

**[ ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 144, July 02, 1941 ]**

**AUTHORIZING THE COMMITTEE CREATED TO INVESTIGATE THE  
MATTER OF THE USE OF RIVERS TO ALSO INVESTIGATE AND  
REPORT ON THE POLLUTION OF STREAMS, AND REVISING, FOR  
THIS PURPOSE, ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 103, AS AMENDED  
BY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 128**

The closing or partial obstruction of many streams in the Philippines and their conversion into fishponds, has been a constant source of controversies and the cause of numerous complaints. Information is conflicting not only regarding the use to which these streams are dedicated but also regarding the right to the use of said streams by the persons actually using them.

The pollution of streams located near mining properties or within their areas of operations due to the discharge and accumulation of mill refuse or "tailings," has likewise resulted in conflicts between the mining companies concerned and the owners of the neighboring agricultural lands because of the injurious effect that the substances and materials thus deposited have on the standing crops.

This condition of affairs has been responsible for much of the unrest in various sections of the country.

For the purpose of determining the facts regarding the obstruction and pollution of streams above referred to, so that a definite policy may be adopted in connection therewith, a committee is hereby created to be composed of the respective representatives of the Secretary of Justice, the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, and the Secretary of Public Works and Communications, which committee shall forthwith investigate and report on the following:

- (1) The status of all the rivers and streams in the Philippines, in order to determine whether they are of private or of public ownership;
- (2) The claims of private parties to any of them, attaching to the report copies of the pertinent papers, documents, contracts and memoranda of the decisions of the competent courts or the laws applicable thereto;
- (3) The value or importance of said rivers or streams for the conservation of the natural resources, indicating which of them are navigable, floatable or convenient for public use;
- (4) The advisability of opening any of them, if closed, for river control purposes and for navigation or for fishing;
- (5) The necessity of adopting administrative measures or legislation to carry out the policy of keeping open such rivers and streams, whether of private or of public ownership, as may be necessary to promote and safeguard the public interest; and