

**2005 CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION TO PROPOSE  
THE REVISION OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION  
Committee on Suffrage, Electoral Reforms and  
Political Party Reforms**

Minutes of Meeting No. 4  
Wednesday, 16 November 2005

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 10:30 am, Committee Chairman Cecilio T. Seno called the meeting to order.

**ATTENDANCE**

The following Commissioners were present during the meeting:

Abarico, Angelo M.  
Abueg, Alfredo Jr. E.  
Abueva, Jose V.  
Adamat, Ronald L.  
Calisin, James B.  
Gonzalez, Nelia T.  
Jurado, Gonzalo M.  
Lambino, Raul L.  
Matula, Jose Sonny G.  
Naval, David C.  
Pedrosa, Carmen N.  
Pena, Fernando M.O.  
Romualdo, Pedro P.  
Sarmiento, Mel Senen S.  
Seno, Cecilio T.  
Soriano, Luz Emmanuel  
Tabanda, Betty Lourdes F.  
Tirol, David B.  
Vilar, Antonio T.  
Villanueva, Jose D.

Guests were:

Atty. Melchor Monsod  
(representing Manila Mayor Lito Atienza of the Liberal Party)

Mr. Ed Collado  
(representing Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay of PDP-Laban)

**START OF THE MEETING**

Chairman Seno turned over the chair to Co-chairman David C. Naval to preside over the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the agenda.

In the absence of the invited speakers at this time, Commissioner Naval recognized instead the presence of the faculty and students of the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University based in Rosario, La Union. The 12 faculty members and 46 students came upon the invitation of Com. Victor F. Ortega. Thereupon, the group representative Ms Anita Flores expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to observe the committee proceedings.

Commissioner Naval also acknowledged the presence of Mr. Ed Collado, representing Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the PDP-Laban Party. Mr. Collado deferred giving any preliminary statement at this juncture

Commissioner Naval then turned over the chair to Chairman Seno for the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the agenda.

**INQUIRY OF COMMISSIONER ABUEG**

At this point, Com. Alfredo E. Abueg Jr. asked who the invited resource speakers were. Chairman Seno enumerated the following list of invitees:

Mayor Jose Atienza Jr.  
Chairman, Liberal Party

Hon. Frisco San Juan  
President, National People's  
Coalition

Hon. Jose Rufino  
National Executive Director  
LAKAS-CMD

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago  
President, People's Reform Party

Sen. Ed Angara  
Chairman  
Laban Demokratikong Pilipino

Mayor Jejomar Binay  
President, PDP-Laban

Hon.. Ronald Puno  
President  
Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino

It was reported that Sen Defensor-Santiago begged off due to prior commitments.

Commissioner Abueg again inquired whether former COMELEC Com. Christian Monsod was invited to the meeting. He noted that it was Commissioner Monsod who started the modernization program of the commission, and as such, would be of much help to the Committee.

The Chairman replied in the negative. In view of the absence of the resource persons, Co-chairman Naval moved for the certification of attendance and for the approval of the minutes of the last meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioner Abueg, duly seconded and there being no objection, the Body moved to dispense with the roll call.

## **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER TABANDA**

Com. Betty Lourdes F. Tabanda queried Mayor Atienza's representative, Atty. Melchor Monsod, whether he has any statement to make on the matter at hand.

Atty. Monsod responded by sharing Mayor Atienza's thoughts on electoral reforms.

Apparently, Mayor Atienza now openly supports the parliamentary form of government as well as the strengthening of party representation, especially a two-party system, and of the local autonomy.

This, Atty. Monsod said, is based on the fact that, through the years, the meaningful participation of political parties in the country's political system has been substantially diminished

Citing the case of the Manila government's *Buhayin ang Maynila* program, the mayor, Atty. Monsod said, also wants to emphasize the importance of local autonomy in the country's development process.

## **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER ABARICO**

Com. Angelo M. Abarico also queried Atty. Monsod on Mayor Atienza's stand on federalism in relation to the empowerment of local government units (LGUs)

Atty. Monsod replied that the mayor's focus is in giving more meaning to the LGUs' political mandate, possibly through constitutional amendment.

Although the local government code has specified devolution from national to local offices; he stressed that many activities are still performed by the

national government. Another issue is on revenue allocation, especially the VAT; which the LGUs found wanting, he added.

