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APERTURA DE LA SESIÓN

Se abre la sesión a las 10:35 a.m., ocupando el estrado el Presidente, Hon. Eulogio Rodríguez, Sr.

El PRESIDENTE. Se declara abierta la sesión.

DISPENSACIÓN DE LA LECTURA DE LA LISTA Y DEL ACTA NO. 56

El Sen. PRIMICIAS. Señor Presidente, pido que se dispense la lectura de la lista y del acta.

El PRESIDENTE. ¿Hay alguna objeción a la moción? (*Silencio.*) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Se dispensa la lectura de la lista y del Acta Número 56.

DESPACHO DE LOS ASUNTOS QUE ESTÁN SOBRE LA MESA DEL PRESIDENTE

Léase el orden de asuntos.

El SECRETARIO:

MENSAJE DEL PRESIDENTE DE FILIPINAS

MANILA, April 12, 1956

Gentlemen of the Congress:

I have the honor to inform you that the Belgian Government has offered Dr. Octavio L. Maloles, present Counselor of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the decoration entitled "Commandeur de L'Ordre de la Couronne."

Inasmuch as the aforementioned decoration may not be accepted without the prior approval of the Congress, pursuant to Article III, Section 1(9) of the Constitution, I am submitting the matter to you for appropriate action.

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Pending such action, therefore, the said decoration will be deposited in the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs as soon as the same is received from the Belgian Legation in Manila.

Enclosed is the draft of a Concurrent Resolution for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) RAMÓN MAGSAYSAY

The SENATE
Congress of the Philippines
Manila

El PRESIDENTE. Al Comité de Relaciones Extranjeras.

El SECRETARIO:

RESOLUCIÓN

Resolución Número 122, serie corriente en la que la Junta Provincial de Bataan, recomienda la aprobación del Proyecto de Ley Número 4666 de la Cámara de Representantes presentado por el Representante Cases, que tiene por objeto requerir a todas las Compañías de petróleo y gasolina, poseedoras de depósitos en cualquier puerto de Filipinas, que paguen a la provincia donde estén situados dichos depósitos, un céntimo por cada litro de gasolina o petróleo extraído del depósito.

El PRESIDENTE. Al Comité de Hacienda.

CONSIDERACIÓN DEL S. NO. 438

(Continuación)

Senator PRIMICIAS. Mr. President, I now ask that we resume consideration of Senate Bill No.

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438. The distinguished gentleman from Batangas, Senator Laurel, will continue his sponsorship.

The PRESIDENT. Continuation of the consideration of Senate Bill No. 438 is now in order. The gentleman from Batangas has the floor.

PONENCIA DEL SEN. LAUREL

(Continuación)

Senator LAUREL. Mr. President and gentlemen of the Senate: This is the third day that I am making the sponsorship as Chairman of the Committee on Education for the approval of Senate Bill No. 438, and I have been making an effort to cull or quote certain passages of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo* in which, in my opinion, are found the great thoughts and ideas of our national hero. And precisely because of these thoughts and ideas, these two novels ought to be read and studied in all the schools, colleges and universities in the Philippines. I am going to continue with these quotations, as I have said, for the purpose of making of record that this, among other things, is my reason for sponsoring this measure in addition, of course, to what I consider are other reasons of great importance.

In the dialogue between Simoun and Basilio, the former adverted to the latter the following:

"Os ligáis para con vuestros esfuerzos unir vuestra patria a la España con guirnaldas de rosas, cuando en realidad forjáis cadenas más duras que el diamante! Pedís igualdad de derechos, españolización de vuestras costumbres, y no veis que lo que pedís es la muerte, la destrucción de vuestra nacionalidad, la aniquilación de vuestra patria, la consagración de la tiranía! . . . ¿Qué seréis en lo futuro? Pueblo sin carácter, nación sin libertad; todo en vosotros será prestado, hasta los mismos defectos! Pedís españolización, y no palidecéis de vergüenza cuando os la niegan! Y aunque os la concedieran, ¿qué queréis?, ¿qué vais a ganar? Cuando más feliz, país de pronunciamientos, país de guerras civiles, república de rapaces y descontentos como algunas repúblicas de la América del Sur! . . . ¿A qué venís ahora con vuestra enseñanza del castellano, pretensión que sería ridícula si no fuese de consecuencias deplorables? ¿Queréis añadir un idioma más a los cuarenta y tantos que se hablan en las Islas, para entenderos cada vez menos?

"¡Error craso!—Os dejáis engañar por grandes palabras y no vais al fondo de las cosas a examinar los efectos en sus últimas manifestaciones. El español nunca será lenguaje general en el país, el pueblo nunca lo hablará porque para las concepciones de su cerebro y los sentimientos de su corazón no tiene frases ese idioma: cada pueblo tiene el guyo, como tiene su manera de sentir. ¿Qué vais a conseguir con el castellano, los pocos que lo habéis de hablar? Matar vuestra originalidad, subordinar vuestros pensamientos a otros cerebros y en vez de haceros libres

haceros verdaderamente esclavos! Nueve por diez de los que os presumís de ilustrados, sois renegados de vuestra patria. El que entre vosotros habla ese idioma, descuida de tal manera el suyo que ni lo escribe ni lo entiende y ¡cuántos he visto yo que afectan no saber de ello una sola palabra! Por fortuna tenéis un gobierno imbécil. Mientras la Rusia para esclavizar a la Polonia le impone el ruso, mientras la Alemania prohíbe el francés en las provincias conquistadas, vuestro Gobierno pugna por conservar el vuestro y vosotros en cambio, pueblo maravilloso bajo un gobierno increíble, vosotros os esforzáis en despojaros de vuestra nacionalidad! Uno y otro os olvidáis de que mientras un pueblo conserve su idioma, conserva la prenda de su libertad, como el hombre su independencia mientras conserva su manera de pensar. El idioma es el pensamiento de los pueblos. Felizmente vuestra independencia está asegurada: las pasiones humanas velan por ella . . . !

I am referring to this statement or to this dialogue between Simoun and Basilio perhaps to indicate what might be considered as the Rizalian or the historical reason for the adoption of that in the Constitution which provides that the State shall take steps to adopt a national language on the basis of one of the native languages. This is of course a personal opinion of mine, but then this is the justification for that provision of the Constitution not to adopt any particular dialect in the Philippines but to take the necessary steps, using one of the native dialects as the basis for the adoption of the national language for the reason, in the language of Rizal, that, "El idioma es el pensamiento de los pueblos" And this is worth pondering and worth reading, at least on the part of the students in the schools, in the colleges and in the universities.

Continuing with that conversation between Simoun and Basilio, when Simoun asked Basilio what he wanted to do and why he was not making an effort to wreak vengeance or to take steps on account of the death of his mother and the death of his brother Crispín, Simoun asked the following question to Basilio:

"Y por la memoria de su madre y de su hermano, ¿qué hace usted? ¿Basta venir aquí cada año y llorar como una mujer sobre una tumba?

"¿Qué quiere usted que haga? preguntó con ira. ¿Sin medios, sin posición social he de obtener justicia contra sus verdugos? Sería otra víctima y me estrellaría como un pedazo de vidrio lanzado contra una roca. ¡Ah, hace usted mal en recordármelo porque es tocar inútilmente una llaga!

"¿Y si yo le ofrezco a usted apoyo?"

