



IN a pool editorial on April 23 the metropolitan newspapers of Manila raised the cry that "we live in a time of severe stress" and that an early constitutional convention might serve to "temper the unrest and bring hope back to a disenchanting nation."

The editorial proposed, among others, the election this November of delegates to the 1971 constitutional convention. It also suggested that the convention itself should be advanced to 1970.

There are of course practical reasons that bid these proposals well. At a time when money is hard to come by to support normal public services, any effort to introduce economy into governmental services should be welcome. But surely there are reasons that also argue against the proposals. Certain sectors in congress and the private community have, as a matter of fact, already warned against unduly firing the imagination of the people towards falsely hoping that a revision of the charter of the land would bring about, automatically, the solutions to the problems that face the nation. More things than just re-writing the people's statute are required in solving the nation's ills.

There is no question though that we are living in a time of stress, for growing is a state of stress. The country during the last few decades had not been immobile. It has moved forward. And the pace of its growth under the present administration is particularly appreciable, what with the peculiarly meager resources at its command. The breakthroughs in food production, road building, school building, land reform and industrial production will, no matter how one looks at it, make an impact upon the future of the country.

But still there is need to institute reforms in the Constitution. The people's restiveness toward constitutional reforms seem to anchor upon, not the lack of drive or goal or program for the people by the government that they have elected to support, but upon the statute's inflexibility to change and progress.

The reforms, to be effective and relevant, however, must cover cultural, social, political and economic reforms. Of these, economic reforms are most important to the survival of the nation.

Changes must also occur in the areas of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Too often when weaknesses are discerned in the machinery for governing the affairs of the country in these areas, like the inability of local governments to design and support their own development, the constitution is blamed for bringing them about. In many instances the blame is well-founded. The country's first law has so strengthened the central seats of power that it had weakened the small units within the periphery of government.

To be worth the effort, therefore, the constitutional convention must provide for an economic system — a kind of society that the people want for themselves — without ambivalence or hesitancy. The people deserve it. The country needs it. But, obviously, we cannot begin to undertake such an important task with closed eyes. President Marcos was right in forming sometime back a commission to study possible constitutional changes based on scholarly approaches. But the leaders of congress howled against the move. The challenge now lies with the various elements in the nation to find ways for establishing the people's consensus.

When we first came out, we pledged to essay the provincial viewpoint on national and public issues. The opportunity has come. *The Philippine Magazine* will be happy to open its pages as a forum for public opinion on this very important undertaking affecting changes in the nation's first law.

S. P. BIGAY

PMAIL

CONSTITUTIONAL MEET

Your magazine is a vehicle of relevant and important information on public affairs. Now, there is a growing interest as to what ideas or reforms can possibly be adopted at the 1970 constitutional convention. Do you plan any feature on this subject in your future issues?

DOLLY CAMAYO
Daet, Camarines Norte

MORE FEATURES

Your entertainment features are definitely okay. Were it not for the article on Kiss-slurp-Kiss in your April 15 issue, this section is good reading for all. The only decent picture in that page was the one showing Vic Vargas (or is it somebody else?) and his partner. We really hadn't realized our movies have gone to those stages already. In spite of this, give us more features. They are well presented.

MANUEL SAN DIEGO
Baguio City

VISAYANS TOO!

Are there other municipalities in the country that have grown or progressed from small villages to industrial units like Las Piñas, Marikina or Iligan? Your articles on these towns are eye-openers. You are right indeed in saying that not all is black in our scene. You should feature some towns or municipalities in the Visayas too. I am certain there are areas that can favorably compare with the three towns featured in your magazine as having progressed to the credit of the townspeople themselves.

PROSPERO CERVANTES
Iloilo City

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