

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF WONG KIT KENG TO BE ADMITTED A CITIZEN OF THE PHILIPPINES. WONG KIT KENG, PETITIONER AND APPELLANT, VS. REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, OPPOSITOR a...

G.R. No. L-18898. December 24, 1963

Ponente: LABRADOR, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/ad1d037908ff/>

LABRADOR, J.:

This is an appeal from a decision of the Court of First Instance, City of Zamboanga, Hon. Gregorio D. Montejo, presiding, dismissing the petition for naturalization of Wong Kit Keng for failure of the latter to prove that he has an adequate knowledge of the Constitution and that he knows how to read and write a Filipino dialect.

At the trial of the case, some questions were directed to petitioner-appellant on the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, asking him to mention some of the provisions of the said Bill, and he answered that anyone "can live in any place within the Philippines; that citizens can vote; that citizens can choose the best man to any position by election." To another question he answered that the Executive Department can declare war with the consent of the Supreme Court, and to another, that the members of the Supreme Court and Congress can be subject to impeachment, etc.

On being asked to write down a statement about the Constitution and thereafter to translate same to Chavacano, he answered that he cannot write in Chavacano.

In arriving at the conclusion that the petitioner does not possess the necessary qualifications, the court below says:

"The Court believes that the petitioner "Wong Kit Keng has not established, at the hearing of this petition, that he has all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications as provided for in the Revised Naturalization Law. The evidence of petitioner to show that he has a fair knowledge of the principles underlying the Constitution of the Philippines is rather inadequate as is shown by a portion of the transcript of hearing embodied in the written Opposition of the City Attorney. Likewise, his ability and knowledge to speak and write 'Chavacano', the principal dialect which he claims to command, is rather scanty as shown by Exh. '1', wherein petitioner was not able to translate into the Chavacano dialect the Constitutional provision written by him as requested by the City Attorney in order to test his knowledge and ability of the dialect.

"After carefully considering the evidence presented by the petitioner, both oral and documentary, in support of the petition; and the opposition thereto, the Court is of the opinion that petitioner Wong Kit Keng does not possess all the qualifications under Commonwealth Act No. 473, as amended and that he has not complied with all the requisites of the Naturalization Law, and therefore, hereby declare Wong Kit Keng, not eligible for naturalization as a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines."

In this Court petitioner-appellant argues that the lower court erred in declaring (1) that petitioner-appellant has an inadequate knowledge of the principles underlying the Constitution of the Philippines, and (2) that petitioner-appellant's knowledge of Chavacano is scanty.

The brief for petitioner-appellant quotes extensively from the record on the questions propounded by his attorney and by the City Attorney, and We find that while he answered the questions propounded by his lawyer, he could not answer correctly those propounded by the City Attorney and the Judge. We are inclined to believe that petitioner-appellant must have been trained to answer certain questions and these he answered fairly; but as to those asked by the Judge and the City Attorney, his answers were not correct. So it is with the questions directed to him to prove that he has knowledge of a dialect and can write it.

It should be remembered that the judge below had the opportunity to observe how the petitioner-appellant acted and gave his answers. The manner in which a party answers the questions would readily show his real knowledge or ability. Thus if he stammers, or hesitates, or doubts his answers—these do not appear in the record, but are visible to the presiding judge. And taking these circumstances into account, We can not find anything in the record to enable Us to declare that the judge's appraisal of the knowledge of petitioner-appellant is incorrect, and that its finding that petitioner-appellant does 'not in fact possess all the necessary qualifications for admission as a citizen is also incorrect.

WHEREFORE, the decision should be, as it is hereby, affirmed, with costs against petitioner-appellant.

SO ORDERED.

Bengzon, C.J., Padilla, Bautista Angelo, Concepcion, Reyes, J. B.L., Barrera, Paredes, Dizon, Regala and Makalintal, 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.