

MALACANANG
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 133

EXONERATING MR. RUBEN M. VILLALUZ, ACTING CHIEF OF THE MOTOR
VEHICLES OFFICE.

This is an administrative case against Mr. Ruben A. Villaluz, acting chief of the Motor Vehicles Office, for alleged maladministration, abuse of authority, incompetence, junketeering, immorality, dishonesty and persecution, which was investigated by a committee appointed for the purpose.

1. Under the charge of maladministration, it is alleged that the respondent signed the indorsement disapproving the application for appointment as honorary agent of one Teodoro C. Alegre but put his O.K. at the top left-hand side thereof without crossing out said indorsement, thereby putting his administrative officer in a quandary as to whether the application was approved or not; and that he appointed non-civil service eligibles to classified positions and ineligible persons as honorary agents of the Motor Vehicles Office to accommodate friends.

An examination of the record reveals that the respondent signed the indorsement of disapproval relying on complainant administrative officer that it was being disapproved only for the reason stated therein, to wit, that appointments of honorary agents had already been closed; and that when the respondent later indicated his approval on the upper left-hand corner of said indorsement for the purpose of finding out how complainant could reportedly fix up the matter if respondent would put his O.K. therein, he was not apprised by complainant of applicant's alleged bad record which he (complainant) knew from the outset. It also appears that before recommending the appointment of non-civil service eligibles to classified positions and four honorary agents the respondent had studied carefully the respective qualifications of each and that he submitted the corresponding information sheets of the prospective appointees together with their proposed appointments to the Department Head who passed upon the same and approved all the appointments. In view thereof, respondent is absolved from the charge.

2. Respondent is also charged with abuse of authority in allegedly ordering the release, through the intervention of one Estelita Villanueva, of the licenses of drivers apprehended for motor vehicle law violations without taking into consideration the recommendations of the apprehending officers and complying with pertinent rules and regulations.

ac Villaluz, Ruben M.

The record shows that the respondent approved the release of said drivers' licenses upon the recommendation of the investigator and the chief traffic officer of the Traffic Section, who are clothed with authority to conduct investigations and make the necessary recommendations regarding motor vehicle law violations. There is no showing that respondent had anything to do with, nor had knowledge of the steps taken in, the release of said drivers' licenses to the woman referred to, who evidently had made friends in the office for having been once employed in its Cavite agency. The instant charge against the respondent is therefore without merit.

3. Respondent is next charged with incompetence for allegedly approving the renewal of registration of motor vehicles even before the delivery and acceptance of the motor vehicle number plates for 1955 (which were supposedly defective and not in conformity with specifications) and the issuance to other persons of reserved number plates previously paid for.

It appears that as a matter of practice in the Motor Vehicles Office the chief thereof did not have to know personally of the delivery of number plates to, and the issuance thereof by, that office; that in the present case the respondent did not know of the partial delivery of the 1955 plates to the office and the release thereof to the public by his property clerk, who did so at his own initiative as he used to do in the past; and that when complaints reached the respondent regarding the defects of the plates, he stopped the further release thereof, ordered the recall of those already issued and required the property officer to explain why those plates had been released without his knowledge and consent.

In approving the release to other persons of reserved plate numbers already paid for, the respondent appears to have acted in good faith, as he relied on the plate book of the property officer which did not show that said numbers had been paid for, the reservists having obviously failed to report to said officer the fact of their having paid the cashier for those reserved numbers. Such honest mistakes, it appears, also occurred in the past.

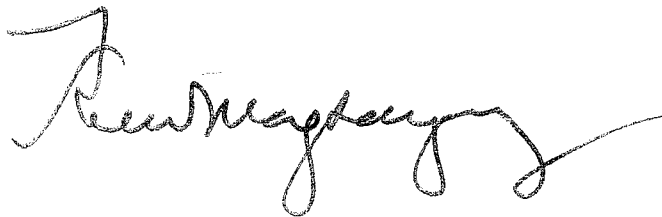
Under the circumstances, it does not seem fair to hold respondent to account under this charge, especially considering that he was relatively new in the office and that was the first time that new number plates for the year were issued by his office.

4. With respect to the charges of junketeering, immorality and dishonesty, I am satisfied that respondent's periodical trips to, and conferences with, the various branches of the office in the provinces were necessary as an incident to his work as head of the office and for the proper orientation of his field men in the enforcement of the Motor Vehicle Law, which visits appear to have resulted in increased collections and efficiency. The alleged acts of immorality and dishonesty attributed to respondent have not been substantiated.


5. Respondent is finally charged with persecution in having supposedly engineered the apprehension by agents of his office of the car of one Jaime J. Valdez because of family differences. I find this charge to be unmeritorious also. Respondent merely acted in the discharge of his duty when he required complainant Valdez to pay the corresponding penalties for violations of the Motor Vehicle Law by not registering his car within seven days from its arrival in the Philippines and driving the same on the public highways without being so registered. Whatever family differences existed, the same appear to have involved Mrs. Valdez and respondent's wife and in-laws only.

In view of the foregoing, and upon the recommendation of the investigating committee, Mr. Ruben M. Villaluz is hereby exonerated of the charges. His suspension from office is hereby lifted and he may resume the discharge of his duties as acting chief of the Motor Vehicles Office.

Done in the City of Manila, this 11th day of August, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and fifty-five, and of the Independence of the Philippines, the tenth.



By the President:


MARIANO YENKO, JR.
Assistant Executive Secretary