It was Simoun who had transformed himself into a radical element, with radical feelings, and the answer of Basilio was this:

"¡Todas las reivindicaciones de la justicia, todas las venganzas de la tierra no harán revivir un solo cabello de mi madre, refrescar una sonrisa en los labios de mi hermano! Que duerman en paz . . . ¿Qué he de sacar aun cuando me venga?"

And this is the answer of Simoun which I would want to emphasize and that is the reason why I think that this is one of the paragraphs in Rizal's work that ought to be read and understood and interpreted in the light of those conditions under which Rizal lived:

"Evitar que otros sufran lo que usted ha sufrido, que en lo futuro haya hijos asesinados y madres forzadas a la locura. La resignación no siempre es virtud, es crimen cuando alienta tiranías: no hay déspotas donde no hay esclavos. ¡Ay! el hombre es de suyo tan malo que siempre abusa cuando encuentra complacientes".

These are again words that ought to be planted deep in the hearts of the Filipino youth. But there is one point particularly which I want to cull from these two novels because it is in relation to the purity of Filipino womanhood. Rizal has been talking so far of the great virtues in general, but there is a portion in these two novels which I would want particularly to make of record, and that was when Basilio reported to Simoun the death of María Clara, and Simoun although tremendously grieved made the following statement approving of the monastic seclusion of María Clara, whose history is too long to be narrated here from the beginning to the time that she secluded herself in the monastery. But upon learning of that death, Simoun said:

"¡Duerme en paz, hija infeliz de mi desventurada patria! ¡Sepulta en la tumba los encantos de tu juventud, marchita en su vigor! Cuando un pueblo no puede brindar a sus vírgenes un hogar tranquilo, al amparo de la libertad sagrada; cuando el hombre sólo puede legar sonrojos a la viuda, lágrimas a la madre y esclavitud a los hijos, hacéis bien vosotras en condenaros a perpetua castidad, ahogando en vuestro seno el germen de la futura generación maldita! Ah, bien hayas tú que no te has de estremecer en tu tumba oyendo el grito de los que agonizan en sombras, de los que se ahogan por falta de libertad! Vé, vé con los sueños que se ahogan por falta de libertad! Vé, vé con los sueños del poeta a la región del infinito, sombra de mujer vislumbrada en un rayo de luna, murmurada por las flexibles ramas de los cañaverales . . . ¡Feliz la que muere llorada, la que deja en el corazón del que la ama una pura visión, un santo recuerdo, no manchado por mezquinas pasiones que fermentan con los años."

In other words, here is a great lesson that should be read particularly by our Filipino young women. Rizal through Simoun expressed a great deal of

satisfaction in preferring seclusion, disappearance, death, to dishonor. To him the purity of womanhood is preferable to anything else, because there can be nothing dearer than honor. Life without honor, life particularly of a Filipino woman, without purity, without consecration and devotion to home, to moral, in the language of Simoun, "duerme", he prefers them to remain in monastic seclusion and be a negative factor in the great events that transpired in the course of the history of a nation.

And then the last part perhaps, without attempting to make reference to the other passages and narrations of these two novels, is the great faith that Rizal had in the Filipino youth, not only from the time that he was in his tender years when he wrote that famous poem dedicated to the "Juventud Filipina", but in his novels, when desperate, when everything seemed gloomy and dark, when he could not believe that the fight for good government, for justice, would be abandoned, and for many of those imperceptible things that I have mentioned the other day, you find this remark, this summon, this challenge to the Filipino youth:

"¿Dónde está la juventud que ha de consagrar sus rosadas horas, sus ilusiones y entusiasmo al bien de su patria? ¿Dónde está la que ha de verter generosa su sangre para lavar tantas vergüenzas, tantos crímenes, tanta abominación? Pura y sin mancha ha de ser la víctima para que el holocausto sea aceptable . . . ¿Dónde estáis, jóvenes, que habéis de encarnar en vosotros el vigor de la vida que ha huído de nuestras venas, la pureza de las ideas que se ha manchado en nuestros cerebros y el fuego del entusiasmo que se ha apagado en nuestros corazones? . . . Os esperamos, oh jóvenes, venid que os esperamos!"

Realizing that there is a never-ending continuity of nations, desiring that the Filipino nation shall live and survive throughout the ages, he practically ended his two great novels by an appeal to the Filipino youth. If for no other reason than that every Filipino student in the schools, colleges and universities may read this appeal of Rizal to the Filipino youth that they may realize that this is a sacred summon so that they, full of vigor and full of enthusiasm, educated men and women of tomorrow, so that they may, when the bugle calls for service, band together as a compact and united Filipino, and fight for those principles for which Rizal fought and died, if for no other reason than that, this appeal of Rizal may reach and touch the heart, the soul of every Filipino student, every girl and boy in the public schools, I think that the novels of Rizal and his writings should be read,

in such schools and colleges and universities. And then, before ending, in view of the fact that there is some question as to the object and purpose of Rizal in writing his two novels that I even exceeded and tried to philosophize that our problem will be beyond social problem, which was Rizal's purposes in bringing about reform in the social and political life then obtaining in those hectic days.

I want to read his letter originally written in French which has not been given enough publicity in my opinion, and being a personal letter of him addressed to his personal friend Ferdinand Blumentritt, whose authenticity cannot be questioned, and which is admitted even by the Hierarchy and the ecclesiastical authority in the Philippines, which proves, as I have stated, that while Rizal might have committed certain mistakes, in unnecessarily referring to certain doctrines, said to be inimical to the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church, this letter explains why. If that was the case, what was his intention, and I said, the members of this body remember at the beginning of my sponsorship, that Rizal did not attack the Roman Catholic Church but rather those men who claimed to be representatives of the church and who abused their authority and their prerogatives under the cloak of Catholicism. This is what Rizal said in that note which he wrote, sending at the same time copies of his works to Ferdinand Blumentritt, written in French:

"This book," he says, "contains things of which no one up to the present time has spoken. For they are so sensitive that they have never suffered themselves to be touched by anyone whosoever.

"For my part," said Rizal, "I have attempted to do what no one else has been willing to do. I have tried to answer the calumnies that have for centuries been heaped upon us Filipinos and our beloved country. I have written of the social conditions and the life of our people, of our beliefs, our hopes, our longings, our complaints and our sorrows. I have unmasked the hypocrisy which, under the cloak of religion,"—he did not say that the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church was hypocritical, or hypocritical, but he said,—"I have unmasked,"—he lifted the veil, the mask. "I have unmasked the hypocrisy which under the cloak of religion came to impoverish us; I have distinguished true religion from the false." In other words, under the cloak of religion the iniquities were committed by some agents of Catholic church, and it was under which cloak, in his opinion, no representative of

the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church would do. He distinguished true religion from the false, from the superstitions to the holy words to get money and to make us believe in absurdities, for which true Catholicism would blush.

He was attacking, in other words, the practices of untrue, corrupt, polluted Catholicism that was not the Catholicism that was just, that was divine, and so he said,—"just Catholicism would blush if it ever knew of those practices." Another indication that he even assumed that the Catholic Apostolic Church did not know,—I mean the religious authority, the hierarchy did not know, because he said that true Catholicism would blush if ever it knew. "I have unveiled that which has been hidden behind the deceitful and glittering words of our government. I have told our countrymen of our mistakes, our vices as I have quoted are faults we had and I have even referred to them, and now with complaisance with our miseries. Whereas I have found virtue, I have spoken of it highly in order to render it homage and if I have not wavered in speaking of our misfortunes, I have looked over them because no one will weep for me and laughter is the best means of concealing sorrow. The deeds I have related are true, and have actually occurred. I can furnish proof of this. My book may have and it does have a lot of defects. What I said was that it was not a perfect book."

