

APRONIANO ALABAT, PETITIONER, VS. WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION COMMISSION AND REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES (BUREAU OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS), RESPONDENTS.

G.R. No. L-43942. September 30, 1978

Ponente: FERNANDEZ, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/a336d6e0b968/>

FERNANDEZ, J.:

This is a petition to review the decision of the Workmen's Compensation Commission in R09-WCC Case No. 14520 entitled "Aproniano Alabat, Claimant, versus, Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education and Culture), Respondent," reversing the decision of the Acting Referee of the Workmen's Compensation Unit, Regional Office No. XIX, at Tacloban City ordering the Department of Education and Culture to pay the claimant the sum of P6,000.00 pursuant to Sections 14 and 17 of the Workmen's Compensation Act.[1]

It appears that the claimant, Aproniano Alabat, now petitioner, was a public school teacher since 1931 and later as head teacher. During his employment, he contracted hypertension, hernia, appendicitis and hepatitis. On account of these illnesses, the claimant retired on November 2, 1973 at the age of 63 with his latest salary at the rate of P4,404.00. On March 10, 1975, the claimant filed with the Workmen's Compensation Unit, Regional Office No. XIX, Tacloban City, a claim for compensation. The Hearing Officer of said Regional Office No. XIX, found the claim compensable and ordered the respondent to pay the claimant the sum of P6,000.00.

The Department of Education and Culture filed a motion for reconsideration alleging that hypertension is only a symptom, not a disease, and it is only when it becomes complicated that hypertension may result to a disabling disease.

It is a fact that the claimant contracted his illnesses during his employment with the Department of Education and Culture. Under Section 44 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, there is a presumption that the said illnesses were caused or at least aggravated by his work as teacher. The respondent, Department of Education and Culture, has failed to rebut the presumption.

In *Vargas vs. Philippine American Embroideries, Inc.*,[2] this Court held:

"Section 44 of the Workmen's Compensation Act unequivocally establishes a presumption of compensability, although disputable by substantial evidence. This presumption does not arise by the mere filing of a claim which is timely controverted, but by the establishment of a preliminary link, although not by substantial evidence, between the injury or illness and one's employment. Once this link is established, such as that the illness or injury supervened during the period of the laborer's employment, then upon the employer is imposed the burden of demonstrating, by substantial evidence, absence of work connection."

Moreover, in the light of our constitutional provision enjoining the State to afford protection to labor, the presumption should receive a broader interpretation so as to advance the beneficent purpose of the Act to protect

workmen and their families, resolving all doubts in their favor.[3]

Obviously, the claimant, now petitioner, retired at the age of 63 because he could no longer continue with his work as head teacher in view of his diseases specially hypertension which had become complicated.

In addition to the disability compensation, the petitioner is entitled to reimbursement of medical expenses if supported by proper receipts.

WHEREFORE, the decision appealed from is hereby set aside and the respondent, Republic of the Philippines (Department of Education and Culture), is ordered:

- 1) To pay the claimant the amount of Six Thousand Pesos (P6,000.00) as compensation benefits and to reimburse him of medical expenses supported by proper receipts;
- 2) To pay counsel of petitioner the amount of Six Hundred Pesos (P600.00) as attorney's fees; and
- 3) To pay to the successor of the Workmen's Compensation Commission the amount of Sixty One Pesos (P61.00) as administrative fee.

SO ORDERED.

Teehankee, (Chairman), Muñoz Palma, and Guerrero, JJ., concur.

Makasiar, J., concurs in a separate opinion.

[1] Rollo, pp. 4-5.

[2] 34 SCRA 680, 687.

[3] Bureau of Public Works vs. Workmen's Compensation Commission, et al., L-8994, 104 Phil. 1062.

SEPARATE CONCURRING OPINION

MAKASIAR, J.:

I concur with the additional opinion that the respondent employer should likewise be directed to provide the claimant with such medical, surgical and hospital services as well as appliances and supplies as the nature of his disability and the progress of his recovery may require and which will promote his early restoration to the maximum level of his physical capacity. It is my consistent view that the provisions of Section 13 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, as amended, confer such right on the disabled employee, whether his disability is temporary or permanent. This is in compliance with the social justice guarantee of both the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions and in obedience to the directive of Article 4 of the New Labor Code that "all doubts in the implementation and interpretation of the provisions of this Code, including its implementing rules and regulations, shall be resolved in favor of labor", which is a re-statement of existing jurisprudence as well as Article 1702 of the New Civil Code. To limit such right to a temporarily disabled employee would inflict gross injustice on those

permanently disabled, who still need to be relieved from the pain, trauma, social ostracism or humiliation generated by such permanent disability.

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.