

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER No. 152

REMOVING MR. GREGORIO SOLIS FROM OFFICE AS
PROVINCIAL TREASURER OF CAMARINES SUR

Mr. Gregorio Solis, Provincial Treasurer of Camarines Sur, stands charged with irregularities committed by him in the acquisition and disposal of supplies and materials

as such provincial treasurer of Camarines Sur and while he was holding the same position in Cavite.

The record shows that in violation of existing law and regulations respondent, as provincial treasurer of Camarines Sur, purchased during the period from June 1, 1949, to May 31, 1950, excessive and unnecessary supplies and materials at exorbitant prices without public bidding; that, evidently to reduce his stock, he practically dumped supplies and materials on the various municipal treasurers; and that he used trust funds to cover in part the cost thereof. It also appears that as provincial treasurer of Cavite he bought about the middle of 1948 and early part of 1949 excessive quantities of supplies and equipment at unreasonably high prices.

Respondent's explanation that the huge acquisitions of supplies and materials for the province of Camarines Sur were made possible because of his trust and confidence in his assistant treasurer who passed upon the correctness and reasonableness of the acquisitions and in his property clerk who certified to the urgent necessity thereof is not satisfactory. The primary responsibility for such acquisitions belongs to respondent, it being one of his functions to "acquire for the provincial government all *necessary* supplies, material, and office equipment for which the proper appropriation has been authorized by the provincial board or other competent authority." Neither can he shift responsibility therefor to the provincial auditor despite the order of the Auditor General holding provincial and city auditors liable for allowing in audit irregular, unnecessary, excessive or extravagant expenses, the provincial auditor being independently responsible under the law.

Respondent's claim that the municipal treasurers concerned had filed corresponding requisitions for the articles issued to them is without merit as it has been established that articles supposedly issued to the municipalities and actually dropped from the provincial supplies-in-stock account were still in the provincial bodega and in the possession of respondent's property clerk. There is also no merit in the claim of respondent that the prices paid for the articles were based on quotations made by the Procurement Office. The Procurement Office merely stated that it would offer no objection to the acquisition of the articles at the prices indicated provided the same were the lowest obtainable in the locality. That office did not fix any prices to be paid, and whatever quotations appeared therein were merely intended to serve as guide or basis for the prices which he, in the exercise of his sound discretion and in the interest of the province, should pay. In the other cases, the prices relied upon by respondent were quotations supposedly given by the Procurement Office to officials of other provinces or cities which in all likelihood were furnished him by or in behalf of the dealers

interested, as there is no record that they were furnished him by that office.

As for the printed forms, he should have consulted the price list of the Bureau of Printing or else communicated with the Director of Printing about the prices thereof. Considering his long connection with the treasury service, he should know that the authority competent to determine the reasonableness of prices of printed matters is said official. Instead, he fell entirely for the copies of letters of the Procurement Office to officials of other provinces and cities.

In connection with certain purchases made by respondent as provincial treasurer of Cavite, the fact that there was need for floor wax for the public buildings of the province furnishes no valid reason for purchasing what would take the province some twenty years to consume. Moreover, he could have bought another kind, equally good if not better, at a much cheaper price. Concerning his purchase of fire extinguishers, the mere fact that the voucher covering payment was passed in audit cannot relieve him of responsibility for making excessive payment, it appearing that he had been informed by the Procurement Office that they could be obtained at a very much lower price.

The foregoing shows respondent to have been not only grossly negligent in the performance of his duties but also to have been guilty of violations of existing law and regulations governing acquisition of supplies and materials to the prejudice of the Government. As a consequence of his acts the Provinces of Camarines Sur and Cavite acquired at exorbitant prices enormous and unnecessary stocks of supplies and materials which would take them a good number of years to consume, resulting in losses thereto conservatively placed at more than ₱600,000.

Considering that the respondent has spent the greater part of his life in the service of the Government, over forty-two years to be exact, it becomes my painful but inescapable duty to take drastic action against him. My feeling of sympathy must give way to the necessity of keeping the faith of the people in their Government.

Wherefore, respondent Gregorio Solis is hereby removed from office as provincial treasurer of Camarines Sur, effective as of the date of his suspension from office by reason of this case.

Done in the City of Baguio, this 22nd day of March, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and fifty-one, and of the Independence of the Philippines, the fifth.

ELPIDIO QUIRINO

President of the Philippines

By the President:

TEODORO EVANGELISTA

Executive Secretary