

[VOL. I, June 02, 1986]

JOURNAL NO. 1

Monday, June 2, 1986

PROCESSIONAL

At 10:01 a.m., the procession began with the entry into the Session Hall of the Members of the Constitutional Commission of 1986.

Then, preceded by the Acting Sergeant-at-Arms bearing the Mace, the Vice-President of the Philippines entered the Session Hall followed by the Acting Secretary-General of the Commission.

The National Color and the Constitutional Commission color accompanied by honor guards entered the Session Hall.

CALL TO ORDER

At 10:05 a.m., the Vice-President of the Philippines, the Honorable Salvador H. Laurel, called the session to order.

OPENING REMARKS OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice-President declared open the inaugural session of the Constitutional Commission of 1986 pursuant to Proclamation No. 9.

For the purpose, he announced the previous election of the officers in an acting capacity: Mr. Napoleon G. Rama, Floor Leader; Mr. Jose D. Calderon, Assistant Floor Leader; Prof. Florida Ruth P. Romero, Secretary-General; and Mr. Roberto M. San Andres, temporary Sergeant-at-Arms.

Adverting to his duty as temporary Presiding Officer for the inaugural session to enable the Commission to elect its permanent President, Mr. Laurel underscored the role of the Members of the Commission who were all chosen by President Corazon C. Aquino for their probity, independence of mind, nationalism and patriotism. He stated that while their probity, independence of mind and nationalism are yet to be reaffirmed, the Members have already demonstrated their patriotism by agreeing to the disqualification from being elected or appointed to office in accordance with the prescriptions under Proclamation No. 9. He noted that such self-denial had already earned for them the necessary credibility essential to the writing of a constitution that will truly reflect the sentiments, ideals and aspirations of the people, a task that will place the nation, derailed by 14 years of martial misrule, back on the tracks of constitutional democracy which is the key to both political stability and economic recovery.

Mr. Laurel invited attention to the fact that the entire proceedings will not only be recorded but will also be broadcast live on radio and television for the nation and the entire world to watch how the Constitution of the future will be fashioned. Using the language of a great jurist, Mr. Laurel stated that the Constitution that the

Commission will write will henceforth bind equally, in war and in peace, both rulers and people, and it will cover all classes of men at all times under all circumstances.

Finally, Mr. Laurel enjoined the Assembly to bow in prayer to ask the Lord to enlighten the Members as they proceed to write the new Constitution, so that they may pour out into the writing of the fundamental law the noblest thoughts of a valiant race.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AND THE INVOCATION

Thereafter, the National Anthem was played, followed by the Invocation led by five religious leaders who were invited for the purpose, to wit:

God, our Father
We, the sovereign Filipino people,
stand in Your presence to pray.

We pray especially and exclusively
for each and for all of the
forty-eight distinguished Members of the
Constitutional Commission of 1986.

These forty-eight Filipino men and women,
these forty-eight national, regional and
sectoral representatives of the
more than fifty million Filipinos,
have solemnly sworn to faithfully
and conscientiously fulfill their duties,
and each one of them has prayed
"So help me God".

As we watch them begin "to hasten
the return of normal constitutional
government",
we pray You, O God, to help them.

We firmly believe that without Your help,
they shall find it extremely difficult
to draft a fundamental law that is
"truly reflective of the ideals and
aspirations of the Filipino people"
because we, the Filipino people,
are Your people
whom You love and who love You.

As they go to work day after day,
as they endeavor to complete their
work within the period provided by law
help them, O God, to frame a constitution
for our land,
a constitution that promotes the good
of every Filipino and of the whole

Filipino man and woman,
a constitution that binds all Filipinos
together as Your sons and daughters,
a constitution that preserves and
perfects the state of our Filipino culture . . .
that recognizes and respects our sense
of Filipino values . . .
that defines and directs our set of
religious traditions,
a constitution that serves the common
good and shares it equitably with the common
tao,
a constitution that builds bridges of love and
justice and peace,
and breaks down walls of self-seeking
and image-building,
a constitution that helps make the Philippines
a more beautiful place to live in as it makes
the Filipinos a better people to live in it,
a people with a better chance to survive
and a chance to survive better.

