

**2005 CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION
To Propose the Revision of the 1987 Constitution**

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Session No. 10

Thursday, 17 November 2005

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At **3.22** p.m., the Chairman of the Commission, Jose V. Abueva, called the session to order.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Our session is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM AND PRAYER

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Can we have the playing of the national anthem and our prayer following to be led by Commissioner David Tirol. Can we please rise.

COMMISSIONER TIROL.

Let us all submit ourselves to the wrap-around presence of God. Almighty God, Creator and Architect of the Universe, Holy be Thy name. We humbly beseech Thee that You bless Your servants who are mandated with the herculean task of crafting amendments to the fundamental law of our land. Endow us with wisdom, with grace and with indomitable convictions so that the fruits of our arduous labors will become a true beacon of light for our people even across the long corridors of time. In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Thank you, Commissioner Tirol.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, I move that we dispense temporarily the calling of the roll.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

No objection to that? We dispense with the roll call at this stage. Mr. Floor Leader?

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, I move that we approve the draft minutes of November 10, 2005 Plenary session.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

I second the motion.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
No objections? The minutes are deemed approved.

BUSINESS OF THE DAY

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Business of the day. Reference to appropriate committee the proposed resolution -- Resolution to Amend/Revise Article X of the 1987 Constitution on Local Government sponsored by Commissioner Pablo P. Garcia. I move that we refer this to the Committee on Structure of the Republic.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
No objection. Approved.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
6.2. Communications, Letters, Petitions. Letter to Commissioner Alfredo E. Abueg, Jr. coming from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Palawan regarding Provincial Resolution/Ordinance No. 6185/872 expressing full support to the Parliamentary-Federal form of government and calling for the Palawan Statehood Movement. I move that that we refer this to the Committee on Form of Government and the Committee on Structure of the Republic.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
No objections. Approved.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
B. Letter to Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from the Philippine Bar Association referred to Chairman Jose V. Abueva on the Statement of the Philippine Bar Association on the Issues Concerning the Philippine Constitution. I move that we refer this to the Committee on Form of Government, Committee on Structure of the Republic, and Committee on National Patrimony and Economic Reforms.

COMMISSIONER BAUTISTA.
Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
Yes, Commissioner Bautista.

COMMISSIONER BAUTISTA.
May we get a copy of this letter also? Can a copy of this letter be furnished to all the members of the Commission?

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
The Secretariat will please furnish all members of the Commission, copies of this Philippine Bar Association communication. So referred, no objections.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
We go to item No. 7, Plenary Discussion, Summing up. The Chairman has the floor.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Dear colleagues, as we all know, we are in to the first week of the last month of our deliberations and our work. This is a clear call for each and all of us and our working committees to proceed with deliberate speed and wisdom to complete the committee work so that the proposals of the committee can be addressed to the plenary for reaction of the whole Commission. And the burden and the urgency of our work is, I think, underlined by the fact that we, at the same time, in the next couple of weeks, will have to undertake the consultations expected of us in Metro Manila and rest of Luzon. You very well know the urgency of our work, so I suggest a very gentle reminder, this is not really necessary. Mr. Floor Leader.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chairman, I move...

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

Mr. Chairman, corollary to what you said, as Co-Chair of Committee on Style, I was wondering if we could set a deadline for all committees to submit their final reports to the Committee on Style.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Please defer the action because it will follow on item No. 8. The Organization of the Sponsorship Committee will be the one organized by the Committee Chairman for them to submit to Committee on Style, the work of all committees.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Will you elaborate on that, Mr. Floor Leader, please?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, I move that we organize the Committee on Sponsorship, to be chaired by the Chairman himself and all the members will be the chairmen of the different committees. The purpose is to see to it that all committees have finished their work. And then the Committee on Sponsorship will go over it; after going over it, that's the time it will be delivered to the Committee on Style. This should be done faster and earlier.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

What will be submitted for final deliberations of the Commission as a whole are those proposals that have been gone over by the Committee on Style.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

The different committees approved by the Plenary and given to the Committee on Style already.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

Just the same, won't it be proper to set the deadline now, considering that we are in the homestretch of our work?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

We have a proposed calendar for the Committee on Style. So my proposal is for the Committee on Sponsorship to finish the job and submit it to Plenary and for this to be submitted to the Committee on Style in time according to the proposed calendar.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Our Secretariat will have to reissue our ConCom calendar in case some of you might have lost or misplaced your calendar. We have indicated there, the various stages of production of our work including the schedule of Plenary sessions as well as the deadline for submission of the final draft. Secretariat, kindly send us additional copies of the ConCom calendar.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE OF COMMISSIONER GARCIA

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Commissioner Garcia, please.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

I ask to be recognized on a question of personal and collective privilege.

Last Monday, there appeared on the front page of the Philippine Star, an item captioned "ConCom wants to clip SC powers" bylined by one Mike Frialde. I had to write the Star because a news item like this can easily get us into trouble. We do not have to incur some potential adversaries, where there is really none. Now, yesterday, my very brief letter to the ... this is what I wrote to the Philippine Star.

Appearing on the Star's issue of today, November 14, is the item "ConCom wants to clip SC Court powers" and your byline, Mr. Frialde, to the effect that the ConCom Committee on Justice voted unanimously for the deletion of the second paragraph of Section 1, Article VIII of the Constitution. To set the record straight, I did not vote in favor of the deletion. In fact, I expressed the view that it would not be prudent or practical to touch the provisions of the Judiciary in the Constitution without first getting the thoughts of the Justices of the Supreme Court. In the interest of truth and accuracy, I hope that you can make some clarifications on the matter.

Yesterday, there appeared in the inside pages my letter but the editor's note was disturbing because this said that the item was based on a press release of the ConCom wherein it was reported that voting was unanimous. So I would like to find out whether there is actually an office in the Commission that issues press releases, and whether there is some mechanism or some procedure by which these press releases can be checked for accuracy.

You see, Mr. Chairman, as I have always pointed out, we should be somewhat careful in dealing with some agencies in our government, particularly the Supreme Court because our efforts or the efforts of Congress will, I suppose, reach the Supreme Court before it reaches the people in plebiscite, considering the present attitude of the Senators on the issue of charter change.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Commissioner Garcia, your expression of concern is well taken. May we hear from any member? Commissioner Jimeno, please?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chairman, the Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary, the beautiful Rita Linda V. Jimeno, be recognized.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Thank you. Commissioner Jimeno please.

COMMISSIONER JIMENO.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. For the record, we did not issue any press release to the Philippine Star. In fact, the reporter did not interview this person. And to take pains to correct what appears to be a misimpression because of that news report, I went the rounds of the TV stations that day. I got interviewed by RPN 9, I also went to ANC together with Commissioner Lambino to explain that it is not the intention of the committee to clip the powers of the Judiciary, rather to make the process correct because there's a Section 5, which provides the functions of the Supreme Court which allows the questioning of the validity of contracts by filing actions in lower courts or administrative bodies. I just want to set the record straight that we did not make any release to the newspapers. We don't know where that came from.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Let me just state that neither did the Chair of the Commission nor our Secretary-General issue any such statement.

COMMISSIONER NAVAL.