The works of Rizal were not perfect because imperfection and imperfectibility goes with mankind and human nature, and Dr. Rizal in his personal letter sending copies of his books to Ferdinand Blumentritt in Austria having stated this in writing that letter in French, I dare say, can there be a more affirmative statement? Defect from an artistic and aesthetic point of view, this I cannot deny. But no one can dispute the veracity of facts I have presented and I have narrated. This probably is the first presentation of Rizal's objectives, his purposes and this supports what I have stated here in my sponsorship that Rizal never wanted to attack the Catholic Apostolic Church or any sect or religion of any character, but being a Filipino he was animated by the lofty purpose of bringing about reforms if those were possible in order to offer what he loved and espoused as a Filipino in that period. But he did not attack the Catholic Church. In other words, if there was any thing said against the church that was probably only accidental or adventitious. And as I have said some of these people buried themselves, figuratively speaking, in some place in a building and

when the criminals or the guilty parties have got to be captured, naturally the house was hit in the course of the skirmishes during the fight that occurred, and this is what happened when Rizal espoused the cause in his attempt to bring about reforms. As I said there are quite a number and more that one can speak indefinitely about the so many ideals and concepts expressed by Rizal in these two great works. But I must add by pleading for the approval of this measure and in pleading for the approval of this measure unanimously by this Body we at the same time give validity, validity and virtuality to the life and teachings of our national hero, Dr. Rizal. By approving this measure, even if we are confronted at times and in matters of our political bickerings and dissensions, it is hoped that future generations and generations after us by reading the life, teachings and the writings of Rizal may gain incorruptible self-confidence, direction, courage and determination in order that, as I have characterized, we may continue forward on our never ending pilgrimage to a full, greater and more abundant life. In making this appeal, I wish to say and to reiterate and to emphasize the incontestible admitted fact that Rizal undoubtedly is the builder of Filipino nationality, that he is the architect and the spiritual leader of our glorious revolution against Spain and that thereafter he was a Filipino hero personally chosen by William Howard Taft, so he told me in my student days at Yale, chosen by him to honor and to glorify the American administration's campaign under him to win the goodwill of the Filipinos towards American policy in the Philippines. Rizal, I dare say, was the inspiration of Osmeña, of Quezon, of Palma and other giants of the Filipino independence movement in the past years who honorably fought for the translation of such policy into one increased autonomy and self-government for the Filipinos. And then it was the universality and love of Rizal for the common people, and this is of course a personal opinion of mine, it was that universality and love for the common people that moved the great Manuel L. Quezon in those happy days of the Commonwealth before the war to formulate the basic policy of social justice which I have indicated yesterday was a provision inserted in our Constitution and for all which remains there today, remains as the mainstay of all Filipinos if it is to bring about further social, political, economic and educational reforms. But, above all, Mr. President and gentlemen of the Senate, it was Rizal's proto-typical,

inexhaustive and exemplary Filipinism sanctified by his own blood and the popular approval and veneration of the entire people that has inspired our nation today which is the inspiration of all of us to remain true to itself. And I am sure we shall endeavor to perform feats of endurance and valor without fear in all the crises that may come in the midst of our misunderstandings and differences of opinions in the political, economic and social fields. We are willing to go through and through in spite of the life and the writings of Rizal which is all we are asking now and which I, as Chairman of the Committee on Education, have the honor to submit—to require the compulsory reading of those writings by Filipinos, by generations of Filipinos and their children, so that the historic consecration of our nation at Bagumbayan fifty-six years ago may not prove in vain.

Mr. President, I thank you, and with that plea I close my sponsorship.

I am now ready to answer questions from the distinguished gentleman from Quezon.

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Quezon may proceed.

Senator TAÑADA. I would like to ask the distinguished sponsor of this important bill certain questions concerning the operation of the provisions of the bill itself.

Senator LAUREL. I shall be very happy to answer questions that may be asked by the Senator from Quezon.

Senator TAÑADA. Your Honor, is there any provision in this bill which could in any way or manner be interpreted as prohibiting any teacher either in a public or private school from explaining the ideas embodied in these works of Rizal or even from pointing to certain ideas as erroneous if, in the belief of the professor or teacher, said ideas are erroneous?

Senator LAUREL. That is a very pertinent question, and I am happy that the distinguished gentleman from Quezon has asked that question. And the reply is categorically that there is absolutely no provision to that effect. In other words, may I explain a little bit, all that the bill requires is that the novels written by Rizal as they are printed and distributed be printed and distributed without eliminating any portion. In other words, the books as written, because I maintain and this is my humble opinion, that if you eliminate any portion of Rizal's writings which is part and parcel of a book, you not only disfigure what he has written but you also disfigure Rizal himself, his

thoughts and ideas, and I as a Filipino, as an admirer of Rizal, shall be against that. But if there are certain reasons, as Rizal himself said, that it is possible that he has made mistakes because there is no perfection in this world, there is absolutely no prohibition contained in this bill which will permit any school, sectarian particularly in character, or that would enable the teacher to explain the meaning, the extent, the nature, the implication and everything that the teacher may want to explain, but it must be on the basis of the original texts as written by Dr. Rizal himself because we want no fraudulent method in the teaching of or educating the Filipino people.

Senator TAÑADA. Would not, therefore, the gentleman agree with me that if a provision had been inserted in this bill prohibiting annotations or explanations of the works of Rizal or even attacks on the ideas expressed by Rizal in his works, that such provision would be unconstitutional because it would be a curtailment of the freedom of opinion and expression?

Senator LAUREL. But there is none. Something cannot be unconstitutional which is not there.

Senator TAÑADA. Precisely, Your Honor, if a provision had been inserted then the bill would be unconstitutional.

Senator LAUREL. Yes.

Senator TAÑADA. That is right.

Senator LAUREL. But I say, Your Honor, pardon me for interrupting you, I may someday, when I am jobless, I shall pretty soon write my annotations on the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo*, and as I announced here, even if Rizal was satisfied with his works, I may find myself in disagreement with him and I do not think the law, not even the government, can curtail my freedom to prepare a textbook not only on the basis of the original novels of Rizal but on the basis at the same time of my own feelings and my own religious convictions on the matter, and that is not provided or required. There is no prohibition and therefore, that can be done. But all that we are requiring is that you read what Rizal said, and as I said, in my opinion, the greatness of Rizal is not that he was a perfect man, that he had made no mistakes. His greatness lies in the fact that he was a human being, a Filipino, and that in the totality of the appraisal of his personality, he was great, he was great in the midst of his mistakes and in the midst of the frailties of his human nature.

Senator TAÑADA. Your Honor, considering the opinion you have expressed in answering my ques-

tions, would you therefore consider it superfluous or unnecessary to amend the bill in such a way as to permit teachers and professors in public or private schools to explain or annotate the writings of Rizal?

Senator LAUREL. I think it would be unnecessary because they have their constitutional rights. But you know I am not the Senate and I do not want to argue with any senator on that.

Senator TAÑADA. I am just getting your opinion considering the fact that you are regarded in this country as the foremost constitutional lawyer.

Senator LAUREL. Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you for what I am not.

