

has considered the same and has the honor to report it back to the Senate with the following recommendation:
That it be approved without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) PEDRO SABIDO
Chairman

Committee on Banks, Corporations
and Franchises

The Honorable
The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
Manila

El PRESIDENTE. Al calendario de asuntos ordinarios.

El SECRETARIO:

(Informe Número 968)

Mr. President:

The Committee on Banks, Corporations and Franchises to which was referred House Bill No. 4642, 3rd C. R. P., introduced by Congressmen Tolentino and Francisco, entitled:

An Act granting Mr. Ricardo P. Ocampo, residing at number one hundred forty C. Francisco Makati, Rizal, Philippines, a temporary permit to construct, install, establish and operate public radiotelephone and radiotelegraph coastal stations, with the corresponding relay stations, and public fixed and public base and land mobile stations for the reception and transmission of radiotelephone and radiotelegraph communications within the Philippines not at present served by public radiotelegraph and/or radiotelephone systems such as in lumber and mining concessions, farms, deep sea fishing and isolated municipalities,

has considered the same and has the honor to report it back to the Senate with the following recommendation:
That it be approved without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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The Honorable
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Manila

El PRESIDENTE. Al calendario de asuntos ordinarios.

El SECRETARIO:

(Informe Número 969)

Mr. President:

The Committee on Banks, Corporations and Franchises to which was referred House Bill No. 4708 3rd C. R. P., introduced by Congressmen Durano and Fortich, entitled:

An Act granting A. S. Días Electrical Service a franchise to install, operate, and maintain an electric light, heat, and power system in the City of Bacolod and its suburbs,

has considered the same and has the honor to report it

That it be approved without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) PEDRO SABIDO
Chairman

Committee on Banks, Corporations
and Franchises

The Honorable
The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
Manila

El PRESIDENTE. Al calendario de asuntos ordinarios.

El SECRETARIO:

PROYECTO DE RESOLUCIÓN

Del Senador Lim (P. S. R. No. 81, 3.er C. R. F.), titulado:

Resolution referring House Bill No. 3428 to the Committee on Government Reorganization for its proper consideration.

El PRESIDENTE. Al Comité de Reglamentos.

Senator PRIMICIAS. Mr. President, the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán, Senator Rodrigo, desires to make use of the privilege hour. I ask that he be recognized.

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman from Bulacán has the floor.

MANIFESTACIONES DEL SEN. RODRIGO

Senator RODRIGO. Mr. President, before I start with my speech, I would request that all questions, if any, be reserved until I finish my speech. The reason, is I have tried as much as possible to cover every possible point in this speech, and it is possible questions which might be asked at the beginning of the speech are answered at the latter part of the speech.

Mr. President and gentlemen of the Senate:

I rise on a matter of grave importance to our country. I rise to lay before the Senate the Problem of our national unity which is now seriously endangered by the ever increasing wave of passionate conflict and recriminations among our people regarding Senate Bill No. 438, which seeks to make the two novels of our venerated hero, Dr. José Rizal, compulsory reading in all schools, colleges and universities, both public and private.

I will not touch on the merits of the bill, for this is neither the time nor the occasion to discuss the bill itself. My speech will be limited to our country's unity, in conjunction with the mounting controversy over this proposed legislation.

Mr. President, we can no longer close our eyes to this threat to our unity as a people. One has but to glance at newspaper headlines; or listen to inflammatory radio commentaries; or hear the discussions and conversations of our countrymen in all walks of life, to realize that a serious rift, an

alarming cleavage is rearing its ugly head in our beloved native land.

The Committee on Education, of which I am a humble member, conducted three afternoons of public hearings regarding this bill. Without going into the merits of the arguments presented by both sides, these public hearings proved to me one thing: that the controversy regarding this bill has gone way beyond the realm of calm and objective discussion, and has reached the realm of passion—heated and dangerous passion, because it is generated by man's intense feelings for nationalism and religion.

If said public hearings had proved anything, it is that this problem has poised a very serious threat to our national unity.

Then, two days ago, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines issued a Pastoral Letter defining its stand regarding this matter. This Pastoral Letter was published in full in all the metropolitan papers; and I was informed that all senators have been furnished copies of it. I will not therefore impose on your patience by reading the whole Pastoral. I shall merely read its dispositive part, and request that a copy of the Pastoral, which I shall give to the Secretary of the Senate, be incorporated in the records of this august body.

The PRESIDENT. Is there any objection to the request? (*Silence.*) The Chair hears none. Approved.

Senator RODRIGO. (*Continuing.*) Mr. President, allow me to quote the dispositive portion of the Pastoral Letter.

"Some of Rizal's most cogent insights into the political and social order are undoubtedly contained in his two novels, NOLI ME TANGERE and EL FILIBUSTERISMO. We wish to make it clear that insofar as these novels give expression to our people's desire for political freedom and a social order based on justice they are not at variance with the practical applications of Catholic doctrine to the exigencies of the social milieu as it existed at the time. The Church itself, as distinguished from the human fallible individuals who compose it, is not, never has been, and never will be arrayed against the legitimate political and social aspirations of any people. If it were, it should not be what it is called: Catholic, that is universal. The clear and even forceful expression of such aspirations can never be injurious to the Catholic Church. The aims and objectives of that Church being supernatural are also supranational; between them and national aims, provided these are in conformity with the principles of morality, no conflict is possible.

"Unfortunately, however, these novels were written when our hero, estranged for a time from our faith and religion, did contradict many of our Christian beliefs. In these two novels we find passages against Catholic dogma and morals; the Catholic religion in general, the possibility of

miracles, the doctrine of purgatory, the sacrament of baptism, confession, communion, Holy Mass, the doctrine of indulgences, church prayers, the catechism of Christian doctrine, sermons, sacramentals, books of piety. These are passages casting doubt or confusion on God's omnipotence, the existence of hell, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and the two natures of Christ,

"Similarly we find passages which disparage divine worship, the veneration of images and relics, devotion to the Blessed Virgen and the Saints, use of scapulars, cords and habits, rosaries, novenas, ejaculations, indulgences, prayers, vocal prayers, like the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory, the Act of Contrition, the Angelus, mass ceremonies, baptismal and exequial rites, worship of the Cross, use of holy water, candles, processions, bells, the Sunday obligation.

"We also find passages that make light of ecclesiastical discipline such as for instance, what concerns stole fees, alms to the church, alms in suffrages for the dead, the authority of the Pope, excommunications, education in Catholic schools, Pontifical privileges, Catholic burial, nunneries and monasteries, Confraternities, and Third Orders.

"Much to our regret then, we feel it our duty to conclude that these two novels come under Canon 1399 of the Code of Canon Law."

What does this mean? The Pastoral Letter itself gives us the meaning.

"It is unfortunate that these novels which were written by our national hero inspired by the most genuine patriotism, should have included such substantial defects in the religious aspect as to render them objectionable reading, in such sense that Catholics may read them only upon due permission obtained from ecclesiastical authorities. This permission, however, is readily granted for a justifiable reason, whenever the person concerned has sufficiently studied the Catholic doctrine in question.

"This does not mean however, that each and every portion of the novel falls under this Canon. Those portions which do not contradict the contents and practices of the Catholic Faith are evidently not affected by said Canon. These portions which contain some of the most beautiful expression of Rizal's great love for our dear Philippines should be propagated among our young generation to read and learn."

Let us now consider, Mr. President, the effect and consequence of this to the bill in question.

It immediately becomes patent that there is a conflict between the bill and the Pastoral Letter.

To say that a vast majority of the students in our private and public schools, colleges and universities are Catholics is to belabor the obvious. They are, at the same time, Catholics and Filipino citizens. As such, they have two great loves: their country and their faith. These two loves are not conflicting loves. They are harmonious affections, like the love of a child for his father and for his mother.

And they have two loyalties: one to their country and one to their Church; but again these two loyalties should not be conflicting, but harmonious and complementary, for they belong to different spheres, one temporal and the other spiritual and eternal.

Now, Mr. President, Senate Bill No. 438 and the Pastoral Letter have given rise to a situation where conflict

seems inevitable between these two great loves, these two great loyalties, of a vast majority of our countrymen.

While the Pastoral Letter makes it clear that even if these two novels are objectionable in the light of the Canon Law, Catholics may read them upon due permission obtained from ecclesiastical authorities, and that "this permission is readily granted for a justifiable reason, whenever the person concerned has sufficiently studied the Catholic doctrine", still it is apparent that a great number of the students who will come under the compulsory provision of the Senate bill would not qualify for such permission. There comes the conflict. Thousands if not millions of cases will arise where what is ordered compulsory by the government is prohibited by the Church.

This conflict, Mr. President, will continually be the subject of passionate recriminations and discussions which can and will erode our national solidarity.

Before I continue, Mr. President, let me narrate how this situation came about.

The very first time that I came to have knowledge of the existence of this bill was about three weeks ago. I was seated in my chair in this hall, studying the calendared bills for the day and waiting for the session to start, when one of our distinguished colleagues approached me and placed on my desk a typewritten copy of this bill. He told me the nature of the bill, and he requested me to sign it. He called my attention to the fact that, at that time, the signatures of 15 senators were already affixed to the bill.

I glanced through the text of the bill; and I immediately sensed that the bill might lead to serious complications and repercussions. I declined to sign the bill, because I needed more time to study its ramifications.

That was the first time, Mr. President, that I got knowledge of the existence of this bill.

It seems that this bill, which I was told was authored by Senator Claro M. Recto, was given to the Committee on Education, to be a committee sponsored bill.

But, the members of the Committee on Education were not called to any committee meeting, and thus not afforded a chance to study and discuss together the different aspects and possible implications of this bill.

I am one of the humble members of the Committee on Education, Mr. President, and I am positive that no meeting was called, no notice even given to me about the existence of this bill, before it was handed to me with already 15 signatures.

Needless to say, this bill, which is supposed to be introduced by the Committee on Education, was seen and signed by senators who are not members of that committee, even before I, as a humble member of that committee, saw it or knew about it.

Mr. President, I said this not to formally raise an issue on the validity and soundness of the procedure followed. I am a new member of this body; I am new even in politics, and I am not an expert on the technicalities of parliamentary procedure.

However, I do say that if only we were called to a committee meeting to discuss this bill, maybe I or some other member of that committee might have anticipated and foreseen the consequences which we are seeing now. Maybe we could have taken the necessary steps to avoid this serious threat to our national unity, without in any way sacrificing and abandoning the substantial objective of the bill.

Coming back to my narration, I learned, later on, that other senators had added their signatures to the bill, and that; of the 24 members of this august body, only 3 have not signed.

I must confess, Mr. President, that, during the subsequent days, I found it difficult to refuse importunities of friends that I sign this bill. I knew that my position would be misunderstood. I knew that my refusal to sign, which, for those who know parliamentary procedure, does not mean an outright opposition to the bill in substance, would be distorted and misinterpreted. I knew that I would be engulfed in an onrushing wave of nationalism. I knew that I would be falsely branded as a tool of certain groups. I realized that I would have to swallow many bitter pills.

Some very good friends of mine advised me, in all sincerity, that I sign the bill. They said that my position was being misunderstood. They said that I would be unpopular; that people would despise and even hate me. They said that I would ruin my political career.

But, Mr. President, I would rather be right—right, as my conscience dictates—than be acclaimed and be popular. I would rather be at peace with my conscience than at peace with the world.

And, Mr. President, when once in a while my strength seemed to falter, I gathered inspiration from the patriotic example set for us and for posterity by the very Chairman of the Committee on Education and sponsor of this bill, our distinguished colleague, Senator Laurel.

There was a time when Senator Laurel was misunderstood. There was a time when he was hated and villified; and when he almost lost his life in the hands of Filipino compatriots who, at that time, sincerely believed perhaps, that to kill Senator Laurel was to serve our country.

Now that I find myself in similar, though not as difficult, a predicament, my admiration and esteem for Senator Laurel has increased a hundred fold, for now I realized what spiritual pain and mental anguish he must have suffered at that time.

Senator Laurel did not falter then. I hope that I will not falter now.

That was a digression, Mr. President, for which I ask your indulgence. Let me continue.

The more I studied the bill, the more I was convinced that it could produce serious repercussions to our unity as a people. And so I set myself to the task of looking for a formula which could serve as a common ground for the two sides.