In connection with that remark of the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary and Commissioner Garcia, may I make on record that I vehemently objected to the proposal of Commissioner Lambino for the deletion of the second paragraph of Section 1 of that Article on the Judiciary. In fact, we had a brief exchange of views on the legal aspect of that provision. During the voting, the records will show that I voted against the deletion. I think that Commissioner Lambino and the Honorable Chairman of the Committee can attest to that fact.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

The main issue is that this information or news item appeared. Maybe, I would like to ask the Chairman of Committee on the Judiciary if it would be in order for her to address the Philippine Star to make a clarification or correction.

COMMISSIONER JIMENO.

We will do so, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Commissioner Garcia, would you favor that?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Mr. Chairman, yes, I would favor that but I think we can go one step further and check whether actually there was a press release coming from ConCom which states that the committee voted unanimously. I have no objection if it had stated that the committee voted in favor of the deletion. What I was concerned about personally was the statement that it was unanimous, considering that there are several members of the committee including yours truly. They might check as to the membership to find out who really voted to delete that provision - the second paragraph of Section 1. Perhaps we can request the Chairman to check it out with the Philippine Star if there was indeed such a press release.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Commissioner Angeles, please.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

Mr. Chairman, to avoid further confusion in the matter of releasing official statements from any committee in the ConCom, in this Consultative Commission, I would like to suggest that we avoid being interviewed by this media after every Committee meeting because everyone has his own views. I have not submitted myself to an interview for the reason that I find it not appropriate to be issuing statements. Perhaps we should designate, no less than the Chairman of this Commission, maybe the Secretary General is the only one authorized to issue statements so that it will be official. We have so many meetings and we are being intercepted by media representatives. Sometimes we do not even know and we are not even sure of their official accreditation. May I call the attention of the Secretary General, that the media representatives here be officially accredited, so that any official statements...

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

They are all accredited. The media are all accredited.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

We have been misquoted many times. We have been even criticized by a member of this Commission questioning the integrity of this Commission. I feel that we should be able to correct this because we still have about four or five weeks of work here. We will continue experiencing this problem of being misquoted or for issuing statements that are not necessarily the true reflections of the decision of the Committee meeting. I would like to recommend that we should have perhaps a centralized media release.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Let me explain. We don't have a centralized releasing but the PIA under the Office of the President collects sometimes what we discussed here. Minsan kasi, the media has a nice way of getting into the core of problem. Yan ang trabaho nila, eh. So, as the Chairman said before, they are allowed to talk to any of the members. We can not stop them. Iba na yung when a member of the Commission starts attacking the Commission. That's a different story. But as far as the media is concerned, hindi pa masyado malaki kasalanan nila.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

Let me amend my proposal then. If there is any statement that will be issued by a particular committee, let chairman of committee be interviewed and issue that statement so that there will be no misquotation or misunderstanding about press releases. This incident could have been avoided if, for example, no less than Commissioner Jimeno was the one asked to issue a statement about whatever deliberations or decisions were made by the Committee on Judiciary. Then there will be no mistake.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

With respect to the press, the news we are discussing initially, we have asked the Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary to make an explanation. I don't think we should curtail the right of any member of our Commission to speak to any accredited media because we do want to disseminate information about our work and we regard all our colleagues as responsible colleagues, as long as their reporting should be accurate. If it's not yet the approved action of a committee, it should not be so reported. Or if it has not been acted upon or decided in Plenary than it should not be so reported. We leave it to the sense of responsibility and accuracy of our colleagues to deal with the media when they are asked. It is a great contribution of every member of the Commission to communicate with the media as long as we keep within the bounds of our accuracy of comments.

COMMISSIONER CALISIN.

For me, as a media practitioner also and as a member of the ConCom, whenever we go back to our own jurisdiction, our own city, province or LGU, the media inevitably come to us. If our right of expression and reporting to our constituency via local or national media practitioners will be curtailed, then the more that we cannot explain the work that we are doing here.

In fact, there is supposed to be media every time we are in session. But only a few can be counted with our fingers. No wonder why, in fact, the People's Court is being covered by the media. This must be, as much as I'm concerned, more newsworthy as that because we are framing the lifeblood of the Republic. That is why it will just be incumbent upon a member of this Commission or an individual Commissioner to be vigilant to whatever comes out of his or her mouth. That it should always be based on truth, accuracy because that is the principle in the media - truth and justice. It would be unjust if our rights of expression as ConCom Commissioners will be curtailed by any one of us. May I suggest, still for that purpose, we should set a policy. I would like to call the attention of the Secretary General to set a policy how it could be carried out without trouble when it is interpreted and written by our media brothers, nationally and locally. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

May I just add as a media practitioner, that it takes two hands to clap. We should not keep blaming the media na konti lang ang kasalanan nila as if they are here to make mistakes or make trouble for us. They are here to cover us, to tell the public what we are doing. It takes two hands to clap. It also is incumbent of us to stop restraining each other, with words like "Oh, wag nating i-didistribute sa media ang matrix na to, huwag i-didistribute sa public." These are the things that hamper the thinking and the media relations of each Commissioner. Ito po ang nakakasira sa atin. If we allow each Commissioner to freely speak with the media, and of course not misrepresent himself or herself and say "this is my personal view, this is not the view of the entire committee or the Plenary" then we will have a better press than what other members of the Commission think that we are getting right now.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

May we close this discussion but thank everybody who has participated in it especially to Commissioner Garcia for taking this with us and we have an appropriate action to be taken by the Chairman of Committee on Judiciary. Thank you. May we move on Mr. Floor Leader?

SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIONS

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, we go to item No. 9, Schedule of Consultations in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon. I move that we recognize the Secretary General on the matter.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Okay, can we call on Commissioner Pedrosa, please, to explain the Manila consultations? The Vice President for Metro Manila, Commissioner Pedrosa, is on top of the whole operations of the consultations of Metro Manila. Commissioner Pedrosa, you have the floor.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Basically, we had a conference with Mayor Atienza this morning. He wants to take a very active role because he wants constitutional amendment to be understood and supported by Manila, which he considers his constituency. So, originally the plan was to have it on the 22nd and he would deliver his speech in the afternoon and we would do our thing, introduction of ConCom,

etc. in the morning. But he vetoed that, he said, he spoke strongly about his taking control – speaking to the people, and making his own way of persuasion. So it's been moved to the 23rd. We start from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. We'll follow the same format, but he said that's entirely up to us to do the workshops. But he will be there before the workshops happen because he said he will be able to make it succeed, but he must have firsthand engagement, speaking with the audience. Basically that's it – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We have the usual speech, introduction by Chairman Abueva, then Lito will give the overview and introduction of Mayor Atienza, then Mayor Atienza himself will then give an overview for the audience. They are expecting at least 650 people if they can fit into the Bulwagan Hall. They will serve breakfast, lunch, merienda for free.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Can you advise us on the structure and process of these consultations? Are we going to follow the format we had in the South?

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Basically, except for the start - it will be a keynote speech by him, of course, after the national anthem, invocation, introduction by you and ...

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

No, I mean the workshops, for example.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

It's the same. I told him that.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Similar? The three main sets of issues.

Commissioner Pedrosa.

Yes.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Please note that we have scheduled a Plenary in the afternoon. Is this feasible if the consultations will go on through the afternoon or early afternoon?

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Yeah, I think, yes. We have only to decide... the press conference will have to be in the morning.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Up to 1:00 p.m., we hope, so that we can have our Plenary still in the afternoon.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

No, no, no. We will have a problem if we have a Plenary, because it will end 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon, unless the Commissioners want to continue, and they can come here and the Plenary will be from 5:00 up. Pero, the way we look at it, it's very close, kasi iba-ibang venues ito. All in Metro Manila, and all of the Commissioners are asked to be present in all of the consultations.

