

Constitutional Convention

1894

According to the proclamation of January 17, 1893 by the Committee of Safety which abrogated the monarchy, the Provisional Government was intended to be an interim regime until the Hawaiian Islands were annexed by the United States. The subsequent withdrawal of the annexation treaty in the United States, along with increasing partisan strife over domestic issues, caused the leaders of the Provisional Government to seek more systematic procedures of governance. In the opening address to the Constitutional Convention Sanford B. Dole said, "The delay which the project of political union between Hawaii and the United States of America has experienced has brought up the question of modifying the present provisional system in order to give the Government a permanent form, and to more fully introduce the principle of representation by the people."

On March 15, 1894 President Dole approved Act 69 of the Executive and Advisory Councils, which provided for the convening of a Constitutional Convention, subject to the call of the President. It stipulated that the convention be composed of the President, members of the Executive and Advisory Councils, and eighteen elected delegates, and be presided over by the chairman of the Executive and Advisory Councils. The act further stipulated the qualifications for electors and delegates.

Pursuant to Act 69, on March 19, 1894 the Minister of the Interior issued a proclamation calling for an election of delegates on May 2nd; on May 10th President Dole issued a proclamation summoning the members of the convention to convene on May 30, 1894.

President Dole called the convention to order in the hall of the Judiciary Building. The convention hired the necessary staff and established four standing committees, which investigated and made recommendations on controvertible propositions. A draft constitution was submitted by the Executive Council and passed two readings in the Committee of the Whole. In convention it was read for a third time in order to make revisions, and a fourth time for corrections.

The constitution was signed on July 3, 1894 and promulgated the next day in special ceremonies, thereby establishing the Republic of Hawaii. The convention then adjourned sine die on July 5th, the twenty-fourth day of proceedings.

The records of the Constitutional Convention of 1894 include stenographic recordings and minutes of the proceedings, committee reports, resolutions, petitions, amendments, four drafts of the constitution, outgoing correspondence, election results, record of disbursements, sample vouchers for election expenses, and miscellaneous material that were kept by C. T. Rodgers, secretary of the convention. The original constitution is in ~~the collection~~.

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SEE ALSO:

Printed Material: Proceedings of the Hawaiian Constitutional Convention

Other Documents: Executive and Advisory Council Minute Books

Index: Subject: Constitution, 1894

Name: see individual members of the convention
Thurston, L. A.

Private Collection: Dole, Sanford B.
King, James A.
Smith, William O.
Wilder, William C.
Carter, Charles L.
Hatch, Francis H.
Thurston, L. A.