that position and, much more so, I also see no reason why he should be allowed to leave the Cabinet.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

SENATOR MERCADO. May I request that Senator Tamano be recognized.

SENATOR TAMANO. Mr. President, I just wish to make it of record that I join Senator Maceda in his sentiments that the Vice-President should not resign from the Cabinet, and that President Aquino should prevail upon him to remain in the Cabinet.

Thank you, Mr. President.

1.8
BILL ON SECOND READING 17
(S. No. 17 - INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM)

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, I move that we consider

Senate Bill No. 17. We are in the period of interpellations. It was Senator Gonzales who has the floor when we left yesterday.

I move that he be recognized.

THE PRESIDENT. Senator Gonzales is recognized. Any interpellations?

SENATOR SAGUISAG. Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT. Senator Saguisag is recognized.

~~SENATOR SAGUISAG. Thank you, Mr. President.~~

SENATE ARCHIVES (LRAS)

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SENATOR SAGUISAG. Thank you, Mr. President.

Will the distinguished Gentleman from Mandaluyong yield?

SENATOR GONZALES. Gladly, to the Gentleman from Pasig, and many other places.

SENATOR SAGUISAG. Thank you. In the Committee Report, I said that I agree to the concept, but I have reservations in relation to what I wrote down as Sections 1 and 3. That was a slip of the pen, a so-called lapsus calami which I would like to correct now. I had really meant Sections 2(1) and Sections 3(1).

On that page appears in three places the phrase "registered voters". It appears in Section 2(1), Section 2(2), and Section 3(1). I have no problem with the use of registered voters in Section 2(2) which merely reproduces what appears in Section 32, Article VI of the Constitution, ⁿ meaning, ten percent of the total number of registered voters. Because, in determining the ten percent, we have to relate it to a fixed frame of reference.

In regard, however, to Sections 2(1) and Section 3(1), when registered voters refer to people who would make use of this prerogative, I have this concern whether this bill

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may be subject to some constitutional challenge on the ground that there may be an unequal protection of the law's problem.

We all know, and I am subject to correction here, that we have no system now of continuing registration. So that, if this bill, assuming it passes, is availed of, say four years from now, my eldest ^{child} is 14 years old; he will be enfranchised four years from now, along with many others. And the way the law is phrased, my son, along with many others who may be of his age, four years from now or those who may not be able to register soon because they are out of town or sick, may not be able to make use of this right. And I was wondering, whether in the period of amendments, the Gentleman from Mandaluyong would consider -- instead of using the term "registered voters", substitute it with the term "qualified voters" in the sense that it appears, for instance, in Senate Bill 92, on page 2, line 30; and on page 3, lines 7, 14, 17 and 24; because this can really result, in my view, in unconstitutional disenfranchisement.

SENATOR GONZALES. Your Honor, please. Insofar as those

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who would sign the petition, then there ought to be a basis.

That is why the bill says, I mean, there is reference to the registry list used in the election immediately preceding. Because without that, Your Honor, it would be very, very difficult to have a If you will use qualified voters, then there will be again a determination by the Election Registrar together with a representative of the proponents and a representative of the local legislative body. They will still determine now whether one who signs is a qualified voter or not. Because, one may be a qualified voter without being a registered voter. I understand, Your Honor, and please correct me if I am wrong, that a qualified voter is one who possesses all the qualifications for the exercise of the right of suffrage and does not suffer from any of the disqualifications.

On the other hand, a registered voter is not only a qualified voter, but his name appears in the registry list.

So, we want a definite frame of reference, "registered voters," referring to those whose names appear in the registry list of voters.

So that this

So that this Board whose duty is merely to take the signature, will not have the quasi-judicial authority of still determining whether one who signs is a qualified voter or not.

SENATOR SAGUISAG. So, the tension or conflict here is between the practical convenience of administration and the denial of a right guaranteed under Article V, Section 1, for which people have died; I mean, their right to vote. For instance, as I said, my son, let us take him as a typical example. He will be of age nine years from now. No one in the neighborhood may really question his qualifications. It seems to me that we should address our attention and energy towards solving that problem. Maybe, there can be some kind of another registration, just to enable people.

Let us visualize a case. In X town there may be 100,000 voters now. In a year's time, maybe, two, three years, four years from now because of migration, because of people who had come back from abroad or for

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any number of reasons, there are people who are really, maybe even leading members of the community who may be ~~the~~ denied the right to take part, the right to make use of this right, because of the practical inconvenience that has been identified by the Gentleman. In other words, I share that, but I am really concerned that in case of a voter challenges this, ~~that~~ this will not be nullified by the Supreme Court because we preferred convenience to the enjoyment of a very valuable right.

SENATOR GONZALES. Well, even in elections, there may be qualified voters and who, for one reason or another, *have* failed to register, and ~~he~~ can not vote, because, a condition precedent to voting is that ^{one} ~~he~~ must be a registered voter. Nothing is heard about a challenge from these people that they are denied the equal protection of the laws, because the opportunity to register is granted to everyone. Nobody is prevented from registering.

SENATOR SAGUISAG. No, but unless we set now ~~now~~ because ¹ can see a case where, for instance, an energetic group of young people who have just turned ¹⁸ ~~eighteen~~,

or ¹⁹ninet~~een~~ may in fact gather all the signatures that they we want because, sometimes, ~~we~~ are more committed and more concerned than their busier elders, and the Constitution speaks of people, not of registered voters.

So ⁴ said, there is a difference ^{between} registered voters for determining the base. But as to who should exercise this right, I think, we should make every effort possible to see to it that every/qualified citizen is able to take part in it, because, it would be anomalous if here, ^{we} you have, ~~out of the,~~ in the hypothetical case I cited, 100,000 voters today, and then, 10,000 to 20,000 new voters two or three years from now, they are able to put together, they expended ~~the~~ energy and attention to get 10,000 or 20,000 signatures, and then they are told, "No matter how much work you have put into this, the law is the law, dura lex, sed lex", ^{& #6} and I really am bothered by this Constitutional concern in that concrete factual setting, because their inability to register is because of something that clearly was not their fault, but they are the ones who are most interested in using this very

interesting innovation.

SENATOR GONZALES. Yes. I am merely telling you the rationale for this provision in the Bill, and I think, without prejudice to anyone submitting the amendments ^{at the} ~~in~~ proper time, ~~and~~ I would expect that that would be one of the amendments that would come from the Gentleman from Pasig.

SENATOR SAGUISEG. Yes, because as I have said, the conflict here is between convenience and disenfranchisement.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT. Any other interpellation?

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF S. P. NO. 17
(SYSTEM OF INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM)

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, I move that we

close the period for interpellation, and I move that we suspend ^{the} consideration of this particular Bill.

THE PRESIDENT. Is there any objection? (Silence.)

The Chair hears none. The same is approved.

SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, I move that we

suspend the session.

THE PRESIDENT. There being no objection, the session is suspended for a few minutes.

← It was 4:35 p. m.

SENATE ARCHIVES (LRAS)

RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

At 4:45 p.m., the session was resumed with Honorable Jovito R. Salonga, presiding.

THE PRESIDENT. Session is resumed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, on a matter concerning committees, I would like to submit the name of Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani as an additional member of the Committee on Local Governments.

THE PRESIDENT. Is there any objection? (Silence.)

The Chair hears none; the same is approved.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

SENATOR MERCADO. Mr. President, I move that we adjourn the session till 4:00 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT. Is there any objection? (Silence.)

Session is adjourned until 4:00 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

It was 4:46 p.m.