This, we know, is a tall order
that is why we call to You, O God,
and count on You.
We trust that You will not fail us now
as You have never failed us before.

And so,
we thank You in advance
for this one blessing we obviously need
even as we thank You
for the countless blessings
that we have received from Your bounty,
through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Acting Secretary General of the Commission called the Roll, to which the following Members responded:

Abubakar, Yusup R.
Alonto, Ahmad Domocao
Aquino, Felicitas S.
Azcuna, Adolfo S.
Bacani, Teodoro C. .
Bengzon, Jose Jr., F.S.
Bennagen, Ponciano L.
Bernas, Joaquin G.
Rosario Braid, Florangel

Brocka, Lino O.
Calderon, Jose D.
De Castro, Crispino M.
Colayco, Jose C.
Concepcion, Roberto R.
Davide, Hilario Jr., G.
Foz, Vicente B.
Garcia, Edmundo G.
Gascon, Jose Luis Martin C.
Guingona, Serafin V.C.
Jamir, Alberto M.K.
Laurel, Jose Jr., B.
Lerum, Eulogio R.
Maambong, Regalado E.
Monsod, Christian S.
Natividad, Teodulo C.
Nieva, Ma. Teresa. F.
Nolledo, Jose N.
Ople, Blas F.
Padilla, Ambrosio B
Muñoz Palma, Cecilia
Quesada, Minda Luz M.
Rama, Napoleon G.
Regalado, Florenz D.
De Los Reyes, Rustico Jr. F.
Rigos, Cirilo A.
Rodrigo, Francisco A.
Romulo, Ricardo J.
Rosales, Decoroso R.
Sarmiento, Rene V.
Suarez, Jose E.
Sumulong, Lorenzo M.
Tadeo, Jaime S.L.
Tan, Christine
Tingson, Gregorio J.
Treñas, Efrain B.
Uka, Lugum L.
Villacorta, Wilfrido V.
Villegas, Bernardo M.

With all 48 Members present, the Chair declared the presence of quorum.

OATH-TAKING OF MEMBERS

The Members of the Constitutional Commission took their oath of office before the temporary Presiding Officer of the Constitutional Commission.

COMMITTEE ON NOTIFICATION

On motion of Mr. Rama, duly seconded and there being no objection, the Chair appointed a Committee of Five composed of the Honorable Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon, Christine Tan, Hilario G. Davide, Jr., Ahmad Domocao Alonto and Crispino

M. de Castro, to inform the President of the Philippines that the Constitutional Commission was ready to receive her message.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

The Chair suspended the session.
It was 10:22 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:25 a.m., the session was resumed.

ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

Upon resumption of session, the Acting Secretary-General announced the entry of the President of the Philippines.

The Body gave the President a standing ovation.

On motion of Mr. Rama, there being no objection, the Chair recognized the President who delivered her address.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

The President underscored the full authority granted to and the complete independence vested in the Constitutional Commission to write the country's new Constitution, a great task in which nobody, not even the President herself can interfere with or overrule.

The President stated that her presence was only to honor the convening of the Body and, apart from wishing the Commission well and saying the hopes and prayers of the nation, to make only two points: first, to be quick in responding to the nation's eagerness for a new Constitution and subsequent elections, with the people expecting a constitutional draft for their acceptance or rejection within three months so that they may have, in the shortest time possible, a full-blown democratic republic; and second, to limit the task to the constitutional mission which is to design a constitution that will provide for a new legislature, to define and protect individual freedoms and rights, and to decide how the different institutions of state will relate to each other, without being distracted by political debates and matters of policy that do not belong to the constitution-making exercise.

The President urged the Members to bear in mind that they shall be writing a constitution not only for their contemporaries with their present concerns but also for succeeding generations of Filipinos whose first concerns could not be presumed to be known beforehand. She stressed that future Filipinos must be free to decide how to address these concerns as they arise because even the wisest cures for present maladies should not be imposed on succeeding generations that will have their own unique problems and priorities.

Adverting to the words of a wise justice, the President stated that true and long-lived constitutions should be broad enough to be able to meet every exigency and specific enough to stoutly protect the essentials of a true democracy. She stated