When I said two sides, I do not only mean the side of the Church and the side of the State as two separate and distinct organizations. I also mean two sides in just one man; two sides in every man. I mean man's love and loyalty for his country and the love and loyalty of that same man for his Church and his religion.

We should be most careful not to create a conflict between these two loves and these two loyalties. We should ever strive to harmonize these two, otherwise we shall create the worst conflict of all, because worse than the conflict of man against other man, is the conflict of man against himself; The conflict between his faith and his nationalism, which are both very dear to him.

It was in order to avoid such a tragic conflict that I set about looking for a formula for reconciliation.

In the meantime, I and two other colleagues who likewise did not sign the bill, were attacked and ridiculed and villified. We were pilloried; we were nailed to the

cross of misrepresentation and ridicule. But we kept our peace.

I would not venture to speak for our two colleagues, but, for myself, I refrained from any discussion or comment, not even in defense of my dignity and honor, because I knew that any comment of mine would just add fuel to the ever growing fire which threatens to wreak havoc on our unity. Instead of entering into any discussion, I silently sought for different formulas of agreement.

That is why, Mr. President, you must have heard of the formula I suggested about "footnoted editions". But, before I had sufficient time to fully explain this formula to both sides, and before either side had sufficient time to thoroughly study and arrive at a conclusion regarding this suggestion, this bill was calendared and Senator Laurel started his sponsorship speech.

I would have wanted to ask for a postponement of the consideration of this bill, if only to have more time to discover a workable formula, but I desisted from so doing because I was sure that such a move would immediately be branded as a dilatory tactic. That would lead to more misunderstanding and more recriminations. That would aggravate the situation.

If I might be allowed another digression, Mr. President, it is oftentimes harmful to prematurely excite public opinion before the issues are laid clearly before the people. It often happens that reasons are buried by emotions, to the extent that the most sincere motives are branded as foul schemes. And so, Mr. President, it happens, not seldom, that while some people might see and admit the reasonableness of a cause, they become timid and afraid to stand for what they think is right, because they do not dare go against the strong current of public indignation.

In the present case, the premature upsurge of public opinion before the real issues were clarified to our people, rendered it most difficult to make an objective study of the bill. It rendered it most difficult for the other side even to be heard.

Even before I had talked with any Catholic citizen, whether layman or ecclesiastic, about the existence of this bill, there were already charges of alleged improper lobbying. It was enough that a Catholic citizen talks to a senator to inquire about this bill to immediately arouse a wave of accusation that there is an organized lobby. The mere presence of a priest within the premises of Congress, even if that priest be as much as Filipino citizen as any of us, is enough to give rise to the condemnation that the Church is meddling in the affairs of the government.

The natural consequence of this, Mr. President, was to discourage Catholic leaders and Catholic citizens from properly presenting their side.

It is true that public hearings were held. But when were they held? After 21 out of 24 senators had already affixed their signatures to the bill, and after the Honorable Chairman of the Committee on Education, Senator Laurel, had for three days delivered his very appealing sponsorship speech. In other words, before the Catholic citizens were given a chance to present their arguments, or even to clarify the issues, our people were already led and predisposed in favor of the bill; and 21 out of 24 senators had practically served notice that all arguments against the bill were futile because they had already committed themselves to vote for the bill.

Maybe you will ask if I am questioning the procedure followed regarding this bill. My answer is yes. While I

do not formally raise it as an issue, I question the procedure within my limitations as a new member of this body, and with due apologies to my more experienced colleagues who are better versed than I in the fine intricacies of parliamentary procedure. If I question the procedure, it is only on the basis of my sense of fairness and justice.

But I want to make it clear that I do not intend this to be an affront against the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Education, Senator Laurel, whom I still sincerely consider as a patriot. I want to make it clear that, if I disagree with him on the matter of the procedure followed, that does not detract from my high regard of him for the patriotic services he has rendered to our country.

In the same manner, if I disagree with some of the things said in the two novels of Dr. Rizal against our religion (which Dr. Rizal himself later on retracted) that does not subtract an iota from my esteem and veneration for Dr. Rizal as our greatest national hero.

A matter of fact, I have stated on several occasions and I repeat now, that even if Dr. Rizal did not come back to the Catholic faith; nay, even if he were a non-Protestant all his life; even more, even if he were a non-Christian—if he were a Moslem or a Buddhist—I would still acclaim him as our national hero for the services and sacrifices that he rendered to our country and to our people.

But this again is a digression, Mr. President. I must confess that I find it hard, in a speech like this, to avoid digressions.

After the public hearings—last Saturday, to be exact—the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines issued the Pastoral Letter which I already mentioned and partly quoted.

Maybe some people will say that, if there is now a conflict between this bill and the Church, the blame should not be laid on the author or sponsors of this bill but on the Catholic Hierarchy for having issued that Pastoral.

I would not want to enter into an argument regarding this matter. Maybe the Catholic Hierarchy should have clarified its stand on these two books long time ago. But maybe the Catholic Hierarchy purposely desisted from making an outright stand, precisely because they did not want to shock our people. They did not want to openly place our Catholic citizens in the difficult predicament of an apparent open conflict between their two great loves: their religion and their love for Rizal. Maybe, it was the policy of the Catholic Hierarchy to explain silently and individually to each Catholic Filipino the real meaning of its stand on these two books. Maybe the Hierarchy thought that it could clarify its stand better, without arousing doubts and conflicts, by personalized explanations to individual Catholics rather than by an outright public proclamation.

Whatever the reason might be is not the concern of this speech. What matters now, in so far as the Honorable Members of the Senate are concerned, is a certain amount of self-examination. Let us ask ourselves whether or not our precipitate move and action on this bill did not push the Catholic Hierarchy to the wall, where they were forced by circumstances to issue this public Pastoral Letter, in order to safeguard what they believe is the most essential factor in a man's life, namely, his faith and the salvation of his immortal soul.

I know that the Catholic Hierarchy issued this Pastoral Letter with much regret. The Pastoral Letter itself states that the pronouncement contained in it was issued "much to the regret" of the members of the Catholic Hierarchy. And the Pastoral Letter continues to say:

"Our objection to the bill then is not against our national hero, nor against the imparting of patriotic education to our children. But we maintain that these novels contain teachings contrary to those of the Catholic church and so, we regretfully but in compliance with a clear duty of our office, oppose the proposed compulsory reading in their entirety, of these two novels in any school in the Philippines where Catholic students may be affected. We may not permit the eternal salvation of immortal souls, souls for which we are answerable before the throne of Divine Justice, to be compromised for the sake of any humanly good, no matter how great it may appear. 'For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?'"

This public proclamation of the stand of the Catholic Church will regretfully but necessarily create a serious conflict among our people.

It is needless to point out the possible serious consequences of such a conflict. It is our bounden duty, as representatives of our people and as senators of this Republic, to do all our power to avoid this conflict.

It was for this reason, Mr. President, that, today, I have addressed and delivered the following letter to the distinguished Chairman of our Committee on Education:

"Honorable José P. Laurel
Chairman, Committee on Education
Senate of the Philippines

Dear Senator Laurel:

For the sake of our national unity which is seriously imperilled by the ever increasing controversy over Senate Bill No. 438, may I, as a humble member of your committee, suggest that the Committee extend an invitation to authorized representatives of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines to a closed-door round table conference, the purpose of which is to seek for a formula which will be acceptable to the proponents and sponsors of the bill as well as to the Catholic Hierarchy.

Assuring you of my respect and esteem, I remain

Very truly yours,

FRANCISCO A. RODRIGO
Member
Committee on Education

Perhaps some may ask why I did not limit myself to addressing and giving this letter to the Honorable Chairman of the Committee on Education. Why did I have to make this privilege speech before the whole Senate?

My reasons are the following, Mr. President:

1. Since this bill was signed by 21 out of 24 members of this august body, this matter ceases to be the concern solely of the Committee on Education. It has become the concern of practically all the members of the Senate;

2. This bill is now before the whole Senate for discussion on "Second Reading". Therefore, my

humble proposal ceases to be the exclusive concern of the committee, but becomes a matter for the whole Senate to decide; and

3. I want to make this request publicly, for all to hear and for all the members of the Senate to decide, in order to avoid any false accusation that there is any secret lobby or underhand influence by any group.

Perhaps some may ask why the committee should have to invite representatives of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines. Why don't the members of the Hierarchy take the initiative in approaching the committee?

Mr. President, I suppose you know what distortions and misinterpretations will be attached to such a move. I suppose you know that once any bishop requests that he be heard, we can expect with certainty attacks from all quarters that the Catholic Church is meddling in affairs of government, and that the Catholic bishops are exerting undue political pressure to influence legislation.

I am not speaking from theory or conjecture alone. I am speaking from our experience, during the last two or three weeks.

And perhaps some may ask: Why did not any bishop or any authorized representative of the Hierarchy appear and testify at the public hearings held last Thursday, Friday and Saturday?

Mr. President, anybody who witnessed the tension and the passion at those public hearings; anybody who saw the conduct and attitude of the spectators in the gallery, who clapped and laughed and booed, like fanatical cheering squads, would readily agree with me that it would have been most imprudent for any Catholic archbishop or bishop to have appeared and testified at those hearings, unless he wanted to expose himself to indignities. Any such incident would have been disastrous, not because of the archbishop or bishop personally, but because of the dire consequences of such an incident to the peace and unity of our people.

And it is for this same reason, Mr. President, that I suggest that this round table conference be held behind closed doors.

The problem is so serious that it calls for the highest type of prudence and statesmanship on the part of the members of the Senate.

I feel most undeserving that this appeal should come from me who can lay no claim to statesmanship nor to experience, nor perhaps, even to political maturity. But in my own humble way, I feel it my obligation to perform this task, with the

hope and trust that the older members of this body will aid me with their wisdom and statesmanship.

I wish to state, Mr. President, that this plea of mine is made not only for the sake of unity, but also for the sake of justice. It seems apparent that, in this controversy, irreparable injustices are bound to be committed against both sides.

Even now, injustices are being committed against those who have registered objections against the bill. Even if their objections are limited only to the element of compulsion; even if the only ground they invoke is the constitutional and democratic guarantee of freedom; even if they try their utmost to explain that their objection to this bill does not mean objection to Rizal, and that their esteem and veneration for Rizal is not in the least diminished by their disagreement to certain religious references in his two novels; in spite of all their repeated protestations, no matter how sincere and reasonable, they are still branded as anti-Rizal, anti-Filipino and traitors to the country.

This is unjust, Mr. President. This is painful and bitter because it is not true, but it seems to be accepted by people who are carried by an overpowering emotion of nationalism.

This is an instance when I think I can justifiably paraphrase Madam Roland, and say: Nationalism, what injustices are committed in thy name.

And injustices are being committed also against the other side. I have already heard some people attribute ulterior political motives to the filing of this bill. They say that this bill was filed not really for the sake of Rizal, but for the sake of political expediency. They say that this bill was filed to create a cleavage and confusion in the ranks of our Catholics in order to nip in the bud the growing political unity of Catholic citizens. I even heard some people say that the real purpose of this bill is to put President Magsaysay in a very tight spot. If this bill, they say, passes through Congress, and if the present controversy spreads and increases, then when this bill reaches the President for his signature, he will be placed between the two horns of a dilemma, where he will suffer politically either way. If he approves the bill, then he antagonizes a big Catholic voting sector; if he vetoes the bill then he alienates the sympathy and the votes of those who zealously favor the bill; and if he does not act on the bill and allows it to become a law, then he loses even more, for he will be accused of moral timidity.

(En este momento el Sen. Locsin asume la presidencia por designación de la Mesa)

And, Mr. President, this is not in my prepared speech but I saw on the front page of the "Manila Times" this morning the caption that this controversy is even now being linked and connected with the communist issue. On the front page of the "Manila Times" it says: "Iloilo Catholics see Reds in Move." Mr. President, even before I saw that news item I already heard conjectures, whispered accusations that may be there is a communist tinge in the filing of this bill because the communists are interested in weakening and disuniting the Catholic Church and they are also interested in weakening politically President Magsaysay but, Mr. President, as you see, I did not include that in my prepared speech which I dictated yesterday. I did not purposely include that because I did not want to be accused of raising the communist bogey man. The only reason I mentioned it this morning is because I found that these whispers have taken the front page of the "Manila Times" this morning. But, Mr. President, I would like to make it clear that I personally refused to believe, I repeat, I personally refused to believe these accusations. I only say that these are imputations and accusations that I have already heard. There is no doubt that more of these will come, if we fail to find a solution to this controversy.

