

Title: **The United States v. Aniceto Barrias, 11 Phil. 327 (1908)**

Facts:

- Incident and Initial Complaint:** Aniceto Barrias, the captain of the lighter Maude, was charged for violating paragraphs 70 and 83 of Circular No. 397 issued by the Insular Collector of Customs. Paragraph 70 prohibits heavily loaded cascos or lighters from moving in the Pasig River without being towed by steam or other adequate power. Paragraph 83 imposes penalties for violating such regulations.
- Charges Filed:** Barrias was proven to have maneuvered the lighter through the Pasig River using bamboo poles without steam, sail, or other external power.
- Legal Contentions in Lower Courts:** Barrias' defense team argued that paragraph 70 of Circular No. 397 was unauthorized by Section 39 of Act No. 355 and that authorizing the Collector of Customs to promulgate such regulations constituted an illegal delegation of legislative power.
- Attorney-General's Position:** The Attorney-General, instead of defending the conviction, concurred with the appellant's argument, insisting that the rule cited was unauthorized and illegal.
- Procedure at Supreme Court:** A memorandum from the Collector of Customs supporting the regulation was presented and the defense was given permission to respond.

Issues:

- Validity of Paragraph 70:** Whether paragraph 70 of Circular No. 397, which limits maneuvering of heavily loaded cascos in the Pasig River without steam or other power, is authorized by applicable laws.
- Delegation of Legislative Power:** Whether the Philippine Commission violated principles of non-delegation of legislative power by allowing the Collector of Customs to issue regulations.

Court's Decision:

- Authority and Regulations of Act No. 1136:** The Supreme Court identified that, according to sections 5 and 8 of Act No. 1136, the Collector of Customs had the authority to

issue and enforce regulations deemed necessary for harbor management. It was also determined that lighterage falls within the jurisdiction of these regulations since the activity described was part of the harbor business.

2. **Proper Scope of Harbor Regulations:** The Court acknowledged the necessity for local authorities like the Collector of Customs to regulate harbor activities, as such regulations require specificity that would overburden the central legislative body.

3. **Invalid Unauthorized Penalty:** While validating the necessity of regulations under Act No. 1136, the Court questioned the provision allowing the Collector to fix penalties as it represented a legislative power not properly delegated.

4. **Conviction and Reconfiguration of Charge:** The Court held that despite the procedural issues in the complaint, the conviction should stand under the valid sections of Act No. 1136. The defendant, Barrias, was convicted of a misdemeanor under these justified sections, showing the Collector's regulation stood valid concerning lighterage prosecutions.

#### Doctrine:

1. **Authority of Collector of Customs:** Collectors of Customs are authorized to issue regulations pertinent to harbor activities under proper legislative acts.

2. **Non-Delegation Doctrine:** The delegation to frame penalties and regulations must be cautious to avoid infringing on purely legislative functions—as shown by the case references like Cooley's Constitutional Limitations and U.S. federal rulings on regulatory authority.

#### Class Notes:

1. **Non-Delegation Doctrine:** Focus on the parameters within which legislative bodies can permit secondary entities to create binding regulations.

2. **Authority of Regulation:** Under Philippine law, authority to issue regulations should have a clear statutory basis. Act No. 1136 sections 5 & 8 provide a legislative baseline.

3. **Fines and Penalties:** Legislative delegation must not allow non-legislative bodies to fix penalties exceeding reasonable limits or infringing beyond administrative details.

4. **Application in Harbor Law:** The case exemplifies practical applications of harbor regulations and lighterage control in terms of administrative authority.

**\*\*Relevant Statutes:\*\***

- **\*\*Act No. 1136 Section 5:\*\*** Authority to Collector of Customs to make and publish suitable regulations.
- **\*\*Act No. 1136 Section 8:\*\*** Penalties for violating regulations, with prescribed scope of misdemeanor punishment.

**Historical Background:**

The case highlights the evolving legal practices in the Philippines during the American colonial period, emphasizing the dynamics between local regulatory authorities and legislative powers. It showcases an early 20th-century legal encounter between regulatory authority and the principle of non-delegation, reflective of transitional governance frameworks introduced by the U.S. amidst efforts to standardize judicial precedents and ensure robust regulatory mechanisms in colonial territories.