To help Commissioner Pedrosa here, on the 23rd, which is Wednesday, we have two... No, let's start on the 22nd. On the 22nd, we have consultation in Laguna. The team leader there is

Commissioner Nelia Gonzalez. They have already about 25 or 30 Commissioners going to Laguna on the 22nd. In Laguna, at the compound in UP Los Banos. I think it's PCCARD.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

I now have the program for Manila and there will be a press briefing, in which the mayor wants to be also present. That will be at 3:00 p.m. end of consultation and then press briefing. So we will be through at about 4.00 in the afternoon.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Effectively, we are canceling the plenary for Wednesday, the 23rd.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Yes.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Please take note.

COMMISSIONER ABUEG.

Twenty-three (23) Plenary cancelled?

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Cancelled.

COMMISSIONER ABUEG.

What if we object?

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

So far it's on.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

...23, 24, 25 all cancelled because all of the consultations will end at about 3:00 or 4:00. Yun ang suggestion ko. It can end at 3:00 or 4:00, the consultations in Metro Manila, all over. If you want to continue with the Plenary, we can come here at 4:00 or 5:00. That will be our decision, if we want to.

COMMISSIONER ABUEG.

Mr. Chairman, on the 24th, the National Commission on Indigenous People has also set a consultation in San Mateo, Rizal, where a number of delegates had been invited to this consultation. It's a whole day consultation 24, Thursday.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

If that is the case, then we can coordinate with Commissioner Pedrosa to also assign some Commissioners there.

COMMISSIONER ABUEG.

No, I think Commissioner Adamat probably may be able to give the names of those who have been invited to this consultation of NCIP.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chairman, lets go one by one. Let's begin with Monday. Where do we go on Monday, Commissioner Pedrosa? Monday, 21st?

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
There's nothing on the 21st.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Nothing.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
No, let me explain, okay? On Monday the 21st, we have the Committee on Form of Government at 9.00 a.m. here.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.
Secretary General, we are not ready to present by Monday. Monday may be too close.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Commissioner Angeles, we have a problem there, because after that, the next meeting will be two weeks after. If we can try to rush this and work this thing out because the Committee on Structure of the Republic will be meeting here at 3.00 p.m. So we would like the Committee on the Form of Government to meet at 9:00 here, and after that the Committee on Structure of the Republic at 3 p.m. because pareho-pareho ang mga myembro nito.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
You are talking about Monday, the 21st?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Monday, the 21st. And then we have also at the same time the Committee on General Provisions, Constitutional Commissions and Amendments and Transitory Provisions at 3 pm at the same time with the Structure of the Republic.

COMMISSIONER BELLO.
I would like to confirm that as the Co-chair of the Committee on Constitutional Commissions, Transitory Provisions, Amendments and General Provisions, we have invited former Commissioner of COA, Ursal. He has accepted our invitation to be here on Monday at 3 pm. We have to accommodate him because he has already officially accepted the invitation. Similarly, on Wednesday, Commissioner Karina David has accepted our invitation. She has invited us to be in her office at the Civil Service Commission. So we are asking the Commission, if the members of our Committee will be allowed to attend because we have invited Karina David and she has accepted. Civil Service Commission at Wednesday, 10.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
What time again?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.
10.00 a.m., Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
On Wednesday the 23rd?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

Wednesday the 23rd, Civil Service Commission. Karina David has accepted our invitation to be at the office of the Commissioner . And on Monday, Commissioner Ursal, former Commission on Audit has also accepted our invitation to be held here at SEAMEO at 3:00 in the afternoon.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

What day?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

Monday for Commissioner Ursal.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Monday the 21st?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

Monday the 21st, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Okay, restate again which Committee is that?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

Committee on Constitutional Commissions, Transitory Provisions, General Provisions and Amendments will meet on Monday at 3 p.m. to listen to the presentation of Commissioner Ursal and the same committee will again meet on Wednesday morning at 10:00 at the office of the Commissioner Karina David of the Civil Service Commission. They have both accepted our invitation.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Can I just ask why we have to go there instead of her coming here if she is being invited? Why are we going to her office?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

I beg your pardon?

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

I would like to understand why we have to go to her office instead of her coming here like the other invited resource speakers?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

The tenor of our letter was for her to either come here or any place or venue.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

We are on a very tight schedule, anyway so it's a good excuse...

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

We will try to convey that information to her to be here at 10:00 in the morning. We will request that and we will advise you.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

We need to know the time...

COMMISSIONER BELLO.
It's 10:00 in the morning.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
10.00? We will be in Manila...

COMMISSIONER BELLO.
Precisely, Commissioner Pedrosa, precisely why we have to make coordination with you that our Committee, at least, maybe 50% of our members should be present because Karina David has accepted our invitation.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
Later today, they will be releasing the names of the different teams we will have in Manila. It will be up to the members, those who were appointed, if they prefer to be with Ms. David or to go to Manila.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.
Excuse me, may I call on the Secretariat. If you can type this on your computer and project this on our screen, these various committee schedules, it would be very helpful.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Angeles is complaining because 9:00 to him is very early, so he's suggesting 10.00 in the morning. So the Committee on the Structure of the Republic anyway can meet at the same time at 3:00.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Okay the Form of Government Chairman Angeles is asking for 10:00 a.m. meeting instead of 9:00 on Monday, November 21. The Committee on Structure of the Republic will be in the afternoon at 3:00. At the same time, we have 4 or 5 members of the Committee on General Provisions, Constitutional Commissions, Amendments and Transitory Provisions which will also be meeting at 3:00. That's for the 21st. Now let me continue please. On the 22nd, that's a Tuesday, there is going to be a consultation in Los Baños. We have about 25 Commissioners who are going there with Commissioner Nelia Gonzales. She is the team leader. It will be held at UP Los Baños. We have people who will guide you there. It will start at 3:00 p.m. There is going to be a van, several vans that will wait for you here at 7:30 here at Innotech. Assembly is at 7:30 here. The whole day yan and then babalik din dito at 6:30 in the afternoon at the same day of 22nd, Tuesday.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
Sinali mo ba yung 22nd ng, there will be a special dinner by the Makati businessmen? That's going to be selected only.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Selected lang yon. Sila Señor Varela, Donald Dee. Kayo na mag-arrange non. They will tell us who they will invite. They will invite some us so they will work this thing out in Makati. On the 23rd Wednesday, there are two groups of consultation. One is in Bulwagang Villegas - Manila City Hall and the other one is at Pasig City Convention Center. Now let me explain. The reason for this is, in Manila we would like to involve the Mayor. Mayor Atienza is requesting to be involved here in the morning ceremonies, and then also the workshop. So therefore we are moving it to the 23rd, Wednesday, at 8 o'clock in the morning. 8 o'clock to 5 o'clock. The reason for 8 o'clock is if there is a registration and the Mayor would like to have breakfast and press

conference with all of those who can attend. Señora Pedrosa will give us the list later on of those who are going to be in Manila, and those also who are going to attend the Pasig, Taguig, Pateros, Mandaluyong City, Makati City, San Juan in Pasig City Convention Center, plus those who are going to be invited by the Makati group. Is that very clear?

