

## **CASTING THE FIRST STONE**

Palace spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao was quoted as saying that the recent expose of Pacifico Marcelo was cause for worry. Just when the economy was anticipated to really pick up, the opposition has again resorted to destabilizing moves.

But what's there to worry if Pic Marcelo's charges are merely fabricated? So far, he has not submitted any solid evidence. So it's going to boil down to his word against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's. But there are some questionable circumstances which may raise a few eyebrows. Mr. Marcelo claims that he had a clandestine meeting with the president; that he was made to pass thru the backdoor. Why they had to meet in the first place has also to be explained.

Then there were these Bureau of Immigration officers who thought they would gain "pogi" points with Malacañang by attempting to arrest Marcelo at the Senate (and immediately deport him ala Harry Stonehill?) very obviously to frustrate him from attesting to his charges. Didn't they realize that their stupid scheme would only have raised more questions in the minds of the public? Let the fellow file his charges before the Senate Blue Ribbon committee. His credibility is rather suspect but he should be given every opportunity to present his evidence - if he has any. And if he fails to prove his case then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo will come out smelling sweeter than ever.

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Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena, in a rather ironic turn of events, found himself relieved from the functions of the office of PJ for six (6) months (some newspapers say indefinitely) for having a rather large backlog of unresolved cases. Earlier, he was reported to have submitted a report to the Supreme Court on the alleged absenteeism and backlog of another justice (Badoy). But what is rather disquieting is his claim that he was never aware of the IBP complaint against him. So it's very likely that the Supreme Court has once again applied the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur* (the thing speaks for itself). The First Division, Sandiganbayan's record of unresolved cases - one case submitted for resolution dating back to 10 years ago (another a motion to withdraw information - unresolved for the past 7 years) didn't need any further amplification. So I guess I have no reason to complain that one case I have before the Sandiganbayan where the prosecution has filed a Motion to Withdraw Information (duly approved by the Ombudsman) has been unresolved despite the lapse of six (6) months.

But the Supreme Court resolution does send a message to all the courts to start clearing up their backlog. At least when these judges and justices realize that the Supreme Court is serious, the wheels of justice may finally start to grind a little faster.

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Reminder to all Cervinians and Eliazoans, we have an alumni homecoming on December 8, 2001 (Saturday), 3 p.m. at the Cervini Hall hosted by the Ateneo Foundation for Resident Students (AFORS). See you there...