

MARCELO LIWANAG, PLAINTIFF AND APPELLANT, VS. CENTRAL AZUCARERA DON PEDRO, DEFENDANT AND APPELLEE.*G.R. No. 15371. July 31, 1961*

Ponente: LABRADOR, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/g-r-no-15371/>**LABRADOR, J.:**

Appeal from an order of the Court of First Instance of Batangas, Hon. Conrado M. Vasquez, presiding, dismissing an action for overtime pay, nighttime pay and vacation leave pay. Plaintiff-appellant Marcelo Liwanag first filed an action with the Court of Industrial Relations, claiming payment of overtime pay, nighttime pay and vacation leave pay in the total sum of about P59,429.13. When the case was dismissed by said court for lack of jurisdiction, he filed said claim with the Court of First Instance of Batangas on October 3, 1956 (docketed as Civil Case No. 161, entitled "Marcelo Liwanag vs. Central Azucarera Don Pedro). On October 10, 1956, defendant-appellee Central Azucarera Don Pedro filed an answer, and, subsequently, on February 5, 1958, it moved to dismiss the action on the ground that the court has no jurisdiction to try the case, because in accordance with Section 25, Article 6 of Reorganization Plan No. 20-A, jurisdiction is conferred upon money claims for services exclusively upon the different regional offices of the Department of Labor. Plaintiff-appellant opposed the motion to dismiss, claiming that under the Judiciary Act of 1948, the Court of First Instance has jurisdiction to try the case, that the regional offices are authorized under Republic Act No. 997 only to render administrative decisions in Labor cases, and that Reorganization Plan No. 20-A was promulgated after the Court of First Instance had acquired jurisdiction over the case.

After due notice and hearing, the lower court granted the motion to dismiss. The order of dismissal was appealed directly to this Court because it involves a question of law.

The question for resolution before this Court is whether or not the lower court or the regional office of the Department of Labor has jurisdiction over the instant case. It is argued by the appellant that jurisdiction of courts of justice cannot be divested by a mere executive fiat, that Republic Act No. 997 does not confer upon the Government Reorganization Commission, authority to transfer judicial functions of courts to the executive department; that Plan No. 20-A took effect after the lower court had acquired jurisdiction over the case; and that under Executive Order No. 218, which defines the functions and powers of each regional office, a party is not barred by the Plan to seek recourse to the court of justice. In answer appellee company maintains that Reorganization Plan No. 20-A was passed by Congress and so it has the force and effect of law, that Plan No. 20-A is a special law and therefore should prevail, in case of conflict of provisions, over the Judiciary Act of 1948, that said Plan No. 20-A is valid and constitutional because Congress is given the power and authority to confer and diminish the jurisdiction of courts.

Plaintiff-appellant's contention is well-founded. Following our decision in the case of Jose Corominas, Jr. et al., vs. Labor Standards Commission, et al.; Manila Central University vs. Calupitan, et al., Wong Chun vs. Diego Carlim, et al., Balrodgan Co., Ltd., et al., vs. Fuentes, et al., supra, p. 551, and our subsequent decisions, we rule that the provisions of Section 25 of Reorganization Plan No. 20-A, which grants regional offices exclusive and

original jurisdiction over money claims is null and void, as said grant is not authorized by the provisions of Republic Act No. 997, which created the Government Survey and Reorganization Commission.

The order of dismissal is hereby set aside, and the case is remanded to the lower court for further proceedings.

With costs against defendant-appellee.

Bengzon, C. J., Padilla, Concepcion, Reyes, J. B. L., Barrera, Paredes, Dizon, De Leon, and Natividad, 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.