

- The President of the Philippines is being accused of violating the right of privacy.

## THE PRESIDENT'S BUGGING OFFICE

President Marcos has revealed that he has bugged his office and has been able to secure tape-recordings of confidential and compromising conversations with visitors. The revelation was made in Cebu at a public rally in which he presented the NP candidates for senator. We have heard of the Russians bugging American and other embassies in Moscow for purposes of espionage, but this is about the first time that the President of a free country has secretly tape-recorded his conversations with his visitors.

In an official press release of Sept. 3, 1967, the Malacañang press office quoted the President as having said in his Cebu speech:

"Don't you know that many of these supposed candidates (presumably the LP senatorial candidates) frequent my office in Mala-

cañang asking for favors from me? I have tape-recordings of each and everyone of them. And if they are interested to find out what they said, I will give them a copy of the tape-recordings.

"Some of them can be a basis for criminal action like attempted bribery. So, if they really want proofs, they should come to me.

"There is not a single one of them who has not gone to my office begging for favors.

"I have refused them, some of them for appointments for high office. I think you know whom I am talking about. Some of them for concessions, some of them for contracts, the Manila Hotel; some of them for reparations items.

"I repeat, if they want to hear the tape-recordings, I will accommodate them."

There are several ways of looking at the startling pres-

idential revelation From his side, the President deliberately recorded confidential conversation with him for his own purpose. Has he gathered evidence against his visitors for purposes of prosecution? Has he recorded their own words that would place them in compromising positions, if revealed, for political purposes?

On the side of the President's visitors, it can be said that the President has betrayed their confidence in him. If they talked to him about confidential matters, it is because they trust him. Now they know that the President has something which, if published, would harm their candidacies. Should they not better withdraw before the President feels compelled to reveal their conversations to the public?

What do the people think of it all? From now on, the President and his office will assume a sinister aspect as far as they are concerned. People see the President for various reasons, most of which are confidential. Some complain against certain public officials for unfairness, arrogance, inefficiency or extortion. Others beg him for favors. Oftentimes they do not wish their names to be revealed for fear of retaliation and persecution, particularly if the officials concerned are vindictive and powerful. Will the people, after knowing that what they say may be tape-recorded, continue to entrust their confidences to the President? Or has Mr. Marcos damaged the public image of the presidency by his bugging and his revelation? — *V. Albano Pacis, Manila Chronicle, Sept. 6, 1967.*