Maybe, these false accusations and imputations will be rectified in time. Maybe, the truth will prevail sooner or later. But it will take time, Mr. President. Meanwhile, the injustice shall have been committed.

I cannot help but remember the grave injustice committed by our very own people against Senator Laurel and other Filipino leaders who, in order to serve our country, agreed to serve with the Japanese.

That was later rectified, Mr. President. The very people who once condemned these leaders, were the ones who cleared them and recognized their true motives and their patriotism.

But it took time. Meanwhile, the injustice was done; and it is hard to avoid that a certain amount of bitterness remains.

Let us try to avoid any repetition of similar situations with all the power in our command.

And finally, Mr. President, let us summon all our wisdom, all our prudence and good counsel, to preserve the harmony between the two great institutions that are both dear to our Filipino people: our country and our Church.

I also appeal to our people, particularly to the gentlemen of the press and radio and to others who have the means at their command to influence public opinion, to cooperate in the attainment of this objective.

Let us not be surprised, much less discouraged, that once in a while there should seem to be a conflict between Church and Civil Authorities. Our Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, was confronted with such a seeming conflict. Permit me to read to you the scriptural passage on this point.

"After this the Pharises withdrew, and plotted together, to make him betray himself in his talk. And they sent their own disciples to him, with those who were of Herod's party, and said, Master, we know very well that thou art sincere, and teachest in all sincerity the way of God; that thou holdest no one in awe, making no distinction between man and man; tell us, then, is it right to pay tribute to Caesar, or not? Jesus saw their malice; Hypocrites, he said, why do you thus put me to test? Show me the coinage in which the tribute is paid. So they brought him a silver piece, and he asked them, whose is this likeness? Whose name is inscribed on it? Caesar's they said: whereupon he answered, Why then, give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. And they went away and left him in peace, full of admiration at his words." (Matthew, 22, 15-22)

I believe, Mr. President, that Our Lord handed down to us this example in His own life, in order to show us that, if this could happen to Him, who is God, it will happen to us, who are mere human beings.

But, in His infinite kindness, He also showed us the general formula for solving problems such as this: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

On the basis of this formula, and with humility and goodwill on both sides, I have no doubt that we can find a solution to this problem.

And so, Mr. President, I request approval of my humble suggestion as stated in my letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Education, which I have already read.

De conformidad con la petición presentada por el Senador Rodrigo y aprobada por el Senado, a continuación se inserta la Carta Pastoral de la Jerarquía Católica como parte de sus manifestaciones en relación con el Proyecto de Ley No. 438 del Senado.

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HIERARCHY
ON THE

NOVELS OF DR. JOSE RIZAL
NOLI ME TANGERE AND EL FILIBUSTERISMO

1. Among the many illustrious Filipinos who have distinguished themselves in the service of their country, the highest place of honor belongs to Dr. Jose Rizal. And

justly so; for Rizal possessed to an eminent degree those virtues which together make up true patriotism. He loved his country not in word alone but in deed. He devoted his time, his energies and the resources of his brilliant mind to dispelling the ignorance and apathy of his people, and combating the injustices and inequalities under which they labored. When these salutary activities fell under the suspicion of the colonial government and he was condemned to death as a rebel, he generously offered his blood for the welfare of his country.

2. But although his love for his country was great, it was not a blind, unreflecting love. It was not the inordinate love which so often passes for patriotism, whereby one regards one's native country as perfect beyond criticism, and attributes all its ills to the tyranny and greed of strangers. Rizal's balance of judgment saved him from this pernicious error. He clearly saw and boldly proclaimed the fact that while the Filipino people suffered from colonial rule, they were as much the victims of their own vices and defects. In dedicating his novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, to his beloved country, he addressed her as follows:

Desiring your health which is also ours, and seeking the best means of restoring it, I shall do with you what the ancients did with *their sick*; they brought them to the steps of the temple that all who came to invoke the god might stop to suggest a remedy . . . I shall lift a portion of the bandage which hides *the disease*, sacrificing all to the truth, even *my personal pride*, for as a son of yours I am not exempt from *your defects and weaknesses*.¹

Thus, while Rizal was fearless in denouncing the evils of the colonial administration of his time, he was no less fearless in pointing out to his countrymen "our own mistakes, our own vices, our supine and culpable acquiescence to these evils."²

3. It will not be out of place in this connection to suggest that the affectionate realism with which Rizal regarded his country and his people should characterize our own attitude towards Rizal himself. The fact that he is our national hero by no means obliges us to approve of all that he said or did. As one of our illustrious senators said on the floor of the Senate a few days ago: "I do not say that Rizal did not make any mistake, did not commit any error in judgment or in the appreciation or in the presentation of facts or in the criticism which he had launched. You can always find passages in his works that are perhaps objectionable. And if I were to be given time and opportunity, to discuss page by page these different passages I could say that I will also differ from many statements which he made."³ We believe that those who try to make Rizal out as a paragon of all virtues with no human failings do him a great disservice; for by departing so obviously from the truth, they only succeed in casting doubt on the very real and truly great qualities which he did possess.

Let us therefore by all means honor Rizal, but for the right reasons: first of all, for his unselfish devotion to his country, and secondly, for the depth of insight with which he examined and analyzed our national problems. Rising above petty passions and prejudices, he disengaged from the concrete complexities of his time ideas regarding

1. *Noli Me Tangere* (Nueva Era ed.) p. (3)

2. Letter to a Friend, March, 1887; in W. E. Retana, *Vida y Escritos del Dr. José Rizal*. (Madrid, 1907), p. 126.

3. Dr. Laurel, Speech of Sponsorship of Sen. Bill No. 438.

the function of government, the wellbeing of society, the dignity of the individual, the necessity of popular education, the native traits and possibilities of the Filipino character, and the special mission and destiny of our nation under God; ideas which, because of their universal and timeless validity are applicable even in our own times. Would that our leaders of today and our people as a whole might put into practice more faithfully the patriotic teachings contained in the writings of our national hero!

But men cannot put into practice teachings with which they have but slight acquaintance and which they do not thoroughly and rightly understand. Hence we cannot but approve and applaud in principle the desire of many that the writings of Rizal be more widely circulated and read, and even introduced as reading matter in the public and private schools of the nation. We can think of no more effective means, after the formal teaching of religion, to develop in our youth a sane and constructive nationalism and the civic virtue, so necessary in our times, of subordinating individual ambitions to the common good.

Nevertheless, in this our respect and esteem for Rizal and his work, we ought to follow the affectionate *realism* he taught us in the love he had for his country. We need not be blind to his errors. To err is human. He had his human failings like the rest of us; and while he showed great wisdom and *courage in returning to the true Faith* before his death, we cannot ignore the fact that he did lapse from that faith. The historic fact of his retraction shows that he himself, in conscience, in the face of death, did not approve of each and every one of his previous statements.

4. Some of Rizal's most cogent insights into the political and social order are undoubtedly contained in his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Certainly our outstanding national hero wrote these books inspired by a most ardent love for our country whose "dear image presented itself showing a social cancer,"⁴ which he dared to expose in the hope of finding a remedy for it.

We wish to make it clear that insofar as these novels give expression to our people's desire for political freedom and a social order based on justice they are not at variance with the practical applications of Catholic doctrine to the exigencies of the social milieu as it existed at the time. The Catholic Church in itself, as distinguished from the human and fallible individuals who compose it, is not, never has been, and never will be arrayed against the legitimate political and social aspirations of any people. If it were, it should not be what it is called: *Catholic*, that is, universal. Hence it follows that the clear and even forceful expression of such aspirations can never be injurious to the Catholic Church. The aims and objectives of that Church, being supernatural, are also supranational; between them and national aims, provided these are in conformity with the principles of morality, no conflict is possible.

Moreover, the same God who created nature, restored it by grace, to Him both the supernatural and the natural order owe their being: hence, as Pope Leo XIII says, "If we would judge rightly, the supernatural love of the Church and the natural love of country are twin loves sprung from the same eternal source, since the author and cause of both is God. Whence it follows that there can be no conflict between these two duties."⁵

We may even go further and assert that history has repeatedly exemplified that the Gospel, which it is the divine mission of the Church to preach and propagate, has for its proper effect to make the individual conscious of his dignity as an image of God and as one who is adopted by our heavenly Father as a filial participant in His own exalted nature. Furthermore, it renders the citizen conscious of his rights and responsibilities within the society which gave him birth and of the freedom, both political and social which is necessary for the exercise of these rights and responsibilities. Thus the Gospel of Christ contributes to the foundation of a true and solid basis for the development of a balanced, dignified and really forceful nationalism. Pope Leo XIII made this clear in no certain terms two years after the publication of the *Noli Me Tangere*:

The Church does not condemn the desire that one's nation should be free from foreign or absolute rule, provided this freedom can be won without injustice. Nor does she reprehend those who wish to bring it about that states should be governed in accordance with their own laws, and the citizens be granted the widest possible scope for increasing their prosperity. The Church has always shown herself a most faithful supporter of legitimate civil liberties.⁶

5. Now, according to Rizal himself, the object of his novels was to expose in terms of fictional narrative the actual evils which then afflicted Philippine society.⁷ This "social cancer" was, in his opinion, largely due to the decadent state of the religious orders and to some practices of the Catholic religion. Hence the larger part of these novels is devoted to castigating disedifying priests and to satirizing what he deemed to be superstitious observances and practices of the Church.

6. In the first place, one ought to observe that these books were written in a period of Rizal's life when he was openly estranged from the Catholic Church to the point of denying Catholic doctrines, deriding Catholic practices and despising Catholic worship. When in May 1889, Dr. Tavera told Rizal in Paris "that he (Tavera) tried to defend him (Rizal) before Father Faura explaining that, in the attack upon the friars, the stone was thrown so high and with such force that it reached religion," Rizal corrected him saying: "This comparison is not quite exact; I wished to throw the missile against the friars; but as they used the ritual and superstitions of a religion as a shield, I had to get rid of that shield in order to wound the enemy that was hiding behind it." Hence, Rizal positively avows that he attacked the Catholic religion, since the *ritual and superstitions* he alludes to were in many instances the sacred acts of Catholic worship and pious practices. Even if it were true that the friars as a whole were making use of religion as a shield for their abuses, it was a mistake to attack the divine religion professed by them. And Rizal himself acknowledged this at the end when he wrote: "I retract with all my heart whatever in my works, writings, publications and conduct has been contrary to my status as a son of the Catholic Church."⁸

7. It is true that in his novels Rizal wrote fiction, not history; fiction, moreover, in the lurid style of the Romantic

4. The Social Cancer (English version of *Noli Me Tangere*, by Charles E. Derbyshire, 2nd ed.), p. lvii.

5. En cycl. "Sapientiae christianae", 10 January 1890; Denziger, *Enchiridion* n. 1936 b.

6. En cycl. "Libertas, praestantissimum", 20 June 1886; *Ibid* n. 1936.

7. In the Letter cited in note 2.

8. R. Palma, *Pride of the Malay Race*, pp. 115-116.

9. J. Cavanna, *Rizal's Unfading Glory*, p. 52.

School. And it is a drawback common to all social novels of this kind that the more effectively they portray the evils against which they are written, the more they tend to give the impression that such evils are *typical*. The implication is fostered that the abuses are not limited to individuals but are applicable to the group; that they are the norm and not the exception. In our case this impression arises not only from the content of the novel itself but also from the expressed intention of the writer himself. In the "Author's Dedication" of *Noli Me Tangere* Rizal said: "I will strive to reproduce thy (my fatherland's) condition faithfully, without discrimination; . . . sacrificing to truth everything . . ." Rizal here patently meant to portray a general condition of his country, not aberrations of individual characters or isolated cases.

Therefore, when in these novels we can hardly find even "one" acceptable religious priest, but practically "all" appear haughty, cruel, morbid, hypocritical, licentious, treacherous, in a word, always hateful in some aspect; when even among the Filipino clergy only "one" Filipino priest, and he as an exception to the others of that time, appears in a noble light;¹⁰ when all good and pious Catholics are pictured as grossly ignorant and ridiculously superstitious: what else would any ordinary reader conclude but that such was the general condition of the whole Catholic Church in the Philippines at that period?

