

RESPONSES* OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Representative No. 1

I disagree with a number of points made by Mr. Itchon in his main speech, particularly those concerning relocation. I would like to say that most of us do not have any knowledge about those people who he said had voluntarily accepted the government's relocation scheme. Those volunteers must have been sympathizers of PANAMIN. It is not true that half of the Kalingas do not even have one-half hectare of land.

He also complained about the six petitions that were sent by a Kalinga delegation to the President and were simply ignored by the President. He also said that the Kalingas in Pantabangan are different people. In other words, the Kalingas have a stronger stand against the project and they don't want to be fooled. And they don't want, the Kalingas don't want what happened in Pantabagan to happen to Kalinga. Now when it comes to the relocation program, the Kalingas still oppose it because relocation to them is a slow way of dying or is a form of dying. They will continue to signify their opposition if the NPC or the government will try to force the construction of the dam. Force on the part of the government would mean fight for the Kalingas.

Representative No. 2

The Kalinga delegation is very happy to share its problems with this group. We would like to state that majority of the Kalingas have no knowledge about those people who Mr. Itchon claims had agreed and submitted themselves for relocation. How can we accept the government's relocation program when the offer of two hectares of land and ₱10,000 capital cannot justly compensate what we presently hold and enjoy and which they are asking us to give up? In the proposed resettlement sites, there are no fruit bearing trees, and we still have to construct ricefields, while in our present places we have everything and we are satisfied. We appeal to all of you here or to anybody who can help us with our problems.

Representative No. 3

At present the peace and order situation in Kalinga is worsening and this has been brought about by the agents of the government. The government wants to make trouble in Kalinga by pushing through the construction of the Chico dam for the benefit of the majority. Although the government has been saying that Chico IV will be the only one to be constructed, we

*These responses were lifted from the tapes and, unless otherwise specified, translated to English by Max Garming.

believe that the construction of Chico IV will also mean the subsequent construction of Chico I, II, and III.

The stand of the Kalingas today is this: if the government will utilize force to pursue this project, we are determined to oppose, and if necessary, to fight. The benefits of the relocation program, particularly the money, ₱10,000, cannot maintain a family for long because what is ₱10,000 today? You can finish spending it in just a couple of days. It cannot compensate for what we possess in Kalinga today.

Representative No. 4

We, the Kalinga delegation, are very thankful to those who sponsored this conference so we can have the opportunity to tell you our problems. It is not true that half of the Kalingas don't own land. Everybody in Kalinga owns land, at least a piece of land. It is not like in other places, particularly in Cagayan, where land is owned by only a few people and tenancy problem is very bad. Although it is true that there are poor people in Kalinga, everybody can at least eat because of supplementary productions like coffee, beans and vegetables. If production is not enough, we can resort to kaingin-making in the mountains.

I do not believe that there has been a real dialogue between the government and the people. In fact, the Kalingas are surprised why some Kalingas have been put to prison. Originally they were just invited for a dialogue but they were placed in prison cells. Furthermore, there are politicians who are aggravating the problems in Kalinga. They do not consult or at least inform the people about the programs of NPC. For instance, the people did not have an idea that NPC camps were to be constructed in the damsite. So naturally, they asked that the camps be dismantled.

Regarding relocation, to us this means total separation from our way of life. It will affect everything which we value very much — our history, traditions and customs. The PANAMIN has not done any good in Kalinga, with all the lies and inconveniences they made on the Kalinga population, especially the women. So how can we believe in the government? For instance, the NPC today may be promising relocation benefits, but we cannot believe them unless we see evidences that the government is really sincere in its promises. The Kalingas don't believe in promises anymore. Take that trip to Manila where people were forced to sign for the construction of the dam. I think a serious problem is that the relocation areas are actually owned by other people and if the Kalingas or those who will be relocated will take that land, then it might cause another problem, and that is, to fight each other. So maybe the government has to assure us that these relocation areas have really been bought for us.