The start is at 8 o'clock. We start all the time early at 8 o'clock. We have the same program-- we start our program at 8 including registration, breakfast and press conference. Please be there on time.

Manila is Bulwagang Villegas - Manila City Hall. We have people waiting for you there. For Pasig City, Taguig City, Pateros, Mandaluyong, Makati, San Juan, the venue is Pasig City Convention Center. We are going to give you all of this later on, *I-explain ko lang*.

The businessmen, since they are businessmen, they will have, I think, their own time at around nine or ten. Señor Varela what time? Okay, they are arranging, they will tell us.

Now, let's go to Thursday, November 24.

COMMISSIONER ABUEG.

Excuse me, Mr. Secretary, on the 23rd, Wednesday, the Committee on Suffrage has a scheduled briefing at 10 in the morning. May we know whether this meeting will proceed? Committee on Suffrage, 10 o'clock, Wednesday.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

I think Señor Amor why don't you just cancel that *mukhang kukulangin na tayo ng tao kasi* we have four things going at the same day, *o 'di ba*. I suggest that you just cancel that for the next available date.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Mr. Chairman, may I suggest a procedure in our consultation meetings especially on fundamental issues? I suggest that we adopt the equal time principle, because I noticed that in some consultation meetings there are three speakers on one side and only one on the other side. And yet each is only given ten minutes. So you have situation where one who is proposing a particular idea has 30 minutes while the only one opposing has only 10 minutes. I think this is not really a fair procedure. I suggest we adopt equal time. If there are three speakers for one proposal and they decide to have only one speaking for them, then let them do it.

I experienced that in one consultation. There were four speakers on one side and I was the only one on the other side. Each one of them was given ten minutes, and I was only given ten minutes. So I suggest that we adopt the equal time policy, Mr. Chairman, for all the issues.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Can there be more comments on that? Commissioner Pedrosa? Okay, you got the advice of Commissioner Espina?

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

I agree that we should have equal time, but let me just say very frankly that I think we have been very liberal. I mean since we come from opposing views, I have always thought that so much time was given to the opposing...

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.
Let us formalize that principle of equal time.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
That's good. I believe that. That's correct.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.
However, many... the speakers are on one side, they should be given equal time.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
I agree with you.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.
Thank you. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Can we go back to Thursday, November 24, because this is very important? After this we still have to discuss Luzon.

Thursday, November 24, the consultation will be for Quezon City and Marikina City. They will be held here at the Philippine Social Science Center – this is just a stone's throw away from INNOTECH, Commonwealth Avenue. Thursday, November 24, consultation for Quezon City and Marikina City at the Philippine Social Science Center, Commonwealth Avenue, 8:00 to 4:00 or 8:00 to 5:00. Eight o'clock in the morning because it includes breakfast.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Tuloy yung Plenary natin.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Kung gusto nyo ng Plenary, okay lang, malapit lang sa kwan... This is 24th. You just walk from the other side to here. We can have our Plenary here at 5 p.m. or at 6 p.m. Five will be perfect. So we can have our Plenary on November 24 after the consultation in Quezon City and Marikina here at the Philippine Social Science Center. Can you put that all in your calendar please? We will also give you a copy of this.

Now Friday, November 25, Friday, the consultation will be here in Parañaque City for the cities of Muntinlupa, Parañaque, Las Piñas and Pasay City. The consultation will be at the Pearl Plaza, Quirino Avenue, Tambo, Parañaque City. Don't worry, we will give you a copy of this.

COMMISSIONER SORIANO.
Time?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Ay, di ba sabi ko 8 to 4, 8 to 4, every day 8 to 4? Okay now, this is the first time the Commission will work on a Saturday. We will have –

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Just a minute. On Friday, we will cancel the Plenary?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
We will cancel the Plenary on November 25, Friday.

Okay. Saturday, the last group of cities will be Caloocan, Malabon, Valenzuela and Navotas. The venue will be Bulwagang Katipunan Main Function Hall, City Hall, Caloocan City. Sister, you forgot to ask the time. 8:00 to 4:00 again. Caloocan City, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela at the Bulwagang Katipunan Main Function Hall. And we will also not have a Plenary after that.

Now, all of the buses will be here at 7 a.m. So please remember. Don't worry about breakfast; we will have breakfast served at the site. So the bus is here at INNOTECH every day at 7:00 a.m. *O kung gusto nyo magpunta don*, that's okay. But for those *na walang sasakyan* will be here. For those who want to go directly, we'll provide you a map. Any questions on Metro Manila before I go to Luzon?

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

Mr. Secretary General, I notice that we will have consultations in Manila on November 23. Then there's a Group 2, November 23, for the cities of Pasig, Taguig, Pateros, also on November 23? Is this simultaneous?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Simultaneous *ito*. Simultaneous. So any other questions before we move on to Luzon, please?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Yes, yes. We canceled Sunday?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

I want to assign also Sunday from 6:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening. If you want to lead a team... [protests] Okay, we will cancel Sunday. Okay, *wala yang 27 ha*, Sunday. Okay *na, wala na tayong* questions.

COMMISSIONER CALISIN.

Can we entertain questions regarding consultations in the South Luzon?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Mamaya na. Tapusin muna natin itong Metro Manila.

COMMISSIONER JURADO.

Just a point of information, Mr. Chairman, what is the meaning of DAP that is annotated in pencil on the left side of our information sheet? It says DAP.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Forget it. These are the people who will get the notes for us.

COMMISSIONER JURADO.

Forget it, okay. Second, you said Group 1, 2, 3 -- is this implying these will consist of different people?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Of what?

COMMISSIONER JURADO.

It says Group 1, 2, 3, etc.... is this saying each group will consist of different people?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

No, no, no. It just means we group Manila cities. *Yung mga tao*, all of us are supposed to be there. *Ito*, grouping *lang ito ng mga* town, places to visit, because we have to get every representative from the barangays.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, if we go to Luzon I think this has to be divided into teams. May I suggest we have a 5-minute recess and then you break it into teams? So I move that we have a 5-minute recess.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Recess of 5 minutes.

It was 4:23 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At this juncture Chairman Abueva relinquished the Chair to Commissioner Garcia.

At 4:34 p.m., the meeting resumed.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, I move that we continue recognizing the Secretary General on matters of scheduling for Luzon.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

The Secretary General is recognized. Proceed.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Kindly repeat that announcement of the assignment on consultation in Luzon. I'm just requesting that the suggestion of the Floor Leader be repeated because we were not able to hear it clearly.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

May the Floor Leader please comment?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

May we continue? I move that we recognize Commissioner Espina.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Mr. Chairman, I was requesting that the earlier suggestion of the Floor Leader be repeated because when it was made the members were still moving around and we could not hear it very clearly. So I'm requesting that his announcement on the scheduling of Luzon consultations be repeated.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Mr. Chair, the Secretary General is about to announce the scheduling of Luzon including the teams who will go to the different areas. I move that we recognize Commissioner Bello.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Commissioner Bello is recognized.

