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Bill recognizing Lapu-Lapu as hero passes final reading in Senate

By MARIO B CASAYURAN

Lapu-Lapu will be given the proper recognition that he deserves for being the first Asian to beat Magellan, a colonial invader, when the bill recognizing him as a hero is signed into law. The Senate had passed the bill on third and final reading yesterday.

The bill calls for the declaration of April 27 as Lapu-Lapu Day or Adlaw ni Lapu-Lapu.

"For the first time, Lapu-Lapu will be given an official day as befits his status as a hero," Sen. Richard J. Gordon said after the Senate passed on third and final reading his bill recognizing Lapu-Lapu as a hero.

Gordon said it was really unfortunate that we turned him into a fish

when he was in fact the first successful defender of our shores, beating the Spanish invaders led by Ferdinand Magellan.

"We should stop calling the fish Lapu-Lapu," he added.

Senate Bill 108 seeks to declare April 27 of every year as a special working public holiday throughout the country to commemorate the victory of Lapu-Lapu and his men over the Spaniards in the historic Battle of Mactan on April 27, 1521.

Gordon said Lapu-Lapu embodies the line in the Philippine National Anthem, "sa manlulupig, 'di kapasisiil," while national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal embodies the line "Ang mamatay ng dahil sa yo."

Unlike Rajah Humabon of Cebu

and other chiefs of the neighboring islands, Lapu-Lapu refused to acknowledge the Spanish sovereignty over the islands and convert to Christianity, he explained.

He said that when he was Department of Tourism (DOT) secretary, he fought to have the Lapu-Lapu Monument installed in the Luneta Park to represent the Visayas and the Muslims while Rizal represents Tagalog Christians which unites the country.

In 2004, the 40-foot monument, which became the "Sentinel of Freedom in Asia, was built in the National Park in Luneta as a gift by the Korean Freedom League to the Filipino people to honor the Filipino soldiers who served and fought for the freedom of the Korean people.

Senate bill