

RECORD OF THE SENATE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1998

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:21 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Marcelo B. Fernan, called the session to order.

The President. The 24th session in the First Regular Session of the 11th Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Juan Flavier.

PRAYER

Senator Flavier.

Our Heavenly Father, may our faithful and loving God guide our hearts in our Senate sessions and fill our lives with gifts of the Holy Spirit.

May God give us strength to be channels of a fuller, more meaningful life, and empower us to invite people to know that life is, indeed, God's wonderful gift for all.

May our hearts be open to the call of God to love others, respond to needs, and help build communities that promote a fuller life for everyone.

As our grateful response to the love of God for each of us, may the grace of God abundantly surround us. May the love of God lead us to serve without counting the cost.

May the fellowship of the Holy Spirit consecrate and bless the weakness of each one of us and of our community.

May God uphold, sustain and accompany us as we offer ourselves to be the light of the world and salt of the earth and give glory to God now and always.

Let it be so.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

The President. The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta ***
Senator Robert Z. Barbers Present

Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon Present
Senator Renato L. *Compañero* Cayetano ... Present
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng ... Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile Present
Senator Juan M. Flavier Present
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona Jr. Present
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan Present
Senator Robert S. Jaworski Present *
Senator Loren B. Legarda-Leviste Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. Present *
Senator Blas F. Ople Present
Senator John Henry R. Osmeña ***
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. Present
Senator Ramon B. Revilla Present
Senator Raul S. Roco **
Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago Present
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III Present
Senator Francisco S. Tatad Present
The President Present

The President. With 18 senators present, there is a quorum.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Drilon. I move that we dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of the previous session and consider it approved.

The President. Is there any objection? [*Silence*] There being none, the motion is approved.

The Secretary will read the Reference of Business.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

BILLS ON FIRST READING

The Secretary. Senate Bill No. 1249, entitled

AN ACT REQUIRING ALL PHARMACEUTICAL DRUG COMPANIES TO PRINT THE SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE OF MEDICINES AND OTHER PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS ON THEIR BOXES OR BOTTLE PADS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Senator Coseteng

- * Arrived after the roll call
- ** On official mission
- *** On official mission but arrived after the roll call

AN ACT ABOLISHING THE PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
(PCGG),

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill No. 359.

The President. To the Calendar for Ordinary Business

The Secretary. Committee Report No. 8, prepared and submitted jointly by the Committees on Environment and Natural Resources; Finance; and Ways and Means on Senate Bill No. 1255 with Senators Flavio, Jaworski, Legarda-Leviste, Honasan, J. Osmeña, Enrile and Aquino-Oreta as authors thereof, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL POLICY, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

recommending its approval in substitution of Senate Bill Nos. 9, 864 and 912.

Sponsor: Senator Honasan

The President. To the Calendar for Ordinary Business.

The Majority Leader is recognized.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR DRILON
(Signatory on the Transmittal of Official
Communications to Senate from Malacañang)

Senator Drilon. Mr. President, before we proceed to the order of the day, allow me to raise certain matters pertaining to our Rules of Procedure governing the transmittal to this Chamber of communications from the Office of the President.

Mr. President, yesterday, in our Order of Business there appeared a letter from the Office of the Executive Secretary, signed by Director Aurora P. Aquino, for the Executive Secretary, transmitting to the Senate for its information and guidance a certified copy of Proclamation No. 21 dated September 23, 1998, which is entitled: Further Amending Proclamation No. 347 Granting Amnesty to Rebels, Insurgents and All Other Persons Who May Have Committed Crimes in Furtherance of Political Ends and Resolution of the Articles of War and Creating the National Amnesty Commission, As Amended.

In the past Congresses, letters of these natures were transmitted to the Senate by the Office of the Executive Secretary, with the enclosed letter of the President requesting the concurrence of the Senate, pursuant to Article VII, Section 19 of the Constitution, which provides that the President shall also have the power to

grant amnesty with the concurrence of the majority of all the members of the Congress.

Proclamation No. 21, Mr. President, requires concurrence by Congress and should have been transmitted for this purpose and not merely for information and guidance.

I am certain that the chairman of the Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, to which committee this proclamation was referred, would so inform the Office of the President of the need to secure the concurrence of Congress for this purpose.

Once again, Mr. President, the Senate has been in receipt of a communication from the Office of the President without a transmittal letter from the Executive Secretary. It will be recalled that on August 5, this Chamber was in receipt of a letter pertaining to the sugar importation, absent of any official transmittal cover from the Executive Secretary.

At times, we receive letters signed by Director Aurora P. Aquino. In other instances, transmittal of communication from the President is done by the PLLO. In one instance, a certified bill was transmitted without any author being identified or the bill number being indicated.

It had been observed that in all previous Congresses, communications from the Office of the Executive Secretary and Office of the President were transmitted by the Office of the Executive Secretary. At present, Mr. President, our Secretariat is having difficulties because so many of the officials simply transmit these communications from the President and we are not certain which transmittals to honor or whether we should honor all of these transmittals.

Mr. President, it is not the business of this Chamber to dictate upon the Office of the President as to who is the officer in that Office of the Executive Secretary that will sign the transmittal or covering letter. All that we should request is that only one official be so designated to sign these letters of transmittal and the Secretary should inform them that this Chamber will not calendar these communications unless it is signed by the officers so designated by the Office of the President to avoid any confusion.

It is in this regard, Mr. President, that we are asking the Senate Secretary to transmit this request to the Office of the President to avoid future misunderstanding.

Senator Tatad. Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Majority Leader. Senator Tatad is recognized.