*Representative No. 5**

Magandang tanghali sa inyong lahat. Ako po ay taga Pantabangan Dam, Nueva Ecija. Kami po ay pinangakuan ng mga ingeniero na kung kami'y lumipat, lahat po ng aming pangangailangan ay ibibigay nila sa amin. Iyan po ay pangako nila sa amin. Noong kami po ay inilipat na sa bagong pamayanan, nangako silang kami ay ipagpapagawa ng bahay na completo. Bagama't ang aming sinasaka ay lumubog na, humigit kumulang po sa 2,000 hectaria, pina-ngakuan kami na papalitan po iyon nila. Gayon po, kami ay naniwala. Sa kasalukuyan po ngayon, kami ay walang sinasaka sa Pantabangan kung hindi po, dahil iyon ay puro bundok, binubungkal ang mga bundok roon para sa ganoon ay mabuhay kami. Ang nangyari po sa amin ay binigyan kami ng tinatawag nilang "compact farm." Kaya lang ay hindi po lahat. Ang naunang nabigyan ay mga baryo ng Pantabangan — tatlong baryo ang nabigyan pero iyong kabayanan po — east at west poblacion — ay hindi pa nabibigyan hanggang ngayon, pero pangako po nila iyon. Kaya ang isang problema roon ay kung saan kami kukuha ng pagkain. Iyan po ang pangunahing problema ng Pantabangan. Binigyan po kami ng "compact farm" pero binabawal naman po ng Forestry. Marami na pong tao sa Pantabangan ang lumilipat sa ibang lugar para mabuhay. Pangalawa po, iyong iba ay nagtratrabaho sa NIA at NPC. Sa NPC maganda naman ang kanilang pangako. Natupad naman nila bagama't ang NPC bago dumating doon ay nagawa na po ang dam. Sila po ang nagpapatatko ng koryente. Ang ipinangako po ng NPC roon ay kukuha sila sa amin ng empleyado para magtratrabaho sa kanila. Bagama't sa NPC ay kaunti pa lang ang nagtratrabaho roon nakatulong din ng malaki sa Pantabangan. Karamihan po sa NPC ay mga taga Pantabangan. Sa NIA ang pangako naman nila bago kami lumipat, 90 percent ng magtratrabaho ay taga Pantabangan. Ito ay natupad rin nila. Saka pangako po nila na iyong paglipat namin ay wala daw kaming iintindihin hangga't hindi kami makatayo sa sarili at tuloy-tuloy daw ang rasyon. Kaya kami po ay nirarasyon ngayon, subali't sa katapusan po nito ay wala na kaming rasyon. Ang tanong ng mga tao roon: paano sila mabuhay? Iyan po ang pangunahing problema sa Pantabangan.

*Representative No. 6***

I come from Ambuklao. Some 24 years ago Ambuklao Dam was completed and we were given a beautiful picture of what we will have; that is, we will be given some farms and capitalization to start production. However, it seems that after 24 years, nothing has been done by the NPC. Resettlement areas in Nueva Vizcaya have been designated for us, but unfortunately these were already occupied by natives. So until now, only very few people have

*The following response was delivered in Tagalog.

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resettled in Kalinas. Most of them are those who got some properties submerged by the dam. A second alternative was Canwak Valley. However, we were also informed by authorities that they could not accommodate as many as 100 settlers because similarly, there were already people in the area. Recently they informed us that there is again a request from Manila Office to submit names of volunteers who want to go to Palawan. That is just recently, maybe a few days ago. So my question is: are there really definite concrete plans to resettle the people of Ambuklao? You see, formerly there were only about 115 families who were affected but now there are more. Although many have died, many have also begotten grandchildren and so you can just imagine the number of settlers who have to be accommodated. That is my question Mr. Itchon.

*Representative No. 7**

Magandang tanghali po sa inyong lahat. Ito rin po ay isa sa mga balita na nangyari sa amin sa Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. Na kung ito ay pinalubog ng gobierno alang-alang sa progreso ng Pilipinas, kami po ay hindi tumanggi at nanalig na lamang kami sa Diyos. Ang aming bahay ay binayaran po sa amin. Pagkatapos na mabunot at matanggal namin ito, ito ay hinakot nila sa lugar na aming lilipatan. At pagkatapos itinayong muli ang bahay namin, bungalow pa ho ang tawag nila. Kami naman ay hindi bihasa sa bungalow. Kung sabagay binayaran lahat — bahay, lote, at saka mga bukid namin at mga kahoy, bayad po lahat, subalit ang kuwarta pala ay madaling maubos. Nang mawalan kami ng kuwarta, wala namang ipinalit sa aming bukid para ikabuhay namin. Ngayon naman kami po ay pinangakuan na rarasyonan subalit ikinalulungkot namin na ngayong Abril ay ititigil na ang rasyon. Hindi pa kami nakakatayo sa aming sarili kaya't nakikiusap kami. Huwag na muna sanang maalís sa amin ang rasyon sapagkat talagang wala kaming pagkukunan ng aming ikabubuhay. Saan kaya kukuha ang 1577 pamilya ng ikabubuhay nila? Kaya pinakikiusap po namin, kung sino ang dapat na makatulong sa amin, kami na rin po ang nagbigay kusa sa progreso ng Pilipinas, sana nama'y huwag na munang putulin ang rasyon namin. Kaya lamang ako medyo naluluha ay talagang masakít ang maalís sa kinamulatang lugar.

Hanggang dito na lamang.

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