8. We need not deny that there were then particular instances of abuses and superstitious modalities in the practice of religion in the Philippines. There were, of course, sinners among all-too-human Catholics in those times as now. And no one proposes to condone the defects of clerics who may not have exhibited the discipline consonant with their station. Nevertheless, though composed of defective human beings and functioning through their agency, the Catholic Church is of divine origin and is, for this reason, the indefectible source of truth and holiness. In this connection, it may be remarked that God in His infinite wisdom and grace to men, without in any way depriving these stewards of their freedom to be faithful to their gage or to betray their trust. Hence, it is no wonder if in Rizal's time, as in ours, there should have been priests who, like Judas, sold Christ for a handful of silver, or who, like Peter himself, the Prince of the Apostles, in a moment of weakness denied his Lord. Because these disciples were unfaithful, Christ does not cease to be God nor do His teachings cease to be true. Rather, does not the defection of the weaker priests prove the divine indefectibility of a Church that can survive during centuries the decadence incident to the rise and decline of empires and cultures and which sooner or later disintegrates merely human institutions?

To generalize from unworthy particular instances and to condemn all priests is to inflict a great injustice on a multitude of worthy, well-deserving and edifying Catholic priests and religious, Filipinos and foreigners, who lived in the past and of whom there are many examples in our own times.

9. It is true that most of the teachings against the Catholic Faith in the novels are put in the mouths of either "liberal" Catholics of the type of Don Rafael Ibarra, Don Custodio and possibly Elias, or of Catholics who have lost their faith, as Tasio the Philosopher. Such persons existed in the Philippines, and it is obvious that they thought and

spoke as Rizal makes their fictional counterparts think and speak, viz., in terms of anti-Catholic ideas, with jeers at Catholic doctrine, with impieties, etc. If the author would not in any way suggest that these were his own opinions which he proposed to his readers as true, it could be said that he was merely making use of the novelist's right to portray people as they are. But this is not the case. Evidently the author here shares these ideas and offers them to the reader as his considered and approved opinions. One gathers this from the seductive allure with which they are presented because of the favorable light in which snide criticism is set forth, or because of their utterance by noble characters, or on account of their being supported by seemingly unanswerable argument which can in no way be contradicted.

Furthermore, and this is what forbids any possible misinterpretation of the author's mind, there are passages where it is not any more the novels' characters but the author himself who speaks, who makes us understand without cavil that the teachings derogatory to Catholic beliefs and practices are also his own.¹¹

10. In these two novels we find passages *against Catholic dogma and morals*¹² where repeated attacks are made against the Catholic religion in general, against the possibility of miracles, against the doctrine of Purgatory, against the Sacrament of Baptism, against Confession, Communion, Holy Mass, against the doctrine of Indulgences, Church prayers, the Catechism of Christian Doctrine, sermons, sacramentals and books of piety. There are even passages casting doubts on or covering with confusion God's omnipotence, the existence of hell, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and the two natures of Christ.

11. Similarly, we find passages which *disparage divine worship*¹³, especially the veneration of images and relics, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and Saints, the use of scapulars, cords and habits, the praying of rosaries, novenas, ejaculations and indulgenced prayers. Even vocal prayers are included, such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Doxology, the Act of Contrition, and the Angelus. Mass ceremonies, baptismal and exequial rites, worship of the Cross, the use of holy water and candles, processions, bells and even the Sacred Sunday obligations do not escape scorn.

12. We also find passages that *make light of ecclesiastical discipline*,¹⁴ especially in what concerns stole fees,

11. *Noli Me Tangere* (P. Sayo Book Store, Manila, Nueva ed. 1950) pp. 54, 55, 57, 74, 75, 76, 157, 159, 163, 165, 234, 286.

In *El Filibusterismo* (Manila Filatélica, Manila, 1908) pp. 232, 233.

12. *Noli*, *ibid.*, op. cit., against Confession, pp. 26, 183, 191, 231, 232, 233,

277; Baptism, p. 263; Communion, p. 171, 183, Holy Mass, 74, 119, 159,

171, 183; Purgatory, 67-70; Hell, 69-70; Miracles, 178, 258; Catholic

Catechism, 93; Catholic religion, 74, 113, 171, 263, 317; alms to the

Church, 26, 75; Catholic priesthood, 171; Catholic preaching, 162-169,

171, 183; scapulars, cords, blessed habits, 83, 157, 258; books of piety,

231; Indulgences, 74, 82-84, 272; education in Catholic schools, 273-274;

also cf. 74-76; 113, 160, 165, 263, 288.

13. *Noli*, *ibid.*, op. cit., Communion, p. 206, Holy Mass,

In *El Filibusterismo*, *ibid.*, op. cit., Catholic religion, 278; alms to

140, 207, Hell, 139; Miracles, 26-27; Catholic religion, 278; alms to

the Church, 140; Preaching, 206; scapulars, habits, etc. 207; Most

Holy Trinity, God's omnipotence, two natures in Christ, 307, 232.

14. *Noli*, *ibid.*, op. cit., against veneration of image, 32-34, 234,

307; devotion to saints, 54, 307-308; Angelus, 275; Processions, 55,

158, 201-202, Holy Water, 159; Church worship, 159; worship to the

Cross, 220; Church bells, 65; Candles, 74; Novenas, church prayers,

74, 84; Sunday duty, 76.

In *El Filibusterismo*, *ibid.*, op. cit., veneration of images, 75; proces-

sions, 75, 119, 207; Holy Water, 234; Ritual Blessing, 40, 223; Veneration

of relics, 66; Novenas, Church prayers, 110, 207.

14. *Noli*, op. cit., Against excommunications, 191, 200, 214, 252;

stole fees, 26, 74-75; 34; Pope's authority, 55, 98, 182, 189; education

in Catholic schools, 38, 42, 145, 274; Catholic burial, 28, 43, Monasteries

of Nuns, 321, 332;

In *El Filibusterismo*, op. cit., stole fees, 140; education in Catholic

schools, 88, 95, 213; Catholic burial, 62-63, 288.

10. The Reign of Greed (English version of *El Filibusterismo*, by Charles E. Derbyshire, 2nd ed.) pp. 20 & 21.

alms to the Church, alms in suffrages for the dead, authority of the Pope, excommunication, education in Catholic schools, Pontifical privileges, Catholic burial, the organization of nunneries and monasteries, Confraternities, Third Orders, etc.

13. These are the actual findings from a serene and impartial reading of the two novels. Much to our regret then. We feel it our sacred duty to come to the conclusion that these works, as any other of their kind, fall under Can. 1399 of the Code of Canon Law which establishes:

"By the law itself are forbidden

... (2) books of any writers defending heresy or schism, or tending in any way to undermine the very foundations of religion;

... (6) books which attack or ridicule any of the Catholic dogmas, or which defend errors condemned by the Holy See, or which disparage divine worship, or strive to overthrow ecclesiastical discipline, or which have the avowed aim of defaming the ecclesiastical hierarchy or the clerical or religious states;

Evidently, *some*, not all, of the clauses of this law affect clearly the novels we are studying. This is indeed a matter of concern to all of us, dear children, and we are the first to regret that the books that were written by our foremost national hero inspired by the most genuine patriotism, have included such substantial defects in their religious aspect as to render them objectionable reading in such sense that only with due permission obtained from ecclesiastical authority may these books be read by Catholics. This permission, however, is readily granted for a justifiable reason, whenever the person concerned has sufficient knowledge of the Catholic doctrine in question.

This does not mean, however, that each and every portion of the novels falls under this law. Those portions which do not contradict the content and practices of the Catholic Faith are evidently not affected by the law.

14. This being the fact, to make the two novels in question *compulsory reading matter* in our schools, as proposed in the Senate Bill No. 438, is tantamount to forcing our Catholic youth to read doctrinal attacks against their religion without making it *equally obligatory* for them to read the answer to such attacks. Is this being fair to Catholics? It is true that our government allows the teaching of religion in schools. But this does not do away with the unfairness of the proposed law, because while the government would impose the obligation to teach the anti-Catholic side, as contained in the novels, it *merely does not oppose* the study of the Catholic side.

Or will the government in the same manner make compulsory the reading of the Catholic doctrines contradicted in those novels? But in that event would not the principle of separation of Church and State be at once invoked against such remedial reading?

As in the case of a certain biography of Rizal, we see here the same tendency to discriminate against Catholics in this Catholic country. When there is a point of attacking the Catholic position, the government seems to have the right even to spend the people's money in support of the attack, in the name of patriotism, culture, history, or

for any other noble purpose. Should Catholics wish to defend their side in the same manner that it is attacked, the specter of clericalism, bigotry, obscurantism, reaction or the like is invoked, and the wall of "separation of Church and State" is hastily rigged to block our way.

15. Let us be sincere and straight forward. In order to imbue our youth with patriotism, is it necessary to make them read that "confessionals are made so that we may sin?"¹⁵ In order to teach our youth love of country, is it necessary to expose them to jeers at Catholic worship, or to say of stole fees, that "divine justice is not nearly so exacting as human", to say that "novenas, responsories, versicles and prayers have been composed for those who lack original ideas and feelings" and that "the Church does not gratuitously save the beloved souls for you nor does it distribute indulgences without payment?"¹⁶ In order to teach our youth high political and social ideals, is it necessary to make them read that the idea of Purgatory "does not exist in the Old Testament nor in the Gospels; that neither Moses nor Christ made the slightest mention of it; and that the early Christians did not believe in a purgatory?"¹⁷ In order to teach our youth civic virtues, is it necessary to tell our girls that "there is a mystery (or corruption) that is hidden behind the walls of a nunnery; that it is a thousand times better for them to be unhappy in the world than in the cloister; that girls who are beautiful were not born to be brides of Christ?"¹⁸ Does patriotism and nationalism consist in these assertions and many others like these repeated again and again in multifarious ways throughout many of the chapters of these novels? If not, then it is evident that the political and social principles of Rizal are not *inseparable* from those passages which we consider objectionable from the point of view of our Church. Therefore, the statements against the Church contained in the novels should never be considered indispensable parts of the ideals we want to teach our youth.

We view with alarm any obligatory reading of these objectionable passages for they can easily be exploited by those who hate the Church as an opportunity, under the guise of patriotism, under the cloak of the spirit of nationalism, to imbue, with legal sanction, (that is, by law, to be enacted by Catholic legislators) the minds of our youth with ideas which are inimical to their religion.

16. Religious conscience is formed by one's belief in and adherence to the teachings and the laws of one's faith. Catholic conscience, then, is guided by Catholic teachings and the laws of the Catholic Church. We are aware that in our country, there are many baptized Catholics for whom Catholic teachings and laws have little meaning. But on the other hand, there are millions of Filipinos, from all levels of life, from the farmhand to the learned professional and academic professor who take the Church as the guide of their consciences.

Once they become aware that there are portions of the books which are against the teachings and laws of their Church, they will consider contrary to their conscience *compulsory reading of the novels in their entirety*. It will not be sufficient to say that prominent and learned Fili-

15. *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 280.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

pinos consider these portions of the two books as attacks only on some disedifying priests and not as attacks on doctrines of the Church. While these millions of faithful Catholics respect their political leaders and follow their political and social leadership, they (the faithful Catholics) still consider the official pronouncements of their Church as the guide of their faith.

It is in their name that We want to appeal to our legislators not to legislate against the conscience of these millions of their countrymen who have a right to their freedom of conscience as much as anybody else. If we want to teach our youth to love, as Rizal did, the freedom of their countrymen, let us not disregard one of the fundamental freedoms of our people, viz., their freedom of conscience.

17. There is a serious danger here of confusing the issues: patriotism and faith. The two issues are so intimately mixed up in Rizal's novels that all our efforts to separate them in this delicate question might be misinterpreted. Were it not because of Our Pastoral duty bids Us forcefully at this moment to speak, We would rather prefer to keep a prudent silence on the matter, as our predecessors did. But since We ought to speak, allow Us to sum up Our mind in the following brief, precise statements, that We offer to you, dear children for your guidance. And We present these to all Filipinos, especially to the law-giving bodies of our Government, for calm study and fair consideration. They are Our expression of the Catholic stand concerning the novels of Dr. Jose Rizal, NOLI ME TANGERE and EL FILIBUSTERISMO:

I. We, the Catholic Philippines Hierarchy, in Our name and in the name of millions of faithful Filipino Catholics, wish on this occasion to restate our unshakable loyalty to our fatherland, as well as to the lawfully constituted authorities of the country.

II. Faithful Catholics wish to be second to none in love and veneration for our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, whose patriotism remains for us a noble inspiration.

