

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (REPRESENTED BY THE LAND TENURE ADMINISTRATION), PLAINTIFF AND APPELLEE VS. DALMACIO URTULA, DEFENDANT AND APPELLEE.*G.R. No. L-16028. November 29, 1960*

Ponente: REYES, J.B.L., J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/84dcbda65a29/>**REYES, J.B.L., J.:**

These are expropriation proceedings initiated by the Land Tenure Administration, pursuant to Republic Act 1400, against Dalmacio Urtula for condemnation of a big tract of land with an area of 213.0940 hectares covered by Transfer Certificate of Title No. 30 of the Registry of Property of Camarines Sur, located in barrios Itulan and Quitang, municipality of Pasacao, Camarines Sur. Defendant did not contest plaintiff's right to expropriate, whereupon three (3) commissioners were, in due course, appointed by the court below. After receiving the evidence of the parties and conducting an ocular inspection, the commissioners submitted their report appraising the value of the property of P1,000.00 per hectare, or a total of P213,094.00; including improvements. Approving the report over plaintiff's objection, judgment was rendered by the court, ordering plaintiff to pay defendant the said amount of P213,094.00 for the land and its improvements.

The only question presented in this appeal is the reasonable market value of the property, plaintiff-appellant claiming that it should be appraised at P670 or, at the most, P750 per hectare; while defendant-appellee claims that its value should be, as found by the lower court, P1,000.00 per hectare.

It would appear that of the total area, 130.0940 hectares are planted to coconut trees; 65 hectares are riceland allegedly producing from 40-45 cavans per hectare; 15 hectares, upland riceland allegedly producing from 35-40 cavans per hectare; and 3 hectares are occupied by the tenants as a homesite (Report of Commissioners; Briefs for both parties). The Commissioners' Report further lists 16,633 fruit-bearing coconut trees (Appendix "A"), and 2,105 coconut trees not yet fruit-bearing, all these planted in an area of 130.0940 hectares, 50 hectares of which are lowland. Also, the following appears as improvements:

- Shed of strong materials, galvanized roofing (4 x 16 meters)
- 2 camarins (5 x 12 & 5 x 16 meters, respectively)
- steel fence
- poultry
- water pump
- residential or administration building (semi-concrete, galvanized-roofing, 16x10 meters)

It is significant that the report of the expropriation commissioners was unanimous, bearing the unqualified approval of the commissioner representing the Land Tenure Administration. The latter, however, contends that their valuation is contrary to the weight of the evidence, and in this Court relies for support upon the assessed

valuation, the report of the Provincial Appraisal Committee, and the evidence of a sale on May 18, 1956 of an allegedly similar parcel of land of 49.8272 hectares to one Jose Goc for P35,000.00 or roughly P702 per hectare (Exhibit C).

We do not find that this evidence establishes the valuation contended for by the Land Tenure Administration. In the first place, the assessed value of P117,690.00 appears to have been fixed by the provincial assessor and not by the landowners themselves, as may be seen from the back of the assessment sheet, Exhibit B. Consequently, the valuation cannot be deemed binding on the landowners, since they were not shown to have intervened in fixing it. Commonwealth Act 530, and our ruling in *Manila Railroad Co. vs. Alano*, 36 Phil., 500, in considering assessment valuations as prima facie evidence of market values, proceed on the assumption that such values were based on the sworn statements of the owners. There is no evidence here that the assessment was based on the owner's estimates so as to make it binding upon them.

As to the estimates of the Provincial Appraisal Committee, we note that none of the members thereof testified before the expropriation commissioners or the Court below. The record is bereft of any data to show how the Committee arrived at the values set in their appraisal (Exhibit D), and granting the competency of the committee members to pass upon and determine market values, their bare opinion is not adequate to overthrow that of the expropriation commissioners. It is elementary that the value of expert opinion depends upon the cogency of the reasons supporting the same (*U.S. vs. Rosel*, 24 Phil., 594; *People vs. Palalon*, 49 Phil., 177). It would be unfair for the landowners to hold them bound by the opinion of experts that they had no opportunity to confront or cross-examine for the purpose of showing that the opinion was premised on false or mistaken data or was otherwise illogical.

Finally, it was preponderantly shown at the hearings before the commissioners that the land sold to Jose Goc (Exh. C) (unlike the one here involved) was uncultivated in two-fifths (2/5) of its total area; so that the true value per hectare of the cultivated portion can not be determined by simply dividing the total area sold by the purchase price. It was testified that to fully cultivate the entire extent of the land would require an additional investment of P10,000.00 at least. Even disregarding the increase in price due to this portion's coming into production, adding this cost of cultivation of the 2/5 to the price of P35,000.00 would result in a total cost of P45,000.00 for the 49 odd hectares, or over 900 pesos per hectare. This value is remarkably close to the value set by the commissioners in this case, taking into account the value of the improvements existing in the land under litigation.

In view of the deficiencies in the appellant's evidence, we find no adequate reason for disturbing the unanimous valuation of the commissioners, as approved by the Court below after hearing the parties.

Wherefore, the judgment appealed from is affirmed. No costs in this instance.

Paras, C.J., Padilla, Bautista Angelo, Labrador, Concepcion, Barrera, Gutierrez David, Paredes, and Dizon, JJ., concur.

Judgment affirmed.

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.