

PRICE STABILIZATION CORPORATION, PETITIONER, VS. COURT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND PRISCO WORKERS' UNION, ET AL., RESPONDENTS.

G.R. No. L-14613. November 30, 1962

Ponente: REGALA, J.

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REGALA, J.:

This case comes to us for review from the Court of Industrial Relations.

On March 18, 1953, the PRISCO Workers' Union and 58 members, who were at the time security guards of the Price Stabilization Corp. (PRISCO), filed with the Court of Industrial Relations an 8-point demand, which they later amended and increased, making it a 10-point demand, for the following:

"1.

25% general increase.

"2.

Payment for work on Sundays and Legal Holidays since 1946 (in lieu of one day off in a week) and payment of 50% additional compensation for services rendered on Sundays and Legal Holidays, effective 1946.

"3.

50% additional compensation for overtime work payment of back overtime, and, payment of back additional compensation for such overtime previously rendered.

"4.

50% additional compensation for night work (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and payment for additional compensation for night work rendered.

"5.

Check-off of Union dues.

"6.

Job Security. That no worker shall be dismissed without just cause or by reason of union activities.

"7.

20 minutes allowance for meals.

"8.

Creation of a Grievance Committee (3 from the Union and 3 from the management to settle labor management disputes)

"9.

That all Security Guards who have rendered at least six months service be made regular, permanent and monthly salaried employees, entitled to all privileges of regular monthly Security Guards, and

"10.

Standardization of salaries of all Security Guards according to grades with the minimum salary of P200.00 a month."

In view of the admission made by the PRISCO with regard to demands Nos. 2 and 3, the Court of Industrial Relations rendered a partial decision, dated August 25, 1953, ordering the PRISCO to pay all the employees and workers involved therein 25 per cent additional compensation for overtime and for Sunday and holiday work done from June 8, 1951, even as it set the demand for similar compensation from August, 1946 to June 7, 1951 for hearing. Thereafter, PRISCO paid the various amounts due its workers whose names were listed in the petition. Although it held its decision to be applicable only to the 58 petitioners, the lower court, upon motion of the Union, extended the benefits of its partial decision to other PRISCO workers who had rendered similar services. This order of the Court of Industrial Relations extending the benefits of its decision to workers other than the

petitioners was affirmed by this Court in G. R. No. L-9288, December 29, 1958, entitled "Price Stabilization Corp. vs. PRISCO Workers' Union et al."

In the meanwhile, hearings were held on other demands denied by the PRISCO, after which the lower court rendered a decision^[1] dated June 10, 1955, ordering PRISCO to pay, among other things, 25 percent extra pay for Sunday and holiday work from August, 1946 to June 7, 1951 and for work done during the nighttime beginning August, 1946. This decision was affirmed by the Court of Industrial Relations en banc and by this Court in G. R. No. L-9834, November 29, 1957, entitled "Price Stabilization Corp. vs. Court of Industrial Relations, et al." 102 Phil., 515; 54 Off. Gaz. (15) 4472)

When our decision in G. R. No. L-9834 became final, the Union filed a motion for immediate examination and computation and, later, a motion for the inclusion of 522 other workers of the PRISCO. PRISCO opposed the inclusion of the 522 workers, but the Court of Industrial Relations granted the motion. Hence, this appeal, petitioner PRISCO contending that—

(1)

"The lower court erred in not holding that Republic Act No. 875 is applicable hereto;

(2)

"The lower court erred in not holding that respondent CIR has no jurisdiction over the subject-matter of the instant action; and

(3)

"The lower court erred in not holding that Republic Act No. 1993 is applicable hereto."

Petitioner's assignments of errors are based on the theory that the Union's motion for the inclusion of 522 other workers was a new and independent action. Ergo, since the same was filed only on January 23, 1958, the same should be governed by Republic Act No. 875 (Industrial Peace Act), which took effect on June 17, 1953, and by Republic Act No. 1993^[2] which took effect on June 22, 1957.

Under Republic Act No. 875, it is contended, the Court of Industrial Relations lost its jurisdiction over claims for overtime and Sunday pay; while under Republic Act No. 1993, it is claimed, claims accruing between August 1946 and June, 1951 are barred for not having been brought within three years therefrom.

On the other hand, respondent Union takes the position that the Court of Industrial Relations correctly granted the motion for the inclusion of 522 other workers because the same was merely an incident of the main case, Case No. 840-V, which it had filed on March 18, 1953, before the effectivity of Republic Acts Nos. 875 and 1993. The Union contends that, by its terms, the decision of the Court of Industrial Relations, dated June 10, 1955, was applicable to all workers of the PRISCO and not limited to the 58 workers named in the petition. It is argued that

when the Union filed its disputed motion for the

"Any action to enforce any cause of action under this Act shall be commenced within three years after the cause of action accrued, otherwise such action shall be forever barred: Provided, however, That actions already commenced before the effective date of this Act shall not be affected by the period herein prescribed."

inclusion of 522 other workers, it was merely trying to help the Court of Industrial Relations determine the workers entitled to the payment of extra compensation.