III. We assert that he is our greatest patriot and our greatest national hero, not however for what he one day wrote against our religion and which at the end he retracted "with all his heart", but for what he did on behalf of the welfare of our country.

IV. The novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* were doubtlessly written as an expression of Rizal's ardent and generous love for our dear Philippines, and there are beautiful passages in them showing this; and we are in favor of propagating these passages and encouraging our young generation to read and learn them.

V. But unfortunately these novels were written when Dr. Jose Rizal, estranged for a time from our faith and religion, did contradict many of our Christian beliefs.

VI. This in no way implies that we must reject him in order to remain loyal to our faith. It only means that we have to imitate him precisely in what he did when he was about to crown the whole work of his life by sealing it with his blood: we ought to withdraw, as he courageously did in the hour of his supreme sacrifice, "whatever in his works, writings, publications and conduct had been contrary to his status as a son of the Catholic Church."

A dying person's last will is sacred. Taking into account Rizal's last will, we must carry out for him what death prevented him from doing, namely, the withdrawal of all his statements against the Catholic faith.

VII. It is our conviction that to disregard our national hero's last will expressed in his *Retraction* as well as his *Last Farewell*, is, far from revering his memory, bringing it into contempt.

VIII. It is true, as the Explanatory Note to the proposed Bill No. 438 3rd C. R. P. says that "to praise Rizal without taking the trouble to study that which elicits our praises is to be hypocritical." Hence we suggest that a *Rizalian Anthology* be prepared where all the patriotic passages and the social and political philosophy of Rizal not only from these two novels but from all the rest of his writings, letters, poems and speeches be compiled. It is not only in the two novels but also in his other writings are the patriotic teachings of Rizal to be found. In order to compile an Anthology of the kind we suggest, we have already organized a committee which is making the necessary studies.

IX. Our objection then to the Bill proposed is not any objection against our national hero nor against the imparting of patriotic education to our children.

X. Our Constitution (Art. 3, Section 1 (7)), guarantees the free exercise of religion. The Supreme Court of the United States has decided that the American school children belonging to a certain sect cannot be compelled to salute the American flag because said act is offensive to their religious belief. (*West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319, U.S. 624.) On this basis, We believe that to compel Catholic students to read a book which contain passages contradicting their faith constitutes a violation of a Philippine constitutional provision.

XI. We, the Catholic Philippine Hierarchy maintain that these novels do contain teachings contrary to our faith and so, We are opposed to the proposed *compulsory reading in their entirety* of such books in any school in the Philippines where Catholic students may be affected. We cannot permit the eternal salvation of immortal souls, souls for which We are answerable before the throne of Divine Justice, to be compromised for the sake of any human good, no matter how great it may appear to be. "For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?"¹⁹

Given in Manila this 21st day of April in the year of Our Lord, 1956.

Senator LIM. Mr. President, will the gentleman please yield to just a few questions?

EL PRESIDENTE INTERINO. El orador puede contestar si le place.

Senator RODRIGO. With pleasure.

Senator LIM. Am I to understand now from the gentleman from Bulacán that according to the Philippine Catholic hierarchy, there is no objection to the approval of this bill, or there would be no

19. Matthew, xvi, 26.

objection to the approval of the bill if the objectionable features which touch the Catholic religion would be eliminated from the compulsory reading of these two novels? I am asking this question because I have not had time to read the pastoral letter. It was only published this morning and it is quite long.

Senator RODRIGO. Mr. President and gentleman from Zamboanga, I would want to refrain from answering that question.

Senator LIM. But as to that portion read by Your Honor quoting part of the pastoral letter, it would appear from the words that you read verbatim that the Catholic hierarchy, or Church hierarchy better stated, because I would like to be known that I am a Catholic also, would not object to this bill if the objectionable features, particularly those parts of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo* touching on our religion, would be eliminated from the compulsory reading feature of the bill.

Senator RODRIGO. Well, that seems to be my understanding also. However, as I said, I would not want to make a direct answer because Your Honor is asking me about the meaning of something that the hierarchy has said. Now, precisely, I am suggesting and I am requesting that duly authorized representatives of the hierarchy, men who can talk authoritatively for the hierarchy, be invited. Whatever I say now will be my own personal opinion. It will not reflect the position of the hierarchy. So, the best thing to do is for us to refrain from the discussion of this until there can be that closed door round-table conference.

Senator LIM. Your Honor, without having had a chance to read that pastoral letter, I, myself, for my own personal reasons, am quite alarmed because the only chance by which our Church could make me change my mind about this bill, because I signed the bill as co-author, is on the compulsory nature of the bill. And I am alarmed, as I said, because if that is the stand of the Catholic hierarchy, right now I have no doubts anymore that I would vote for this bill, because as far as my religion and your religion, our religion is concerned, regarding the attacks, if we can call them attacks, of the late Dr. Rizal against our beloved Church, I am not worried about that—that Rizal tried to ridicule, for example, our theory, our belief that there is Purgatory in which I believe, that he tried to ridicule the indulgences. Father Cavanna said that Dr. Rizal has painted the indulgences in a comical manner because some old ladies were saying that according to the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo* particularly the *Noli Me*

Tangere, one woman said, "I still have 2,753 days of indulgence and I think I have already covered that up in my prayers this morning, and I will give some to you." Father Cavanna said that some portions of the two books are comical. Precisely, he has reinforced the argument that these charges of Dr. Rizal against our religion will not be taken seriously by our youth, because if they are comical, nobody will take them seriously and, besides, I have faith and confidence in the weapons of our Church to combat such statements of ridicule. Lord Jesus Christ said, if Your Honor will permit me, before he left the earth, that the Holy Ghost, which is one of the persons in the Holy Trinity, one of the mysteries of our faith, composed of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, would be sent here to guide and protect our Church from enemies within and without and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Even before Dr. Rizal was born and all through contemporary history, even up to now and I am sure forever, the non-Catholics are going to lambast our Church and ridicule not only the matter of Purgatory but also the matter about the virginity of the Virgin Mary, about the confessional, about the granting of indulgences and many others, about the other sacraments such as baptism where they say we should not baptize a child who has no chance to object, whether or not the child would like to be baptized or not, because then he is just a baby of one or two months. As far as I am concerned, religion being a matter of faith, a believer in religion, does not have to reason out. Yours is not to reason out; yours is but to believe, and no matter what Rizal and other detractors of the Church may say, no matter what abuses the friars, during the time of Rizal, may have committed, I believe that somehow the spirit of the Catholic religion, the Holy Spirit shall see to it that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against our Church. Rizal was not a theologian, was not a padre and not an expert on religion, and the students will not take seriously these attacks against our Church. And so because of that, personally, I believe that we should read these two novels in their unexpurgated forms. But as far as I am concerned, as I told you, I have been having doubts, because although I was able to be present in the public hearings only once, every night I have been listening to the rebroadcasts of said public hearings where many witnesses testified pro and con, and I would like to confess that I wish to be enlightened on the aspect of compulsion of this bill. If that is the only fear, that our Catholic Church would lose many of its faithfuls, or that its progress in

its attempt to spread the Catholic religion would be impeded in the sense that the statements of Rizal in his two novels would affect the minds of the students, I am not worried about that because our Church has enough weapons to counteract that. It has enough weapons to be able to withstand the attacks not only of Dr. Rizal but of perhaps wiser men than Dr. Rizal in matters of religion, such as some of our Protestant ministers, because while Rizal could not be equalled in patriotism, for he proved it by giving his own blood and life, at least in matters of religion, much as I love Rizal, I know that he was just an ordinary layman. He knew religion perhaps from a few years' study at the Ateneo. I am not worried, I am not afraid at all. My Church is very strong. It is not going to be crushed by just a few comments from Dr. Rizal. The only chance of my changing my mind about this bill, and my only worry, is the debatable point of the compulsory reading of these two novels, and if I could be shown and convinced that the compulsory nature should not be included in this bill, then I might still change my mind; but as far as the attacks of Dr. Rizal on the Church is concerned, I am not worried about that, frankly speaking. I have a strong faith in the church, from the infallibility of the Pope down to the cardinals, the archbishops, the bishops and the priests. The attacks of Dr. Rizal on the church are but a small drop in the bucket compared to the attacks and sermons of non-Catholic ministers and even non-Christian priests.

My question now is, is Your Honor ready to present amendments to show that the compulsory nature of the bill is objectionable?

Senator RODRIGO. I started to say that I wanted to refrain from discussing the merits of the bill, and if the gentleman will allow me to explain my reasons without interruption, I will do so.

First of all, this is not the time to discuss the merits of the bill. The bill is not under consideration by the Senate this morning. This is only a privilege speech. I did not touch upon the merits of the bill, and I stated very definitely that I would not touch on the merits of the bill. There will be a time for discussion. I want to assure the gentleman from Zamboanga that I can explain those points. I think I will have very valid arguments, but I will wait for the proper time, and when that comes, then I shall explain those points.

My second reason is, I would be inconsistent with my very stand this morning if I were to enter into disputations right now, because precisely my stand now is to calm down, to have a sort of moratorium on the heated discussions of this bill

in order to silently seek an understanding with the members of the hierarchy. And so, even at the risk of people here saying that I was not able to answer the questions and arguments of the gentleman from Zamboanga, I am willing to take that risk because I think it is not prudent to enter into any heated discussion.

Senator LIM. I would not say that the gentleman from Bulacán was not able to answer my question. Let my remarks be perhaps a call of attention to our Catholic hierarchy that in their pastoral letter, I assume it to be so because of the portions that the gentleman read, they don't seem to be against the bill even with its compulsory nature if the compulsory reading of the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo* would not be applicable to the objectionable features thereof. Because if the Catholic hierarchy will not later on or subsequently object to the bill because it is unconstitutional in the sense that no one should be compelled to read or not to read anything, if it is only the fear of our priests or even of the hierarchy of the Philippines that the statements in these two books against the church will impede the progress of their religion, I am not worried about that. As I already stated, our Catholic church is much bigger than any individual, bigger even than our great Malayan hero, our beloved Dr. Rizal.

I thank the gentleman.

Senator RODRIGO. Thank you very much.

Senator ALONTO. Mr. President, will the gentleman yield?

EL PRESIDENTE INTERINO. El caballero de Bulacán, puede contestar si le place.

Senator RODRIGO. With pleasure.

Senator ALONTO. Frankly, I somewhat hesitate to take the floor in asking a few questions of the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán because I might be misunderstood, as he claims to be misunderstood. But precisely, I would like to ask these questions to clear any doubt from my mind.

I cannot understand the controversy. That is the truth of it, Mr. President. Of course that is understandable, because, as my distinguished colleagues in the Senate call me, I am a non-Christian. So I cannot understand why we are fighting over something which we should not fight over. To my mind we are trying to create a mountain out of a molehill, and that is precisely why I am asking these questions.

My first question is, I would like to be clarified as to the statement of the gentleman from Bulacán, about loyalty or love for God and loyalty or love of country. To me, those are two things which are quite different from each other and do not con-

flict and which to my mind cannot conflict. So I would like to be clarified as to that. Is there any way, is there any instance by which love for God, or loyalty to God, or loyalty to religion, or loyalty to church for that matter, can conflict with that inherent love of a person for his country and his homeland? That is the question I would like to ask first of the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán.

Senator RODRIGO. Well, I agree with the distinguished gentleman from Lanao that there should be and there can be no conflict between these two. In essence, they should be in harmony. But sometimes conflicts are created not because of religion, not because of country, but conflicts are created by men. I will give an example to the gentleman from Lanao.

There is an order by the Department of Education that folk dancing should be compulsorily taken by public school students. But there was a protest from a certain Moro group that folk dancing would be against their religious belief. I am not acquainted with that belief, but that is their belief and I absolutely respect it. Now, as the government insisted, in spite of the protest of this Moro group, in compelling Moro students to take up folk dancing, there came a conflict between religion and government. But the government, in that case, following democratic processes, through our Secretary of Justice, ruled that those Moro students cannot be compelled to take folk dancing.

Senator ALONTO. Well, I agree with you there, but folk dancing does not involve love of country. What I mean is, if there is a conflict between love of country and love of God. That is what I am asking. What is your stand?

