

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

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Philippine Studies vol. 38, no. 2 (1990): 251–262

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Quezon on the Question of Reelection

ROLANDO M. GRIPALDO

To tell the truth gentlemen, I should like to continue being the President if I were sure I would live one hundred years. Have you ever known of anyone who had voluntarily renounced power unless it be for a lady who, in his opinion, was more important than power itself, or because of the threatening attitude of the people? Everybody likes power. It is the greatest urge of human nature—power. I like to exercise power. But, because my main consideration is the interest of the country, I am stepping out of office when the time comes for me to do so. And when I am no longer in office, I will not want to be a boss; I do not want to be a power behind the throne.

—Manuel L. Quezon¹

Article VII of the 1935 Philippine constitution provides for presidential and vice presidential tenure. While section 2 says that the president and vice president shall hold office for a term of six years, section 4 stipulates that no person elected president may be reelected for the next succeeding term. These have been legally translated to mean that an elected president shall serve a term of only six years without reelection.

THE IDEA OF NO REELECTION

Quezon conceived the idea of no reelection. When the constitutional convention was considering this subject, he personally appealed to the members of the convention that there should be no presidential reelection, and in view of this appeal, the convention inserted the section prohibiting the reelection of the president.²

1. "Cooperation between the Chief Executive and the National Assembly," 22 May 1939)

2. Manuel L. Quezon, "Re-Election Message," 16 May 1939, in *President Quezon: His Biographical Sketch, Messages and Speeches*, ed. Eulogio Rodriguez (Manila: Publishers Incorporated, 1940), p. 240. See Feliciano H. Magno, "Quezon Nixes Second Term, Urges Bicameral Legislature," *Quezon Souvenir*, 1964 (Manila: Quezon Society, 1964), p. 7.

In December 1934 a group of prominent citizens headed by Miguel Unson urged that Quezon and Osmeña consolidate their forces because they anticipated future problems, which would require a united effort. "What we need is unity, so that we may have the best services of our best men at a time when we can ill afford to waste any of them."³ So, eventually on 16 June 1935 the Quezon and Osmeña factions joined forces and agreed that both leaders would head their ticket. In the September 1935 elections Quezon and Osmeña were chosen President and Vice President respectively.

Barely two years later however, the presidential reelection issue was openly discussed. Quezon had to issue a press statement declaring that he was responsible for the inclusion of the nonreelection provision of the constitution and that he would deny any move to amend the constitution to allow his reelection. He believed that amending the constitution in this way would be to follow in the footsteps of some Latin American republics where this type of constitutional amendment was mainly responsible for many of their revolutions. It took another two years before this reelection issue resurfaced with intensity, although Assemblyman Dominador Tan and six others a year earlier, in 1938, drafted a resolution for a constitutional amendment to allow Quezon to run for reelection. But this did not prosper.⁴

One of the earliest assemblymen who suggested Quezon's possible reelection was Eusebio Orense of Batangas. But Quezon believed he had succeeded in convincing Orense to drop the matter. On 13 May 1939, the Assembly Nacionalistas held a caucus in which they decided to amend the constitution to provide for a presidential reelection. Speaker Jose Yulo and other Nacionalista leaders discussed the matter at length with Quezon, who objected to the idea of amending the constitution simply to allow his reelection. When Yulo told him, however, that the idea of presidential reelection was independent of the question whether he should be reelected or not, Quezon considered it. Later he wrote Yulo not to act on an amendment resolution until he could present his views before the Assembly.⁵

3. Quoted by Carlos Quirino, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom* (Manila: Filipino Book Guild, 1971), p. 278.

4. Manuel L. Quezon, "Press Statement," 19 October 1937, *Messages of the President*, 5 vols. (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1946), 3,11:338. See *Tribune*, 18 February 1938. Teofilo Sison said that prior to the National Assembly's discussion of the proposed amendments, local and provincial organizations adopted resolutions asking for Quezon's reelection. See also *Philippines Herald*, 18 May 1940.

