

RECORD OF THE SENATE

THURSDAY, MAY 17, 1990

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:17 p.m., the Honorable Sotero H. Laurel, Senate President Pro Tempore, called the session to order.

The President Pro Tempore. Binubuksan ang pulong ng Senado.

Pangungunahan tayo sa panalangin ni Senador Jose D. Lina, Jr.

Everybody remained standing for the opening prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Lina.

Lord God, Dear Father, source of true strength and abiding peace, send Your precious spirit upon our land. Upon our people sow the seed of repentance and humility. Upon the nation the seed of peace and reconciliation. Purge and cleanse us of our sins as a nation that we may come to that time of refreshment You have promised to those You love and call Your own. Claim us Lord, as Your children, this we ask in Jesus' mighty Name.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

The President. Babasahin ng Kalihim ang talaan ng mga Senador.

The Secretary.

Senator Heherson T. Alvarez	Present
Senator Edgardo J. Angara	Present
Senator Agapito A. Aquino	Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	Present
Senator Joseph Ejercito Estrada	Present
Senator Neptali A. Gonzales	Present
Senator Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr.	Present
Senator Ernesto F. Herrera	Present
Senator Sotero H. Laurel	Present
Senator Jose D. Lina, Jr.	Present
Senator Ernesto M. Maceda	Present
Senator Orlando S. Mercado	Present
Senator John H. Osmeña	Present
Senator Vicente T. Paterno	Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr.	Present
Senator Santanina T. Rasul	Present
Senator Alberto G. Romulo	Present

Senator Rene A. V. Saguisag	Present
Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani	Present
Senator Mamintal Abdul J. Tamano	Present
Senator Wigberto E. Tañada	Present*
Senator Victor S. Ziga	Present
The President	Present*

The President Pro Tempore. With 21 Senators present, we have a quorum.

The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Guingona. Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the *Journal* of yesterday's session and consider the same as approved.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] The Chair hears none; the *Journal* is approved.

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

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Secretary. Letter from the Secretary of the House of Representatives, dated May 9, 1990, informing the Senate that on May 9, 1990 the House of Representatives approved the Conference Committee Report on the disagreeing votes of House Bill No. 27749, entitled

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PETROLEUM PRICE
STANDBY FUND TO SUPPORT THE OIL PRICE
STABILIZATION FUND (OPSF), AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

The President Pro Tempore. To the Archives.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Secretary. Committee Report No. 1047, submitted by the Committee on Economic Affairs on Senate Bill No. 1178, introduced by Senators Romulo, Tañada and Herrera, entitled

AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 6 OF REPUBLIC
ACT NUMBERED SIXTY-SEVEN HUNDRED
TWENTY-FOUR RELATING TO THE
COMPOSITION OF THE FOREIGN DEBT
COUNCIL,

*Arrived after the roll call

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR MERCADO

Senator Mercado. Mr. President, I vote in favor of the measure, of course, as the Sponsor, and I reserve the right to submit a short written explanation of my vote.

The following is the written explanation of vote of Senator Mercado:

Mr. President.

Senate Bill No. 1314, which I have had the privilege to sponsor, intends to fire up technological application in the rural areas through micro and small industries and technologically sound agricultural application.

We need judicious selection and appropriate utilization of available scientific discoveries and advances using the criteria of productivity, aimed at equitably distributing the benefits of development. I believe, however.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR SAGUISAG

Senator Saguisag. Mr. President, I am voting Yes with reservations. Can I likewise submit a short explanation in writing which I would just want to be attached to the *Record*?

The following is the written explanation of vote of Senator Saguisag:

Mr. President.

I vote Yes with reservations.

Let me quote from a published telegram from Catanduanes Governor Leandro Verceles who said that he "fully agrees that regional branches of national offices be abolished as they are an added layer of bureaucracy. They are unnecessary obstacles to speedy and effective development in the rural areas. Many regional directors have developed a cult of superiority over provincial governors and municipal mayors. Policies and programs of national offices should flow freely to provinces. After all, most national offices have provincial representatives."

I submit that this view is relevant here.

I do not know that what is proposed here is achievable. I do not know that it streamlines the bureaucracy, which in fact, it may Balkanize.

Thank you, Mr. President.

EXPLANATION OF VOTE OF SENATOR SHAHANI

Senator Shahani. Senate Bill No. 1314 is a timely bill, because it ensures access to the advances in science and technology for the people in the provinces, especially in the rural areas.

