

**CHUA TAY, PETITIONER-APPELLEE, VS. REGIONAL OFFICE 3,
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR F. A.
FUENTES, HEARING OFFICER PAULINO S. PEREZ AND FELIPE
AGUPAN, RESPONDENTS-...**

G.R. No. L-16981. March 30, 1962

Ponente: BARRERA, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/f0f4fda4eff8/>

BARRERA, J.:

Until his dismissal in March, 1958, Felipe Agupan was working in the "Acme Furniture", for its owner and manager, Chua Tay. Having contracted pulmonary tuberculosis after his discharge, and believing the same to have been caused by his previous employment, Agupan filed a complaint in the Regional Office No. 3 of the Department of Labor, docketed as Case RO3-WC-388, for injury and/or sickness in line of duty, claiming for hospitalization expenses and compensation.

The case was, accordingly, set for hearing during which both parties presented their respective evidence.

On July 30, 1959, the hearing officer rendered a decision ordering respondent Chua Tay to pay claimant Agupan disability compensation in the amount of ₱1,893.46, as of August 6, 1959, and thereafter the sum of ₱25.74 a week until the compensable ailment is pronounced cured or arrested, but not to exceed ₱4,000.00; to reimburse claimant of duly receipted hospitalization and medical expenses; and to remit to the Regional Office the required fees.

Respondent Chua Tay filed a notice, dated August 13, 1959, controverting the award. On September 1, 1959, claimant filed with the Regional Office a motion for execution of the decision rendered therein on the ground that the notice controverting the award, being pro forma, said decision had already become final and executory. As thus prayed for, the Regional Administrator issued a writ of execution against the properties of respondent.

On October 21, 1959, respondent Chua Tay filed a petition for certiorari with prayer for a writ of preliminary injunction in the Court of First Instance of Manila, questioning the jurisdiction and authority of Regional Office No. 3 to try and decide money claims such as Case RO3WC-388, as well as the validity of the proceedings conducted therein. As a consequence thereof, a writ of preliminary injunction was issued by the court restraining the Sheriff of the City of Manila and the Regional Administrator or their agents from enforcing the aforementioned writ of execution.

On February 15, 1960, the lower court rendered judgment holding Reorganization Plan 20-X insofar as it vests judicial powers and functions to the regional offices of the Department of Labor, illegal, and declared the proceedings had in the case (RO3-WC-388) null and void. It is from this decision that the instant appeal has been interposed by the Regional Administrator F. A. Fuentes, Hearing Officer Paulino Perez and claimant Felipe Agupan.

It is here contended by appellants that the lower court erred (1) in applying the provisions of Reorganization Plan 20-A to the case at bar, and (2) in declaring said Reorganization Plan 20-A unconstitutional and invalid.

There is merit in the first allegation. It is true that in a long line of decided cases,[1] this Court ruled against the validity and constitutionality of Reorganization Plan 20-A, insofar as it vests the regional offices of the Department of Labor with exclusive and original jurisdiction to try and adjudicate money claims arising out of labor relations. However, as we clarified in the case of *Miller vs. Mardo* (112 Phil., 792; 59 Off. Gaz. [14] 2307) the invalidity did not extend to the exercise, by the said regional offices, of jurisdiction over cases falling under the Workmen's Compensation Law, because with respect to such matter, the disputed provision of the reorganization plan merely effected a reallocation or re-assignment, not a new 'grant, of authority already bestowed on Labor-officials by Republic Act 997, as amended by Republic Act 1241.[2] The claim herein being one for compensation under the Work1 *Corominas, et al. vs. Labor Standard Comm.* 112 Phil., 551; 59 Off. Gaz., (43) 7432 and subsequent cases. *San Miguel Brewery vs. Sobremesana*, L-18730, Sept. 16, 1961. men's Compensation Act, the authority of appellant Hearing Officer to take cognizance of and render judgment on the case must be upheld.

The possession by the regional offices of such authority to try and decide a claim for compensation, however, does not carry with it the authority to issue writs of execution for the enforcement of their decisions. By specific provision of law,[3] the power to enforce award or decision in Workmen's Compensation cases is reserved exclusively to the court of record under whose jurisdiction the compensable injury occurred[.4]]

It is noted that the award rendered by the Hearing Officer has been duly controverted or appealed by the employer *Chua Tay*. It is error to say that this is merely proforma, as the law authorizes such appeal to the Workmen's Compensation Commission. Under the circumstances, the award has not yet become final and the appeal should be given due course and submitted to the Commission for appropriate adjudication.

With the foregoing modification, the decision appealed from is hereby affirmed in all other respect, without costs. So ordered.

Bengzon, C.J., Padilla, Bautista Angelo, Concepcion, Paredes, Dizon, and De Leon, JJ., concur.

[1] *Corominas, et al, v. Labor Standard Comm*, L-14837, June 30, 1961, and subsequent cases.

[2] *San Miguel Brewery v. Sobremesana*, L-18730, Sept. 16, 1961.

[3] Sec. 51, Act 3428, as amended by Act 3812, Comm, Act 210 and Rep. Act 772.

[4] *Pastoral v. commissioners, etc.*, L-12903, July 31, 1961.

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.