

GMA endorses 27 new appointees to CA

By JESS GALLAS

President Arroyo has endorsed 27 new appointees for confirmation by the Commission on Appointments, Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gallas, head of the 12-member House CA contingent, said yesterday.

He said the CA has received the appointment papers of Press Secretary Jesus Duroza, Energy Secretary Angela Reyes, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, and Commissioners Leonardo Leonida, Lourdes Tagle and Mercedes Macarambon of the Commission on Elections.

Duroza, Leonida and Tagle are new appointees, while Atienza, Reyes and Macarambon were bypassed in June when Congress ended its first regular session, prompting the President to reappoint them.

Gallas said as of last Friday, the appointment papers of Mrs. Arroyo's new economic planning secretary, former senator Ralph Recto, and Labor Secretary Maricris Roque have not been submitted to the CA.

He said the President has likewise endorsed the 15 new ambassadors and other diplomatic officers led by former senator Orlando Mercado, envoy-designate to China with concurrent jurisdiction over North Korea and Mongolia.

Also submitted were the promotions of Major Generals Ricardo Capacio, Nathaniel Legaspi and Florentino Perea, and Rear Admirals Danilo Cortez, Ramon Peralta and Joaquin Soliman.

Gallas has been acting head of the House CA contingent since last February when Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles vacated the post upon his election as Speaker. Last week, the House elected Gallas as permanent contingent head.

By choosing Gallas, the Liberal-dominated House rejected the proposal of rival administration party Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kamp) for its president, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villacorte, to be Nograles' successor in the CA.

Also elected was Rep. Alfonso Usala as Liberal Party (LP) representative in the CA.

Last year, LP congressmen questioned the decision of the House under then Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. not to give them representation in the appointments

commission.

The House elected Usala a week after the Supreme Court required Nograles and

Senate President Manuel Villar on Sen. Jovito Salonga's petition questioning the commission's membership.