Commissioner Abarico claimed that "Mindanao has enthusiastically embraced the concept of federalism." In the recent consultations in Davao by the Committee on the shift from unitary to federal system, 38 voted in favor of federalism and 0 for unitary form of government, according to Commissioner Abarico

He cited a case wherein the creation of the position for janitor would still require the approval of the national government.

#### **REACTION OF COMMISSIONER SARMIENTO**

Com. Mel Senen S. Sarmiento was quick to correct such statement.

LGUs, he said, have the authority to appoint their own employees, without need for DBM approval. The appointment papers are submitted to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) merely for attestation.

Local autonomy, Commissioner Sarmiento asserts, has actually helped the LGUs a lot. He emphasized that the main issue now is the automatic appropriation and release of the IRA, without need for Congress' deliberation.

Even the Supreme Court has ruled on the automatic release of the IRA to the LGUs. This year, he said, PhP 166.5 billion has been allocated for the IRA.

He suggested that what the Congress should deliberate on is the remaining 60% of the BIR collections which, to date, remains unremitted to the LGUs.

Currently, he said, only 40% of the total BIR collections go to the LGUs, not to mention the unremitted revenues collected from other agencies such as the Bureau of Customs. The LGUs should get more, Commissioner Sarmiento insisted, considering that they have shown their capability to run their own affairs.

At this point, the Chairman reminded the body that the issue on the form and structure of government belongs to another Committee.

As a point of inquiry, Commissioner Abarico asked whether local appointments and budgets no longer need CSC and national government approval.

Commissioner Sarmiento answered in the affirmative.

#### **INQUIRY OF COMMISSIONER TABANDA**

Commissioner Tabanda queried the party representatives present (LP and PDP-Laban) if they can offer any proposal on constitutional provisions towards the strengthening of political parties.

Atty. Monsod responded by looking into the possibility of extending some kind of support to political parties, like what they do in the United States, especially for parties which have attained significant number of votes in previous elections.

He also suggested disqualification for those who switch party affiliation in midstream for convenience.

Asked on the Liberal Party's stand on turncoatism, Atty. Monsod instead offered his personal point of view. Too much turncoatism, he said, has largely

“marginalized” political parties, except the LP

### **CHAIRMAN ABUEVA’S QUESTION ON THE LIBERAL PARTY POSITION**

Chairman Jose V. Abueva clarified with Atty. Monsod the LP’s apparent lack of unity in decision-making especially in making a party stand.

This impression, Chairman Abueva, said, was based on two events --- the public act of LP chairman Jose Atienza questioning the decision of LP leaders asking President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to resign; as well as media reports that LP Lower House representatives have decided as a block to support the majority coalition led by Speaker Jose De Venecia.

Shedding light on the matter, Atty. Monsod noted that the party chairman himself did not call the meeting which supposedly led to the demand for President Arroyo’s resignation. He reiterated that such was not the official position of the party, but only of some party members.

With respect to the party’s position on the House Speaker, he said, it has shown that the party can make a stand on an internal matter.

### **MOTION OF COMMISSIONER NAVAL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED ARTICLE ON POLITICAL PARTIES**

Commissioner Naval moved for the consideration of the article on political parties as proposed by Chairman Abueva

Following the previous motion, Commissioner Abueg requested Chairman Abueva to enlighten the Body on the proposal of the Citizens’ Movement for a Federal Philippines (CMFP).

Commissioner Tabanda raised a point of order on whether the Committee is done with part 1 of the agenda.

The Chairman answered in the negative.

Meanwhile, Com. James B. Calisin reminded the Committee Members to strictly observe the business of the day to maximize the limited time allotted to the Committee.

### **INQUIRY OF COMMISSIONER SARMIENTO ON BARANGAY ELECTIONS**

Commissioner Sarmiento suggested throwing more questions to the resource speakers on political parties, such as their party position on barangay elections.

Atty. Monsod replied that the City of Manila is in favor of the present system of electing barangay officials although there are studies towards reducing the number of barangays. He said that present conditions do not warrant maintaining the more than 800 barangays in the city.

Atty. Monsod added that election, instead of appointment, of barangay officials is acceptable since they are the only elected public officials required by law to be non-partisan

Mr. Collado of PDP-Laban expressed the same sentiments.

Commissioner Sarmiento also asked their opinion on the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK).