Senator TAÑADA. Now, Your Honor, I would like to go to another provision of this bill, because this bill will be the object of discussion for years to come. Section 5 of the bill provides for penalties to be imposed for violations of the law or of Section 5, itself. According to paragraph (a) of Section 5, if the person violating any of the provisions of this law is a professor or teacher in a government college or university, his penalty is or shall be dismissal from the service and disqualification from teaching in any public or any government recognized private school, college or university.

Senator LAUREL. Correct.

Senator TAÑADA. Whereas, according to paragraph (b) of the same Section 5, if the person violating the provisions of the law is a professor or teacher in a private college or university recognized by the government, the penalty is merely disqualification from teaching in any government-recognized college or university. In other words, there is a difference in penalty, whereas the offense is the same. And I am afraid that we may be violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution, because then the professors and teachers in public universities and colleges would claim that they are being given a higher penalty than those being meted out to teachers in private schools and universities. Does not Your Honor think that inasmuch as the offense sought to be penalized is the same in nature and character, the penalty should be the same as much as possible?

Senator LAUREL. You have a good point there, Your Honor, and where the offense is the same and the offense is the same because of the nature and the scope and the consequences that follow from the offense, the same penalty should be meted out in the two cases. If Your Honor will make a proposal and give me further time to analyze this last portion of the bill, I may have no objection to any proposal on the part of Your Honor to

amend it so that it may be just and equitable in point of imposition of penalty.

Senator TAÑADA. I will gladly do that. After all, we have not yet reached the period of amendments.

Now, Your Honor, I am going to a question which I hope Your Honor will not consider as too personal.

Senator LAUREL. Well, I will be very happy to hear that, precisely because of the announcement that it may be too personal.

Senator TAÑADA. I have known the sponsor of this bill for years. I have been his student in Constitutional Law.

Senator LAUREL. It is my great honor.

Senator TAÑADA. I have had the privilege of working under him in Washington, D. C., in connection with the amendment of the Bell Trade Act, and because of that I have come to observe him very closely, and I am of the opinion that the Senator is a good Catholic. Now, Your Honor, my question is: Are you being a good Catholic when you passionately, earnestly, and sincerely ask for the approval of this bill?

Senator LAUREL. I don't consider that, Your Honor, an embarrassing question for me to answer, because I have never tried to deceive myself, my friends, and the people in the fact that I am a Catholic, I hope a good one. I would not say that I am a good Catholic, but I profess the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion. I have tried, as far as possible, to live up to the duties and obligations of a follower of a Roman Apostolic Church, and I think that not only have I not concealed that, but that is even a matter of public knowledge. But in sponsoring this bill, and considering the fact, as I stated, that Rizal, in my opinion, has not really attacked the Catholic Church but rather the perverted element of the church, and considering my own conviction which I want to announce categorically and specifically now that I believe that one could be a good Filipino and at the same time a good Catholic, that there is fundamentally, in concept, deep in my heart, no conflict, no contradiction, and no antagonism between Filipinism and Catholicism, and for this reason, therefore, I have sponsored this bill. And as I already announced in the hall of this august body, my sponsorship should not be construed as trying to stir up any agitation, quoting Winston Churchill, that in the hope that by looking back, back to the past, back to our ancestors, back to their lives that strengthen, invigorate and fortify the spirit of

the Filipinos; I thought that I would be contributing as a Filipino in the realm of love of country as Rizal did, without abandoning or forsaking the religion which is of course also dear to my own heart.

Senator TAÑADA. My last question is this: Does not Your Honor think, therefore, that the Catholics should welcome the approval of this bill because the approval of this bill providing for the compulsory reading of the two great works of our national hero in colleges and universities, whether government-owned or government-recognized, would give the Catholics an opportunity to rebut what had been considered by some Catholics as an attack on their religion?

Senator LAUREL. Yes, I perfectly agree with Your Honor, and I may go a little farther, which I would not want to do. In the first place, the question of making a choice for me has not come, the choice, in a real case of conflict, where you should not be a *binabae*, where you reach the crossroads and will have to go one way or the other. In the case of conflict between my religion and my country, the choice has not come for me to say, "I go this way." That has not come. But if I were one of those high in the ecclesiastical councils of my own religion, I would hesitate many, many times before I object to a measure such as this, which would make every boy, every Filipino, know the writings of Rizal, because that might give the impression that the Roman Catholic religion is against Rizal, and I cannot conceive of a good, true, loyal, patriotic Filipino who can be a Filipino and at the same time against Rizal. It would affect and impair the popularity, the adherence and, who knows, perhaps the support of many Filipinos who would make the choice in favor of their own country first and then as to religion the other choice.

Senator TAÑADA. I wish to thank the distinguished sponsor for the answers given to my questions, and I wish to assure the distinguished sponsor that I will present the amendment which I think should be presented in order to avoid or eliminate the unconstitutional features of section 5 of the bill.

Senator LIM. Mr. President, will the gentleman from Batangas kindly yield to a few questions?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Batangas may yield, if he so desires.

Senator LAUREL. Before I answer the questions of my esteemed friend from Zamboanga, I would like to make it known that as chairman of the Committee on Education, I want to give notice that

I and the members of the Committee on Education shall be very happy to hear and to confer, to exchange views in a kind of public hearing before the Committee on Education which will start at 2:00 o'clock this afternoon until Saturday or Sunday of this week, while the discussion of this bill is going on in the morning.

I shall be very glad to answer now the gentleman from Zamboanga.

Senator LIM. First of all, allow me to make some preliminary remarks. I wish to congratulate the gentleman from Batangas for his sponsorship speech. I believe no one else could surpass or perhaps even equal the brilliance and the force of the argumentation of the gentleman from Batangas, and also I wish to congratulate him for his Filipinism with which I agree completely.

Senator LAUREL. Thank you so much. You flatter me so much.

Senator LIM. I would like to say at the outset that I am 100 per cent for the approval of this bill. However, I would like to inquire from the gentleman from Batangas as to certain points.

Is it not true that these novels of Dr. José Rizal composed of two volumes, or rather two parts, to be accurate, first of the *Noli* and Secondly, of the *Filibusterismo*, are quite a complicated reading matter in the sense that the words are very often in the form of metaphors, personifications and hyperboles and the language is so deep that it would not be easy for ordinary school teachers and for ordinary young boys and girls in any school to interpret Dr. Rizal's ideas?

Senator LAUREL. There is something in that, that these novels probably will not be so very easily understood at the beginning in the lower grades, let us say, in the second and third years, high school, but before I answer that question, I want to be permitted to state here that there was a time when I myself was in the high school from 1905 to 1910. What I was reading in those days, if I remember, were Robinson Crusoe, a fiction, and then Alhambra, describing the conditions in Granada, and Ivanhoe, and Silas Marner. Even these fictitious books written for the young mind in the grammar school I had some difficulty in understanding. But I wish that we had already prescribed, and as expressed regretfully by Senator Tañada that he wished we had required this years ago, but if I had had the opportunity of reading them, and then reading them again, and reading them in the colleges and in the universities, then I would have been able to acquaint myself more creditably in reciting by memory the whole *Noli*

and the whole *Filibusterismo*. What I mean, Your Honor, is that they may find some difficulty, as life itself is difficult, particularly in the beginning, but if we require this and then with the teacher's explanation, as they do now in the United States since the first grade the life of Washington is taught, or what Washington said that, "if you want a thing well done, do it yourself," those little things which come from the great teachings of a great man, will be infiltrated into the minds and eventually into the heart, and then they will become Rizalistas. They will grow up to manhood, to maturity, with that idea of Filipinism and nationalism so vital and so essential to the life of the Filipino, if this nation is to live and survive throughout these difficulties.