Senator RODRIGO. I will give the gentleman an example, although he knows this already as a lawyer. He was my co-graduate in the University of the Philippines. There is that case of Jehovah's witnesses. There is a standing rule in the United States and also in the Philippines that there shall be a flag ceremony in the morning for students in the public schools, and the indispensable part of the flag ceremony is for the students to salute the flag, and the reason for this is precisely to inculcate love of country and nationalism. The members of this religious sect called the Jehovah's witnesses appealed to the government and said that to salute the flag is against their religious conscience because they think that it is included within the prohibition that they should not bow to any graven image, and so they said that if their children are compelled to salute the flag, they would violate their

religious conscience. The Supreme Court of the United States decided that these students cannot be compelled to salute the flag, and through Justice Jackson, if I am not mistaken, the Supreme Court said in substance: "that if there is any fixed constellation in our democratic firmament, it is that it is not within the power of government to fix and decide what shall be orthodox in religion." And so, that is the ruling in the United States. In the Philippines, that is the same ruling by our Secretary of Justice, that Jehovah's witnesses cannot be compelled to salute the Philippine flag no matter how patriotic saluting the flag might be, because it will violate their religious conscience.

Senator ALONTO. Now, let us not prolong the controversy between us, but what the gentleman implies, is that there are cases where there can be a conflict between love of country, and, let us say, religious practices or, as you say, love of God.

Senator RODRIGO. Situations arise and situations have arisen, and situations are still arising.

Senator ALONTO. Well, what would the gentleman like the Senate now to do in case the situation would arise in which there would be a conflict between love of country or nationalism and love of God? In short, the stand of the religious practices in any religious sect or church in this country, how would you like the Senate as a body to act, to resort in favor of the religious practice, or in favor of love of country or nationalism? I would like the gentleman to define his stand.

Senator RODRIGO. That is a very good question, but I think I answered that in my speech; what the Senate is to consider is the side of the men belonging to that religion, and then to call them and to consult them and try to find a *modus vivendi*, common ground, and try to look for a formula which shall be satisfactory to the Senate and, at the same time, not objectionable to this religious group. Now, we should exhaust every means to find that formula before we say: Well, we just decide because we want the Senate to do that. No, we should first exhaust every possible means, use the utmost statesmanship, humanity and good will; get these people and talk to them and let them explain to us, until we can find a meeting ground?

Now, supposing we cannot find a meeting ground? Then follow the general principle, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." In other words, decide first if this is a case or a matter of temporalities, or is it a matter of religion. If it is a matter of temporalities, then the Government is supreme. But if it is a matter of religious faith, then the

Government should not tread into that sanctuary; religious freedom should prevail.

Senator ALONTO. As a matter of fact, I agree with you right there. Supposing in a situation, for example, where you cannot reconcile, that there is absolute controversy, that you have to choose one or the other?

Senator RODRIGO. That has happened in the case of Jehovah's witnesses. There is the law that flag salute is compulsory. The last resort is our Supreme Court. That to salute the flag is compulsory. Jehovah's witnesses protested. They said their children should not be compelled to salute the flag, but the authorities refused to hear their protestations, and so the members of Jehovah's witnesses appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the Supreme Court decided the case in their favor.

Senator ALONTO. Very good. Now, in other words, I am very glad really about your opinion about defending the religion and your religious practices, because that should really be so. The only difference between your opinion and mine is when the religious practice should conflict with my inherent love of country, I think my inherent love of country should prevail, because without my country I cannot practice my religion. If I am, for example, in Russia, I cannot practice my religion. I am glad that I am in the Philippines, because the Philippines gives me a chance to practice my religion. So I defend my country first. So now, why don't we, for example, as you said that there is a belief among your church that, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's," I don't really know why the Catholics are opposed to these books. Because I am not a Catholic, and I happen to be a Moslem, I would not take that as an offense. I do not consider there is anything there which should offend my religious sentiment. As you said give to Ceasar what is Ceasar's and to God what is God's, suppose we give to God what is God's and give to Rizal what is Rizal's? Let us read his books and if there is something that is there against God, let the Catholic priests show in their sermons that there is something wrong in the books of Rizal. Let the people decide which to believe: the priests or Rizal.

Senator RODRIGO. I appreciate the suggestion, but as I said, I am not here to discuss the merits of the bill, so I suggest to the gentleman from Lanao that when this round table conference is held, for him to attend the round table conference and propose that as a compromise. May I just explain one thing. Of course, this is a digression, but this point was raised and it does not even have reference

to the merits of the bill, so I think it would be innocuous, it would be beneficial to discuss this point, and that is the point raised that in case of a real headlong and unavoidable conflict between religion and State, that we should always side with the State. My stand on that point is: not always. I am sure the gentleman knows the story, and a true story, of Socrates, the philosopher of Athens. Socrates was spreading ideas among the youth of Athens which according to Socrates was the truth and so he was charged before the court for a criminal offense for allegedly corrupting the youths of Athens and during the trial of Socrates the prosecutor propounded to him this question. The prosecutor asked him "Supposing that there should be a conflict between Athens and the truth, which would you side? And Socrates hedged in the beginning and he said "I think there can, and there should be no conflict between Athens and the truth." But the prosecutor insisted, "But supposing there should be that conflict, which would you side?" Socrates answered "The truth." And he was executed for that. Another example.

Senator ALONTO. There is a parallel between Rizal and Socrates.

Senator RODRIGO. Yes, Your Honor, that is he was executed but that execution did not bring ignominy, did not bring shame to Socrates like the execution of Rizal which did not bring ignominy and shame to Rizal. As a matter of fact, Rizal himself showed us an example that during his time he opposed the government for what he thought was true. Now, you mentioned Communist Russia and other satellite countries from where we have heard Cardinal Mindzenty. Cardinal Mindzenty in his country which was behind the Iron Curtain was made to choose between his country and his religion which he thought and believed was the truth. Cardinal Mindzenty made a choice of the truth over his country. So there are cases when we have to choose the truth even against our country, and even Rizal in his "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo" was the first to admit that our country and our people are not perfect, that we have many defects, and so if our people are wrong, is it our duty to obey the people just because they are the people? Even if they are the people, we must believe the truth.

Senator ALONTO. That is good. I think Your Honor should be congratulated for that. But supposing you are in this situation. You know you have never felt how it is to be in the cultural minority or may I say in a religious minority.

Senator RODRIGO. Right now I am feeling how it is to be in the minority insofar as public opinion is concerned. That is the way I feel.

Senator ALONTO. Suppose it is the other way around, that the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán belongs to the religious minority, suppose the gentleman is made to choose between his religion and his country as I have on many occasions called upon to do. For example, it is the religious practice of my brother Moslems to be allowed to have several wives, but because the law of my country demands that no polygamy is allowed, Moslem though I am I have to give up that practice. And supposing it is that way with Your Honor and he happened to be in the minority and some other religious groups happened to be the majority and since morality after all is relative and what may be moral to you may not be moral to others. Suppose in this country the majority is Moslem and it imposes a law of nature which is polygamy which to the Catholic Church is immoral and in which you are given the alternative to choose, how will you choose between the country you loved and the religious practice you followed?

Senator RODRIGO. It is not an extreme case. The question is supposing this were a Moslem country and the law was passed allowing polygamy, what would I do as a Catholic? There is no conflict in that because the law of the country only allows polygamy but does not compel polygamy. In other words, if the law says it allows polygamy and I am in the minority in a Moslem country, all that I would do is not to take advantage of the situation. But when it becomes compulsory, then there is conflict between that law and my religion.

Senator ALONTO. In that case, I would like to find out what the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán would do in a situation like that.

Senator RODRIGO. I have already said that in spite of the fact the law allows polygamy I will not have more than one wife. But the law will not punish me for that because the law in your example is permissive and not compulsory.

Senator ALONTO. Your Honor is trying to evade the question. Supposing it is compulsory, what will Your Honor do, will Your Honor follow the law for love of your country?

Senator RODRIGO. I will not follow the law.

Senator ALONTO. That is a case where Your Honor's religious practice conflicts with your love for country.

Senator RODRIGO. It is not only a matter of religious practice, it is a matter of dogma and the way we look at it and I think even the Moslem's creed says that the end of men is not only in this world but what is more important here is eternal salvation, eternal punishment and eternal happiness in the other life. If I were to be in a country

where the law will compel me to practice polygamy but I know that if I submit to that law I will sacrifice my eternal salvation, then I better be like the early Christians who suffered being thrown to the lions instead of losing my chance for eternal happiness.

Senator ALONTO. I am sorry to disagree with the gentleman's statement and I am sorry for the Christians who were thrown to the lions.

Senator RODRIGO. May I answer that? Now, I do not think, Mr. President, and I refused to believe that the gentleman from Lanao had any intention to take lightly one of our basic Christian beliefs.

Senator ALONTO. No, Your Honor, I beg your pardon.

Senator RODRIGO. But I would like to tell the gentleman from Lanao—no, I am not taking offense for what he stated—I just want to explain that according to our belief those Christian martyrs fed to the lions are not to be pitied, they were to be envied like Rizal because those thrown to the lions had finally earned their final goal in life, that is eternal salvation.

Senator ALONTO. I still envy them but I am sorry for them. We are digressing from the point. Let us go back to the main question at issue. We have here a question of choice between something that represents love of country, nationalism, in its grassroots, in its primary consideration because to the Filipinos today and even to the whole world, everything that is Filipino is everything that Rizal stands for. For the information of the gentleman and of the Senate, in Indonesia, a nation that is very much behind in education than our country, these two books of Dr. Rizal, the *Noli Me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo*, are memorized, memorized by elementary pupils even during the occupation by the Dutch of their country, and they were doing it even surreptitiously, even in danger of being punished by the Dutch government that occupied Indonesia. These books are copied and printed and translated in the Indonesian language and they became a Bible of nationalism in Indonesia. They are read in that country by all people, Christians and Moslems, and among the Christians, they are read by the Catholics, by the Protestants, by all Christian sects. All of them in Indonesia love these books of Dr. Rizal and they began the fire which won for them their ultimate independence. Now, here we are in this country, Filipinos who have been proclaiming before the world that we are inspired in our fight for independence by our heroes and Rizal, and as a matter of fact, Dr. Rizal became a national hero, fighting, quarreling about whether to read or not to read these two

books of Rizal wherein everything that he stands for, every idealism that he stands for is embodied. I am certain and I apologize to the gentleman from Bulacán, that I cannot understand, in my humble way, I cannot understand why we should object to the compulsory reading of these books. May be because, as I said, I am a non-Catholic, and may be because I am an extreme nationalist, that if my own religious beliefs, if my own religious practices are in conflict with what I believe is love of country, I choose the latter. That is why may be I cannot understand why we should quarrel about this bill. But nevertheless, in the event that we choose or rather the Senate chooses to approve this bill authored by the distinguished gentleman from Batangas making it compulsory for everybody to read in schools the unexpurgated versions of these two books of Rizal, in the event that this bill becomes a law, does not Your Honor believe—I am asking the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán—as a Filipino first and above all that we have done something that this Senate, this Congress, has done something, if this is signed by the President into law, that is good for our country?

Senator RODRIGO. Well, those are things which, right from the very beginning, should be discussed when this bill is taken up for consideration, and I would like to repeat that I am here on a privilege speech merely to touch on ways and means of finding a solution in order to conserve our national unity. Now, those are arguments, very valid arguments. I would like to hear them when this bill is officially discussed and I shall be willing to answer, and I hope that if this round-table conference is called the gentleman from Lanao will go to that round-table conference to present those arguments. But even before the round-table conference is held, if it will be held at all, and even before this bill is taken into consideration by the Senate, if the gentleman from Lanao, as he says, cannot understand our position and he wants to be enlightened, then as I said, while this is not the proper occasion for that, I am willing to be with the gentleman one whole day just the two of us, and I will explain our side even for one or two days. But in the meantime, this is not the time or occasion to discuss this matter, and we have other matters, more important bills which we should take up.

Senator ALONTO. The gentleman is very kind for having the patience to explain his side to me even for one or two days. But I cannot understand why he does not have the patience to explain it for a few minutes on the floor of this body.

Senator LIM. Mr. President, with the permission of the two gentlemen on the floor, may I ask the gentleman from Lanao just one question.

Senator ALONTO. If the gentleman from Bulacán will yield the floor to me so that the gentleman can ask me his questions, I would be very willing, Mr. President.

El PRESIDENTE INTERINO. La Mesa desea advertir al caballero de Bulacán (Senador Rodrigo) que la hora de privilegio reglamentaria ha terminado y a menos que el Senado dé su consentimiento unánime no podría continuar en el uso de la palabra.