Atty. Monsod, expressing his personal view, noted that there should be a deeper examination of the SK’s political role. Having encountered many

problems with the SK, especially on accountability, he believes that there is an opportunity for everyone at the right time. He favors maintaining the objectivity of the youth by keeping them away from direct participation in politics.

Mr. Collado also shared the belief that the youth has become too politicized. On the form of government, according to him, PDP-Laban is pushing for federalism.

Commissioner Calisin revealed that, several months ago, the ULAP, in a meeting among the different Cabinet members and some elected officials, arrived at a consensus to strengthen the youth commission. However, he observed that when the maximum age in the SK was reduced, the capability of the members was likewise reduced.

Commissioner Calisin's said his experience with the SK was a big let-down. He noted that the SK representatives in his own province were unproductive, habitual absentees except in out-of-town sorties and had no clear-cut development plan, except for boundary markers and basketball courts.

Worse, he said, the SK has set the stage for institutionalizing corruption from a very young age. He believes that it is high time to restructure the SK to keep demoralization away.

#### **INQUIRY OF COMMISSIONER PEÑA**

At this point, Com. Fernando M.O. Pena asked Mr. Collado on PDP-Laban's stand on parliamentary form of government and turncoatism

Expressing his personal opinion, Mr. Collado believes that turncoatism is a malpractice where party leaders have no real control of. The consequences,

he said, apparently are not sufficient to stop anyone from doing it.

While the parliamentary system looks favorable, PDP-Laban has set its focus more on the federal form of government

#### **CHAIRMAN ABUEVA ON THE ISSUE OF HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS**

Chairman Jose V. Abueva observed that homeowners associations (HA) have mushroomed in Metro Manila and in other urban residential communities. Knowing that their own barangay cannot possibly attend to all their needs, the HAs' have widened their scope of responsibility.

Chairman Abueva cited as an example the HA to which he belongs to. The HA has done so much for the barangay residents, including water supply, security, sanitation, environmental protection, greening and cleaning, and other social services.

While the law dictates that the barangay should report to constituents its accountabilities and accomplishments at the end of each year, his barangay has consistently failed to do so since 1969.

Chairman Abueva even filed a formal complaint with municipal and provincial leaders, but nothing has come out of it. He believes that there are serious problems on local autonomy affecting highly urbanized communities in the country. He asserted that HAs had to take over many of the services which the barangay and even the municipality cannot provide.

On one hand, he said, this was an example of self-reliance. However, he recognized that some adjustments have to be made in the relations between the barangay and the association. In some

cases the heads of the barangay and HA are at odds, instead of working together. This scenario raises serious issues on the role of barangays in highly urbanized areas.

Chairman Abueva reiterated that this issue be brought to the attention of political parties so they can look into this and maybe take a stand.

Atty. Monsod recognized the significant roles of barangays and the HAs especially in the settlement of land ownership, acquisition and maintenance, housing problems and urban land reform

In the City of Manila, he affirmed that it is the HA which is at the forefront of all these while the barangay merely assists in the association's efforts. It is in the bigger arena, he claimed, such as traffic management as well as peace and order where the barangay exercises its role.

On the other hand, Mr. Collado was pleased to note that the City of Makati has been spared from such issues. With only 33 barangays, out of which are six villages, under its jurisdiction, the city can be proud of the cooperative efforts between its barangay leaders and their residents. He believes that the problem lies not on legislation but on management. If there's effective dialogue between the city or municipal leaders and the barangay heads, there should be no problem, he added.

At this point, Chairman Seno announced a working lunch for the committee.

#### **COMMENTS ON TAXATION BY COMMISSIONER ABUEG**

Commissioner Abueg, reacting on the comments of Mr. Collado, noted how Makati benefited from businesses

holding their head offices in the city but also operates in areas outside of Makati.

Palawan, for instance, supplies Metro Manila 60% of its fish consumption but the fishing companies, which are based in Metro Manila, pay their taxes in Manila, particularly in Malabon and Navotas. Palawan gets nothing, he said.

He wanted to find out if there's a way of sharing taxes between the place where products or goods are sourced and the place where the business holds its headquarters. He wondered whether local governments would be willing to share taxes collected from common businesses.

Atty. Monsod admitted that the City of Manila shared the same sentiments. While big businesses are run in Binondo, Divisoria and other Chinese communities in Manila, the city doesn't get the income it should get from the actual volume of business transacted in Manila.