Senator LIM. But, gentleman from Batangas, with due respect to your opinion and to Your Honor, of course, all the time I would like to say that unlike in the case of, let us say, Haiwatha or Robinson Crusoe or Silas Marner, which are purely fictions, in the case of the reading of the *Noli* and *Filibusterismo*, I believe that certain controversial factual matters are brought which may be vital and quite dangerous if not properly interpreted, for our young men and women to come to conclusions. In the *Filibusterismo* and *Noli* it is not the same as in the case of Robinson Crusoe, which is mostly humor, or for the purpose of humor perhaps, but here we have controversial facts regarding religion, regarding nationalism, regarding the propriety or impropriety of taking up arms against Mother Spain at that time, and I believe there are certain points there stated or there may be a question that even the teachers themselves, not being able to comprehend or grasp the very intention of Dr. Rizal, might be misinterpreted. We Catholics claim the reason why the Protestant religion counts with more than 300 sects is because the Bible is so complicated. Some Protestant sects interpret the Bible not as a group and the deliberations are not done in common council such as we have in the case of the Pope and Cardinals. That is why the Protestants are divided. There are more than 300 different sects. It is because they interpret separately or differently certain vital or essential portions of the Bible and perhaps they will be the same as in *Noli* and *Filibusterismo*, it is possible that some teachers may interpret Rizal was anti-Catholic Church and anti-spiritualism, that he was in favor of taking up arms against Spain at that time. These questions are preliminary, and I would propose that the gentleman from Batangas, in view of the fact that the *Noli* and

Filibusterismo are complicated reading matters, that we should adopt an amendment to the bill, perhaps a requirement, that there should be attached a memorandum as to the textbooks to be taught when certain accepted principles are to be stated, from which the teachers cannot deviate; that Dr. Jose Rizal did not attack the Catholic Church but some of its priests; that Dr. José Rizal believed in things spiritual, not materialistic, which is good for our youth today because they are materialistic; that Dr. José Rizal believed in Filipinism and nationalism, and from these principles our teachers cannot deviate in teaching the *Noli* and *Filibusterismo*. I agree with the gentleman from Batangas that Dr. José Rizal never attacked the Catholic Church, I agree. Rizal simply put into ridicule some friars at that time like Fray Dámaso and after all there is nothing inconsistent with Catholicism in that because even in the Catholic church there are enemies from within and enemies from without and those abusive friars whom he attacked were considered enemies from within because by abusing the people they were not really practicing the principles and precepts of the Catholic church. So that Rizal's teachings and ideals may be inculcated in the minds of our school teachers and children these should be incorporated in a memorandum which I shall propose in an amendment. Does not the gentleman agree with me that certain precepts and principles must be inserted so that those who would want to properly study these two works of Rizal should be properly equipped with intelligence such as the intelligence of the brilliant gentleman from Batangas who to me is the most brilliant and most patriotic Filipino living today?

Senator LAUREL. I shall be glad to consider that when it is presented in the form of amendments, but we are not in the period of amendments yet.

Senator LIM. By inserting that amendment here we would state certain principles from which teachers cannot deviate. For example, that Rizal believed in God, in Divine Providence; that he never attacked the Catholic church, that he did not believe in materialism but in the virtue of the spirit and also in immateriality; that he did not believe in Filipinism or nationalism; that he did not believe in taking up arms, for instance, against mother Spain at the time when he said that precisely it was by education and not by taking up arms, when Andrés Bonifacio wanted to take up arms against Spain, that we could obtain necessary reforms because in those times we could not expect to defeat the all-powerful Spain. Don't you

believe that that principle should be made known to the teachers and that they cannot deviate from that principal thought of Dr. Rizal? I believe really, gentleman from Batangas, that we should have that principle inserted in the requirements for the teachings of these two novels, that we should eliminate from the minds of the Catholic church or the Catholics that we are anti-catholics, for example, when we say that Dr. Rizal never for a moment attacked the Catholic church itself but only some abusive friars as personified by Fray Dámaso in "*Noli Me Tangere*". Another point is the constitutionality. I am concerned and interested in the passage of this bill and I would like to know, no less than the expert on constitutional law, the gentleman from Quezon, when he directed the question to the gentleman from Batangas, as to whether or not this bill would stand the test of constitutionality in the sense that it provides penalty in section 5 under subparagraphs (a) and (b).

Senator LAUREL. Precisely one of the reasons why we are having these hearings is first we want to take up the constitutionality and application of the Canon Law and I thought it would be a good idea to hear them without expressing any opinion, and for that reason, I would like to withhold my opinion before the public hearing is held so that I may know beforehand where I stand and it will be less embarrassing to me if I will later on change my stand than if I will have to express an opinion now.

Senator PÚYAT. Mr. President, will the gentleman from Batangas yield to some questions?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Batangas may answer if he pleases.

Senator LAUREL. I am happy to answer the gentleman from Manila and Pampanga.

Senator PÚYAT. I would like to ask a few questions to the distinguished gentleman from Batangas for the purpose of clarifying the intent and the purpose of the bill because I will use the answers of the gentleman from Batangas in preparing my amendments to this bill. May I refer to the first section? What is the intent of the sponsor of the bill, that the reading of the "*Noli Me Tangere*" and "*El Filibusterismo*" be compulsory in all grades of the public schools starting with the intermediate, high school and the university?

Senator LAUREL. As it is in all schools, colleges and universities, public and private.

Senator PÚYAT. What does "school" mean?

Senator LAUREL. Well, you start with the high school. Presently it is used in the third and fourth

year high school. Whether it should be extended down to the first year is a matter of implementation and as I stated here the Department of Education shall take steps to promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of this practice. In other words, if the Secretary of Education feels that it should start from the second or first year it is a matter for deliberation and discussion for the purpose of determining in what grade they should be taught more truthfully and effectively. If we say schools, colleges and universities, that does not mean that the students will take that in the evening or in the morning in the first year up to the fourth year. It is a matter, I believe, of implementation and of making it more flexible to enable the school authorities to plan how the "Noli Me Tangere" and the "El Filibusterismo" are to be read in the schools, colleges and universities.

Senator PÚYAT. In other words, I gathered the impression that the distinguished Senator is willing to leave this provision undefined preferring that it be covered by rules and regulations that will be issued by the Secretary of Education.

Senator LAUREL. Because it will be difficult for us, not knowing the operation and the technique, to say that they must be taught in the first, second, third or fourth year. I think it is better to leave that provided these books are read in the high school not necessarily in all the grades provided they are read in the university and college.

Senator PÚYAT. I want to know if it is the intention of the gentleman to start the requirement as compulsory in the high school or whether it is the intention of the gentleman to include all intermediate schools, because depending upon the answer of Your Honor, I will prepare two amendments that will cover appropriation so that if this bill becomes a law it will not be a dead letter law because this bill without an appropriation will be inoperative unless we provide an appropriation for its implementation.

Senator LAUREL. Only from the high school. Our students in the primary schools now do not know even how to read.