COMMISSIONER BELLO.
Yes, Mr. Chair, this is in connection with the earlier schedule. We would like to invite the Chair and Co-chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Accountability of Public Officers to join us on November 23 because this is going to be the Civil Service Commission presentation, and we have a common interest. So we are conveying the invitation to all the members, but particularly the Chair and Co-chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Accountability of Public Officers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
And what does the Chair of the Committee on Civil Service have to say on the suggestion of Commissioner Bello?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
The Chair is outside talking.
[Laughter]

COMMISSIONER BIAN.
We will be there, Mr. Chair, on Wednesday since we also sent the communication yesterday to Commissioner David asking her to comment on the outputs of the Committee on Civil Service. We will be there on Wednesday, 10 o'clock. Thank you for the invitation.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
May we go back to Secretary General for scheduling for Luzon?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
The Secretary General is recognized.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Okay. The Luzon consultation will actually start within the week of 28 to Saturday, December 3. But there will be some changes. We'll go one by one *para makita natin kung ano ito*. I have not finished dividing the teams yet of the individuals. We will give to you the individual names by the Plenary next week. But we have already worked out and fixed the teams that will go to these places.

First, we have Team A - *hindi na ito kagaya nung groupings natin sa Visayas and Mindanao. Iba na ang mga team leaders, iba na rin ang membership*. So the team going to Region 1 – that means Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Abra – they will be the first group, this is Team A. We broke them into two groups because one will have a consultation in Vigan, while the other will have a consultation in Dagupan. Except that both of these groups will take the Philippine Airlines to Laoag. The second team, from Laoag, will just go down to Dagupan. Let me explain.

Team A, which is Group 1 and 2 for Region 1, will leave Manila for Laoag 10 a.m. Thursday, December 1. Don't worry, we will give you later the scheduling. On December 1, 2005, they will take the Philippine Airlines and land at Laoag International Airport. The first team will be arriving there from the Laoag International Airport. One group will go down to Dagupan –it's a 3.5-hour motor. While the other group will stay in Vigan courtesy of Governor Chavit Singson. At the end of the day –

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

Mr. Sec. Gen., suggestion lang po, *mas madali mag-Manila-Dagupan kesa Laoag-Dagupan. Mas matipid pati.*

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

In that case, there is an alternative. With that alternative, we have also this group that will go direct from Manila by *bus kung gusto nyo*. Manila to Dagupan. So that's about four and a half or a five-hour drive, which is okay, so there's no problem there. Except that one should be in Vigan and one should be Dagupan. This will take care of Region 1.

They will be back both in Manila on December 3. The reason for this is simple. Governor Victor Ortega is inviting the two groups to stay in San Fernando because he'd like to show San Fernando's development hideaway. There's a little consultation there, but it is more vacation than anything else. So the two groups are invited courtesy of Governor Victor Ortega for an overnight stay. And December 2 *na ito, mag-overnight dun*. And you will be back in Manila on December 3, or you can stay up to Sunday if you want, courtesy again of Victor Ortega.

So far, no questions for Region 1? *Isa-isa lang muna tayo* because there will be complications later on.

Now the people who have been assigned here, *hindi pa natin na-formalize* here because we are still working on the membership of the teams. But these are the two teams that will work out the Region 1 group. If there are any other questions, *ngayon na please*, because I will go now to Team B. Now most of the members of Group 1 and the 2 groups are mostly from Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte and those areas – *mga Ilocano rin, so awan ti problema datoy*.

Team B will have a consultation in Tuguegarao. This is Region 2. The group in Tuguegarao will be meeting the people of Region 2, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Ifugao and Kalinga Apayao. The meeting will be... Cordillera *ito*, Region 2 and Cordillera. They will leave Manila by Air Philippines on Wednesday, November 30. So you notice that this team will leave earlier. The flight to Tuguegarao City is via Air Philippines, God bless us all. It will leave at 12:40 p.m., and hopefully arrive at Tuguegarao at 1:30 pm. Don't worry because Chairman Abueva has already taken this route, and the route is 10 hrs if you want to drive. So it's either Air Philippines or 10 hour-drive. You will stay overnight in Tuguegarao, Hotel Roma, this is November 30. You leave here at 12:40, Air Philippines, Hotel Roma in Tuguegarao. This is a very nice hotel, I was told. And the next day, December 1, you will have your consultation at the People's Gym of Tuguegarao City. The consultation is, including breakfast, is from 7:00 in the morning to 7:00 in the evening, and you will have another second night at Tuguegarao City in that nice Hotel Roma. December 2, after that, you can also leave for Manila via Air Philippines again. For the survivors, 1:50 is the ETD, the ETA is 2:40.

The consultation is December 1 at People's Gym Rizal, including Isabela, Batanes, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Ifugao and Kalinga Apayao. This is Region 2. Any questions so far?

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Mr. Secretary General, *ito po bang consultation na ito* will be considering all the issues from transitory to form of government to suffrage to election reforms?

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

The basic format still is the three, the shift and patrimony. If you want to add, *bahala na kayo doon*. You can play it by ear.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Okay, thank you.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Team C is going this time to the south, but this is beautiful because we have some areas here which are.. *tama ba ito*, Team C, Aurora at Mindoro? *Saan ba ito?*

No, no, no. I have a different here, sorry. Team C is for Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province. They will hold their consultation at Baguio, so this is the Baguio people. This is going to be handled, of course, by Commissioner Betty Tabanda who is a native of Baguio – not an Igorot, but a native of Baguio. Wednesday, November 30 *kayo aalis*. You also will take the Asian Spirit, but a lot of the commissioners said they would rather not take the Asian Spirit but would rather take the bus, which is okay, which means you leave INNOTECH at 6 or 7 in the morning going to Baguio. They are not very comfortable with Asian Spirit. Anyway when you reach Baguio, the start of the consultation is in the afternoon at 1 pm, ends at 6 o'clock. You rest overnight in beautiful Baguio. I don't know yet, we have not talked to those who are going to give us free lodging... give me another day or two. Baguio City, we have to look for free lodging here or else we have a very nice park, you just bring blankets.

From Baguio, at night, you will drive down after that to Clark Field, December 2, Friday, because the consultation for Clark will be for ... no, Central Luzon: Aurora, Tarlac, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Bataan and Zambales. So this is from November 30 to December 2. You will be back in Manila, motoring from Clark for only about 2 or 3 hours from EDSA, and from EDSA to INNOTECH, maybe about 4 hours. That will be December 2. Any questions so far on the teams?

Now, we have another team for the Bicol area. We have one team for the Bicol area. Señor Naval and Señor Calisin will be heading this team. They will leave Manila, this time by PAL, leaving Manila 7:15 for Naga City where they will have the first consultation in Naga City and then rest overnight in Naga City. I heard Villa Caceres is a very nice place. The next day, after breakfast you will motor to Legazpi City where you have another consultation and rest overnight at Legazpi City. The next day, you can ride back or take the PAL back to Manila December 2. So that is the team that will go to Bicol.

Now the people there, the region there, we have already included the people from Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catandaunes and Masbate. It is going to be first in Naga and then Legazpi.

Now we have a special team, because this is the request also of some of the executives there which we thought is nice for us. It's an extra team. In Occidental, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, and Marinduque.

COMMISSIONER CALISIN.

Just a clarification, Mr. Secretary General, before we move on. If there is still a possibility of consideration, because we have six provinces in the Bicol region, Camarines Norte and Sur are adjoining. The difficulty is for the people of two island provinces in Bicol, namely Catanduanes and Masbate. The venue for consultation is in Legazpi City. Now for people to participate in the consultation from Catanduanes is three hours travel by sea. Drop-off point is Tabaco, which is about 45 minutes from Legazpi City. So it's now three hours and 45 minutes. While those from Masbate, another three hours to Sorsogon, and about two hours to get to Legazpi. If it is in

Pilar, Sorsogon, you have one hour from Pilar, Sorsogon to Legazpi City. So the difficulty is the venue.

