

RILECO, INC., PETITIONER, VS. MINDANAO CONGRESS OF LABOR-RAMIE UNITED FARM WORKER'S ASSOCIATION (LOCAL) AND THE COURT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, RESPONDENTS.

G.R. No. L-22243. November 29, 1968

Ponente: DIZON, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/2f6a85d7a2dd/>

DIZON, J.:

Appeal by writ of certiorari taken by Rileco Inc. from an order of the Court of Industrial Relations in Case No. 69-MC-DB, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

"WHEREFORE, the Department of Labor, pursuant to the provisions of Section 12 of R. A. No. 875 is hereby requested to conduct an election among the eligible workers in the ramie culture of the Manolita Plantation. The appropriate collective bargaining unit is composed of all the workers whose names appear in Exhibit 'X-Court', Ramie Project, numbering 176 workers in all. Upon termination of the election, the results shall forthwith be submitted to this Court for its further disposition. The contending unions are the Mindanao Congress of Labor-Ramie United Farm Workers' Association-Local and the Ledesma Plantation Laborers Union-Mindanao Association of Agricultural and Industrial Labor."

The case below involved a petition for certification election filed by the Mindanao Congress of Labor-Ramie, United Farm Workers' Association-Local, a legitimate labor organization, claiming that more than 10% of the employees and laborers of the Manolita Plantation - owned by Rileco - were its members; that no certification election had been conducted at such plantation for the past twelve months immediately prior to the filing of its petition, and praying that a certification election be ordered held.

Herein petitioner filed a motion to dismiss the petition on the ground that a valid and binding collective bargaining agreement already existed between it, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Ledesma Plantation Laborers Union, a duly registered labor union which represented a majority of the employees of said plantation. Subsequently, petitioner filed a supplemental motion to dismiss the petition upon the ground that the Court of Industrial Relations did not have jurisdiction to entertain it because the Manolita plantation was engaged solely in agricultural work and, consequently, its laborers were agricultural laborers.

On April 22, 1963 the respondent Court of Industrial Relations issued the order appealed from.

The only question raised now is whether or not the ramie culture in which petitioner is admittedly engaged in its Manolita plantation is an agricultural or an industrial undertaking. If it is of the latter nature, the order appealed from must be set aside because the Court of Industrial Relations has no jurisdiction over the case.

In connection with the above issue the relevant provisions of Section 2, Republic Act 602 are to this effect:

"'Agricultural' includes farming in all its branches and among other things includes the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural commodities, the raising of livestock or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on farm as an

incident to or in conjunction with some farming operations, but does not include the manufacturing or processing of sugar, coconuts, abaca, tobacco, pineapples or other farm products.” (Underscoring Supplied.)

On the nature of ramie culture the respondent court found that the whole process known as such end in which the Manolita plantation was engaged consisted of the preparation of the soil, planting of ramie roots and caring thereof for at least one-hundred days; then the ramie stalks are cut and delivered to the stripping sheds where they are stripped with the use of decorticating machines powered by electricity; then the wet fibers are dried under the sun for one day and later made to pass through the brusher to cleanse them of impurities; that thereafter the fibers are deemed ready for the market.

In the case of Benjamin Celestial, et al. vs. The Southern Mindanao Experimental Station et al. 57 O. G. 8461 which involved a similar process or functions, We said -

"Where an experimental station operates a farm comprising 960 hectares, and, through its employees and laborers actually tills the soil, introduces and plants seeds of the best crop (principally cacao) varieties found by it after study and experiment, raises said crops in the best approved methods of cultivation, including the spacing of each plant or seedling and the amount of water needed through irrigation, weeding, etc. and the proper harvesting of the crops, including the timing and method, discovers plant pests and their eradication by means of treatment with the proper insecticides, and, thereafter, extracts the seeds from the harvest for sale and distribution to farmers, there can be no question that all these acts and functions ... are agricultural as distinguished from non-agricultural functions." (Underscoring Supplied)

While the Celestial case involved a farm or plantation dedicated to the growing and cultivation of cacao and other plant seeds, it can not be denied that there is a great similarity between the processes therein discussed and the ones involved in ramie culture.

Moreover, petitioner has invited our attention to case No. 95-MC-DB entitled "Petition for Certification as Sole Collective Bargaining Representative of the Workers of Odel Plantation in the Court of Industrial Relations" where the Court of Industrial Relations itself held that the production of hemp, abaca and copra and the use of stripping machines in connection with its harvesting which ends with the classification and packaging of the products ready for marketing are "purely agricultural work"; that although the plantation therein questioned raised abaca and processed it until it was ready for marketing, the processing did not convert the abaca into another product, and that the mere use of modern machines as a labor saving device does not alter the agricultural nature of the product.

This, while not binding on us, would seem to be reasonable construction of the law and must be applied likewise to the processing of ramie fiber.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, We hereby rule that the ramie process or culture as described in the appealed order is purely agricultural in character. Consequently, the writ prayed for is granted and the decision under review is set aside, with costs.

Concepcion, C.J., Reyes, J.B.L., Makalintal, Zaldivar, Sanchez, Castro, Fernando, and Capistrano, JJ., concur.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.