

[ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 186, March 09, 1956]

**SUSPENDING MR. SEVERINO BAGTASOS FROM OFFICE AS
REGISTER OF DEEDS OF SULU**

This is an administrative case against Mr. Severino Bagtasos, register of deeds of Sulu, for allegedly extorting money from some ignorant Moros.

It appears that sometime in 1953 a group of Moros came to the office of the respondent to inquire about their free-patent applications. The respondent advised them to hire the services of a lawyer in Manila by the name of Antonio Arieta to work for the early issuance of their patents. Subsequently, a telegram was received by the respondent from Mr. Arieta asking him how much each applicant would pay for the service. Thereupon, the respondent sent his son to Tongkil, Sulu, to inquire from the applicants how much each of them would pay for the services of Mr. Arieta in expediting the issuance of their patents.

Although there is no evidence to sustain the charge of extortion, the actuations of the respondent in the premises are such as to cast a shadow of suspicion on his motives, considering that the transaction involved pecuniary consideration. For lack of sufficient evidence, the respondent is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, and he is therefore absolved from the charge. However, the fact remains that in acting beyond the scope of his official duties and in such a way as to cast doubts on his motives he is guilty of improper conduct. Needless to say, while it is the duty of every public officer or employee to serve the public to the fullest extent possible, he should nevertheless refrain from doing acts which may cast suspicion on his motives.

Wherefore, Mr. Severino Bagtasos is hereby suspended from office as register of deeds of Sulu for fifteen days without pay, effective upon receipt of notice hereof.

Done in the City of Manila, this 9th day of March, in the year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-six, and of the Independence of the Philippines, the tenth.

(Sgd.) **RAMON MAGSAYSAY**
President of the Philippines

By the President:
(Sgd.) **FORTUNATO DE LEON**
Acting Executive Secretary



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