

[Commonwealth Act No. 141, November 07, 1936]

AN ACT TO AMEND AND COMPILE THE LAWS RELATIVE TO LANDS OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

TITLE I

TITLE AND APPLICATION OF THE ACT, LANDS TO WHICH IT REFERS, AND CLASSIFICATION, DELIMITATION, AND SURVEY — THEREOF FOR CONCESSION

CHAPTER I Short title of the Act, lands to which it applies, and officers charged with its execution

Be it enacted by the National Assembly of the Act:

SEC. 1. The short title of this Act shall be "The Public Land Act.

SECTION 2. The provisions of this Act shall apply to the lands of the public domain; but timber and mineral lands shall be governed by special laws and nothing in this Act provided shall be understood or construed to change or modify the administration and disposition of the lands commonly called "friar lands" and those which, being privately owned, have reverted to or become the property of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, which administration and disposition shall be governed by the laws at present in force or which may hereafter be enacted.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce shall be the executive officer charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act through the Director of Lands, who shall act under his immediate control.

SEC. 4. Subject to said control, the Director of Lands shall have direct executive control of the survey, classification, lease, sale or any other form of concession or disposition and management of the lands of the public domain, and his decisions as to questions of fact shall be conclusive when approved by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce.

SEC. 5. The Director of Lands, with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce shall prepare and issue such forms, instructions, rules, and regulations consistent with this Act, as may be necessary and proper to carry into effect the provisions thereof and for the conduct of proceedings arising under such provisions.

CHAPTER II. - Classification, delimitation, and survey of lands of the public domain, for the concession thereof

SEC. 6. The President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, shall from time to time classify the lands of the public domain into —

- (a) Alienable or disposable;
- (b) Timber, and

(c) Mineral lands,

and may at any time and in a like manner transfer such lands from one class to another, for the purposes of their administration and disposition.

SEC. 7. For the purposes of the administration and disposition of alienable or disposable public lands, the President, upon recommendation by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, shall from time to time declare what lands are open to disposition or concession under this Act.

SEC. 8. Only those lands shall be declared open to disposition or concession which have been officially delimited and classified and, when practicable, surveyed, and which have not been reserved for public or quasi-public uses, nor appropriated by the Government, nor in any manner become private property, nor those on which a private right authorized and recognized by this Act or any other valid law may be claimed, or which, having been reserved or appropriated, have ceased to be so. However, the President may, for reasons of public interest, declare lands of the public domain open to disposition before the same have had their boundaries established or been surveyed, or may, for the same reason, suspend their concession or disposition until they are again declared open to concession or disposition by proclamation duly published or by Act of the National Assembly.

SEC. 9. For the purpose of their administration and disposition, the lands of the public domain alienable or open to disposition shall be classified, according to the use or purposes to which such lands are destined, as follows:

- (a) Agricultural
- (b) Residential commercial industrial or for similar productive purposes
- (c) Educational, charitable, or other similar purposes
- (d) Reservations for town sites and for public and quasi-public uses.

The President, upon recommendation by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce, shall from time to time make the classifications provided for in this section, and may, at any time and in a similar manner, transfer lands from one class to another.

SEC. 10. The words "alienation, "disposition, or "concession" as used in this Act, shall mean any of the methods authorized by this Act for the acquisition, lease, use, or benefit of the lands of the public domain other than timber or mineral lands.

TITLE II

AGRICULTURAL PUBLIC LANDS

CHAPTER III - Forms of concession of agricultural lands

SEC. 11. Public lands suitable for agricultural purposes can be disposed of only as follows, and not otherwise:

- (1) For homestead settlement
- (2) By sale
- (3) By lease
- (4) By confirmation of imperfect or incomplete titles:
 - (a) By judicial legalization
 - (b) By administrative legalization (free patent).

CHAPTER IV. - Homestead

SEC. 12. Any citizen of the Philippines over the age of eighteen years, or the head of a family, who does not own more than twenty-four hectares of land in the Philippines or has not had the benefit of any gratuitous allotment of more than twenty-four hectares of land since the occupation of the Philippines by the United States, may enter a homestead of not exceeding twenty-four hectares of agricultural land of the public domain.

SEC. 13. Upon the filing of an application for a homestead, the Director of Lands, if he finds that the application should be approved, shall do so and authorize the applicant to take possession of the land upon the payment of five pesos, Philippine currency, as entry fee. Within six months from and after the date of the approval of the application, the applicant shall begin to work the homestead, otherwise he shall lose his prior right to the land.

SEC. 14. No certificate shall be given or patent issued for the land applied for until at least one-fifth of the land has been improved and cultivated. The period within which the land shall be cultivated shall not be less than one or more than five years, from and after the date of the approval of the application. The applicant shall, within the said period, notify the Director of Lands as soon as he is ready to acquire the title. If at the date of such notice, the applicant shall prove to the satisfaction of the Director of Lands, that he has resided continuously for at least one year in the municipality in which the land is located, or in a municipality adjacent to the same, and has cultivated at least one-fifth of the land continuously since the approval of the application, and shall make affidavit that no part of said land has been alienated or encumbered, and that he has complied with all the requirements of this Act, then, upon the payment of five pesos, as final fee, he shall be entitled to a patent.

SEC. 15. At the option of the applicant, payment of the fees required in this chapter may be made to the municipal treasurer of the locality, who, in turn, shall forward them to the provincial treasurer. In case of delinquency of the applicant, the Director of Lands may, sixty days after such delinquency has occurred, either cancel the application or grant an extension of time not to exceed one hundred and twenty days for the payment of the sum due.