5. *Tribune*, 18 February 1938, 16 and 18 May 1939. Jose P. Laurel, Sr. likewise wanted Quezon's reelection, but his role was minimal. See Quirino, *Paladin*, p. 328.

On 15 May Quezon informed the Assembly that since he had conceived the idea of no reelection, he resisted being induced to seek a second term by some assemblymen, especially Assemblyman Orense, and by the resolutions he received from various municipalities, provinces, associations, etc., favoring his reelection. Speaker Yulo, however, told him that apart from Quezon's own reelection, he felt the constitution should be amended by reducing the presidential term of office from six to four years and allowing the President's reelection, because six years "is too long for a bad President and too short for a good one." This created "grave thought" in Quezon's mind, whether it was wise for him to oppose "the consideration by the people of the question raised by the Speaker." He informed Yulo he would not object if the Assembly pass a measure creating a constitutional convention that would consider the issue of reelection and other questions. Should the convention desire to amend the constitution by reducing the presidential term of office to four years with reelection, he would recommend that there should be only one reelection. In any event, no person should be allowed to remain president for more than eight consecutive years. He would further recommend that the amendment be made retroactive so as to affect his own term of office. Although Quezon was reluctant to serve for more than six years, he might reconsider provided a constitutional convention was called and the delegates elected to it expressed in their platforms or certificates of candidacy that they would amend the presidential term of office to four years with reelection. "An amendment adopted in this fashion," Quezon said, "would in effect originate from the people, and I might feel obligated to heed their command." But following George Washington's example, Quezon would not serve as president for more than eight consecutive years.⁶

In a press conference and in subsequent press releases Quezon reiterated the argument that he might run for reelection if his term of

6. *Tribune*, 16 May 1939. See Quezon, "Re-Election Message," pp. 240-41. Quezon also suggested some amendments he considered more pressing, viz., (1) the revival of the bicameral Legislature by instituting a Senate elected at large; (2) the abolition of the electoral commission and the power to decide on election protests should be vested either in the courts of justice or in the Legislature alone; (3) impeachments should be shared by two bodies. (In a unicameral system, the courts should try impeachment cases with the Legislature retaining the power to impeach, or the Legislature should try impeachment cases with the executive holding the power to impeach. In a bicameral system, the House should initiate impeachment proceedings while the Senate should pass judgment on impeachment cases.) Finally, (4) a possible amendment on the trade provisions of the constitution in view of the recommendations of the Joint Preparatory Committee on Philippine Affairs.

office were no more than eight years.⁷ Later he told the press that he knew when he suggested to the constitutional convention the tenure of six years without reelection that he would most likely be elected the first Commonwealth President. Though he might not be able to build a nation in that period, "he felt six years of the presidency would just leave him time enough to enjoy private life a few years more before his life would close."⁸ Despite the fact that he doubted this six-year idea in light of Yulo's remark, he considered a reelection of another six years unthinkable. Following George Washington's example, he was convinced a maximum tenure of eight years, i.e., a four-year term with one reelection, would be wise. He stated that unlimited reelection was not necessarily undemocratic, as long as there was a constitutional limit to the tenure of office and the people could elect their chief executive at specified intervals. Such was the case of England where some leaders headed the British government for long periods of time. Although the right of the people to avail themselves of the services of any citizen as chief executive may be unlimited, Quezon said there should be a limit to the duty of a citizen to serve in that capacity. Washington established such a limit and, incidentally, "placed successfully an effective limit to the ambitions of the individuals."⁹

AMENDMENTS BY PLEBISCITE

On 17 May, a committee headed by Speaker Yulo and Floor leader Quintin Paredes conferred with Quezon. They explained why the Assembly preferred the amendment of the constitution by plebiscite to one by convention for "reasons of economy and to avoid too much political agitation." A convention would require a special election of delegates and a plebiscite, whereas an amendment by plebiscite would only require the plebiscite "and the views of the people would be just as well expressed as in an election of candidates to a constitutional convention."¹⁰ Quezon replied that he had really nothing to do with

7. United Press Release, 17-18 May 1939. Associated Press Manila wire Associated Press Honolulu and San Francisco, 17-18 May 1939. All from *Quezon Papers* (hereafter cited as QP), ser. V. Quezon considered the existing unicameral Assembly as dangerous in that it was prone to a series of clashes between the president and the Assembly and if the president won, there would be a dictatorship while if the Assembly won, there would be an oligarchy.