The transfer of technology is essential in the development of an agro-industrial economy in the Philippines, and these centers, if properly managed and efficiently run, will be the mechanism for such transfer.

I vote Yes, with the understanding that this shall not be another layer of bureaucracy but rather, a mechanism to improve the transfer of science and technology in our country to the rural areas.

BILL ON SECOND READING

Senate Bill No. 335 — Regulating the Practice of Nursing

Senator Guingona. Mr. President, I move that we consider Senate Bill No. 335 as reported out under Committee Report No. 138.

The President Pro Tempore. Consideration of Senate Bill No. 335 is now in order.

With the permission of the Body, the Secretary will read only the title of the bill, without prejudice to inserting in the *Record* the whole text thereof.

The Secretary. Senate Bill No. 335, entitled

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF NURSING IN THE PHILIPPINES.

The following is the full text of Senate Bill No. 335:

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF NURSING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

ARTICLE I. TITLE

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Nursing Act of 1987."

ARTICLE II. DECLARATION OF POLICY

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared to be a policy of the State to assume responsibility for the

protection and improvement of the nursing profession by instituting measures that will result in relevant nursing education, and in humane working conditions, better career prospects and a dignified existence for our nurses.

ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD OF NURSING

SEC. 3. *Name and Composition of the Board.* - There shall be created a Board of Nursing the members of which shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines from a list of twelve nominees who are registered nurses of recognized standing in the Philippines and who possess the qualifications prescribed in Section four of this Act as certified by the accredited national nurses association to the Professional Regulation Commission. The Professional Regulation Commission, which shall be under the administrative supervision of the Office of the President, shall exercise supervision over the Board.

The Board shall be composed of a Chairman and four (4) members.

SEC. 4. *Powers and Duties of the Board.* - The Board shall have the following powers, duties and functions:

(a) Supervise and regulate the practice of the nursing profession;

(b) Describe the subjects in the licensure examination, determine the syllabi of the subjects, and their relative weight, construct the test questions in the licensure examination, score and rate the examination paper, and submit the examination result to the Professional Regulation Commission within the period provided for in the rules of the Commission;

(c) Issue, suspend, or revoke certificates of registration for the practice of nursing;

(d) Study conditions affecting nursing practice in the Philippines and exercise the powers necessary to ensure the maintenance of efficient, ethical, technical, moral and professional standards in the practice of nursing;

(e) Examine the prescribed facilities of universities or colleges seeking permission to open new colleges of nursing or department of nursing education in order to ensure that standards and essential requirements for a qualified dean and faculty and adequate budget are properly complied with. The authorization to open colleges of nursing shall be based upon the favorable written recommendation of both the Board and the representative of the government entity concerned with the granting of permits or authorization;

(f) Investigate violations of this Act. For this purpose it may, through its Chairman, with the approval of the Board, issue summons, subpoena or *subpoena duces tecum* to violators of this Act and witnesses thereof and to compel their attendance by the power of contempt;

(g) Promulgate decisions or adopt measures as may be necessary for the improvement of the nursing practice, for the advancement of the profession and for the proper and full enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Qualifications of Board Members.* - A member of the Board shall:

(a) be a citizen and resident of the Philippines;

(b) be a member in good standing of the accredited national nurses' association;

(c) be a registered nurse and holder of a master's degree in nursing conferred by a college or university duly recognized by the government;

(d) have at least ten (10) years of continuous practice of the profession prior to appointment; and

(e) not have been convicted of any offense involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 6. *Requirement upon Qualification as Member of Board of Nursing.* - Any person who qualifies as a member of the Board shall automatically resign from any teaching position related to basic nursing education. He shall not have any pecuniary interest in, or administrative supervision over any institution offering basic nursing education programs.

SEC. 7. *Term of Office.* - The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years and until their successors shall have been appointed and qualified: *Provided*, That a member of the Board may be reappointed for another term not exceeding three years: *Provided, further*, That in the event only one member of the Board is reappointed, he or she, by virtue of seniority shall automatically become the Chairman of the New Board. However, in case two or more members are reappointed, the best qualified among them, to be determined by all of the New Board, with the concurrence of the Professional Regulation Commission, shall become the new Chairman of the Board: *Provided, finally*, That in case all members of the old board are reappointed, the members of the New Board shall elect the Chairman of the New Board.

