

Presentation of the Conference Theme and Delegates

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Bahn Guinomla began by introducing the PPSA officers, the paper readers from Manila and other visitors to the Conference.

Sometime late last year, the Philippine Political Science Association met in Manila and the matter of bringing it closer to the regions was discussed. After some deliberations, it was decided that three regional Conferences be conducted, one in Mindanao, another in the Visayas and then in Luzon. For the first time, the PPSA comes closer to you who are far out in the regions. Hopefully, we shall be able to generate interest among you in the Association's goals and objectives, especially in the development of political science as a field of discipline.

Before proceeding to the task of introducing the conference theme, allow me, on behalf of the Association, to acknowledge the valuable support of the office of Regional Commissioner Datumanong for the administrative help it has extended to us in preparing for the conference. I wish to thank primarily Asst. Commissioner Michael Mastura for his assistance. (Applause)

While in Manila, before we came over, the liaison office of the Office of the Regional Commissioner in Manila was virtually converted into a PPSA working room. And that happened only because of the generous cooperation and support given us by Director Dirawatun: the gratitude also goes to his staff back there. Of course, this morning's breakfast was given by the Mayor of Dinaig who is the President of the Mayor's League here and whom we approached only yesterday at the ORC. For today's lunch, we shall have the Governor of this province to tender it. We thank him in advance. Also, to the individual staffers of the Commission, we extend our thanks for the assistance you have given us. We are also grateful to all those who have supported us in one way or another.

Conference Chairman and Mindanao Coordinator.

While this conference was being discussed in Manila, Dr. Fernandez, our President, designated me to be the Chairman of the Conference. Maybe he thought that since I come from this region, I should run the show. I told him and the group that I would accept the responsibility provided the Association would give me its full backing the assurance of which I readily got. One of my initial tasks was to recommend an appropriate theme and in the succeeding meeting I presented a proposal that focused on the current efforts at political regionalization in the South. Other suggestions along similar lines were also made; subsequently, a consensus was arrived at on the theme that we have today.

I would like to refer to President Marcos' statements sometime ago. He warned of the danger of political disintegration which is being posed by some segments or forces in our society. My friends, we would like to contribute to the crystallization of the issues involved in this problem particularly in regard to the distribution of political power, the granting of political autonomy, providing thereof the mechanisms, structures and framework of such arrangements. These are issues which are as real as they are central to the problems facing us in the Southern Philippines today.

And so, for the next two days, we shall be discussing these things. We have lined up very competent speakers who shall be introduced to you accordingly. And so, without further ado, I shall now introduce the registered participants in this conference.