

RECORD OF THE SENATE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1992

BILL ON FIRST READING

RESUMPTION OF THE SESSION

At 10:32 a.m., the session was resumed.

The President: The session is resumed.

Senator Romulo: Mr. President, may I ask the Secretary to read the Sixth Additional Reference of Business.

The President: The Secretary is required to do so.

SIXTH ADDITIONAL REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Secretary:

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

December 18, 1992

The Honorable
NEPTALI A. GONZALES
President of the Senate
Manila

Mr. President:

I have been directed to inform the Senate that the House of Representatives approved on December 17, 1992, the Conference Committee report on the disagreeing votes of House Bill No. 3192, entitled

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FROM JANUARY ONE TO DECEMBER THIRTY-ONE, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-THREE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) CAMILO L. SABIO
Secretary General

The President: To the Archives.

The Secretary: Senate Bill No. 1012, entitled

AN ACT FIXING A PERIOD FOR THE CONDUCT OF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION BEFORE THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, AMENDING FOR THAT PURPOSE SECTION 18 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6770, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "OMBUDSMAN ACT OF 1989," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Introduced by Senator Tatad.

The President: Referred to the Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

RESOLUTIONS

The Secretary: Proposed Senate Resolution No. 252, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE REPORTED SCAM PERPETRATED BY CERTAIN HOSPITALS THRU THE FILING OF FICTITIOUS OR OVERCHARGED CLAIMS AGAINST THE MEDICAL CARE SYSTEM AND TO FIND OUT, IF ANY, THE PARTICIPATION OF CERTAIN MEDICARE AND GSIS EMPLOYEES IN THE SAID ANOMALOUS PRACTICE, AND FIND OUT POSSIBLE MEASURES THAT COULD BE UNDERTAKEN AGAINST AND/OR CORRECT THE SAME, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Introduced by Senators Webb and Herrera.

The President: Referred to the Committee on Health.

The Secretary: Proposed Senate Resolution No. 253, entitled

RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE TO INVESTIGATE THE STRENGTH AND SAFENESS OF CARNIVAL RIDES, AND THE SAFETY MEASURES INSTALLED BY CARNIVAL RIDE OPERATORS AND

on Second Reading Senate Bill No. 578, entitled An Act Prohibiting a Person Below 18 Years of Age from Directly Engaging or Being Used as a Model for Advertisement of Promotion of Liquor, Intoxicating Drinks and Cigarettes and Providing Penalties Thereof.

The printed copies have been distributed this morning and are on the desk of each of the Senators.

The President: Is this a certified bill?

Senator Romulo: No, Mr. President. The three-day rule applies. So the three-day rule commences today.

Also, Mr. President, on Senate Bill No. 925, entitled "An Act Providing for the Establishment of Provincial, City and Municipal Libraries in Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines." This was also approved on Second Reading yesterday. The printed copies have been distributed this morning and are on the desk of each of the Senators.

Mr. President, on a question of personal privilege, I ask that the distinguished Senator from Mindanao and Sulu, Senator Santanina Rasul, be recognized.

The President: The distinguished Lady Senator from Mindanao, Senator Santanina Rasul, is hereby recognized on a question of personal privilege.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF SENATOR RASUL (Censure of Black Propaganda)

Senator Rasul: Today, I am constrained to rise on a matter of personal privilege to deny and to denounce, in the strongest possible terms, the slander, the libelous misinformation campaign against myself and my family by some irresponsible persons who chose to hide behind the cloak of anonymity.

Mr. President, I rise to take issue against reports circulated by certain sectors on the robbery in the Office of the Finance Attaché in the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which occurred more than a year ago today, to be exact, November 4, 1991.

For the past week, press releases emanating from anonymous sources have grossly distorted the circumstances surrounding the incident in an apparent attempt to vilify my family's reputation and good name.

For several days now, the Rasul name has been the object of black propaganda which can only emanate from the dirty

and twisted minds of persons who probably never did an honest work in their lives and, therefore, presume that everyone else is like them.

Confident that the truth will surface, I patiently withstood the onslaught of these slanderous allegations, libelous and malicious imputations that amazingly found print in our major dailies, as well as voice in some radio programs.

For example, today, front page news of the *People's Journal*, "OCW P7 million stolen in Riyadh. Saudi Police suspect inside job." The *Daily Globe*, "PNB Saudi Heist Inside Job." *Malaya*, "DFA Eyes Cover-up in PNB Riyadh Rob." *Philippine Star*, "Pinoy Workers in Saudi Seek PNB Probe." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, "Probe of P7 million PNB Rob in Riyadh Set." *Malaya*, December 11, "Rasul told to Explain Riyadh P7 million Rob." I can go on and on, Mr. President.

However, my silence has not reaped its just reward--the truth has yet to surface, the facts remain distorted--and the Rasul name and reputation continue to be maligned.

In the midst of this ill-motivated campaign to misinform the public, I cannot help but break my silence and raise my voice to the end that the truth may prevail.

Friends have told me that radio commentators have taken to ridiculing Ambassador Rasul and myself saying, "Ambassador na, Senadora pa, magnanakaw pala."

How did all of these come to pass?

In November 1991, a robbery occurred in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Office of the Finance Attaché was robbed of almost P7 million, most of which were in checks to pay the death claims of Filipino overseas contract workers. Several robberies occurred during the two weeks of this robbery of the Philippine Embassy. Two other embassies were similarly robbed.

The Saudi Police authorities were notified the very same night of the robbery and they immediately investigated the incident. The Office of the Governor of Riyadh was immediately alerted.

Since then, the Saudi Police have arrested 17 Filipinos involved in these robberies.

Since then, there have been two well-timed attempts by persons with dubious motivations to pin the robbery on my family. Why?