

THE SYMPOSIUM AND THE GUEST OF HONOR *

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The holding of public discussions of important subjects affecting the government, the administration of law, or the management of public and political affairs is a new project of the College of Law. The College of Law believes that an activity of this kind will serve to stimulate a wide interest in matters of great importance. It is true that people talk about these things. But quite often they talk about them without a thorough understanding of their nature and significance because there is usually no sufficient preparation and study. Unprepared broadcasts on the issues of the day may be highly entertaining. Impromptu talks, questions, and answers may be interesting. But they are seldom, if ever, instructive enough or reliable enough to be used as basis of decision or action. The careful man or the careful government official does not adopt a line of conduct on the basis of snap judgments.

In the near future, other subjects and problems will be discussed involving questions of national concern, or professional interest, or intellectual significance.

This project is intrusted for its execution to the Order of the Purple Feather, an honor society of the College of Law, composed of students selected from the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior classes on the basis of academic prominence and high scholarship. Membership in this Order is a recognition of merit and ability. This fact is sufficient guarantee that those who take part in the discussion of the questions selected for this program possess the necessary competence and preparation.

Under these circumstances, it is but logical and pressing that the choice of a guest speaker must necessarily fall upon a person whom the College of Law can rightly consider competent and qualified. Otherwise, a discordant note might creep in to blur the wholesome effect of this public discussion. Such an occurrence will be distressing. For it has been our purpose and plan to make this symposium capture the spirit, even if only in a slight measure, of what was known in medieval universities as the "great conversation."

* Speech delivered in introducing the guest of honor, former Ambassador Proceso E. Sebastian, at a symposium held at Rizal Hall, on September 24, 1954, under the auspices of the Order of the Purple Feather, of the College of Law, University of the Philippines.

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And so, this evening we have with us a College of Law man who is highly qualified to be the honored guest of this honor society: the Hon. Proceso Sebastian, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws from the University of the Philippines. He graduated from the College of Law in 1915 in a class which eventually turned out some of our distinguished Filipino leaders; among them being ex-President Elpidio Quirino, Supreme Court Justice Marceliano Montemayor, Supreme Court Justice Sabino Padilla, and Senator Jose P. Laurel.

Since his graduation from our College, our guest of honor has had a varied career. He entered politics and was elected successively member of the House of Representatives, Governor of his home province, Cagayan, and member of the Philippine Senate. He was called to the judiciary and served for sometime as judge-at-large and as district judge. Then in the diplomatic service, he headed the Philippine delegation to the first UNESCO Conference on May 1946 in which he was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents. He served as Minister to China, Minister Plenipotenciary to Rome, and Special Ambassador to the Vatican. Then he was assigned as Minister to France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Lastly, he occupied the post of Ambassador to Indonesia where he served with distinction until his resignation last July of this year. He holds at present the position of Vice Dean of the Francisco Law College.

A man of many parts and many accomplishments, we feel honored to have him with us here tonight. We are glad to welcome him. We know that his message to us will be both enlightening and inspiring.