Of course the most reasonable place to conduct as the center is Legazpi City, but you have to consider those people in the island provinces because of the difficulty of the distance and transportation. *Baka kung umangal sila na hindi sila makarating*, and they might have some comments and objections to just have two venues in the Bicol region.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

So what do you suggest, Vice-Governor?

COMMISSIONER CALISIN

We have to consult people from Catanduanes if they are amenable, the local government officials, because they will be the ones in the front lines in order to gather people. *Siguro* if we can have two -- for Sorsogon and Masbate, and then Catanduanes and Albay. For your consideration.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

In fact we have considered this already, but it was the advice of the LGUs there, the Regional Development Council already advised us *na itong dalawa* because before we were thinking of cutting the team and going with what you want to do. But it was the Regional Development Council who said *itong dalawa na lang*.

COMMISSIONER CALISIN

Okay, I'm just airing it out for your consideration. I've been interviewed because of course we have tri-media in the Bicol region. Their comments were again for us to consider... we used to have always the venue of our consultation – I think except in Metro Manila – the venue is in the hotels. If you consider *doon sa atin... sa 5-star hotel*. So *parang ang dating* is we are a consultation only for the elite. So, why not just hold this one in a cheaper place? In the City of Legazpi in the province of Albay, we have the government-owned gym. For the province of Albay, we have Astrodome, the capacity is 7000 pax. In the city, we have also the Ibalong Center for Recreation... that's about 5000 capacity. While in Casablanca, it can only take 300-500. Also in Villa Caceres, I think it can also take around... I think Commissioner Naval is much more knowledgeable considering he is also from Naga City.

So these are small places which can accommodate only less than a thousand people. So I think the maximum is 500-700. So considering the area and population of our area of consultation, in Albay, four provinces, are we sure we can accommodate if we have delegations from Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Masbate, per province in a 500 or a 300 delegation of different sectors, cross sections of the society all in one hall which can accommodate only 500 to 700 people? So the cross sections of society will come to the venue. We have to consider that because *ang sabi nilaour meeting in the Visayas and Mindanao were held in hotels*, so how can we welcome the... *parang hesitant yung people, may doubts, may kaba na pumunta dun*. So *ang makakarating lang sa atin, mga nakokonsulta lang natin yung mga middle class up of the constituency*.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

There's a request for a recess of 5 minutes?

COMMISSIONER BELLO.

Before the recess, we would like to announce Commissioner Karina David has accepted our invitation for her to come here on Wednesday, 10 a.m., November 23. So for information of the members of the Committee on General Provisions, Constitutional Commissions, Amendments and Transitory Provisions, the venue will be here on Wednesday. And we are extending the invitation as announced earlier to Committee on Civil Service and Accountability of Public Officers.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Okay, recess for five minutes.

It was 5.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 5.07 p.m., the session was resumed.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

The session is resumed.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

I move that we recognize the Secretary General.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

The Secretary General is recognized.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Can we ask everybody, please, to come back. Okay. The suggestion of Vice Governor, Commissioner Calisin, is being looked into now by a group of our staff to see how we can solve the problems there. Meantime, if we don't have any other problems from Region I to Region IV, we will proceed.

Itong special team. We formed a special team mainly because of the request of the people in Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Romblon and Marinduque. So, we decided to form one special team there of about eight people to go to Calapan on Tuesday, November 29—*'yun lang ang slot natin e*, November 29.

They will motor to Batangas International Port, Batangas City. And at 11 o'clock of November 29, they will take the RoRo Starlight—that's one hour and 30 minutes—to Calapan City, November 29. *Meron daw 45 minutes fastcraft, pero 'yun nagbigay sa atin ng libre e. Alam mo, naghahanap lang ako ng magbigay sa atin ng libre e.* So, we were able to get a sponsor for this RoRo Starlight which is one hour and thirty minutes compared to, if we have to pay a Supercat, that's 45 minutes. So, we spend more if we take the Supercat. That's no problem because you will be arriving there at 12:30, in time for the consultation at Calapan City. The consultation again will be at the Filipiniana Hotel, which is the hotel *daw* where the President normally stays when she goes there. The workshop will end at seven o'clock.

The next day, November 30, you will go back the same way, motor to Calapan port and then to Batangas City again, *itong* RORO pa rin, one hour and thirty minutes. And then, back to Manila by 4:30 p.m.

November 30. So, this is the program for Luzon. The members of the team will be given to you next meeting on Wednesday during our plenary. So we will have time.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Thursday. The Plenary is Thursday.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Kelan ba 'yon, kelan ba 'yon, the Plenary?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.

Thursday, the plenary on Wednesday is cancelled. So, the Plenary will be on Thursday.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Basta we will give you all the names by next week during our Plenary here.

Now, another thing is, I want to announce something from the business group here. They have a special arrangement for a consultation for the businessmen all over Metro Manila and all over the Philippines. Ah, all over Metro Manila. I will pass you on to the kingpin of the businessmen here, Señor Varela.

COMMISSIONER VARELA.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Commissioner Varela is recognized.

COMMISSIONER VARELA.

Thank you. Well, ah, we would like to extend the invitation to all our colleagues in the Commission if you can attend the dialogue that we have arranged with the various leaders of the various business organizations around Metro Manila, principally through the respective chambers of commerce in Metro Manila.

We also invited our friends from labor, headed here by Mr. Quito Mendoza who will be sending the leaders of several labor groups that he is heading. This will be at Dusit on Wednesday. Dusit Hotel, dinner time, seven o'clock.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.

Will you repeat, please? This is an invitation also for dinner.

COMMISSIONER VARELA.

Yes, this is an invitation for dinner.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
And it is going to be at Dusit Hotel, on...

COMMISSIONER VARELA.
Wednesday.

COMMISSIONER LORENZANA.
Wednesday, after our consultation in Manila and Pasig.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.
Can I just ask for a longer period between the Manila colloquium and the dinner at Dusit? Because we need to get from Manila to Makati. So, I would think that dinner should be 7:30. But it depends on them. They can always meet ahead, though we will arrive about 7:30. *Pwede ba 'yon, Mr. Varela?* Yeah, okay, 7.30?

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Commissioner Romualdo is recognized.

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
May I know if there is no more schedule so I can bring up a certain matter, if I'd be allowed to do so? I would perhaps use the parliamentary procedure by invoking personal and collective privilege, if I'd be allowed to do so.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Yes, Commissioner Romualdo is recognized.

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
May I know if Honorable James Marty Lim is still around so he can be given a chance to answer whatever we will raise.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
He is here, he is here...

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
It appeared in the newspaper of national circulation that attributed statements to Honorable Commissioner James Marty Lim, which I hope he was misquoted, when he said that our procedure is very much flawed. And he said that, *(reading from a newspaper clipping)* "We are no more than a rubber stamp Commission, and if we proceed with it, it would be a very expensive no-vote exercise."

I think everybody knows that all of us will always stand on what we believe to be a possible improvement of the Constitution. But for an honorable member to call the entire institution—

which is the Consultative Commission—as a rubber stamp, I think that statement is uncalled for, unparliamentary, and perhaps may be censored.