Senator PÚYAT. Is it not better, Your Honor, to start our young children early so that at an early age they can drink deep into the inspiration of José Rizal and not wait until they become 15 or 16 years of age?

Senator LAUREL. But this is compulsory reading and the children in the first grade do not yet know how to read. How can we compel them?

This should be determined by the National Board of Education.

Senator PÚYAT. This brings out another point I have in mind that perhaps to cover that phase of our education, because our statistics now show that for every 1,000 students that enter the first grade, only about thirty get to high school, and out of the thirty only about three get to the university. So, if you start the reading of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo* in the high school, you are losing 970 of those students that start in the primary grades. Now, Your Honor, don't you feel that you are not reaching a very big segment by limiting this requirement to the high school?

Senator LAUREL. No.

Senator PÚYAT. But, precisely, I was leading to the point that, perhaps, we can amend the bill so that in the intermediate grades we could prepare a simplified version of these books.

Senator LAUREL. Not the reading, but probably in the teaching of civics in a combined curricula, there might be some form of preparing a reader but not compelling them to read the original works of Rizal, or probably some books on civics culled from sources taken from Rizal, Mabini, del Pilar, or a compilation of those to prepare them for the eventual reading should they go up in the high school or outside should they leave. There is a great deal of truth, I think, in what you go to that about 70 per cent of the children who go to the primary grades drop out. Beyond that, they don't get any more education, and so some kind of an arrangement could be made through planning, technical planning of the authorities, by which without compelling these people who are just starting the primary grades, some kind of supplemental reader could be prepared for their training in civic education, but not to the extent of requiring them to read the unexpurgated text of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo*.

Senator PÚYAT. I am glad to know the thinking of Your Honor, because based on the reply I will be in a better position to prepare my amendments. Now, gentleman, may I convey the following information to you so that perhaps we could cooperate in preparing these amendments. The appropriation for textbooks for compulsory reading in our public schools is ₱650,000. All of that sum has been used up except ₱75.72 today. Now, this appropriation is being presented and is being reduced to ₱500,000 for the next fiscal year. Now, if the intention of the sponsor is to limit the compulsory reading of these books to the secondary

level, then the estimate of the Department of Public Education is that about 36,000 copies would be required. Would the sponsor of the bill prefer that an authority to appropriate be incorporated in this bill, or an amendment to the effect that an appropriation to cover the printing of the books be incorporated in the budget to be presented to Congress?

Senator LAUREL. Either way, but personally I would like the bill amended containing the actual appropriation for the printing of the unexpurgated copies of these two books for distribution even in the amount of P50,000. I would appeal to our Chairman of the Committee on Finance to help us in that direction.

Senator PÚYAT. Thank you very much, Your Honor.

Senator PRIMICIAS. Mr. President, the distinguished gentleman from Negros Occidental, Senator Locsin, will consume a turn in favor of the bill.

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Negros Occidental is recognized.

DISCURSO DEL SEN. LOCSIN A FAVOR

El Sen. LOCSIN. Señor Presidente, Caballeros del Senado: El camino de la libertad no está alfombrado de rosas. Tiene sus hondonadas, sus angosturas, sus zigzags, sus trechos bloqueados, es siempre ascendente, sin término porque los pueblos dignos son eternos peregrinos del progreso. Se requieren valor sereno y determinación para recorrerlo. Los que precian la vida y sus comodidades más que un ideal de libertad, de justicia, de buen gobierno y los fueros del progreso y del bienestar social, se ponen al margen de la senda redentora.

Los errores y abusos del imperialismo español bloquearon ese camino manteniendo a nuestro pueblo en un obscurantismo cultural, político, social y económico. No se dieron cuenta de que no todos dormían en la noche de nuestros abuelos. Rizal nos abrió ese camino. Consciente, sin embargo, de que filipinos de todas las generaciones tienen que recorrerlo y vivir todas sus dificultades, dejó, según juicio de D. Jaime C. De Veyra, un legado moral y espiritual: "la enseñanza de su vida, su ejemplo, sus escritos: el *Noli Me Tangere*, las *Notas de Morga*, *El Filibusterismo*, *Sobre la indolencia de los filipinos*, *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, *La Nueva Ortografía*, etc. Ahí, ahí, está Rizal

"Constante repitiendo la esencia de su fe."

El pueblo, especialmente la juventud, perdería grandes oportunidades para amasar valores de es-

tilizada espiritualidad, de conducta ciudadana ejemplar, de nacionalismo afirmativo con el desuso de ese valioso legado.

Los males de toda laya que Rizal combatió y con mano maestra describió en sus escritos a fin de exponerlos "en las gradas del templo para que cada persona que viniese de invocar a la Divinidad les propusiese un remedio", no han desaparecido del todo. Nuestros tiempos los han heredado si bien con otros nombres, con manifestaciones más encubiertas, tanto más peligrosas cuanto más sutiles, a modo de la serpiente que se desliza bajo tupida maleza lista siempre a causar su víctima a la primera ocasión.

Hoy día, esos males se manifiestan en el abuso del poder que frustra la voluntad popular expresada en los comicios, que causa actos de terrorismo criminal. La influencia monacal de entonces está suplantada hoy por la influencia de los intereses creados. Los latifundios de las corporaciones religiosas de antes se conocen hoy por los latifundios familiares. Las fortunas improvisadas o mal adquiridas de antes, hoy se adquieren por medio de grandes concesiones, de préstamos fabulosos, por compras de efectos del gobierno a precios previamente convenidos, o negociando en dólares. Aún tenemos la escandalosa preponderancia de las galleras. La explotación de los servicios de Basilio y Crispín la sufren hoy miles de menores de edad que trabajan en campos y talleres. No tienen desperdicio en estos nuestros tiempos estas palabras de Elías: "Aún oímos que se saquean pueblos; aún se ataja en los caminos; los robos continúan y no se averiguan los autores; el crimen existe y vaga libre el verdadero criminal" . . . Las consideraciones expuestas por Isagani a Fr. Fernández sobre la falta de competencia del escultor para producir nada más que una caricatura de la masa, más que a la calidad de la misma pueden referirse al enorme porcentaje de estudiantes que fracasan en los exámenes que las distintas juntas examinadoras del Gobierno celebran periódicamente. Las costosas celebraciones de la fiesta anual del pueblo de San Diego se proyectan en las fastuosas celebraciones de las fiestas patronales o cívicas de nuestros municipios y barrios. La opulencia de las fiestas sociales de Capitán Tiago encuentran acabada proyección en los aristocráticos saraos de nuestros Clubs sociales de hoy día.

Rizal creyó que la responsabilidad de toda labor manumisora de la patria y de la sociedad tiene que encomendarse a la juventud. Aún de estudiante del Ateneo de Manila, en su oda premiada, ya llamó a la juventud filipina "bella esperanza

de la patria". En el *Noli Me Tangere* creó la figura central de Crisóstomo Ibarra, repositorio de todos los atributos de más valor que debe reunir un joven filipino en dotes intelectuales, en virtudes ciudadanas, en educación y responsabilidad familiar. Ibarra era para Rizal el joven ideal llamado a ser botón de muestra de nuestra juventud. Fué enviado por su padre a otros países para "aprender la ciencia de la vida", para ser un día útil a la patria. Ibarra, antes de partir, se despidió de su primer maestro, un viejo sacerdote que le regaló estas significativas palabras de despedida: "No olvides que si el saber es patrimonio de la humanidad, sólo lo heredan los que tienen corazón".