Commissioner Sarmiento informed Commissioner Abueg that the League of Cities of the Philippines is already doing something about this taxation problem. They have commissioned a research study to be used as basis for legislation.

#### **INQUIRY BY COMMISSIONER CALISIN ON GRASSROOTS DISCUSSION ON FEDERALISM**

Addressing Mr. Collado, Commissioner Calisin inquired on the mechanism employed by the PDP-Laban to cascade its advocacy on federalism down to the barangay level.

Mr. Collado underscored the importance of dialogue in all barangays to explain federalism at the grassroots level.

In the case of Manila, Atty. Monsod claimed that the Manila mayor has encouraged discussion on the proposed changes in the form of government at the barangay level. He welcomed the idea of receiving primers on the subject of federalism as point of discussion and for a deeper understanding of the issues.

Commissioner Abueg confirmed with the Chairman the scheduled consultation of Commissioners Jose D. Villanueva and Carmen N. Pedrosa with barangay officials at the Manila City Hall the following week.

Upon inquiry from Commissioner Abueg on whether Sen. Aquilino Pimentel is one of the founding members of PDP-Laban and if he is an advocate of federalism, Mr. Collado responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Abueg wanted to know if steps are being taken by the party towards educating the people on the concept of a federal form of government, such as consultations with the people.

Mr. Collado offered to get a copy of the primer on federalism from Senator Pimentel.

Noting that the Chairman had left the room without permission, Commissioner Calisin wanted to put on record that, as a matter of parliamentary procedure, the presiding officer cannot leave the meeting unless a recess has been called.

Co-chair Naval informed the Commissioner that he has taken over while the Chairman has taken a momentary leave for personal reasons.

Commissioner Calisin admitted that even the mayors in the province of Albay are apprehensive on the idea of

federalism. They prefer a gradual transition towards federalism, since it is a bottom to top system; starting from the barangay level, then to municipal, provincial, regional and parliamentary.

Upon motion of Commissioner Abueg, seconded by Co-chairman Naval, Chairman Abueva took the floor to enlighten the Body on the proposed article on political parties.

### **PROPOSED ARTICLE ON POLITICAL PARTIES BY CHAIRMAN ABUEVA**

As a backgrounder, Chairman Abueva recalled the political parties in the US, UK, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia where the parties really loomed large in the consciousness of the people, and where governance of the nation is associated with political parties.

In the history of the US and the UK, there has always been a regular alternation of power between two major parties. In other countries like Singapore and Malaysia, it's the same party which has been in power since their independence.

In the Philippines, from the late 40's to the 60's, there used to be an alternation of power between the Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party, the latter being a splinter group of the former.

Chairman Abueva also raised the issues on collaboration during the war and parity rights. During the authoritarian regime, from 1972 to 1986, another party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan or KBL, was born.

Chairman Abueva observed that political parties are really organizations of politicians, with the main purpose of putting up their own candidates to rule the country;

Few of these parties, he said, gave importance to their program of government. Some went through the motions of adopting a party platform, which did not really become the basis for governance once the party came to power. Lately, parties like PDP-Laban and the Liberal Party have emphasized their program of reform.

In other countries, especially in Europe and in North America, political parties are mass parties with card-bearing members.

The Chairman admitted that the country has not reached that stage in the development of political parties. But with the proposed shift from presidential to parliamentary system, the role of the political parties has become more important. One proposal, he added, is the selection not only from a list of names of candidates but also the party, which the voter would like to govern in parliament. The majority party then assumes responsibility and accountability for power, its leader usually becoming the Prime Minister.

Chairman Abueva ended his piece by justifying the proposed article on political parties. Once approved, it will be the first time in the political history of the country that its Constitution will have an article on reforms of political parties

#### **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER TIROL**

Com. David B. Tirol wondered whether the idea of a strong party system will be as useful or effective under a presidential form of government.

Chairman Abueva replied that a good party system is useful to either parliamentary or presidential system. The issue, he said, is accountability of

the governors. The political party plays a very important role in involving the people not only to elect candidates but, more important, to discuss the platform, policy ideas and other issues,

Commissioner Tirol observed that the Philippines started out with a strong party system, having experienced it himself early on in his political career.

Chairman Abueva: recalled that the old Philippine political parties had this practice of using party affiliation for personal convenience which can easily be set aside when political ambitions become strong. Turncoatism turned platforms into insignificant pieces of documents.

