

Castelo wants BIR, BI to probe POGOs in QC

By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Councilor **Winston Castelo** wants the Bureau of Internal Revenue and other concerned government to probe the employment of Chinese individuals working for Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations in the country, especially in the city.

Castelo urged authorities to scrutinize whether Chinese nationals working for POGO have secured the necessary and pertinent documents, including their working permits, since they are considered migrant workers.

He made the request amid reports that POGO employees, mostly Chinese nationals, failed to pay their taxes.

Castelo raised apprehensions that the Chinese might not be paying the necessary taxes allotted for the city government despite POGOs' mounting popularity in the Philippines, "most especially in Quezon City."

He appealed to the BIR to ensure that these Chinese nationals working for different POGO branches in Quezon City are paying the correct taxes.

Moreover, Castelo asked the Bureau of Immigration to step into the matter to validate whether the foreign workers have already secured proper documents and working permits.

Failure of the POGO employees to pay taxes could hamper the city's future projects and "imperil" the city's coffers, with funds that could also be allotted to alleviate the poor and impoverished residents of the city, the former three-term congressman pointed out.

Castelo clarified that he was not against the idea of Chinese nationals working for POGO, "but things should be put in proper places and perspective so as not to violate Philippines laws, and particularly paying the required taxes for the government should be observed by anybody regardless of any nationality."