Ibarra vivió en el extranjero una rígida disciplina para conseguir la más completa preparación espiritual y cultural. Y volvió al país mucho más rico en conocimientos, intolerante con las injusticias, defensor y protector de los débiles, filántropo para la causa de las escuelas, resuelto a conservar la fe de sus padres, amar a la "patria, porque es deber de todo hombre amar al país a quien debe el ser, a quien debe y deberá su felicidad". . . . Pero al llegar, su gran corazón fue sacudido por dos violentos y contradictorios sentimientos, de dolor intenso el uno, desgarrador por la muerte de su padre en la cárcel, de cómo fue perseguido "en el mismo reposo de la muerte", hollando su tumba para ser tirados en el lago los restos exhumados; y otro, un éxtasis de felicidad al encontrar a su María Clara, la novia dulcemente añorada durante los años de ausencia, tan hermosa "como un ensueño, pura, llena de fe y de inocencia, mecida entre amores y sonrisas", tan enamorada para ponerle en olvido como le manda su confesor, su María Clara, que es

"fantasma azul del alma filipina
que soñara Rizal,
prolongación del beso
de su obsesión divina,
vibrante poesía
que el poeta cantara,
eres, clara María,
nuestra María Clara"

Así lo cantó una poetisa. ¡Con qué acierto se expresó el Capitán General a Capitán Tiago: "La más virtuosa de las hijas es digna seguramente del mejor ciudadano de Filipinas." Reexpresaremos el pensamiento del Capitán General diciendo que María Clara e Ibarra representaban una simbiosis de amor entre la patria y la juventud!

Como médico Rizal era un psicólogo. Sabía que la juventud tenía necesariamente que ser "inexperta y soñadora", algo idealista. Así, con ser

Ibarra un joven reflexivo, como enamorado era romántico, un consagrado a la memoria de sus padres, un convencido de la labor ennoblecedora de la escuelas, un creyente de que en todo corazón humano hay un rico depósito de nobles sentimientos. Rizal llenó al joven Ibarra de rosadas ilusiones para herirle en "su fibra más sensible" con el puñal de las injusticias de su tiempo.

Animoso quiso Ibarra mejorar la enseñanza ofreciendo el dinero necesario para levantar una escuela; pero en la solemnidad de la colocación de la primera piedra, por poco pierde la vida a no haberle advertido Elías del planeado accidente. El pobre maestro de escuela salió humillado por el cura con estas palabras: "No me uses prendas prestadas; conténtate con hablar tu idioma y no me echas a perder el español que no es para vosotros". Otra vez en la escuela se volvió a practicar aquello de que la letra con sangre entra.

Llamado a respetar al sacerdote por su carácter y porque "quería que se respete la Religión que educó a la sociedad", una alusión abierta y extremadamente injusta a la memoria de su padre que fué "un hombre honrado, un buen ciudadano, que se ha sacrificado por el país, un buen cristiano que siempre ha hecho el bien y jamás oprimió al desvalido, ni acongojó al miserable", le obligó a derribar al P. Dámaso sujetándole el cuello con uno de los pies y "blandiendo un afilado cuchillo estuvo a punto de manchar su mano con sangre impura."

Amando con noble amor a María Clara, manos impiadosas y conciencias negras le hicieron imposible la realización de ese amor, y la dalaga de sus sueños que sólo sabía entregarse a su primer amor, derramó todas sus fragancias de virgen en el convento de Santa Clara en preces de amor al Dios del Amor!

Con ser liberal, Ibarra era un contemporizador que rehuía las violencias. Refiriéndose al pueblo se expresó: "yo quiero su bien, por eso levanto una escuela; lo busco por medio de la instrucción, por el progresivo adelanto; sin luz no hay camino". Pero vió frustradas sus más sinceras intenciones. Y se transformó; más bien los desengaños le transformaron. Replicándole Elías de que "el país si bien sufre, aún espera y no pide más que un poco de libertad, de justicia y de amor", Ibarra le contestó: "no vengarme, sería un crimen, sería aniquilarlos a nuevas injusticias . . . No, fuera cobardía, pusilanimidad, gemir y llorar cuando hay sangre y vida, cuando al insulto y al reto se une el escarnio! . . . Haré ver a ese pueblo su miseria y le diré que contra esta opresión se levanta y

protesta el eterno derecho del hombre para conquistar su libertad!"

En la banca de Elías nació Simoún! . . . Aleluya!

En *El Filibusterismo* Rizal creó otros modelos de jóvenes dignos de ser emulados por la juventud. Isagani, el ateneísta brillante, de una fuerza argumentativa colosal, sin signos de inferioridad cuando discute cara a cara con Fr. Fernández, el profesor que se vio sorprendido, a veces confundido por las contestaciones y la dialéctica del estudiante:

"Que ustedes cumplan con su deber . . . Lo que somos, ustedes lo han hecho . . . Al pueblo que se tiraniza, se le obliga a ser hipócrita; a aquel a quien se le niega la verdad, se le da mentira; el que se hace tirano, engendra esclavos . . . Algo les obliga a estudiar. Aparte del deber de cada uno de buscar su perfección, hay el deseo innato en el hombre de cultivar su inteligencia, deseo aquí más poderoso cuanto más reprimido; y el que da su oro y su vida al Estado, tiene derecho a exigirle que le dé la luz para ganar mejor su oro y conservar mejor su vida" . . . Este tono de independencia intelectual, de apasionada defensa de la dignidad y capacidad de los jóvenes filipinos, de convicción arraigada sobre la responsabilidad colectiva de los estudiantes, de amor al estudio, de patriotismo dinámico campean en los actos y declaraciones de la juventud de entonces. La dialéctica de Isagani es tajante. Replicando al abogado Pasta se expresó: "Cuando tenga canas como éstas, señor, y vuelva la vista hacia mi pasado y vea que sólo he trabajado para mí, sin haber hecho lo que buenamente podía y debía por el país que me ha dado todo, por los ciudadanos que me ayudan a vivir, entonces, señor, cada cana me será una espina, y en vez de gloriarme de ellas, me he de avergonzar". El señor Pasta dio por terminada la entrevista pensando en las espinas de su cabeza cana después de oír tan condensada lección de responsabilidad social improvisada por un estudiante.

Basilio, el hijo de Sisa, es un ejemplo de diligencia en el estudio de la Medicina, poseedor de los secretos de Simoún porque sabía guardarlos, tenía una edificante resignación a la pobreza.

Macaráig, el de más pasta, hacía uso de sus medios con esplendidez. Porque tenía conciencia del carácter social de la propiedad se mostraba siempre generoso en sus aportaciones materiales.

La juventud tiene mucho que aprender de nacionalismo en las páginas del *Noli me Tangere* y *El Filibusterismo*. Elías, brazo protector de los perseguidos, coraginoso hasta la temeridad, la voz del pueblo de los oprimidos, fue un Bautista en

el desierto de nuestros anhelos libertarios. Suenan como un conjuro estas sus palabras dichas antes de morir:

"Muero sin ver la aurora brillar sobre mi patria . . . ! vosotros, que la habéis de ver, saludadla . . . no os olvidéis de los que han caído durante la noche!"

Lo diamantino que es su patriotismo, su total consagración al ideal, su coraje inspiraron estos versos del lírico Guerrero loando nuestra bandera.