So with that note, perhaps we can give Honorable Commissioner Lim a chance to explain whether he has been misquoted or he did really say these quoted statements in one of the national newspapers. Because with that statement, I am one of those that may be alluded to to be a rubber stamp.

For the information of Honorable Commissioner Lim, I have been a ConCon delegate in 1971 which stood up for our respective beliefs and principles, together with Gerry Espina. Although it was already martial law, we stood up and really said things against the President then. Hence, nobody can dictate on me—I can never be a rubber stamp.

When I was a member of the Congress of the Philippines, '87 to '98, that's three terms, again I stood up in the halls of Congress. Nobody can ever dictate on me. If I ever sponsored any measure in the House, it was because I believed in it and it would be for the good of my constituency in particular and the country in general.

And now, I'm a member of this Consultative Commission. In my province, as Governor for three terms now, nobody dictated on me. I go into participatory democracy in my own province, and whatever consensus we arrive among my peers in the province, then those are the things that we implement. And never again can we be dictated on.

That's why to me, this is an insult to my person as a member of this Constitutional Commission to be called and dubbed as a rubber stamp. Not even Honorable Commissioner Lim can make me a rubber stamp, neither the Chairman of this Consultative Commission can. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

In the interest of fair play and due process, would Commissioner James Marty Lim care to respond?

COMMISSIONER LIM.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And with all due respect to the Body, honorable members of the Commission, for those of you who were present in my presentation in the last Plenary where I made a presentation to the Commission on my position with regards to the shift to the parliamentary form, it is true that I made mention of it. Actually, it was in the form of a question. I asked, "Would it not be that we might be seen as a rubber stamp Commission?"

And it is also true that I made mention in my presentation that if we make a mistake in our analysis and our presentation—because, if the Body remembers, I was presenting a system of how we could easily present the reason why we are shifting, I was presenting to the Commission that what we're doing is we are already deciding on the parliamentary form even before we analyze step by step what is wrong with the present situation. As a matter of fact, if most of us who were here during that time remember at the end of my presentation, I made mention that if we make a mistake, it may end up as one of the most expensive no-vote.

I think all of these are on record, and if the media took it up piece by piece and printed it otherwise, I think that was not my fault. Personally I was never interviewed by Neal Cruz—as I was reading the minutes of the meeting.

So, I don't really see. Most of the items mentioned in the minutes were true. But I do now know how it was quoted, how it was treated in the media, but you can check on our records, I did make mention of that. As a matter of fact, my only issue is very simple. The Body has already decided to shift to a parliamentary form as a way to resolve all the pending issues of the country in one shot. So, as of now, I still could not reconcile with myself with regards to the other issues that shifting will bring.

As a matter of fact, it's funny because our procedure is similar to that of a school, for example. There are students who are failing because our passing mark is 75, let us abolish the grading system so that everybody will pass. I think I'm really *medyo* questioning the procedure *po*. And up until now, I still would like to find that compelling reason that we should shift to a parliamentary form.

So, so far, in most of the forums in which I have talked, *ito lang naman po 'yung isyu na bini-bring up ko. Ang sa akin lang is hanapin po natin 'yung talagang compelling reason kasi lahat po ng problemang binabanggit natin today under the present form of government, meron namang solusyon. 'Yun lang po 'yung akin.*

Now, *'pag sinabi nating lipat tayo, ganito, 'yun ang tinatanong minsan ng media sa akin. Ano ba 'yung isyu, bakit nakapagdesisyon na ang Commission ng gano'n? 'Di sinasabi ko na ito --'yung stand ng grupo, and ito naman 'yung tingin ko.* So, how they print it, I think, with all due respect to the Body, I think I never directly said that this Commission is a rubber stamp.

I never made mention of that, one. Number two, in my presentation, all I said was that we may be seen, and I think the records will bear me out, that we might be branded as a rubber stamp, and I even asked the committee a question, *'di ba?* At the end of my presentation. And I think, Mr. Chairman, how media treated my statements is another story.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Mr. Chairman, can I...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Ah, Commissioner Pedrosa is recognized.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Yes. Did Commissioner Marty Lim write a letter to Mr. Neal Cruz objecting to his interpretation of what he said?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Would Commissioner Lim care to respond?

COMMISSIONER LIM.

I actually, with regards to my position, I have a short list of my presentation—that is what I disseminated when the media asked me. I give my talk to them.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

No, but I mean I'm talking...

COMMISSIONER LIM.

A letter? No. Directly a letter to Neal Cruz? No.

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Will you have to correct it if you are saying now to us that that's not what you said? We would expect that you would feel indignant about it and write him, but we did not see that.

COMMISSIONER LIM.

Okay. I mean, actually I only saw the (article) now, and then as a matter of fact, when it was brought to my attention, I had to look for that old newspaper because I never knew that he wrote about it, and he made a quotation about it. As a matter of fact, the one that really brought me to this Plenary today is not only to answer this but also the suggestion that barangay officials should be appointed and all that. I think that is an issue that I'd also like to find out if it were true. So if this is...

COMMISSIONER PEDROSA.

Excuse me, excuse me... Is he willing now to write a letter to Mr. Neal Cruz?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Just a moment. We would ask Commissioner Lim if he is willing to write.

COMMISSIONER LIM.

There's no problem, there's no problem, Commissioner. Honestly, I haven't really read the entire print. I saw the quotations here in the minutes. And I really would appreciate it if I could see the entire print so I know how to write that letter.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Is it our understanding that, referring to the minutes, you actually did say that this Commission is a rubber stamp?

COMMISSIONER LIM.

No, Mr. Chairman. I think it is in my presentation that I made mention that we might be seen as a rubber stamp Commission. I think that is in my presentation. As a matter of fact, it is a written presentation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Commissioner Bondoc is recognized.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.

Thank you. May I just suggest? I don't want to sound presumptuous—*mas marami pong nakatatanda at mayayaman po sa karanasan kaysa sa akin dito*. But I have been noticing this, either in plenary or in committee votings, *na kapag may natalo po na vote, humahabol pa po ng mga*, "May I put this on record, may I put..." As if mga *halimaw ang nanalong majority du'n sa vote na 'yon*. Let us please try to avoid it and abide by the rule of the majority also. *Kasi, 'yun*

pong pinasingit natin 'pag natalo na tayo sa botohan—"I want to put this on record"—*e, nilagay na po natin sa record 'yun* during the argumentation and the debate, *e, bago po magbotohan. Nagkakaanuhan lang po ito, e.* It gives a wrong impression *na 'pag natalo tayo, parang ang tumalo sa atin ay mga barumbadong mga halimaw na berdugo.* Which is not the case. So, *sa akin lang po e simple -- sa parliamentary rules po, majority rules, 'di po ba?* I'd like to remind our colleagues *lang po.* Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Oh, yes, Commissioner Espina is recognized.

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.

I understand that today would be the last day we will be meeting before we proceed with — except for the 21st—our consultation in Metro Manila and Luzon? We just received the schedule...

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.

Mr. Chairman, are we through with my collective and personal privilege?

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

I was just asking if anybody would care to say something about the incident raised by Commissioner Romualdo in connection with this report appearing in one of our papers, particularly the column of Neal Cruz.

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.

Yeah, unless somebody else will ask me a question, Mr. Chairman, may I be allowed to close the same.

CHAIRMAN ABUEVA.

Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Should we first recognize our distinguished Chairman?

