

COMMENTS AND REACTIONS

TEODORO D. CAÑETE

Do you know I appreciate the ladies in this group more than I appreciate the men because even at this unholy hour they still look as fresh as a morning when papayas are in bloom?

I heard from the Hon. Assemblyman about P300M, about Holy Land, about being the spoiled officials in this part of the country. I was thinking that specially when I approach this blackboard that I should illucidate on some of our economic problems bedeviling people in the non-autonomous region like for instance our energy crisis. I believe that our Muslim brothers for whom the autonomous government was created would take the necessary measures to soften the impact of the crisis in that area of the oil producing countries to the end that their effectiveness as autonomous government will really be felt not only in Mindanao but in every nook and corner of the Philippines. If they are in constant dialogue with people outside of the Philippines, since the beginning of the Islamic system, and in view of the fact that it is the Islamic people who seem to control the flow of oil, cannot they adopt certain measures whereby they can persuade these people to lessen the anguish being suffered from the problem arising from oil crisis?

I have gone over the speech read here and I am very much impressed by the statement of the assemblyman that they are really enjoying special privileges because of the special condition in the region, like for instance the approval of the grant of free quarters, light and water to governors and city mayors and the approval of the grant of automobile allowance to local chief executives. I am the Regional Director of the Civil Service Commission, but I do not have a government service jeep. Once upon a time I had, but it was almost disintegrating in the middle of the street. It was so very noisy that they thought I was coming in on a train and the members of the group could tell that I was approaching because of the noise of the disintegrating jeep. Another one that I would like to point out is only a premise to a question. Here, investigation of administrative

complaints against local officers can be done without clearance from the President of the Philippines. This is something really very special. Is this a concession given to you as an alternative to that secessionist movement that caused some trembling in the Southern Philippines although they did not have what we call in seismology, earthquake fault? Is this an alternative, so effective, valuable and a consumation devotedly to be wished? From that secessionist movement that really bothered the President of the Philippines because of this we might try also. I am very happy that you can tell what I am about to say because if there will be an investigation you will be the one to answer. Reading these privileges, I feel like changing my residence, transferring there. Now the question that I would like to pose because of this is: may we know the system, the procedure or the strategies adopted by your representatives that resulted in the grant of this special concession scheme? Of course, in the first place, we are not holy people here, while this province is popular because of the First Lady, we have no, what we call, relations with people in the Holy Land. It is stated here that this was conceived and dedicated in order that the people in that area will not feel that they are being overlooked by the national government.

Is it indeed very true that the expectations from this autonomous government are now being felt by every resident in the autonomous government area and finally, is there no attempt, just as there is an attempt to name the Philippine Friendship Highway into Maharlika to coin a name specially for those areas covered by the autonomous government that is expressive of the desires, the wishes, the dreams of the people? Thank you very much.

AGRIPINO GALVEZ

Before I start the reaction, it seems that this time I wouldn't like to react, rather I would like to act. But anyway I offer this advice to Director Cañete that in the event that he wants to change residence, I would advise him to transfer to Iligan City because the climate there is very conducive for people who are already in the twilight zone. It is very near the most beautiful and the only dam and energy power in Asia, the National Power Corporation. The energy is very cheap. There is no brownout such as we have in this eligible land of Leyte.

From what I heard about autonomous government and the

residents of these provinces, I've been aware that there are differences in culture among these groups of Muslim people. By experience perhaps, the Philippines is divided into a lot of different tribes like Boholanos and Cebuanos which have different ways and means of livelihood and, therefore, their insights into the problems are colored by their culture. I understand that in this autonomous government there are at least three different types of culture. I would pose this question to the resource persons or guests: would these cultures not deter the seeming progress that is now being experienced in the autonomous government?

Among the problems that we have at present is one of communication. The fact that you say it's easier now to give what is there to give because it is in the region, could be partially true like for instance in Region XII where the regional center is far away or far removed from some other provinces like Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. I was thinking that this could also be a cause for the progress which we expect to really be fast because of the distance of these two provinces from the government center. While it is true that in Region XII the power is cheap because of the National Power Corporation, I wonder if this has already been extended to Cotabato. I haven't been to Cotabato. My only regret is that it is the only place in Mindanao which I have not yet seen. So we say that progress in terms of infrastructure could be obtained cheaply if there is cheap power and if the power is cheap but far from a certain place, then the chances for development would not be fast. In other words, when we project the development of an area to be within 10 years but if it lacks power by then, probably the planning and decision-making in connection with this infrastructure would be delayed regardless of whether the government is autonomous or not. To re-echo Director Cañete, we envy your special relations with the national government because it is the experience that it is really very difficult to get concessions specially from the Budget people regarding infrastructure. A point is this, in Region XII we have one of the best universities like the Mindanao State University. If my figures are right, it has a P120M-budget this year. This is a big amount of money which even the VISCA does not enjoy. I think VISCA has only a P20M appropriation for Calendar Year 1980. So, I can foresee that with this amount of money there will be a lot of infrastructure projects in Region XII and because of this, the chances for faster development is evident by the fact that money is there. So, in terms of cost-benefit analysis perhaps, we can deter-

mine if the amount of money poured in by the national government is or has been used efficiently or effectively and this can only be altered by the autonomous government. Has the money that has been given to this autonomous region been used efficiently and effectively? Yours is the answer.

LORETTA MAKASIAR SICAT

This time reversing the policy of ladies first made me nervous because I was afraid that I would be left with nothing to say. So before that thing really materializes, I might as well make out my last gasp of a reaction. But even then what could one really say or how could one really act in the face of two seemingly persuasive success stories? That's why it's necessary to gasp. So my reaction would be therefore, short and simple and would come about in the form of a series of questions.

Presumably, one of the rationales for adopting some kind of a model of regional government is to develop or to give opportunities to exercise self-reliance on the part of our sub-national officials. I would assume, therefore, that self-reliance is premised on a rather wide degree of participation and it is on this subject that I focus my question. I would like to know just what the degree of participation there is in either one of these two regions. In the face of a more obvious criterion of evaluation which might be material or tangible in nature, I would therefore want to look into the more subtle aspect of regional development brought about by autonomy.

The level of participation that I would like to know about in these instances would be based on two levels. Admittedly, we have been given very convincing instances of quick action that are very very important to people. However, we would like to know just to what extent is the local level able to act decisively as quickly as possible? What is the level of participation? How far down the structure is the participation in decision-making and implementation in terms of the level of government employees? For one thing it could be that the top man could always act quickly. Does the lowly government employee have any say both in the planning and implementation of projects as well as the solution, instant solution, of the problems? Similarly, where does the common man come in? Again, in what manner does he participate? Is he able to participate indeed?

These levels could be measured in terms of a greater number

of real options that are given both to people who are connected directly or indirectly with the government as well as to those who are not directly employed by the government. One other measure could be in terms of individual perception. Has the bringing about of the establishment of regional autonomy made people aware that there are changes?

To be able to attain some measure of comparability we will have to establish some kind of a baseline and so I think we need some information not only with regards to the autonomous region but probably also with regards to Executive Director Lindy C. Morrell's empire here in the land of "eligibi-Leyte" (NEDA version). Only then, I think, can we truly have reason to conclude that this model is the all important variable in bringing about development on the subnational level.