"Fija en la brecha está, ése es su puesto;
allí la encontrarán otras edades;
allí irán a besar su hierro enhiesto
rayos de gloria o fieras tempestades.
Allí la miraré siempre clavada
flameando al sol las esperanzas mías;
vieja quizás, pero jamás hollada,
jamás vendida por el bravo Elías."

Y nuestros capullos de mujer, si quieren tener más de María que de Eva, encontrarán en María Clara un espejo donde mirarse. Humildad en la belleza, en el rango social y en la fortuna. Sin pastas y colorines que empañen el color rosa de las mejillas y el carmín de los labios. Pensamientos de recato que florecen en la tersa frente. Pureza de alma que límpidos ojos dejan asomar. Refinamiento en las formas. Sobre todo un noble corazón que es nidal de generosos sentimientos que dieron fuego a su único amor, el impulso necesario a la mano que regala un valioso relicario a un lazarino y trinos de rruiseñor a la voz que canta:

Dulces las horas en la propia patria,
Donde es amigo cuanto alumbra el sol;
Vida es la brisa que en sus campos vuela,
Grata la muerte y más tierno el amor!

* * * * *

Dulce es la muerte por la propia patria,
Donde es amigo cuanto alumbra el sol;
Muerte es la brisa para quien no tiene
una patria, una madre y un amor!"

Sinceramente católica, en la hora nona de su vida de enamorada, de desesperación abrasada, rendida por el dolor no acude a la botella de lisol como remedio de todos sus padecimientos, no . . . Corre a su cuarto escapándose del bullicio de una fiesta social en su propia casa y completamente exhausta, sin fuerzas, se deja caer en el suelo al pie de una imagen, sollozando:

Madre, madre, ¡madre mía! . . . Y pasaron las horas . . . se consumió la bujía y se apagó, pero la joven continuaba inmóvil en el suelo, iluminada por los rayos de la luna, al pie de la imagen de la Madre de Jesús.

¡Qué consoladora escena! . . . María Clara que, como mujer enamorada, se declara vencida por el dolor . . . y María Clara, la heroica creyente que se entrega confiada al amparo de la Madre de Dios!

No perdamos más tiempo para romper el frasco de alabastro a fin de que el perfume de las enseñanzas de Rizal se derrame e impregne todas las células de nuestra vida! . . . Estamos atravesando un trecho del camino de la libertad en zigzag y con un mal tiempo . . . Creedme, nos valdrán muy poco los dólares prestados sin el sensible nacionalismo enriquecido con dádivas de sacrificio que nos predicó Rizal . . . Cabeasang Tales nos saldrá más valioso que Capitán Tiago en la hora actual.

Rizal sabía lo que le esperaba con sus obras. Rechazó la oferta de una evasión cuando estaba desterrado en Dapitan. Sabiendo que el ambiente de Manila le era muy hostil, ya en Hong Kong, fuera por tanto de la jurisdicción del gobierno español, volvió aún a Manila porque no quería que otros padeciesen por su culpa. Siempre fue irreprochable como hombre y como ciudadano. Previó su papel histórico y se preparó con fruición de predestinado . . . Ya lo dijo: "Pura y sin mancha ha de ser la víctima para que el holocausto sea aceptable".

Repasemos el Capítulo VIII del *Noli me Tangere*. Ibarra recorrió en coche Manila para evocar recuerdos; pero sus pensamientos se cortaron "a la vista de la pequeña colina en el campo de Bagumbayan. El montecillo, aislado, al lado del paseo de la Luneta, llamaba ahora su atención y le ponía meditando" . . . Preguntamos, y ¿por qué? . . . ¿Sería la visión de otro calvario con la víctima propiciatoria de nuestras libertades patrias clavada, muerta en la cruz del supremo y manumisor sacrificio? . . . El 30 de diciembre de 1896, tal sentimiento se convirtió en una realidad apoteósica!

Rizal, en aquella fría mañana decembrina, cayó en Bagumbayan tiñendo con su sangre la verde alfombra del lugar. Su muerte forzó el nuevo día. Apóstol reflejó el efecto del luctuoso sucedido en dos versos lapidarios,

"Si una bala destrozó tu cráneo,
también tu idea destrozó un imperio!"

Rizal era profético. Cuando al toque del Angelus el P. Salvi, con sombrero, atraviesa la calle de prisa para dirigirse a la casa del alférez, sería por un asunto de suma importancia. Era para comunicar al alférez una indiscreción confesional de una penitente: la inminencia de una conspiración. Este pasaje en el *Noli me Tangere* pasa hoy de hecho histórico. Preguntamos si la confesión de Simoún preanunció la confesión de Rizal en su celda del Fuerte Santiago. Me inclino a creerlo así.

Llamado a dedicar toda su vida a la patria, antes de morir epilogó esa total entrega volcando en hermosos versos alejandrinos el néctar de su incomparable amor a su adorada Filipinas. Saboread conmigo fragmentos de la floración patriótica de Rizal.

"Yo muero cuando veo que el cielo se colora
Y al fin anuncia el día, tras lóbrego capuz;
Si grana necesitas, para teñir tu aurora,
Vierte la sangre mía, derrámala en buen hora,
Y dórela un reflejo de su naciente luz.

* * * * *
Ensueño de mi vida, mi ardiente vivo anhelo,
¡Salud! te grita el alma que pronto va a partir!
¡Salud! oh que es hermoso caer por darte vuelo,
Morir por darte vida, morir bajo tu cielo,
Y en tu encantada tierra la eternidad dormir."

Creylene en la comunión espiritual entre todos los fieles de la grey, Rizal impetra de todos una piadosa oración en estos inspiradísimos versos:

"Deja que el sol ardiendo, las lluvias evapore
Y al cielo tornen puras, con mi clamor en pos;
Deja que un ser amigo mi fin temprano lllore;
Y en las serenas tardes cuando por mí alguien ore,
Ora también, oh Patria, por mi descanso a Dios."

Señor Presidente y caballeros del Senado: A mi humilde manera de honrar la memoria del egregio patriota cada diciembre, leo y releo sus obras para mi propia delectación. Tengo para mí que el filipino no podrá encontrar mejor piscina donde refrescar su espíritu de ciudadano como en la piscina de las obras de Rizal, siempre llenas de las aguas vigorizantes de sus enseñanzas, aguas siempre frescas por la eterna lozanía de sus pensamientos lapidarios. A medida que uno vaya adentrándose en las páginas de sus dos novelas, se prepara gradualmente para el impacto de la grandeza del último capítulo de *El Filibusterismo* en que el P. Florentino, con la humildad y sabiduría del verdadero sacerdote, oye con simpática comprensión la confesión de Simoún.

"Dios le perdonará a usted, señor . . . Simoún; sabe que somos falibles, ha visto lo que usted ha sufrido . . . Usted ha creído que lo que el crimen y la iniquidad han manchado y deformado, otro crimen y otra iniquidad podían purificar y redimir. Error! El odio no crea más que monstruos; el crimen, criminales; sólo el amor lleva a cabo obras maravillosas. Sólo la virtud puede salvar! . . . Los justos y los dignos deben sufrir para que sus ideas se conozcan y se extiendan . . . Redención supone virtud, sacrificio, y sacrificio, amor!"

Así habló el P. Florentino a Simoún . . . Había mucha ternura y concentración en la voz y en el consejo. Gradualmente se hacía más y más imperceptible la respiración de Simoún, hasta que