

'Bistek' as QC vice mayor?

By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Mayor Herbert Bautista is considering a run for vice mayor in the 2019 mid-term elections.

City hall sources told **Manila Standard** Bautista is still studying his options, after previously being touted to run for a seat in the House of Representatives.

Asked if he would run for the position he's held twice before, Bautista said: "I don't know. The election is too far [to project things]. I [really] don't know."

"What's the problem?" added "Bistek," who was vice mayor under then-Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte from 2001 to 2010, and also from 1995 to 1998 under Mayor Ismael Mathay Jr.

Bautista, sources said, planned to seek a congressional seat against three-term District 3 Councilor Allan Ben-

edict Reyes.

But the mayor "is now toying with the idea" of becoming vice mayor anew when the powerful Belmonte clan chose Reyes, not him, to join their slate for next year's elections, one of the sources told the **Standard**.

The same source said Mike Defensor—the former congressman, QC councilor and presidential spokesperson—might replace Bautista against Reyes for the District 3 House seat.

"I, along with Tito [Senate President Vicente Sotto], belong to the Nationalist People's Coalition. I [really] don't know. Any [position] the party would tell [me to seek]," he told the **Standard**.

"It could be Congress. I have been a vice mayor. I have never experienced Congress. Either or... All I know is Tito and I are a team," Bautista told reporters.

Sotto's son, three-term District 3 Councilor Gian Carlo Sotto, is the running mate of Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte, who will try to succeed Bautista, in the 2019 elections.

Meanwhile, Bautista and Joy Belmonte have been recognized as outstanding education partners for their commitment to increase the quality education through local government efforts.

During the recent city's 1st International Education Summit held at the Novotel Manila, Araneta Center, Bautista said: "To a large extent, Quezon City, our local government, has stepped in to lessen the burden of education on families especially among the poor, who have the most to gain from quality education to uplift their status in life."