Any vacancy in the Board occurring within the term of a member shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term only. Each member of the Board shall take the proper oath of office prior to the performance of his or her duties.

SEC. 8. *Compensation of Board Members.* - The Chairman and members of the Board shall receive as compensation an amount equal to that given the Chairman and members of other government Boards situated under analogous circumstances.

SEC. 9. *Removal of Board Members.* - The President of the Philippines, upon recommendation of the Professional Regulation Commission, may remove any member of the

Board on the following grounds after giving the member concerned an opportunity to defend himself or herself in a proper administrative investigation to be conducted by the Professional Regulation Commission:

- (a) continued neglect of duty or incompetence;
- (b) commission or toleration of irregularities in the examination conducted by the Board;
- (c) unprofessional or dishonorable conduct.

SEC. 10. *Rules and Regulations.* - The Board may, subject to the approval of the Professional Regulation Commission, promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provision of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Records.* - All records of the Board of Nursing, including examination papers, minutes of deliberations, records of administrative cases and investigations and examination results shall be kept by the Professional Regulation Commission under the direct custody of the person designated by the Chairman of the Commission.

SEC. 12. *Examination Required.* - All applicants for license to practice nursing shall be required to pass written examinations.

SEC. 13. *Qualifications of Applicants.* - In order to be admitted to the nursing profession, an applicant must establish to the satisfaction of the Board of Nursing that:

(a) He or she is a citizen of the Philippines, or a citizen or subject of a country which permits Filipino nurses to practice within its territorial limits on the same basis as the subject or citizen of such country: *Provided*, that the requirement for the registration or licensing of nurses in said country are substantially the same as those prescribed in this Act:

(b) He or she is in good health and is of good moral character;

(c) He or she is a holder of bachelors degree in nursing from a college or university duly recognized by the proper government agency.

SEC. 14. *Scope of Examination.* - The scope of the examination for practice of nursing in the Philippines shall be determined by the Board. The Board shall take into consideration the objectives of the nursing curriculum, the broad areas of nursing and other related disciplines and competencies in determining the subjects of examinations.

SEC. 15. *Rating in the Examination.* - In order to pass the examination, an examinee must obtain a weighted general

average rating of at least seventy-five percent (75%) with a rating of at least sixty percent (60%) in all the subjects. An examinee who obtains an average rating of seventy-five percent (75%) or higher but gets a rating below sixty percent (60%) in any given subject must take the examination again, but only in the subject or subjects where she or he rated below sixty percent (60%).

An examinee who, despite the second examinations, fails to obtain at least seventy-five percent (75%) in the subject or subjects repeated, shall no longer be allowed to take the examinations, unless he/she proves to the satisfaction of the Board that he/she has undergone a refresher course consisting in enrollment and the passing of the regular fourth year subjects in a recognized nursing school.

SEC. 16. *Issuance of Certificates.* - A certificate of registration shall be issued to any applicant who passes the examination. Every certificate of registration shall show the full name of the registrant, the serial number, the signatures of members of the Board and the official seal of the Board.

SEC. 17. *Fees for Examination and Registration.* - Applicants for licensure examination and for registration shall pay the prescribed fees set by the Professional Regulation Commission.

SEC. 18. *Registration by Reciprocity.* - Certificates of registration may be issued without examination to nurses registered under the laws of any foreign state or country: *Provided*, That the requirements for the registration or licensing of nurses in said country are substantially the same as those prescribed under this Act: and *Provided, further*, That the laws of such state or country grant the same privileges to registered nurses of the Philippines on the same basis as the subjects or citizens of such foreign state or country.

SEC. 19. *Non-Issuance of Certificates in Certain Cases.* - No person convicted by final judgment in any criminal offense involving moral turpitude or any person guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct, shall be issued a certificate of registration.

The Board shall furnish the applicant a written statement setting forth reasons for its action, which shall be incorporated in the records of the Board.

SEC. 20. *Revocation and Suspension of Certificates.* - The Board shall have the power to revoke or suspend the certificate of registration of a nurse upon any of the following grounds:

- (a) for any of the causes mentioned in the preceding section;
- (b) for unprofessional and unethical conduct;

- (c) for gross incompetence and serious ignorance;
- (d) for malpractice or negligence in the practice of nursing; and
- (e) for the use of fraud, deceit, or false statements in obtaining a certificate of registration.