Senator PRIMICIAS. Mr. President, I move that the gentleman from Bulacán be given a few more minutes of the privilege hour.

El PRESIDENTE INTERINO. Hay alguna objeción a la moción? (*Silencio.*) La Mesa no oye ninguna. El caballero de Bulacan puede continuar.

Senator LIM. Will the gentleman from Lanao now yield to just one or two questions on one point?

El PRESIDENTE INTERINO. El caballero puede contestar si le place.

Senator ALONTO. With pleasure.

Senator LIM. This perhaps may be academic, but it may perhaps become interesting because of the fact that I am from Zamboanga which is more or less known as a Moro land because there are many Moslems there. I am most concerned with the conclusion that I am forced to have from your utterances regarding choice between religion and country. Are we to understand that it is so in accordance with the Moslem religion that when there is a headlong conflict between your religion and your country, as a Moslem one must choose his country? Or is that only your personal dogma or belief? This is a very honest and sincere question.

Senator ALONTO. I would like to inform the gentleman from Zamboanga that when I stand here to speak, I do not speak as a representative of the Islam religion. I stand here as representative of the people of the Philippines, as a member of the Senate, and I speak for myself.

Senator LIM. Since I expect Your Honor to know the Moslem religion, can Your Honor inform us if, in accordance with the Moslem religion, when there is a headlong conflict between the Moslem religion and love of country, a Moslem must choose his country?

Senator ALONTO. Frankly, I would like to inform the gentleman from Zamboanga, if he really wants to know what the tenets of the Islam religion are, that it is a theory of individual salvation. So your salvation depends upon yourself. You can either go to Hell or to Paradise, depending upon yourself. It is up to you on how to act. It is up to you on how to save yourself.

Senator LIM. In other words, according to the Moslem religion, a Moslem may either choose his country or his religion in case of a headlong conflict between the two. I would like to know that. Frankly, I have no other motive in asking this question except for purposes of the record in the Senate and for my own satisfaction that it is so in accordance with the Moslem religion that because it is predicated on individual salvation, a Moslem is free to choose either his country or his religion in case of a headlong conflict between the two.

Senator ALONTO. Oh, yes. If your actions are acceptable to God. . .

Senator LIM. Just one final question. I remember Your Honor said a while ago that in case of polygamy, for example, you have to make a choice between your country and polygamy which is allowed by your religion. Is it not so that you have to abide by Philippine laws because otherwise if you marry more than once you have to go to jail?

Senator ALONTO. That is correct, in spite of the fact that polygamy is permitted under the Islam religion and because that is only practising publicly what others are practising secretly.

Senator LIM. That is beside the point. That is really beside the point. My question only is: Is it true that it is not the Moslems who choose not to practise polygamy, but that they are compelled by Philippine laws not to marry more than one; otherwise it will become a crime which must be prosecuted and the violators must go to jail?

Senator ALONTO. Believe me, that is one of the proofs how the Moslems in this country love their country; otherwise since there is a law prohibiting them to practice what is allowed by their religion, if not for love of country, there will be repercussions.

Senator LIM. There is no conflict there. My point is that perhaps it is not the Moslems choice to prefer his country to his religion, but perhaps in this particular case, he is compelled not to marry more than one because our bigamy laws apply to Christians and Moslems alike.

Senator ALONTO. I do not think that compulsion has got anything to do with their following the law.

Senator LIM. Well, I am through, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

Senator ALONTO. Thank you also. Mr. President, I think that other members of the Senate would like to take the floor.

Senator RECTO. Mr. President, will the gentleman from Bulacán yield?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield if he so desires.

Senator RODRIGO. With pleasure.

Senator RECTO. In view of the fact that I do not wish to deviate from the text of the beautiful speech delivered here by the gentleman from Bulacán, in formulating my questions, may I know whether the gentleman will yield to these questions some time after I have been furnished by the Secretary of the Senate with a copy of his speech?

Senator RODRIGO. Certainly.

Senator RECTO. Some other day, in view also of the advanced hour.

Senator RODRIGO. Yes.

Senator RECTO. Now, will the gentleman permit me to make a question which has to do not exactly with his statements in the course of his address but with a statement he made in the course of his answers to the interpellation of the gentleman from Lanao?

Senator RODRIGO. Certainly.

Senator RECTO. In connection with the Jehovah Witnesses case . . .

Senator RODRIGO. Yes.

Senator RECTO. Does the gentleman remember and will he have any objection to repeat for the benefit of the Senate the fundamental pronouncement made in said decision by the Supreme Court of the United States and which fundamental pronouncement was made the basis of the legal or constitutional ruling in the case?

Senator RODRIGO. Well, if I remember right—I did not make a thorough restudy of that case yet because I am reserving my study of that when this bill is actually discussed and as a matter of fact the gentleman himself said that that did not come up in my speech, that came up only during the interpellation—however, if I remember right, the ruling in that case is that if the regulation compelling students to salute the American flag is a violation of the religious conscience of those students according to their creed in their sect, the Jehovah Witnesses, then the government cannot and should not compel them to salute.

Senator RECTO. The statement as reproduced by the gentleman is hypothetical or conditional. The pronouncement I mean was an assertion, a pronouncement by the Supreme Court.

Senator RODRIGO. Yes.

Senator RECTO. If the gentleman will allow me to refresh his memory, may I say that what the Supreme Court of the United States said about the meaning of the salute to the flag was that that was a pledge of allegiance to what everything that flag symbolized?

Senator RODRIGO. I do not remember that portion.

Senator RECTO. Well, that is there. Now, does this bill compel the students or the professors of public schools and private schools to pledge allegiance to the teachings and opinions of Rizal, or does it make only compulsory the reading of his books so that both professors and students can make up their mind whether they will agree with Rizal or disagree with him?

Senator RODRIGO. It does not; this bill under consideration does not require allegiance.

Senator RECTO. Yes.

Senator RODRIGO. But may I continue. The basis to my mind of the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court in the case of Jehovah Witnesses was not primarily and physically on the fact that salute to the flag is oath of allegiance . . .

Senator RECTO. Not oath, I did not say oath, pledge or assertion of allegiance.

Senator RODRIGO. But the fundamental premise is that that salute to the flag, whatever it might mean, is against the religious conscience of the Jehovah Witnesses.

Senator RECTO. What the Supreme Court said was that the salute to the flag plus the pledge that is recited during the salute were an assertion of allegiance.

Senator RODRIGO. Now, how can we explain the opinion of our own Secretary of Justice that folk dancing, which is not a pledge of allegiance, cannot be compelled to Moro students because it violates their religion?

Senator RECTO. Folk dancing?

Senator RODRIGO. Yes.

Senator RECTO. But what does that have to do with this?

Senator RODRIGO. Well, because according to the gentleman, in the case of the flag salute the students cannot be compelled.

Senator RECTO. The opinion of the Secretary of Justice is not the opinion of the Supreme Court, it is not even the opinion of the members of the Supreme Court.

Senator RODRIGO. Yes, that is right, but as long as there is no other opinion to the contrary, I think that we should follow and heed the opinion of our Secretary of Justice.

Senator RECTO. What about the separation of powers? What about our own opinion as legislators? Does the gentleman believe that we should yield our opinion to the Executive or to a member of the Executive Department?

Senator RODRIGO. I would not yield to any opinion, but at the same time these opinions which are well studied should have advisory effect.

Senator RECTO. Does the gentleman believe that he can rest his stand regarding the alleged unconstitutionality of this bill, on that opinion of the Secretary of Justice on folk dancing?

Senator RODRIGO. I do not say that, and I wish to inform the gentleman from Batangas that I am not here arguing for the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of this bill. No. What I am proposing precisely is a meeting, a round-table conference, in order to be able to thresh out this matter.

Senator RECTO. That is what I understood from the gentleman when I heard him invoking the decision on the Jehovah Witnesses' case, and if my understanding was not correct then and the gentleman believes that he does not have necessarily to rest his stand on the validity of that decision . . .

Senator RODRIGO. No. As a matter of fact, I want to announce that the decision on the Jehovah Witnesses' case is not even a decision of the Philippine Supreme Court; it is a decision of the U. S. Supreme Court . . .

Senator RECTO. I am glad to hear that.

Senator RODRIGO. . . . and we are an independent country, we do not have to follow the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court. But at the same time we can learn, in the course of our study, from the decisions of the U. S. Supreme Court which, after all, is considered the cradle of democracy.

Senator RECTO. The gentleman admits that our own Supreme Court has not made a pronouncement on this case.

Senator RODRIGO. That is a fact.

Senator RECTO. Now, coming to another matter. The gentleman read some news item from the "Manila Times" about a dispatch coming from Iloilo to the effect that a priest . . . what does it say? I do not want to misquote.

Senator RODRIGO. It says in the subhead on page 1, front page of this "Manila Times" of today, April 23, 1956: "Iloilo Catholics see Reds in move;" then under that, "Iloilo Catholics. Iloilo City, April 22.—Catholic church leaders in the Jaro archdiocese declared today they see a Red hand in the attempt to misrepresent Rizal as an anti-Catholic . . .

Senator RECTO. So the Red hand is behind those who are attacking Rizal as anti-Catholic.

Senator RODRIGO. How is that?

Senator RECTO. That is according to the dispatch that a Red hand is behind those who are attacking Rizal, and they are anti-Catholics.

Senator RODRIGO. But who is attacking Rizal?

Senator RECTO. That is not my statement. That is the statement of the dispatch.

Senator RODRIGO. If that is the statement of the dispatch, then I completely disagree with that dis-

patch. As a matter of fact, I said in my speech that I refused to believe that.

Senator RECTO. That is all, and thanks to the gentleman.

Senator TAÑADA. Mr. President, will the gentleman yield?

The Acting PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield if he so desires.

Senator RODRIGO. With pleasure.

Senator TAÑADA. I am not going to question the gentleman from Bulacán on the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of Barnett regarding the salute to the American flag, because I don't think this is the time to discuss the merits of the case. First, I would like to congratulate him for his nice speech, and I would like to join him in his request for a round table conference, because there is nothing like a free discussion of any subject especially if the subject is an important one like this. However, I would like to request the gentleman from Bulacán to modify his request in that the round table conference be not held behind closed doors. Let the round table conference be held in public like the one we are conducting now in connection with this bill, because it is to the interest of all the people that the manifestations therein to be made are known by them first-hand, not from reports gathered from the newspapers. I believe that whatever incident that might have arisen in the hearings held in the last few days could be avoided, whereas a round-table conference behind closed doors, I think, is not democratic, so what do you say if we hold that round-table conference in public because, after all, this is a subject which is of paramount interest to the people, and if our people are not interested to express their views in the conference, let them do so in public, even at the expense of his being ridiculed even like the way you think. What is the reason for a round-table conference behind closed doors? Let us make it open.

Senator RODRIGO. The gentleman will agree with this plan which occurs just now to me which is the reason why I suggested a closed-door conference. I see the point of the gentleman. But what about this compromise plan: hold the conference with members of the press and radio and with tape recording, so that after the conference the people will hear everything that is said, and the press and the radio will be there to cover the conference? The reason why I want to avoid this public hearing is, perhaps, there are only a very small portion of our people present in our public hearing, maybe 50 people present. But at the same time, there is that thing that we want to avoid, that passion,

that booing and clapping and cheering. If the gentleman were only present at the public hearing that we held, especially when the hearing came to the second day, and the third day, the gentleman himself will agree that the better part of valor is prudence. Now, without in any way digressing from the democratic feature, we can have this conference with all newspapermen present to make coverage, tape recording and even a light show over the radio, but let us avoid any incident which, instead of solving the problem, might aggravate it.

Senator TAÑADA. I am sorry I cannot agree with that compromise suggestion of my colleague, the distinguished gentleman from Bulacán, because to adopt the closed-door conference is not even a conference as suggested by him in his compromise proposal which, in effect, implied, if not expressly, admits that we Filipinos have not yet reached that stage when we can discuss really and openly important subjects like the one confronting us. If there are unruly individuals in the public hearing, let the chairman of the conference order their exclusion, but to hold a conference behind closed doors is to admit, that we are not yet prepared for truly democratic processes. So I am with you in your request for a conference. As a matter of fact, I believe there is a conference going on right now. You are only underlying the importance of that conference, and I join you 100 per cent; only I suggest that let us not do it behind closed doors, as if the very subject we are discussing is something that the people of the Philippines cannot receive first hand. Suppose we do it and let us just heed the suggestion that a more rigid enforcement of the rules be followed in these conferences? It is even a training for us, Your Honor,—a training for the people who will listen to the speeches and who will be present in the conference, a training for civic mindedness, or both, for those who will appear in the conference. How about it?