In G. R. No. L-9288, between the same parties, to which We adverted earlier in this opinion, one of the issues raised was whether the Court of Industrial Relations has authority to modify its partial decision rendered on August 25, 1953 by extending its benefits to other workers of said corporation. We held in that case that it has such power, on the basis of the broad grant of authority to it by Commonwealth Act No. 103, as amended. Thus, under Section 7 of that law, the Court of Industrial Relations has the power, among other things, to correct, amend, or waive any error, defect or irregularity, whether in substance or in form, that it may find in its proceedings, or to give all such direction as it may deem necessary or expedient in the determination of any dispute before it. Under Section 17, the same court may alter, modify or set aside, during its effectiveness, any award, order or decision it may render, upon application of any of the parties and after due hearing, and an award, order or decision is deemed effective for at least three years unless a shorter period is fixed by the court. The clear object of these provisions is undoubtedly to give to the Court of Industrial Relations continuing control over the case, in the interest of management and labor, as long as it remains under its control and jurisdiction, in order to accord substantial justice to the parties. This is in line with the policy of the law which enjoins that the court shall act according to justice and equity and the substantial merits of the case, without regard to technicality or legal forms and shall not be bound by any technical rules of legal evidence but may inform its mind in such manner as it may deem just and equitable. (C.E. Church et al. vs. La Union Labor Union, et al., 91 Phil., 163).

In the case of Land Settlement & Development Corp. vs. Caledonia Pile Workers' Union, et al., 90 Phil., 817, we upheld the extension of the benefits of a decision to other than the petitioners and said:

"Criticism is addressed to the extension of the increases and other benefits in question to employees and laborers who were not made parties hereto and who did not join the seventy-six drivers and conductors who had made corresponding demands upon and declared a strike against the petitioner. Aside from the fact that the Court of Industrial Relations is authorized to act according to justice and equity without regard to technicalities or legal forms (Commonwealth Act No. 103, section 20), the criticism is answered in the decision of this Court in Parsons Hardware Co., Inc. vs. Court of Industrial Relations, G. R. No. 48215, wherein it was held: 'Even assuming that the eighteen laborers were not members of the union at the time its petition for a general increase in salaries was submitted, we are of the opinion and so hold that as they are laborers of the company, they are entitled to the increase. * * * It has to be so, because to accord such increase only to members of the union would constitute an unjust said unwarranted discrimination against non-member,' "(Leyte Land Transportation Company, Inc. vs. Leyte Farmers' & Laborers' Union, 80 Phil. 482; 45 Off. Gaz. 4862).

"The petitioner takes the point that only members of a labor union who made demands, struck, picketed or otherwise made common cause with the strikers, are entitled to the benefits won in a labor dispute.

Section 4 of Commonwealth Act No. 103 relied upon by the petitioner does not support its proposition. The requirement of the Section invoked that 'the number of employees, laborers, * * * involved' shall be more than 30, means, in our opinion, nothing more than that a lesser number may not set the machinery of the Court of Industrial Relations in motion. It does not mean that the court's decision, once the court has legally taken cognizance of a case, may not comprise employees and workers other than those who signed the demands or were identified with the walkout. It has been held that workers involved in a dispute include other workers, unionists or not, who are presumed to be interested in the outcome of the demands or strike one way or

another. (Parsons Hardware Inc. vs. Court of Industrial Relations and Parsons Workers and Employees Union, G. R. No. 48215; Leyte Land Transportation Company Inc. vs. Leyte Farmers and Laborers' Union, supra)"

We do not see why a similar holding cannot be made in this case. In fact, as pointed out earlier, this case is merely a continuation of G. R. No. L-9288. For while G. R. No. L-9288 involved extra pay for Sunday, holiday and overtime work to beginning June 8, 1951, this case involves the same demand for the period August, 1946 to June 7, 1951. These two cases stemmed from the same petition filed in Case No. 840-V of the lower court. The reason they were treated separately was because the PRISCO admitted its liability for this demand beginning June 8, 1951 only but denied liability for the same demand before that period. And so, in order not to delay the enjoyment of benefits, the lower court rendered a partial decision on the demands so far admitted.

We therefore, affirm the order dated June 4, 1958 of the lower court, which applies the benefits of the decision of June 10, 1958 to the 522 other workers of the PRISCO, and hold that the motion of the Union to this effect was but an incident of the main case which was filed on March 18, 1958.

Having reached this conclusion, We also hold that Republic Act No. 1993 has no application to the matter. As pointed out earlier, Republic Act No. 1993 took effect on June 27, 1957—long after Case No. 840-V, of which the motion of the Union was merely an incident, had been filed in the lower court. In fact, this law exempts from its provision actions already commenced before its effectivity.

Wherefore, the order of June 4, 1958 and the resolution of October 13, 1958 of the Court of Industrial Relations are hereby affirmed, without pronouncement as to costs.

Bengzon, C. J., Padilla, Labrador, Reyes, J. B. L., Barrera, Paredes, Dizon, and Makalintal, JJ., concur.

[1] This decision of the CIR granted demands nos. 2, 4, 5, 6 and 9 and denied demands nos. 1, 3, 8 and 10. Demand no. 7 was withdrawn by the union.

[2] Section 1 of this law, which was inserted as Section 7-A of Commonwealth Act No. 444 (Eight Hour Labor Law) provides:

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