SEC. 21. *Reissuance of Revoked Certificate and Replacement of Lost Certificate.* - The Board may, for reasons of equity and justice or when the cause for revocation has disappeared or has been cured and corrected, upon proper application therefor and the payment of the required fees, issue another copy of the certificate of registration.

ARTICLE VI. NURSING EDUCATION

SEC. 22. *General Entrance Requirements.* - Applicants desiring to enroll in a nursing course must show evidence of completion of the General Secondary Course and must have passed the National College Entrance Examinations or any of its equivalent with a rating of at least sixty percent (60%).

SEC. 23. *Nursing Education Program.* - The nursing education program shall provide sound academic and professional foundation for the practice of nursing.

SEC. 24. *Learning Experiences.* - The learning experiences required in classroom, hospital, home, community or other health/welfare agency shall adhere strictly to specific requirements embodied in the prescribed curriculum for the nursing course and in the rules, policies, and standards of nursing education.

SEC. 25. *Qualification of Faculty.* - A member of the faculty in a college or school of nursing must:

- (a) Be a Filipino citizen;
- (b) Be a registered nurse in the Philippines;
- (c) Have at least three (3) years of clinical practice in a field of specialization;
- (d) Be a member of good standing in the accredited national nurses association; and
- (e) Be a holder of a master's degree in nursing or other related fields:

Provided, however, That nothing in this Act shall be construed to disqualify those who have already been considered qualified and actually occupying the position before the effectivity of this Act: and *Provided, further,* That those occupying such position before the effectivity of this Act shall be given a period of five (5) years from the date of approval of this Act, within which to qualify under the

provisions hereof: *Provided, finally,* That by the year 2000 all colleges of nursing shall only employ faculty members with a master's degree in Nursing or other related fields.

In addition to the aforementioned qualifications, the dean of a college or school of nursing must have had at least three (3) years experience in teaching and supervision in nursing education, and preferably must have a master's degree in administration and supervision of nursing education programs.

ARTICLE V. NURSING PRACTICE

SEC. 26. *Scope of Nursing Practice.* - A person shall be deemed to be practicing nursing within the meaning of this Act, when he/she, for a fee, salary or other reward or compensation, singly or in collaboration with another, initiates and performs nursing services to individuals, families and communities in various stages of development, toward the promotion of health, prevention of illness, restoration of health and alleviation of suffering through:

a) Utilization of the nursing process, including assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care. Nursing care includes, but is not limited to, traditional and innovative approaches in nursing, therapeutic use of self-executing nursing techniques and procedures, comfort measures, health teaching and administration of legal and written prescriptions for treatment, therapies, medications, and hypodermic, intramuscular, or intravenous injections: *Provided, however,* That this provision shall not apply to midwives and community health workers who are certified by the Department of Health or its duly-designated representative, to undertake such tasks only on official time and in line with the Primary Health Care approach, and in times of emergencies when a nurse is not available;

b) Establishment of linkages with community resources and coordination of services with other members of the health team;

c) Motivation of individuals, families and communities;

d) Participation in teaching, guidance and supervision of students in nursing education programs, including administering nursing services in varied settings such as hospitals, homes, communities and the like, undertaking consultation services, and engaging in such other activities which call for the performance of functions, duties and responsibilities that require the utilization of knowledge and decision-making skill of a registered nurse; and

(e) Undertaking nursing and health manpower development training and research and soliciting finances therefor, in cooperation with the appropriate government or private agency: *Provided, however,* That this provision shall not apply to nursing students who perform nursing functions under the direct supervision of qualified faculty.

SEC. 27. *Qualification of Nursing Service Administrators.* - A person occupying supervisory or managerial positions, requiring knowledge of nursing must:

- (a) Be a Filipino citizen;
- (b) Be a registered nurse in the Philippines;
- (c) Be a member in good standing of the accredited national organization of nurses;
- (d) Have at least a two (2) year experience in general nursing service administration; and
- (e) Possess a degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with at least nine units in management course at the graduate level:

Provided, That a person occupying the position of Chief Nurse or Director of Nursing Service shall, in addition to the foregoing qualifications, possess:

- (a) At least years of experience in a supervisory or managerial position in nursing; and
- (b) A master's degree major in nursing service administration or its equivalent.