The country, claimed the Chairman, never really had a two-party-system, just two factions of the same elite group. The objective of the proposed reforms is to develop political parties with distinctive sets of ideas and policies to be implemented once the party comes into power.

He said that the party platform will be used to judge the quality of the leadership and the party's performance.

Once this kind of political party is developed, the people will know who to reward for success in governance or in reducing corruption, and who to punish when the program of government is not implemented or the government remains corrupt, he added.

#### **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER ABUEG**

Commissioner Abueg asked Chairman Abueva's suggested measures to strengthen political parties.

Referring to Section 1 of his proposal, Commissioner Abueg

proposed to define the optimum role of the ideal kind of political party system. Its purpose is to remind political party leaders on the roles they have to assume, and to inform the citizenry on the indispensable role of political parties in a democracy.

With this framework, Commissioner Abueg hopes that the electorate can select candidates who are exceptionally competent and are capable of serving the people.

The Campaign Finance Reform Act, meanwhile, intends to prevent politicians from becoming beholden to private financiers by providing for a state fund to assist different parties in their political campaign, the commissioner added.

#### **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER GONZALEZ**

Com. Nelia T. Gonzalez expressed her concern on the proliferation of political parties, which raises questions on the validity of election results, especially for those winning with very small margins.

In response, Chairman Abueva emphasized that a shift to parliamentary system will put a premium on large, united, coherent parties with a program of government. In parliament, there has to be a majority party from which parliament officials such as the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers will come from.

Chairman Abueva also proposed to have 100 extra reserved seats in the Parliament to be divided among the political parties based on their share of the party votes cast in the previous elections, while maintaining the present congressional or parliamentary districts. This will encourage smaller parties to join the bigger parties to have better chances at gaining seats.

While the two-party system makes the alternation of power easier, it will only naturally evolve over a long period of time, so there is no way it can be legislated or constitutionally prescribed, averred the Chairman.

Upon motion of Commissioner Abueg, there being no objection, Com. Ronald L. Adamat acted as floor leader.

#### **INQUIRY BY COMMISSIONER PEÑA**

Queried by Commissioner Pena on the classification in the political spectrum (center, right, left) that a political party takes on based on its platform, Chairman Abueva opined that it would be practical and ideal if each party defined itself on the major issues now facing the country. The idea, the latter underscored, is to make parties compete with each other on the clarity of their programs of government or their commitments towards the many issues facing the country.

#### **INTERPELLATION BY COMMISSIONER LAMBINO**

Commissioner Raul L. Lambino expressed his concern over making the Constitution too verbose. He asked whether Chairman Abueva would agree to confine the provision on political parties into general policies and leave the specifics to Parliament.

Chairman Abueva noted that his proposal addresses the political party as an important, if not indispensable, political institution in a democracy. Other sections in the proposal may be dispensed with, such as Section 3, since it is meant merely to form part of the discussion.

Commissioner Lambino reiterated his counter proposal to do away with the specifics; instead just make general

statements on the strengthening of the two-party system, prohibition on turncoatism, the policy of the state to provide financing to political parties who will garner a certain percentage of the

**INSERT MINUTES FROM 1-3 P.M.**

**MOTION OF COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO TO AMEND SECTION 1, ARTICLE V OF THE CONSTITUTION**

Commissioner Romualdo moved for the insertion of the word “actually” before the word “resided” in Section 1, Article V of the Constitution, and that the last phrase should read, “The principle of *animos revertendi* shall not apply to one who will run for an elective position.”

Commissioner Sarmiento seconded the motion.

Commissioner Tabanda pointed out that the Body is not speaking of *animos revertendi* for residence requirement of voters but for residence requirement of candidates.

Commissioner Garcia said that there is a way of avoiding confusion from the employment of the Latin term *animos revertendi* by providing for actual physical residence, since the Supreme Court has already defined such concepts as residence, actual residence, principle of domicile, etc.

Commissioner Romualdo said that the proposed amendment should apply to both candidates and voters.

Commissioner Garcia observed that the proposed amendment would immediately do away with absentee voting. He stated that absentee voting is not practicable and doable within the framework of our Constitution. He said that suffrage is a constitutional right but only in the territory where the

votes, all of which will form part of the overall provision on the Commission on Elections.

