

The Speaker of the National Assembly

IN 1907 when Secretary of War Taft opened the first Philippine Assembly, he declared that the speaker of that body was the officer second in rank to the Chief Executive. Speaker Sergio Osmeña was thus considered as the first Filipino of the land. His powers, both legal and extra-legal, were extensive. All employees of the Assembly and its committees were appointed by him. He was the elect of the elect.

In 1916 when the Philippine Senate was organized, the office of Senate President threatened to overshadow that of the Speaker. With the Senate's power to approve appointments, its President possessed greater legal

powers than the Speaker. The latter, however, as the head of the majority party, was still his political superior. That division of political and legal headships could not be maintained for long. So a clash eventually took place between Quezon, the Senate President and therefore the legal superior, and Osmeña, the Speaker and the political head. Quezon emerged victorious after the 1922 elections. Upon his bidding Manuel Roxas, then a young politician, was selected Speaker of the House of Representatives. At last the Senate President became legally and politically the head of the Filipino participation in the government. Roxas



TOP YOUR MEAL

With A Glass of "BBB" Pilsener Beer—

*And You'll Discover that
"BBB" Pilsener*

- is not bitter, unlike other beer.
- is refreshing, because it comes to you always Factory Fresh.
- is more economical in the long run, because you get more in taste, quality, and in bottle contents.

Have your "BBB" Beer delivered to your home.

Balintawak Beer Brewery Co., Inc.
Box 3386 Manila Tel. (40)—550—552

became the mere head of the lower house of the Legislature; but within it, he exercised vast powers, even if at times he had to appeal to Quezon to keep his position against rebellious members. In 1933, he lost the support of President Quezon and so he lost the Speakership, which was handed over to Quintin Paredes. An able lawyer and a clever political leader, Paredes soon developed prestige and influence of his own.

The establishment of the Commonwealth in 1935, with its single-chambered National Assembly, brought into prominence the question of the Speaker's position. President Quezon expressed the opinion that the Speaker should have no special political power but should be a mere presiding officer. Paredes differed with him, believing that a Speaker should be the leader of the Assembly. Philippine tradition and American practice supported Paredes' stand. But President Quezon's view

prevailed, thus introducing the English practice under which the Speaker acts as a mere chairman and ceremonial head of the House of Commons. Gil Montilla, a colorless sort of Assembly member, was chosen Speaker. Much of the real power was wielded by the majority floor-leader who was Jose E. Romero of Negros Oriental.

With the election of the second National Assembly in 1938, the vast powers of the Speaker may be resurrected. Jose Yulo, former Secretary of Justice and a trusted adviser of President Quezon, is now the Speaker. Without any legislative experience to speak of, Yulo is known nevertheless as a capable and hard-working individual. Paredes was chosen floor-leader. The Assembly is completely dominated by one single party.

Yulo and Paredes were once law partners. Paredes was at one time also a Secretary of Justice. Many believe that they make a good team.

A local picture very much worth your while—



GALA PREMIERE — FOX — February 11