8. See *Philippines Herald*, 18 May 1939. Quezon noticed that the Assembly was more in favor of the amendment on presidential reelection than on the revival of the Senate. See also *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 22 May 1939.

9. *Philippines Herald*, 18 May 1939 and *Tribune*, 18 May 1939.

10. *Tribune*, 18 May 1939.

constitutional amendments, since under the constitution only the Assembly had the authority to determine the method of amending the constitution, except that he was "immediately involved in it." In view of this he felt it was his duty to express his opinion on the subject, but if the assemblymen believed and were fairly convinced that their method was the best, then they should go ahead with it. Quezon, on the other hand, would have to continue with what he felt was his own best conduct in reference to reelection. He suggested that the constitutional amendments be taken up in the next regular session of the Assembly so that there could be enough time to think things over.¹¹

SAFEGUARD OF DEMOCRACY

On the issue that the constitution should not be amended because it had just been approved, Quezon said the argument was of no great value since the American constitution had been amended immediately after the federal government was established. But if a constitution were amended it should be on fundamental principles, not on passing and incidental circumstances. He contended that the constitution was not a safeguard of democracy or of freedom and liberty. The real safeguard was "the practice and habit of self-restraint among the people in the exercise of governmental and political powers."¹² In other words, since Quezon was trying very hard to exercise that self-restraint, the assemblymen and the Filipino people must do likewise. It was unfortunate, he said, that the presidential reelection had been brought about because of the desire of some people to have him reelected.¹³

Earlier Quezon had placed the burden of self-restraint on the chief magistrate by involving Washington's example and setting eight years of continued service as the maximum presidential limit. This time, however, he stressed that the people (including the assemblymen)

11. Ibid. Jose Topacio Nueno, an opposition leader, considered the presidential reelection an indication of fickleness of mind, the lack of seriousness, and an establishment of a bad precedent. See *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 22 May 1939.

12. *Tribune*, 18 May 1939.

13. Ibid. Joseph R. Hayden, *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 78, said that one possible reason for the move to have Quezon reelected was that Quezon's continuation in power was the best guarantee for a large majority of elective officials to have security of tenure in the positions they held, or for promotion. This political move is probable. We should not forget, however, that resolutions favoring Quezon's reelection also came from nonpolitical aggregations and private citizens. See Quezon, "Re-Election Message," p. 40 and T. Ayson to Ma. Aurora Quezon, undated (1940?), QP, ser. II.

where sovereignty resided, must first have self-restraint in the exercise of their sovereign power as the safeguard of democracy in order not to tinker with the constitutional limit of the presidential tenure. Only when they failed to exercise this self-restraint by demanding their right to avail themselves of the unlimited services of a chief magistrate of their choice did Quezon believe the chief magistrate himself should exercise his own self-restraint.

On 22 May Quezon affirmed before the Executive Committee of the Nacionalista party that he would not run for reelection. He reiterated this before an audience at a farewell banquet in honor of Quintin Paredes, who was to depart for the United States to join the Philippine mission there. He said that from the time he told the National Assembly on 15 May about the possibility of his running for reelection provided his tenure did not exceed eight years, he had receded from that stand. "The more I think of the idea, the less I like it." He indicated he might not even accept a two-year extension of his term. He disclosed that at a caucus he held with the National Directorate of the party, they had agreed to call a party convention sometime in July to ascertain whether or not the party believed the constitution should be amended. It was at this banquet that he admitted having liked to exercise power, but in the interest of the nation he would step down when the time came. He reiterated once again that the safeguard of democracy was neither the constitution nor the written laws, but the people's self-restraint in the exercise of power.¹⁴

REASONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL REELECTION

On 1 July 1939 Quezon expressed his preference to retire from politics. During the Nacionalista convention of 6 July, he said if the National Assembly wanted him to finish his term of six years before allowing him a reelection of four years, he would not run for reelection. If his present term was reduced to four years he might run, because in this case he would be risking the two remaining years of his term. It would be asking for a vote of confidence from the people. To the retort that he was sure of winning a reelection, Quezon argued: "Well, if I am sure of my reelection then the people are for me,

14. Manuel L. Quezon, "Cooperation between the Chief Executive and the National Assembly, Coconut Excise Tax, and Constitutional Amendments," 22 May 1939, *QP*, ser. VIII. Published in *Messages of the President*, 5,1:128-31. A press report stated the Nacionalista convention was to be held on 6 July. The opposition leaders at this time began to consider the Senate revival merely as a smokescreen for what they believed was the real purpose of the Nacionalista convention, which was to pave the way for the reelection amendment. See *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 8 June 1939.

and if they are for me they certainly are entitled to have me." To guarantee that his reelection would not be by "false means," administrative machinery independent of the chief executive would be created to conduct the elections in the country.¹⁵ In this convention Speaker Yulo argued that the demands of the times called for unity of all the diverse elements of the populace in the control and direction of the government. The assembly leaders felt the "necessity of the continuance of the present order, particularly as regards the leadership of the man who has laid the foundations of the Commonwealth government and initiated the economic reforms and put into practice the new social policies in our Constitution." Unfortunately, Yulo noted, the constitution did not allow such an eventuality. Hence the need for the reelection amendment. But the more important reason, Yulo stressed, was the democratic principle behind the move to permit a presidential reelection, i.e., the unnecessary curtailment of the right of the people to a free selection of the chief magistrate of the nation if they were prohibited from reelecting the incumbent president despite "the consensus of the popular will clamoring for such reelection." Moreover, the constitution prohibited people from changing the chief magistrate for a shorter time since six years of power in the hands of an unscrupulous president "may lead the nation to decadence or to destruction." Yulo observed that the reason for advancing the presidential term of six years without reelection was "lack of faith" in democracy in the Philippines, the fear that the popular will may be thwarted by a strong magistrate who wanted to perpetuate himself in power, and the further fear that the chief magistrate allowed to run for reelection may play politics during his term of office. Since Yulo had faith in democracy and in the ability of the Filipino people to practice democracy in the country, there should be no fear in amending the constitution to permit a presidential reelection.¹⁶

The convention debated, discussed, and finally decided on three constitutional amendments: (1) the reelection of the president with a four-year term with retroactive effect in the case of Quezon; (2) the revival of the Senate and (3) the creation of an independent and exclusive administrative electoral body to take charge of national elections.¹⁷

15. Manuel L. Quezon, "Speech at the Public Plaza, Tagbilaran," 1 July 1939, and "Nacionalista Party Convention Speech," 7 July 1939. Both from QP, ser. VIII.

16. "Yulo Gives New Arguments Supporting Shorter Term and Presidential Reelection," *Philippines Herald*, 7 July 1939.

17. "3 Amendment Plans Reported Out; Yulo Sets Debate for 3 P.M.," *Philippines Herald*, 7 July 1939.