COMMISSIONER ABUEVA.

Mr. Chairman, when this was discussed in a previous Plenary session here, there were reporters who approached me after we took this up. And this reporter told me that she received a statement from our colleague, Commissioner Lim. And she said she will give me a copy of that statement which she received from him.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.

Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Commissioner Angeles is recognized.

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.
Mr. Chairman, since hearing the denial of Commissioner Lim that he did not, in fact, make that statement, then he should make a formal denial of whatever is quoted about his statement in the column of Mr. Neal Cruz. It's hard to now believe...this rubber stamp image that has been mentioned is a direct insult to the entire Commission.

I go with the position of Commissioner Romualdo that we are no rubber stamp. We have deliberated on the form of government extensively, even allowing him to make a presentation here about his opposition to the parliamentary form of government.

Now, we should respect the majority. In any democratic process, deliberations are conducted but the ultimate decisions are made by the majority. We are not dictated by any person or not even the President of the Philippines about our decision to shift the presidential system to the parliamentary form.

I believe he should make a categorical denial of whatever—if he claims that he is misquoted in this column. He should make a categorical denial to correct the insult that has tarnished the image of this Commission.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
From what I gathered, Commissioner Angeles would like to know from Commissioner Lim if in light of what he has stated, he is willing to be quoted as saying that the statement attributed to him by Mr. Cruz is not correct, that he did not say that. Is that impression correct?

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.
Yes, Mr. Chairman. He should furnish a copy denying all of these allegations that have been mentioned in this column, so that...

COMMISSIONER LIM.
Mr. Chairman, may I speak, Mr. Chairman?

COMMISSIONER ANGELES.
It is not fair for this Commission to be insulted by one of its honorable Commissioners in the person of Commissioner Lim.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Shall we first give a chance to Commissioner Lim to respond? If he so desires, then we will recognize Commissioner Lim.

COMMISSIONER LIM.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, Mr. Chairman, we're taking this quite out of context. And we're really quite blowing this out of proportion. *Alam n'yo po 'yung isyu na—wala naman po akong sinabi dito na, except siguro this portion...*“We are no more than a rubber stamp committee,” which I think this is all where the issue is coming from. I did mention, and I'm trying to have my records brought in, because this came in a form of a question, if the Body will

remember in my presentation. *Siguro ang mali lang po dito 'yung sinabi ko na, ang nakalagay ito, "We are no more...."* Ang actual -- "we may be seen as no more..." *Binawasan e. So, 'yung 'yung isyu.*

But, did I mention the word "rubber stamp?" Yes, I did. As a matter of fact, it was in the form of a question which I presented to the committee. In my presentation, I was actually asking the Body *na inisa-isa natin 'yung issues, alin d'yan...* and I even asked the Commission to help me find that issue where it would be easy for everybody to explain to the public why the solution is shifting. *'Yun lang naman 'yung akin du'n.* And I think if we look at the other statements, maybe the other portion, like the "predetermined concept" and all that—I'm not the only one saying it. As a matter of fact, many other comments by many other observers, they were also saying the same thing actually. And it's not only me. So, I guess, I should not be singled out, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Yes, Commissioner Ortiz-Luis is recognized.

COMMISSIONER ORTIZ-LUIS.

I think this all started when Commissioner Romualdo asked Commissioner Lim whether he said it. He said that he said that it was not the product of an interview; it was a product of a pick-up of his presentation, which obviously, from the way the article is written, you will note that it was a pick-up really. And there was a paragraph that was made to appear like it was something that he said. But on the other paragraph, he said that, "We may..." And therefore, I think we're really overblowing this. We are not out here to sanction a colleague who's already said he did not say it. He said it in a presentation. If there was something wrong with the presentation, we should have sanctioned him right then and there. But obviously, it was an erroneous pick-up, so we should cut that. *Pero*, certainly there are a lot of erroneous pick-up that is being made by the media... in this, for instance, that there is already a consensus for federal when in fact there is none; that there is already a consensus for parliamentary, but the resolution of the committee basically says that it would be voted upon later, so it does not mean that we have a consensus, and to be fair, let's put things in proper context.

I think things are also being picked up erroneously at times, and since Commissioner Marty already said it is not a product of a direct quote that he said, we should leave it at that.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Perhaps we could put closure to this. In the meantime, Commissioner Peña is recognized.

COMMISSIONER PEÑA.

Yeah, I'd also like to add, considering that, again, he's made an explanation, though I was not present during the meeting, and our forthcoming consultations in Luzon, and what happened also to the Judiciary Committee, this will continually be a problem. So, maybe this should serve as a lookout for everybody that—in relation to how we pertain ourselves in public. We should also be concerned with this and I'm sure Commissioner Lim, by his mere presence tonight, spending time like the rest of us, is also stating that we definitely are not a rubber stamp of anybody.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.

Thank you very much. Anybody would care to...

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
Mr. Chairman...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Commissioner Romualdo...

COMMISSIONER ROMUALDO.
I'm not really satisfied with the explanation, but be that as it may, we are not trying to blow it up, because it ridiculed—no matter if it was in the form of a question or what—but decency would have dictated each and every one of us to avoid words that would ridicule the Consultative Commission itself. We are supposed to be knowledgeable of very simple English language, so let's try to avoid "rubber stamp," etcetera—if your intention is not to ridicule the Consultative Commission.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, although as I said the fact that this came out in the papers, and then the gentleman that authored this statement did not even communicate to correct the same, so the implication therefore is simple -- to ridicule the Consultative Commission. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Mr. Chairman, I move to adjourn.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection...

COMMISSIONER ESPINA.
Yeah, second...

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection...

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
It has been moved and seconded to adjourn...

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
No, objection, objection!

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Is there any objection to the...

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection, sir.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Are there any objections to the motion?

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection...

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
There is an objection then we vote.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Is there any objection to the motion?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
There is no objection. They are only joining my motion.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Objection!

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
Speak, Commissioner Bondoc.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
I was asking for if we could come up with the deadline for the committees to submit their reports to the Committee on Style. And it was deferred until we have discussed the schedule. And after discussing the schedules, *bigay na natin 'yung deadline*.

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
The deadline is in the calendar distributed to you. However, if you would like to question it, and change the deadline, then let's see about it. I am in the meantime withdrawing my motion to adjourn.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Hindi, kasi po...

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
The program is Saturday, September 10—no, it's December 8, final-edited. Well, this is your deadline already, then (December) 9, final editing; (December) 10, final editing; (December) 11, final editing. (December) 12, 13, 14 -- you have four days to edit it. So the deadline will begin with the submission after the plenary on the 7th, then we finalize, then it will be given to the Committee on Style.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
Can we set it at 12 noon on December 8, all committee reports?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
December 8, *'yun ang* final editing, *e*. That's the Committee on Style, final editing.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
So, can we set it at 12 noon of December 8?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Yeah, December 8.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
12 noon?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Wala nakalagay. Sige, 9 o'clock.

COMMISSIONER BONDOC.
E lalong mabuti, nine o'clock, 9 a.m.?

COMMISSIONER APOSTOL.
Oo. So, the Committee on Style will meet on December 8 at 9 o'clock in the morning, here. It's final editing, meeting of the Committee on Style. So is that okay?

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

COMMISSIONER GARCIA.
With that, is there no objection to the motion to adjourn? There being none, the session is adjourned.

It was 5:42 p.m.