

**[ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 166, December
31, 1955]**

**REMOVING MR. GREGORIO E. EDILLO FROM OFFICE AS JUSTICE
OF THE PEACE OF LILOAN AND PINTUYAN, LEYTE.**

This is an administrative case against Justice of the Peace Gregorio E. Edillo of Liloan and Pintuyan, Leyte, for allegedly collecting fees beyond what is allowed by Republic Act No. 145 for his services in assisting claimants to benefits under the laws of the United States administered by the United States Veterans Administration (USVA).

The case was investigated by the District Judge before whom Francisco Supangan, Florentina Paler, Vicente Amparo, Andrea Encinas, Alfonsa Angub (through her son, Juan Basa, she being too old to testify) and Ruperta Cagadas, who were all recipients of compensation benefits from the U.S. Veterans Administration, testified as follows: that they were assisted by the respondent who was then municipal mayor of Libagon in the preparation and prosecution of their claims with the U.S. Government; and that with the exception of the last two claimants who had no definite agreement with the respondent as to the amount of his fees it was stipulated that respondent would get for his services 10% of whatever amount would be paid to them by the U.S. Government.

From the testimony of these claimants it appears that Supangan received from the USVA the total sum of P10,000, Paler P5,161, Amparo P5,700, Encinas P6,000, Angub P8,108 and Cagadas P3,818. Supangan, Paler, Amparo and Encinas declared that respondent actually collected from them the stipulated 10% as his share, while Angub and Cagadas stated that they paid the respondent P700 and P720, respectively. All the six witnesses also declared that when respondent collected his fees from them he was already a justice of the peace.

The respondent denied the charge, alleging that he helped these claimants without expecting any reward inasmuch as he was then their municipal mayor and that he did not in fact received a single centavo from any of them or from any of the other claimants whom he had also helped. He attempted to strengthen his defense with the testimony of Nemesio Egina, treasurer-postmaster of Libagon, Leyte, to the effect that the checks of the aforesaid pensioners were cashed in his office and that he paid them all in full.

It appears, however, that Egina was also denounced by the USVA for supposedly fleecing claimants for compensation benefits; that in fact it was while he was being investigated by a Post-Office Inspector that Justice of the Peace Edillo was implicated by witnesses as his co-conspirator; and that the report of the Post-Office Inspector in the case against Egina was the basis of the complaint filed by the USVA against the herein respondent. Egina's interest in Edillo's exoneration is therefore understandable. Moreover, even assuming that Egina paid the pensioners' checks in full, this does not prove that the respondent did not collect his fees. It is not alleged