On 10 July Harry Hawes cabled Quezon that the latter's endorsement as reported in the *New York Times* to reduce the presidential term to four years, "permitting your reelection," was best for both the Filipino and American people. Osmeña, who was in America working for the revision of the economic provisions of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, congratulated Quezon for deciding to seek reelection to allow the people to avail themselves of "your able and patriotic leadership during the critical years of our preparation for independence." He also wanted the term of the vice president cut to four years. Quezon thanked Hawes and Osmeña and informed the latter he would submit his suggestion on the vice presidency when the Assembly considered the question.¹⁸

QUEZON'S DESIRE TO RETIRE

Upon his arrival in August from the United States where he had assisted the Osmeña economic mission, Floor Leader Paredes proposed that the four-year presidential reelection take effect in 1941. Quezon opposed this, saying that after his six-year term, he would not stay a single day in office. He declared that the move to shorten the presidential term would set a dangerous precedent since the Assembly would acquire the power to remove a president who had become obnoxious to the Assembly by simply amending the constitution to reduce that president's term of office without impeachment proceedings which required a stricter criterion for removal, e.g., treason or malfeasance in office. Quezon stated he would oppose the shortening of his term, but if, despite his opposition, the Assembly reduced his tenure, then he would be forced to run for reelection.¹⁹ Although in July Quezon "yielded to the possibility of serving two years in the presidency," later in August he feared that his reelection after a term of six years, as Paredes proposed, would become a dangerous precedent. "Some ambitious and unscrupulous politicians," Quezon worried, "might invoke such a precedent in order to perpetuate himself (sic) in power." Since this would endanger the people's liberties, he was horrified at the thought he might cause the destruction of those liberties for which he had fought and to which he had consecrated his life. But as a compromise he would run for reelection if his term was reduced to four years, although he hoped it would not be done.²⁰

18. Hawes wire Quezon, 10 July 1939 and Osmeña wire Quezon, 10 July 1939. Quezon wire Hawes, 11 July 1939 and Quezon wire Osmeña, 11 July 1939. All from QP, ser. V. 19. *Philippines Herald*, 5 August 1939.

20. Quezon, "Nacionalista Convention Speech." On 24 July Quezon seemed to have decided not to run for reelection. See "Quezoniana II," *Vargas Papers*, Vargas Filipiniana

On his birthday, 19 August, Quezon appealed to the assemblymen and the government officials that he be allowed to retire after his six-year term, and that the Assembly should not make a move that would "compel him to run for reelection against his best judgment." He said he did not believe his retirement would cause any serious dislocation in the government. He was sure his successor would do as well if not better, because the solid foundations of the government had already been laid and were well on the way to completion. If the people should feel that his services were still needed, e.g., during the first days of the republic, he might perhaps make himself available again.

On 27 August, George Fairchild expressed his appreciation for Quezon's stand against changing the constitution to permit his reelection for another term. "The human desire for power is so great, few individuals are capable of a renunciation such as you have made." On the same day Quezon expressed to the National Assembly, through a letter to Speaker Yulo, his desire not to be reelected. He said that if the Assembly should decide in the interest of the nation to amend the presidential term, it should not be made retroactive so as to apply to himself. He appealed that his term be allowed to expire and that a presidential reelection be planned so as not to affect his term and his retirement.²¹

Towards the end of August Quezon wrote Roy Howard that despite his first announcement not to be reelected, the Nacionalista Party passed a resolution in its convention recommending the changing of the constitution to allow his reelection. He said he was forced to suggest a four-year term reduction of his tenure with one reelection. "Of course," Quezon declared, "regardless of what the National Assembly may do in this respect, I am definitely out not only for reasons of state but for my personal and family convenience as well." Howard replied that what was of particular interest in the United States was "your idea that a definite limitation of tenure of office—a limitation to two four-year terms—should be fixed by the Constitution." Quezon explained to Howard his May National Assembly speech, that he would not run for reelection if the proposed constitutional amendment did not shorten his six-year term even if that proposed amendment would allow him to run, because it would

Research Center, and University Archives, University of the Philippines Library, Diliman, Quezon City. On 2 August Quezon wrote Yulo that if reelection were pushed through, it should be prospective and not retroactive, so as not to apply to his case. See Quezon to Yulo, 2 August 1939, "Quezoniana I," *Vargas Papers*.

