

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER No. 227

REPRIMANDING MR. GUILLERMO ARCEBAL,
PURCHASING AGENT

Purchasing agent Guillermo Arcebal is charged with irregularities in connection with anomalous purchases of supplies made by local governments, the charges ranging from complicity in the disappearance of office records, improper release of requisitions to a private party and giving of price quotations on request of dealers, certification and confirmation of higher prices than those prevailing in the open market, to non-objection to acquisition of certain printed forms at excessive prices.

After carefully going over the record, I find that the respondent has satisfactorily explained the various irregularities imputed to him with the exception of those treated hereunder.

It is claimed that contrary to existing regulations and allegedly to favor a private party the respondent authorized the release of Requisitions Nos. 338371 and 338371-A of the Division Superintendent of Schools of Zamboanga to an agent of H. E. Heacock & Co. Respondent denies the charge and alleges that the absence of an authorization under his signature or initial raises the presumption that he never authorized the release. He also avers that even if he did, he is not aware of having thereby violated any regulation.

Respondent's explanation is not satisfactory. His assistant chief buyer stated that said requisitions were lent by him to the agent involved "with the permission and approval of the Purchasing Agent" (respondent), which was confirmed by the agent in her sworn statement. Again, he admitted in his letter of February 9, 1950, the "apparent irregularity" in the handling of his office of Requisition No. 338371.

The respondent is also being held accountable for interposing no objection to the acquisition of printed forms by the Province of Antique at prices quoted by the provincial auditor thereof without first consulting the Bureau of Printing as to the availability of the forms therein and their prices, as a result of which the province acquired printed forms of excessive prices. Disclaiming any responsibility therefor, respondent suggests a careful study of the basic letter of inquiry of the provincial auditor and his reply thereto. He claims that the forms had already been purchased when the request for price confirmation was made.

A perusal of said letter, as suggested, fails to yield the relief expected by him as it shows that the provincial auditor requested the "confirmation" of the prices of supplies therein given to justify certain "proposed" or future local purchases. Be that as it may, his confirmation is evidently not an empty formality but the moving factor in the purchase of said forms.

Neither am I impressed by his reason for not consulting the Bureau of Printing, to wit, that he is not aware of any regulation or directive requiring him to consult other offices before signing and releasing his own papers. Respondent knows that it is the Bureau of Printing that handles printed matters for the Government. If his office did not have any record of transactions regarding the forms involved, the most prudent thing for him to have done was to consult that bureau on the matter, in the same manner that when his office has no record of the,

price of a given article, material or equipment it canvasses the market or obtains quotations from dealers. He should not have contented himself with merely reciting to the provincial auditor his customary ritual that his office had no record of previous purchase thereof and that if the need for the forms was so urgent as to permit of no delay and the prices quoted were the lowest secured in the locality, his office would interpose no objection to their acquisition.

The foregoing shows that respondent has not been very zealous in the discharge of his duties, and his acts redounded to the prejudice of the Government. Considering, however, his long and satisfactory service as well as the absence of the slightest indication that he profited personally from the transactions involved, I am inclined to view his case with some measure of leniency.

WHEREFORE, Mr. Guillermo Arcebal is hereby reprimanded and warned to be more careful in the discharge of his duties; otherwise, a more drastic action will be taken against him.

Done in the City of Manila, this 4th day of December, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and fifty-three and of the Independence of the Philippines, the eighth.

ELPIDIO QUIRINO

President of the Philippines

By the President:

MARCIANO ROQUE

Acting Executive Secretary