ARTICLE V. - MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, UTILIZATION

SEC. 28. *Studies of Nursing Manpower Needs, Production, Utilization and Development.* - The Nursing Board shall undertake studies and initiate and/or cooperate with appropriate government or private agencies in the conduct of studies for nursing manpower needs, production, utilization, and development.

ARTICLE VII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 29. *Prohibition in the Practice of Nursing.* - A fine of not less than Five thousand (P5,000) pesos nor more than Twenty thousand (P20,000) pesos or imprisonment of not less than one year nor more than six (6) years, or both, in the discretion of the Court, shall be imposed upon:

1. Any person practicing nursing in the Philippines within the meaning of this Act -
 - (a) without a certificate of registration or without having been declared exempt from examination in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
 - (b) who uses as his/her own the certificate of registration of another;
 - (c) who uses a suspended or revoked certificate of registration;

- (d) who gives any false evidence to the Board of Nursing in order to obtain a certificate of registration;
- (e) who falsely poses or advertises as a registered nurse or uses any other means that tend to convey the impression that he or she is a registered nurse; and
- (f) who appends B.S.N./R.N. Bachelor of Science in Nursing/Registered Nurse to his/her name without having been conferred said degree or registration; or

2. Any person who undertakes in-service educational programs or who conducts review classes for both local and foreign examinations without permit/clearance from the Philippine Nursing Association, the Board of Nursing and the appropriate office or officer of the Department of Labor and Employment.

SEC. 30. *Standard Basic Pay.* - Based on current NEDA figures, the proper government agency shall fix as soon as possible standard basic pay for all nurses working in either public or private hospitals. The same standard basic pay shall be increased periodically to cope with the increase in the cost of living.

SEC. 31. *Enforcement of this Act.* - It shall be the duty of all duly constituted law enforcement agencies and officers of national, provincial, city or municipal governments to enforce the provisions of this Act and to prosecute any person violating the same.

SEC. 32. *Repeal.* - All laws, decrees, orders, circulars, rules or regulations and other issuances which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 33. *Separability Clause.* - If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected thereby shall continue to be valid and operational.

SEC. 34. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect one (1) month after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Senator Guingona. Mr. President, I ask that we recognize Senator Alvarez to sponsor the bill.

The President Pro Tempore. Senator Alvarez is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR ALVAREZ

Senator Alvarez. Senate Bill No. 335, if anything, is a tribute to and a celebration of the professionalism, dedication, fortitude and patriotism, I might say, of a corps of careerists who

minister to the needs of the sick, the convalescing and the dying of this world and of our nation.

The saga of this hardy breed of men and women is a proud chapter in our young history.

These knights and nightingales in white shining robes are doing battle against disease, ill-health and unsightly living in every corner of our land and the far reaches of the world.

They have projected to the world a proud face and a wonderful image of our people whose daring qualities, courage and patience have fired the imagination of many nations especially those in bondage.

They have been equal to the best and brightest of any land, and in a number of cases more than equal to others.

Their spectacular performance in our land and abroad is a testimony to the excellent education, training, practical experience they have imbibed from our schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and clinics.

In a word, our nurses are world-class.

Keeping Ahead

But nothing stands still. Change, development and transformation rule implacably over our lives.

New knowledge and information are accumulating at dizzying speed. To stand still is to be left behind; to run at leisure is to remain in place; only if we go swiftly can we keep abreast with the movement of new knowledge and information.

When the old Nursing Law, Republic Act No. 877, was passed in 1955, concepts, management methods, teaching, research, and technologies of health care services were already being transformed and have been revolutionized with accelerating swiftness. Many provisions of that law have been made obsolete, obsolescent, and obtuse.

Artificial hearts and kidneys, computerized diagnostic systems, gene prints, artificial red blood cells — these are just a few examples to dramatize the lightyear leap in health science since the passage of that old law in 1955.

We must, therefore, transform the world of health care services in the image of new realities. This we must and we will. We can escape this task only at the risk of losing our high standing worldwide. That can only happen through a failure of nerve, laziness, or sheer indifference.

To Hold our Own and Keep our Exalted Place

Senate Bill No. 335 hopes to keep us abreast with the rest of the world in the delivery of health care services, maintain our tradition of excellence in the production of world-class nurses, and even raise our standards even higher.