21. Quezon, "Constitutional Amendments," pp. 249–50. See Hayden, *The Philippines*, p. 76. See also *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 17 and 21–22 August 1939. Fairchild to Quezon, 21 August 1939, *QP*, ser. V.

not disturb in any way his present tenure. "I am entirely out of the run and so I have several times announced to the people of the Philippines."²²

In early September Yulo reiterated the Assembly proposal for an amendment of four years with only one reelection, and the National Assembly went on with its plan to amend the constitution by plebiscite. On 15 September it adopted Resolution No. 38 which embodied the three constitutional amendments on presidential reelection, Senate revival, and creation of the commission on elections. From 16 September 1939 onwards, Quezon was firm in his decision not to stand for a second term. On 16 November he told High Commissioner Francis Sayre that he would not seek reelection because "if he did so the precedent would be set for Commonwealth presidents to be reelected for successive terms without limit and that the result would be an almost unavoidable tendency toward a dictatorship government." Quezon felt he should resign at the end of his six-year term. He had decided on Osmeña to succeed him, although Yulo and Roxas were also possibilities.²³

Earlier in June 1939, Osmeña had regarded the four-year term with one immediate reelection as more democratic, in that it gave the people the chance to replace or reelect the president. In January 1940 he was active in campaigning for the approval of the constitutional amendments. He believed these amendments would "strengthen the stability of our government through the improvement in our political structure."²⁴ Manuel Roxas, who initially doubted the wisdom of a presidential reelection, later supported the move, saying that the creation of the proposed nonpartisan electoral commission would bar a president from manipulating the electoral processes to secure his reelection. In effect a political opponent would have an equal chance with the reelectionist in a clean and honest election. Moreover, this would enable the electorate to pass judgment on the performance of the incumbent.²⁵

When Resolution No. 73 amended Resolution No. 38 on 11 April 1940 redefining some of the executive functions, Quezon continued to

22. Quezon to Howard, 30 August 1939; Howard to Quezon, 15 September 1939; Quezon to Howard, 20 October 1939. All from QP, ser. V.

23. *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 11 September 1939; Resolution No. 38, 15 September 1939, *Official Gazette* 37 (21 October 1939): 2596-2601; C.A. No. 492, 19 September 1939. See Sayre to Roosevelt, 16 November 1939. Cited by Aurelio B. Calderon, "A Fragile Relationship," *Solidarity* 95 (1983): 40.

24. *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 10 June 1939 and *Tribune*, 28 January 1940.

25. *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 11 June 1939 and Marcial P. Lichauco, *Roxas* (Manila: Kiko Printing Press, 1952), p. 130. Although Claro M. Recto opposed the idea of reelection, he was for bicameralism. See *Tribune*, 10 August 1939.

hold on to his original position to retire in December 1941.²⁶ His daughter, Maria Aurora, opposed his reelection since "she can't lead a normal life—at least not while her father is President."²⁷ Benigno Aquino, Sr. pleaded support for the amendments, calling the reelection amendment "wise" in the sense that a good president could serve longer, and "democratic" in the sense that the people would be given greater freedom in the institution of their own government.²⁸

On 25 April Quezon approved Commonwealth Act. No. 517 calling for a plebiscite on the amendments. He did not campaign, however, for the presidential reelection because he said he was not interested. But he campaigned for the revival of the Senate and the creation of the electoral commission. His final position was that he was not a candidate for reelection, that he was not going to run even if nominated by his party, that despite this, if the people should reelect him to the presidency, he would have to serve "because such an election would be a command by the people and he did not propose to run away from duty."²⁹

Democrata Juan Sumulong on 28 April criticized Quezon's "fanatical henchmen" for amending the presidential tenure that would allow Quezon to become president for sixteen years, that is, from 1935 to 1943 and from 1945 to 1953, since the vice president would run the government from 1943 to 1945.³⁰ Parades, demonstrations, and petitions in support of Quezon's reelection, however, were held nationwide on Labor Day. About 75,000 Manila laborers supported Quezon since they considered him the "patron of social justice." Yulo and Aquino actively continued their defense of the amendments.³¹

26. See Sayre to Roosevelt, 15 April 1940. Cited by Calderon, "Fragile Relationship," p. 41. See also Resolution No. 73, 11 April 1940, *Official Gazette* 38 (15 May 1940): 1281–85.