Senator RODRIGO. I will leave that to the Senate, although I say when we use prudence in holding a closed-door conference, especially on a matter which touches one of the most sensitive feelings of men, religious feelings, I don't think that a closed-door conference is undemocratic. I am almost sure that even in democratic countries like the United States, there are times when, according to prudence, they also hold closed-door conferences.

However, before I stood up the honorable gentleman from Batangas, Senator Laurel, told me he is agreeable, in accordance with my letter which I submitted to him. Now, I submit this to the Senate; to me I leave it to the wisdom, prudence and sagacity of the members of this body as to the best and most effective procedure.

Senator TAÑADA. I think Your Honor will agree, that if we hold this conference behind closed doors, and I am addressing my remarks to the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Education, then the discussion on the merits of the bill in this hall, must necessarily be held behind closed doors.

Senator RODRIGO. I have a suggestion, gentleman from Quezon. Would you agree to leaving the decision on the procedure to be followed to the Committee on Education?

Senator TAÑADA. You have submitted it to this body!

Senator RODRIGO. Yes, I am submitting it to this body.

Senator TAÑADA. Personally, it would be more democratic to let the body decide whether this conference would be held behind closed doors or not.

Senator RODRIGO. That is precisely what I said. I am announcing that I would rather that matter be decided by the body itself. I agree with that. Let this body decide.

Senator TAÑADA. Thank you.

Senator SABIDO. Mr. President, will the gentleman yield to a question?

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman may yield, if he wishes.

Senator RODRIGO. Certainly, with pleasure to the gentleman from Albay.

Senator SABIDO. I listened religiously to the gentleman's brilliant speech and I wish to join the distinguished gentleman from Quezon in congratulating the gentleman. But I just want to know something from the gentleman if he does not mind to give me that information. It was published in the newspapers and I believe I heard the gentleman state that he does not object to the enactment of the bill but he believes it was necessary that the unexpurgated text of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* should contain certain footnotes explanatory of certain passages thereof which require explanation. Is that correct, gentleman from Bulacán?

Senator RODRIGO. Almost entirely correct, except that my statement to the gentleman of the press was this: I agree with the spirit and objective of the bill. However, I said we have to study certain aspects and clarify certain aspects and following my policy to look for any solution I made a suggestion to the effect that why not adopt the unexpurgated edition with proper footnotes prepared by church authorities? That was my personal suggestion. However, when the pastoral letter came out, it seems likely my suggestion was not followed and I do not mind announcing here that I proposed the suggestion to one, two or three members of the

hierarchy. However, that is my personal suggestion.

Senator SABIDO. And that continues to be the personal belief of the gentleman from Bulacán, that with such formula we can avoid the gloomy picture that the gentleman from Bulacán has masterfully made for us of the situation?

Senator RODRIGO. If out of that formula these books can no longer be considered coming under Canon Law 1399, then I stand for that. As a matter of fact, up to now I am trying my humble best to lay down this formula to both sides. I hope it will be accepted in the round table conference. That is one of the formulae that I personally as member of the Committee on Education will propose.

Senator SABIDO. Do I understand then that what I have stated and corroborated by the gentleman from Bulacán represents also his personal opinion?

Senator RODRIGO. Yes, Your Honor.

Senator SABIDO. Now, considering, gentleman from Bulacán, that the sponsor of this measure, the distinguished gentleman from Batangas, made it very, very clear that there is nothing in the bill which forbids anyone to comment on the contents thereof; that in reality if your opinion is followed, there is no conflict at all; considering, I repeat, that in answering the questions of the gentleman from Quezon the gentleman from Batangas made it very clear that there is nothing in the bill which will preclude or forbid anybody from commenting on the contents thereof. If Your Honor's opinion is followed, there will be no conflict at all.

Senator RODRIGO. I would like to clarify my suggestion, because when the public hearings were held, the gentleman from Batangas stated his understanding of my proposal and I would like to state that the understanding by the gentleman from Batangas is not exactly in accordance with my understanding. During the public hearings the gentleman from Batangas had occasion to state that my suggestion was this: to allow the reading of the books to be made compulsory but in Catholic schools allow comments and annotations or footnotes. That is not the real meaning of my suggestion. The real meaning of my suggestion is this: that all students whether they be in the public or private schools who state or through their parents state that the text they want to read is the footnoted edition because that is the edition allowed by the rules of their church if, of course, this will be acceptable to the church, then these students not only in the Catholic schools but also Catholic students in the public schools should be given the right to choose the footnoted edition. But there seems to be a little misunderstanding. However, I stated I still believe

personally that would be a happy solution or at least the basis of a solution and so in this round table conference as I said I am going to propose that again and see if that is going to be accepted or accepted with certain modifications.

Senator SABIDO. So in accordance with the gentleman's opinion he thinks that by such a formula we can avoid all conflicts in relation to this bill?

Senator RODRIGO. When it comes to a matter of discipline within an organization, I am not an expert theologian nor a canon law expert. On matters of faith, I express my opinion, but if the authorities of the church to which I belong decide that my opinion is against canon law, I have to submit to the decision of the church authorities just as I will submit to the decision of the Supreme Court even if that decision happens to be contrary to my stand.

Senator SABIDO. And I believe the gentleman until now has not changed his position in relation to the bill the fact notwithstanding that a pastoral letter has already been published.

Senator RODRIGO. No, as a matter of fact, I studied the pastoral letter, read it very carefully and according to my personal judgment, that pastoral letter does not close the door to a pronouncement later on if they would find it right to make an announcement that footnotes will be made.

Senator SABIDO. So it is the position of the gentleman from Bulacán that those footnotes can be very well read by all the students?

Senator RODRIGO. That is my layman's point of view, but as I said when it comes to religious pronouncements, when it comes to interpretation of the canon law, I will submit as a true Catholic to the decision of the church authorities just as I would submit as a good Filipino to the decision of the Supreme Court.

Senator SABIDO. And the gentleman from Bulacán agrees similarly with me that considering the answer given by the gentleman from Batangas, the sponsor of the bill, to a question propounded by the gentleman from Quezon that there is nothing in the bill which would forbid or preclude anybody from commenting on the content of the books, in reality there is no conflict at all in relation with the proposed bill.

Senator RODRIGO. There seems to be a misunderstanding on that, because that was the way I understood it when the question was propounded on the floor of the Senate and answered by the gentleman from Batangas. But as I said during the public hearing, the gentleman from Batangas made a statement and clarified the way he understood my proposal that these footnotes and explanation will

be allowed only in private Catholic schools, but that the footnoted editions will not be allowed in public schools even for Catholic students. So I am now clarifying my stand, my proposal. My proposal is this: that the footnoted editions, the footnotes to be prepared by the church be allowed or be allowed by law to be as a matter of choice for any student, any Catholic student, irrespective of whether he be in a private school or in a public school.

Senator SABIDO. Which is perfectly permissible in accordance with the answer given by the gentleman from Batangas to the gentleman from Quezon.

Senator RODRIGO. Yes, according to the answer given on the floor of the Senate, that is perfectly permissible, but as I said, during the public hearings I understood that the gentleman from Batangas would limit that. The gentleman from Batangas is here. Why does not Your Honor ask him for clarification?

Senator SABIDO. With this clarification does not the gentleman believe that to a certain extent the gentleman from Lanao was right when he stated that the situation is not really as gloomy as portrayed?

Senator RODRIGO. Yes. If I thought there was no chance, I would not have proposed the round-table conference.

Senator PAREDES. Mr. President, will the gentleman allow me one or two questions?

El PRESIDENTE INTERINO. El orador puede contestar si le place.

Senator RODRIGO. With pleasure.

Senator PAREDES. Thank you. I am trying to reconcile my conscience and my duties, and I would like some advice from Your Honor. Suppose this bill is passed by the Senate and by the lower House and approved by the President, what would Your Honor do? Would Your Honor follow your Carta Pastoral or the law?

Senator RODRIGO. In a case like this, I will follow, and I announced it publicly and considering also other circumstances, I will follow the interpretation by the church of the canon law, and I will give my reasons.

Senator PAREDES. I know Your Honor has given your reasons.

Senator RODRIGO. But they might be misunderstood and I would like to explain them. I have already been misunderstood so many times. I want to explain.

Senator PAREDES. Please.

Senator RODRIGO. First of all, the canon law does not mean an absolute prohibition. It does not mean that my children who are in school cannot read the *Noli Me Tangere* or *El Filibusterismo*. As a mat-

ter of fact, when I was an A.B. student in the Ateneo, I read the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* in Spanish. The canon law simply means that Catholic may not read those books without permission from ecclesiastical authorities and that permission is not hard to get. It is only supervisory, to find out if a boy is ready and equipped to read the books without destroying his faith. As a matter of fact, even if there were no such canon, just my authority over my son as a father, if I think that the government is compelling my son to read a book which I, in conscience as a father, believe can hurt the morals or the faith of my son, I will refuse.

Senator PAREDES. I expected that answer and now this is what bothers me. If Your Honor is to follow your religion or the Carta Pastoral and disobey the law or defy the law, then how can Your Honor expect unity which was the whole subject of your speech? Your Honor wants unity and you want everybody to get together now. But we are assuming that you cannot get them together on this proposition. Your Honor then advises disunity because Your Honor will say: "I follow my religion and leave the law alone". Would not Your Honor feel guilty of having started the division which Your Honor seeks to prevent?

Senator RODRIGO. If this law is passed and there is no reconciliation between the two, I will be put in a situation where I feel guilty either way. If I obey the church and disobey the law, I feel guilty towards the government. On the other hand, if I obey the government and disobey my church, I will feel guilty towards my church. Precisely, that is the reason why before this law or this bill is acted upon, I am pleading for means of reconciling the two sides.

Senator PAREDES. May I therefore presume your position to be this: We must have unity. We will not have unity if we approve the law. Consequently, we should disapprove the law.

Senator RODRIGO. No.

Senator PAREDES. In other words, Your Honor is placing the Senate in a position to follow what you want in order to avoid disunity because everybody must be for unity. There is no question about that. So proposition: We must have unity. Unity is absolutely necessary. Agreed. If we do not approve the law, there will be no disunity because I will not separate from you. Ergo: Therefore, we must follow what Your Honor says.

Senator RODRIGO. No.

Senator PAREDES. That is what is disturbing me because of what you spoke about. How can we

have unity if those who are for unity are trying to impose their will saying that if others do not follow them there will be no unity? I would like to follow but not by imposition. There is a kind of threat there. You say: "You follow us or you are out," and once we are out there is disunity. Will Your Honor consider this sort of a syllogism? And if Your Honor finds a solution, I beg you to please inform me because I, for one, want to find a solution.

Senator RODRIGO. May I explain now. My position is not as the gentleman from Abra pictured it because the way the gentleman from Abra pictured it, my position is to either approve the law or disapprove the law. No. My position is not a matter of black and white, either to approve or disapprove. My position is this—to look for a formula of agreement.

Senator PAREDES. We are with Your Honor in that.

Senator RODRIGO. I did not say we should disapprove entirely the bill because there might be possible amendments or suggestions which might be acceptable.

Senator PAREDES. I agree with Your Honor in that respect. But I cannot be with any man who says, "This is it or we separate", because we know that that is not unity.

Senator RODRIGO. But a situation will arise, gentleman from Abra, where either we disobey the government or we disobey the church. In either way, there will be disunity, and precisely what we are trying to avoid is that situation. We do not want to be in that situation. I am asserting these things frankly because in my case, as I said, as regards my children, if that situation comes which should be avoided, I will take my course like I told Your Honor. But I wish to be frank also to say that there will be many Catholics who will do the other way. They will obey the government and defy the church, something which we should not allow to happen in this country. And so please, let us look for a working formula.

SUSPENSIÓN DE LA SESIÓN

Senator PRIMICIAS. Mr. President, I ask that we suspend the session until this afternoon at five o'clock.

El PRESIDENTE INTERINO. ¿Hay alguna objeción a la mocion? (*Silencio.*) La Mesa no oye ninguna. Se suspende la sesión hasta esta tarde a las 5:00.

Era la 1:00 p.m.

REANUDACIÓN DE LA SESIÓN

Se reanuda la sesión a las 5:50 p.m.