Constitution is enforced. He added that the COMELEC has no jurisdiction beyond the Philippines, and this would create problems in prosecuting massive cheaters, for instance. He said that if the proposed amendment would do away with absentee voting, then so be it.

Commissioner Soriano said that the privilege of overseas voting has already been enjoyed by our countrymen abroad during the last elections and asked whether that privilege would be taken back.

Commissioner Abueg said that in a parliamentary system, there will be no need for absentee voting abroad, since under the present law, the overseas voter votes only for national officials. The issue of absentee voting, then, becomes moot and academic.

Commissioner Peña agreed with Commissioner Abueg. He added that this is an area of concern since there is a whole question of whether these overseas voters will be included in the plebiscite to approve the constitutional amendments.

Commissioner Calisin asked whether the Committee has agreed that should a parliamentary system be approved; there will be no more president of the republic. He said that he was asked by his constituents to relay their opinion that there should still be a president to exercise limited powers, such as national defense, foreign affairs, and the economy, while the day to day affairs are being undertaken by the prime minister.

Commissioner Garcia said that the issue should not be a serious problem

since it will depend on what kind of parliamentary system will be adopted. He cited countries where the presidents are more powerful than the prime ministers.

Chairman Abueva suggested that the Committee vote on the motion since he thought they had already exhausted the issue.

At this point, Chairman Seno asked the Committee to vote on the motion of Commissioner Romualdo. There being no objection, the Committee approved the proposed amendment to Section 1, Article V of the Constitution.

#### **CHAIRMAN ABUEVA'S MOTION TO INCORPORATE TO THE CONSTITUTION A PROVISION ON POLITICAL PARTIES**

Chairman Abueva made a motion to include one or two provisions on political parties in the suitable part of the constitution so that it can be part of an article, with the proposal to be a section or a couple of sections. He said he would like to collaborate with Commissioner Villanueva since the latter has a similar proposal. He said that they could compress their proposal so that it would not constitute a separate article but could be located in an appropriate article.

Commissioner Villanueva suggested that the Committee consolidate the proposal of Chairman Abueva and his own proposal and treat them as one and later on reconcile everything that has to be reconciled.

Commissioner Tabanda suggested that the Body identify the major points and vote on the fundamental principles without going into the details. For instance, will it be multi-party system or two dominant-party system? She pointed out that Commissioner

Villanueva proposes a two dominant-party system while Chairman Abueva proposes a multi-party system. She also wanted to tackle the issue of turncoatism.

At this juncture, Commissioner Calisin asked whether the Chairman of the Constitutional Commission can participate as a movant in a committee. He said that the presiding Chairman of the Commission cannot propose a motion or a resolution so as not to influence the members of the committee. He added that if Chairman Abueva has a proposal, he should give it to a member of the Committee and that member will act as the movant. He said that if the proceedings are monitored, the integrity of the Committee is going to be questioned because it would appear that the Body is influenced by the Chairman of the Commission.

Commissioner Adamat responded by saying that all officers of the Commission are automatically ex-officio members of all the Committees, and that they are entitled to sit, to talk, and to vote. He said that everyone is entitled to make a motion.

Commissioner Abueg stated that the Chairman of the Commission has the same right and privileges as that of any Member.

Commissioner Romualdo requested the proponent to restate the motion.

Chairman Abueva moved for the reconciliation of the substance of his proposed article with the proposal of Commissioner Villanueva as a section, to be inserted in an appropriate part of the proposed revised article.

Commissioner Tabanda asked how the proposal of Commissioner Villanueva can be reconciled with the

proposal of Chairman Abueva when it comes to the party system, since the two have different proposals on the issue.

Chairman Abueva responded by saying that one cannot prescribe a law on the kind of party system, whether it is 2-party or multiple-party system, and that it is a matter of political history and evolution of political parties. He added that many two-party systems in the world began as multi-party systems, and that they evolved to develop two major parties.

Commissioner Tabanda wanted to elicit a reaction from Commissioner Villanueva about Chairman Abueva's statement, since the former is a strong advocate of a two-party system.

Commissioner Villanueva said that he does not see any contradiction between the two proposals because in his proposal, the forming of other parties is not prohibited. He clarified that what it provides is a development of a two-strong party system. He agreed with Chairman Abueva that a constitutional provision cannot prohibit the forming of other parties. He said that he is authorizing Chairman Abueva to reconcile the two proposals and approve it as one. He then asked Chairman Abueva if he would accept the authorization.