27. *Philippines Free Press*, 2 March 1940.

28. *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 11 April 1940.

29. See *Philippines Herald*, 5 June 1940; *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 5 and 17 June 1940; *Tribune*, 5 June 1940; and Fairchild to Quezon, 13 June 1940, QP, ser. V.

30. *Tribune*, 28 April 1940. See *Philippines Herald*, 17 August 1940. Hayden, *The Philippines*, pp. 77–78, said that this arrangement would preserve the dominance of the Nacionalista party and avoid or postpone the "divisive struggle for the Quezon mantle." This would likewise avoid a "change of administration in the middle of a dangerously turbulent stream." These are, of course, political probabilities. In the Mexican case, when Alvaro Obregon, who served as the second Mexican President, was about to serve his second term as the fourth Mexican President, he was assassinated. See in this connection, George Malcolm, *American Colonial Careerist* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1957), p. 124 and Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 2 vols. (R.P. Garcia Publishing Company, 1965), 2: 794. See also *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1968 ed., s.v. "Mexico," by Parkes.

31. *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 2–3 May 1940; *Philippines Herald*, 9 May 1940; *Tribune*, 21 May 1940; and Hayden, *The Philippines*, p. 81.

On 5 June Quezon denied he had urged the National Assembly that the reelection amendment be passed and argued that the documents could bear him out. He then told Democrata Juan Sumulong in an open forum: "Just to show you that I am not interested in the reelection amendment, I will work for the defeat of that amendment if the senator [i.e. Sumulong] will work for the approval of the senate." Sumulong agreed, provided the senators would be elected by districts and the assemblymen's salary would not be increased. Quezon replied that would not be possible, because he was for a Senate elected at large and Sumulong should not object to a salary of ₱7,200 per annum because when they were both senators, their salary was ₱10,500 and Senator Sumulong never asked for less.³²

"Throughout the campaign," Joseph R. Hayden said, "the chief argument for the presidential amendment was that it could permit the reelection of Mr. Quezon, and the hope or expectation that the president would run again was repeatedly expressed."³³ Item 2 of the plebiscite ballot read:

Do you vote for the approval of an amendment to the Constitution of the Philippines, as proposed by the Second National Assembly in Article II of its Resolution No. 38, as amended by Resolution No. 73, which, in substance, provides for the repeal of the provision prohibiting reelection and changes the term of office of the President and the Vice President of the Philippines from six years to four years and prohibits any person from serving as President for a period of more than eight consecutive years?³⁴

Ratified by the Filipino people on 18 June 1940, the amendments were subsequently approved by President Roosevelt.³⁵

Quezon was subsequently reelected, but the question of reelection was resolved by the National Assembly on the basis of its merits as espoused by Jose Yulo, and not on the basis of the desire of one man to perpetuate himself in power. In light of the 1987 constitutional provision of a presidential tenure of six years without reelection, it is important to reiterate Quezon's view that the safeguard of democracy is not the constitution, but the people's self-restraint in the exercise of governmental and political powers. Should this fail, the chief executive himself should exercise his own self-restraint.

32. *Philippines Herald*, 5 June 1940.

33. Hayden, *The Philippines*, pp. 81 and 873.

34. C.A. No. 515, 25 April 1940. It must be noted that the two-term presidential limit was adopted in the United States only in 1951 by virtue of the twenty-second amendment. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1968 ed., s.v. "President," by Wilfred E. Binkley.

35. See Manuel L. Quezon, "Message," 4 December 1940, "Quezoniana III," *Vargas Papers*.