This bill benefits from a pervasive consultation at all levels of the nursing profession. It is, in fact and in reality, a product of the best thinking and highest imagineering capabilities of professionals.

It has taken over five years for this bill to reach this point of realization. In that length of time, any substantial developments and trends in the world of medicine and health care would have found a congenial home in this bill.

The revolutionary changes in the profession and in the world at large are reflected in this bill, as may be gleaned from its innovative parts.

Among its salient features are:

1. It redefines the scope of nursing practice to emphasize

(a) the use of nursing process as scientific discipline in arriving at appropriate nursing action and care;

(b) the teaching, management, leadership and decision-making roles of the nurses;

(c) the undertaking and participation in studies and research by nurses; and

(d) the role of nurses in primary health care.

Heretofore, nursing had been seen as a passive element in those endeavors.

2. It requires a faculty member who is appointed to the Board of Nursing to resign from his or her teaching position at the time of appointment and not one year preceding appointment as provided for in Republic Act No. 877, as amended. This provision seeks to impose the highest sense of integrity, honor, and morality among those who would set the standards of performance and ethical behavior in the profession. It will especially, avert possible conflict of interest when a member must go over the qualifications of candidates for licensure.

3. It provides for the updating of faculty qualifications by requiring a master's degree in nursing or related fields or equivalent terms of experience and specialization as pre-requisite to teaching.

This requirement seeks to raise the level of teaching and learning, and upgrades the standard of excellence for the profession.

4. The bill specifies qualifications of administrators of nursing services; and

5. It includes the phrase "unethical conduct" as one of the reasons for revocation and suspension of certificate of registration. Without this qualification, it is quite possible to have technically qualified people whose moral discipline do not hold them to perform at their highest level of capability.

Pride of our People, Gift to the World

I am satisfied that this law meets the felt needs of the moment and the foreseeable future.

Many professionals look to this as the "Magna Carta for Nurses," freeing them from the shackles of the past, updating practices and structures which would ensure we will turn out professionals whose skills and knowledge are in line with the revolutionary advances that have taken place.

Here is an outstanding opportunity for us to ensure that we keep the tradition of excellence in the nursing profession intact; that our country continue to produce a breed of professionals whose skills and knowledge are at par with their peers anywhere in the world, and that we turn out well-rounded individuals and caring human beings who bring hope, good cheer, health and well-being to the sick, the unkempt, the convalescing of our land and of the world.

Mr. President, esteemed Colleagues, I invite you to join us in this pleasant task. We owe it to them that we pass this bill. It is their due. It is our way of thanking them in the name of our people and all peoples of the world.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President Pro Tempore. The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF SENATE BILL NO. 335

Senator Guingona. Mr. President, I move that we suspend consideration of this measure.

The President Pro Tempore. Is there any objection? [Silence] The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

BILL ON SECOND READING Senate Bill No. 1243 — Illegal Recruitment

Senator Guingona. Mr. President, I move that we consider Senate Bill No. 1243.

The President Pro Tempore. Consideration of Senate Bill No. 1243 is now in order.

With the permission of the Body, the Secretary will read only the title of the bill, without prejudice to inserting in the *Record* the whole text thereof.

The Secretary. Senate Bill No. 1243, entitled

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A 20-YEAR PRESCRIPTIVE PERIOD FOR THE CRIME OF ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT CONSTITUTING ECONOMIC SABOTAGE AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE 290 OF THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES.

The following is the full text of Senate Bill No. 1243:

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The first paragraph of Article 290 of Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Art. 290. Offenses. - Offenses penalized under this Code and the rules and regulations issued pursuant thereto shall prescribe in three (3) years[:]; *PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT IN CASES OF ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT CONSTITUTING ECONOMIC SABOTAGE AS PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE [39 (A)] 38(B), THE OFFENSE SHALL PRESCRIBE IN TWENTY (20) YEARS.*"

SEC. 2. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation[,], WHICHEVER COMES EARLIER.

Senator Guingona. I ask that we recognize Senator Mercado to sponsor the bill.

The President Pro Tempore. Senator Mercado is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR MERCADO

Senator Mercado. Mr. President, esteemed Colleagues in the Senate, Senate Bill No. 1243 provides for a 20-year prescriptive period for the crime of illegal recruitment, which constitutes economic sabotage.