

REACTION BY NPC REPRESENTATIVE

Moderator: I don't think it is proper for us to use up the time of the next paper. It would be discourteous. And so to give anybody a chance to be able to probe deeper into the problem of the Chico River may I request anyone who wishes to ask questions to just write down his question on a piece of paper and give that to the secretariat so that if we have a chance to go over them, we might ask Prof. de Raedt or Fr. Guyguyon here to help us in trying to answer the questions. And may I now request Fr. Guyguyon to give us a five-minute comment on the paper of Prof. de Raedt.

Fr. Guyguyon: I'm just very happy to have listened to the talk of Mrs. de Raedt on the Chico problem and the social implications of this project. The Chico River Basin Project is a case where the people to be affected by the project have not been listened to either. And so it seems that this project was considered only from the economic point of view without taking into consideration the social implications. I find in her conclusion a recommendation we in the Church have been giving to the Government, that is, to cancel for the meantime the Chico River Basin Project, to have the social analysis of the situation in order to give the Kalingas and the Bontoc a chance to speak out, to make themselves understood, and perhaps even to participate in the planning and implementation of this Project. These are all we are hoping for — suspension to allow dialogue between people and the Government.

Moderator: And with that I think the issues are more or less very clear from the paper of Prof. de Raedt and from the remarks of Fr. Guyguyon. Perhaps answer to several issues raised regarding the actions of the Government, may I request a representative of the National Power Corporation to give a possible interpretation of the Government position?

NPC Representative: Regarding the Chico Project, actually I'm not exposed to this project considering that I am a political science major. The needs of the social scientist do not go hand in hand with the economic needs of the country. You seem to ask for more data regarding the establishment of the Chico Dam. I would just like to give an analogy. When the escalator was constructed the people who conceived of the idea of the escalator did not ask the people if they wanted to go upstairs without exerting any effort at all. So the escalator was constructed. The people came to know that it was easier to go up using the escalator than using the stairs. In other words, time will solve the problem. Although I am not with the Chico Dam Project, once the Chico Dam is constructed, becomes operational and useful, I suppose that the Kalinga or Bontoc will come to realize it and come to adjust to it. It is only a matter of time. Meanwhile, the President has ordered for the immediate relocation of the families affected by the Chico Dam Project.

Moderator: The issue here is very simple. Should the government proceed with the construction of the Dam without looking into the cultural, social, and political problems that have just been called to your attention?

NPC Representative: I suppose the Government is aware of that problem. In fact, the President with his technocrats has anticipated the problem. The National Power Corporation is now paying the land owners affected by the Project.

Moderator: Just for purposes of discussion, I don't think it is just a matter of payment because that is just the economic part of it. It is something deeper. We are dealing here with the experience of Pantabangan and Ambuklao that highlight those things that should be taken into consideration beyond the mere economic benefits, and these are the human and subhuman problems attendant to a project like Chico River.

NPC Representative: Yes I understand. Initially we are paying. After that we will try to relocate the affected families. That is the position of the NPC and it is with the blessing of the President. In fact, we are asked by our Office to submit the areas to be affected by the Project, the areas occupied by the families that have been paid and the number of the families to be relocated. As far as the relocation is concerned, I think the President has prepared another agency to take care of that.

Moderator: There is an impasse and so it seems that the chair takes the prerogative of not giving anybody a chance to speak for or against. We just want to hear the stand of the paper reader, the discussant and the NPC representative. We cannot resolve this.

NPC Representative: I would like to make clear this position. We are not against, neither are we in favor of the Chico Dam Project. We are in the Government and we have to go by the decision of the Government. It is immaterial whether or not there is opposition from the Kalingas and the Bontocs. That is beside our main duties and responsibilities. It is up to the Government to solve that.

Moderator: May I suggest that we continue with the discussion in relation to the paper of Professor Pawid?

Prof. Pawid: The paper of Mrs. de Raedt and my paper are really very closely tied together. So with your indulgence and the moderator's, I propose that I read my paper before we have the open forum.