Chairman Abueva said he would gladly do so.

With that, the motion of Chairman Abueva, there being no objections, was approved by the Committee.

**COMMISSIONER TABANDA'S  
MOTION TO INCORPORATE A  
PROVISION ON SECTORAL  
REPRESENTATION**

At this point, Commissioner Tabanda moved for the approval of her and Commissioner Adamat's amendment to incorporate the provision on sectoral representation as part of the strengthening of political parties.

Commissioner Adamat said that there seemed to be no objection to the motion but added that he would be introducing an amendment to the said motion "at a proper time."

Com. Angelo M. Abarico requested Commissioner Adamat to state his proposal, which he was sure, is about indigenous peoples of the Philippines.

Commissioner Adamat said that Commissioner Tabanda's proposal involves all other sectors but they differ in approach. He mentioned that Commissioner Tabanda's approach is through election while his is through appointment, as being practiced by other countries under the parliamentary system.

Commissioner Gonzalez suggested that the elderly be included in the sectors mentioned in the proposal.

Commissioner Tabanda said that the reason why the elderly are not excluded in the marginalized sectors is because many of the candidates of political parties are actually elderly.

Commissioner Peña wanted to know if the Body will tackle the turncoatism issue, as brought up by Commissioner Tabanda earlier.

Commissioner Villanueva replied by saying that the issue is already included in the consolidation of amendments of Chairman Abueva and his proposal, and referred to the last paragraph of the second page of a copy of his proposal.

There being no objection, the Committee approved the motion of Commissioner Tabanda.

**PROPOSAL OF COMMISSIONER CALISIN AND COMMISSIONER SARMIENTO TO ABOLISH BARANGAY ELECTIONS**

Commissioner Calisin argued that the barangay executive is more powerful than the president of the Philippines because the latter only exercises the executive function, while the former exercises executive, legislative, and judicial powers. He takes issue with the fact that barangay executives are given a huge responsibility when there are no qualifications for their election. He added that without barangay elections, the government can save billions of pesos. Referring the Committee to his and Commissioner Sarmiento's position paper, he suggested that the mayors should be in charge of the appointment barangay officials, subject to the concurrence of their respective sanggunian. In behalf of Commissioner Sarmiento, he then formally moved for the approval of their proposal.

Commissioner Romualdo observed that there is always animosity between barangays, especially on rural areas, that's why development in rural barangays is poor. He mentioned that most barangays in the country receive no less than P80,000 each and if every barangay official is audited, practically all of them will go to jail because the money is spent mostly for their honoraria and travel expenses.

Commissioner Adamat clarified whether the motion by Commissioner Calisin was a motion to incorporate the proposal as a reference material or as a new provision.

Commissioner Sarmiento replied that it is meant to be a new provision

(additional section) under Article X. The provision would read, "The local chief executive with the concurrence of the sanggunian of the local government unit shall appoint the barangay officials."

Commissioner Peña asked the local executives present whether the proposal will be approved by the people.

Commissioner Sarmiento said that they have discussed the issue with barangay officials and that the latter were happy about it since it would stop their spending so much money. He mentioned that the latest study conducted by the Liga ng mga Barangay showed that 70% of the barangay captains are not capable of running the barangay. He added that there are many community leaders who are capable of running the barangay but would not want to participate in an electoral exercise. He said that these people are willing to serve if they are appointed. He added that the proposal is one way of cutting down election costs.

Chairman Abueva stated that he is in favor of the proposal. He said that some of the governors of the residential associations could be appointed as barangay leaders because they are already the effective leaders of the residential community.

Commissioner Garcia asked whether the proposal includes the Sangguniang Kabataan.

Commissioner Adamat said that the Committee will wait for a proposal along that line.

Com. Jose Sonny G. Matula asked whether the barangay officials will be considered as employees of the municipality.

Commissioner Tabanda followed up by asking whether the barangay officials will become regular employees following their appointment.

Commissioner Sarmiento said that they will be like volunteers who will get honoraria.

There being no objection, the motion of Commissioner Calisin and Commissioner Sarmiento was approved by the Committee.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

Upon suggestion of the Floor Leader, duly seconded and there being no objection, the committee meeting was adjourned.

*It was 3:59 p.m.*