

JUAN DELFIN, PETITIONER-APPELLANT, VS. COURT OF AGRARIAN RELATIONS AND PATRICIO MERCED, RESPONDENTS-APPELLEES.

G.R. No. L-23348. March 14, 1967

Ponente: SANCHEZ, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/e6877e1f7840/>

SANCHEZ, J.:

Dispossessed of the 3-hectare landholding he has been cultivating in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, petitioner, on August 25, 1958, went to the Court of Agrarian Relations (CAR) for reinstatement and for damages.[1] CAR, in a decision dated April 16, 1964, directed principal respondent to reinstate petitioner as share tenant on the landholding and to pay P500.00 by way of attorneys' fees, but declined to award damages by reason of petitioner's "failure to present sufficient evidence".

Thwarted in his motion for reconsideration and for reopening of the case "to prove the amount of the indemnification", petitioner appealed direct to this Court.

The refusal to award damages and to reopen the case is thrust upon us as errors committed below.

1. The measure of damages for dispossession is, inter alia, "the extent of the landholder's participation in the harvest".[2] To arrive at the landholder's participation, the net produce must be ascertained. To get the net produce, expenses are to be deducted from the gross produce. The threshing fee and reaping fee are such deductible items.[3] Admittedly, "petitioner did not present his evidence on the amount of the threshing fee and reaping fee".[4] Therefore, contrary to petitioner's assertion, evidence on damages is insufficient. Damages, jurisprudence teaches, may not be awarded on the basis of speculation, conjecture or guess work. [5] We perceive no error on this score.

2. Reopening of a case before decision thereon acquires finality, is matter addressed to the court's sound discretion. This tenancy case was pending in the court below for over 5 years. The failure to present evidence on the threshing fee and reaping fee is not ascribed to fraud, accident, mis-take or excusable neglect. Said evidence is not newly discovered. It is old forgotten evidence. In this factual backdrop, forgotten evidence is not a ground for reopening or new trial.[6] Really, if a case may be reopened from time to time as a party or his lawyer remembers evidence which was overlooked, then litigation will suffer undue delay. Instead of giving relief, court suit may become intolerable. Here, neither equity nor law sanctions reopening.[7] With the lower court, we reject it.

Judgment affirmed. Costs against petitioner.

SO ORDERED.

Concepcion, C.J., Reyes, Dizon, Regala, Makalintal, Bengzon, Zaldivar, and Castro, JJ., concur.

[1] CAR Case No. 75-NV-58, Court of Agrarian Relations.

[2] Section 27(1), Republic Act 1199.

[3] Section 32, Republic Act 1199.

[4] Annex E of petition for review before this Court, entitled "Urgent Motion for Reconsideration and for Reopening of the Case to Prove the Amount of the Indemnification".

[5] Choa Tek Hee vs. Philippine Publishing Company, 34 Phil. 447, 456-460, and cases and authorities cited.

[6] Bank of the Philippine Islands vs. De Coster, 49 Phil. 574, 583-584; Manila Railroad Company vs. Mitchel, 49 Phil. 801, 808; National Shipyards and Steel Corporation vs. Asuncion, 54 O.G. No. 24 pp. 6246, 6247; Sy Ha vs. Galang, G.R. No. L-18513, April 27, 1963.

[7] Cf.: David vs. de la Cruz, 54 O.G. No. 35, pp. 8073, 8074.

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.