SEC. 16. If at any time before the expiration of the period allowed by law for the making of final proof, it shall be proven to the satisfaction of the Director of Lands, after due notice to the homesteader, that the land entered is under the law not subject to home-stead entry, or that the homesteader has actually changed his

residence, or voluntarily abandoned the land for more than six months at any one time during the years of residence and occupation herein required, or has otherwise failed to comply with the requirements of this Act, the Director of Lands may cancel the entry.

SEC. 17. Before final proof shall be submitted by any person claiming to have complied with the provisions of this chapter, due notice, as prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce shall be given to the public of his intention to make such proof, stating therein the name and address of the homesteader, the description of the land, with its boundaries and area, the names of the witness by whom it is expected that the necessary facts will be established, and the time and place at which, and the name of the officer before whom, such proof will be made.

SEC. 18. In case the homesteader shall suffer from mental alienation, or shall for any other reason be incapacitated from exercising his rights personally, the person legally representing him may offer and submit the final proof on behalf of such incapacitated person.

SEC. 19. Not more than one homestead entry shall be allowed to any one person, and no person to whom a homestead patent has been issued by virtue of the provisions of this Act regardless of the area of his original homestead, may again acquire a homestead; Provided, however, That any previous homesteader who has been issued a patent for less than twenty-four hectares and otherwise qualified to make a homestead entry, may be allowed another homestead which, together with his previous homestead shall not exceed an area of twenty-four hectares.

SEC. 20. If at any time after the approval of the application and before the patent is issued, the applicant shall prove to the satisfaction of the Director of Lands that he has complied with all the requirements of the law, but cannot continue with his homestead, through no fault of his own, and there is a bona fide purchaser for the rights and improvements of the applicant on the land, and that the conveyance is not made for purposes of speculation, then the applicant, with the previous approval of the Director of Lands may transfer his rights to the land and improvements to any person legally qualified to apply for a homestead, and immediately after such transfer, the purchaser shall file a homestead application for the land so acquired and shall succeed the original homesteader in his rights and obligations beginning with the date of the approval of said application of the purchaser. Any person who has so transferred his rights may not again apply for a new homestead. Every transfer made without the previous approval of the Director of Lands shall be null and void and shall result in the cancellation of the entry and the refusal of the patent.

SEC. 21. Any non-Christian Filipino who has not applied for a home-stead, desiring to live upon or occupy land on any of the reservations set aside for the so-called "non-Christian tribes" may request a permit of occupation for any tract of land of the public domain reserved for said non-Christian tribes under this Act, the area of which shall not exceed four hectares. It shall be an essential condition that the applicant for the permit cultivate and improve the land, and if such cultivation has not been begun within six months from and after the date on which the permit was received, the permit shall be cancelled. The permit shall be for a term of one year. If at the expiration of this term or at any time prior thereto, the holder of the permit shall apply for a homestead under the provisions of this chapter, including the

portion for which a permit was granted to him, he shall have the priority, otherwise the land shall be again open to disposition at the expiration of the permit.

For each permit the sum of one peso shall be paid.

CHAPTER IV. - Sale

SEC. 22. Any citizen of lawful age of the Philippines, and any such citizen not of lawful age who is a head of a family, and any corporation or association of which at least sixty per centum of the capital stock or of any interest in said capital stock belongs wholly to citizens of the Philippines, and which is organized and constituted under the laws of Philippines, and corporate bodies organized in the Philippines authorized under their charters to do so; may purchase any tract of public agricultural land disposable under this Act, not to exceed one hundred and forty-four hectares in the case of an individual and one thousand and twenty-four hectares in that of a corporation or association, by proceeding as prescribed in this chapter: Provided, That partnerships shall be entitled to purchase not to exceed one hundred and forty-four hectares for each member thereof. But the total area so purchased shall in no case exceed the one thousand and twenty-four hectares authorized in this section for associations and corporations.

SEC. 23. No person, corporation, association, or partnership other than those mentioned in the last preceding section may acquire or own agricultural public land or land of any other denomination or classification, which is at the time or was originally, really or presumptively, of the public domain, or any permanent improvement thereon, or any real right on such land and improvement: Provided, however, That persons, corporations, associations or partnerships which, at the date upon which the Philippine Constitution took effect, held agricultural public lands or land of any other denomination, that belonged originally, really or presumptively, to the public domain, or permanent improvements on such lands, or a real right upon such lands and Constitution took improvements, having acquired the same under the laws and regulations in force at the date of such acquisition, shall be authorized to continue holding the same as if such persons, corporations, associations, or partnerships were qualified under the last preceding section; but they shall not encumber, convey, or alienate the same to persons, corporations, associations, or partnerships not included in section twenty-two of this Act, except by reason of hereditary succession, duly legalized and acknowledged by competent courts.

SEC. 24. Lands sold under the provisions of this chapter must be appraised in accordance with section one hundred and sixteen of this Act. The Director of Lands shall announce the sale thereof by publishing the proper notice once a week for six consecutive weeks in the Official Gazette, and in two newspapers one published in Manila and the other published in the municipality or in the province where the lands are located, or in a neighboring province, and the same notice shall be posted on the bulletin board of the Bureau Of Lands in Manila, and in the most conspicuous place in the provincial building and the municipal building of the province and municipality, respectively, where the land is located, and, if practicable, on the land itself; but if the value of the land does not exceed two hundred and forty pesos, the publication in the Official Gazette and newspapers may be omitted. The notices shall be published one in English and the other in Spanish or in the local dialect, and shall fix a date not earlier than sixty days after the date of the notice upon which the land will be awarded to the highest bidder, or public bids will be called for, or other action