

TERRITORIAL FOOD COMMISSION
1917-1918

During the latter part of World War I, the Federal government emphasized an increase in food production and food conservation programs. In a cable sent in April, 1917, Secretary of Agriculture Lane asked Governor Lucius E. Pinkham that Hawaii make itself as self-supporting as possible and increase its exports of foods, especially sugar to the mainland. Legislation was rushed through the closing days of the Legislature and Act 221, which created the Territorial Food Commission and allotted it \$25,000, was approved by Governor Pinkham on May 2, 1917.

Two days later, Governor Pinkham filled 6 of the 9 commission posts that the act created, naming James Dole, John Waterhouse, Frank Black, C. G. Bockus, Arthur Ozawa and Richard Ivers. The last two were succeeded by Arthur Neely and William Hoogs Sr. respectively, upon their deaths in 1918. The Governor refused to name commissioners for the outer islands to fill the remaining vacancies, but did name Delbert Metzger of Hilo, William D. Baldwin of Maui and Charles Rice of Kauai as representatives of the commission. However, in June, 1918, Governor Pinkham's successor, Governor C. J. MacCarthy gave William Baldwin, Charles Rice and also James Russell of Hawaii their commissions.

Attending regular commission meetings besides the commissioners and the executive officer were a representative of the U. S. Army in Hawaii and legal counselors, Senator Alfred L. Castle and Charles R. Hemenway, who were appointed by the commission.

Dr. Arthur Dean, President of the College of Hawaii, served as executive officer without pay for four months until he resigned in August, 1917, because of an increased work load at the College. Senator Alfred Castle then resigned as attorney for the commission and was appointed executive officer in his stead. Assisting him was John Francis Child who served as assistant executive officer with pay. Meanwhile Congress had created the Federal Food Administration with Herbert Hoover as its head and Mr. Child was named Federal Food Administrator in Hawaii. It was, therefore, only natural that he succeed Senator Castle as executive officer of the Territorial Food Commission when the latter resigned in December, 1917, because of pressing work with the Red Cross.

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Commission was an inventory of the different food supplies on hand in the Islands and a comparison of it with the Custom House imports of the same goods, to see which island products could be increased and imports of it decreased. It also undertook the investigation of such things as hoarding, wasting of food and excessively high costs and prices. In this endeavor, it used its powers to fix a ceiling on the price of Hawaiian grown rice and taro.

Assisting the Territorial Food Commission was a Women's Committee headed by Mrs. A. C. Alexander, and with branches on the outer islands. They and the commission's publicity man, F. E. Matson, were of great help in promoting many projects, among which were meatless, wheatless and porkless days and publication of recipes using wheat and flour substitutes.

Perhaps the Territorial Food Commission's most important project was the initiation of the county agent system for the purpose of advising and instructing planters of crops other than sugar cane and pineapple, about matters pertaining to planting, cultivating, spraying, harvesting and marketing. These agents, one each on Oahu, Maui and Kauai, and two on Hawaii, also served as marketing demonstrators for the Marketing Division of the Board of Agriculture and Forestry. They supplied them with information about crops that were planted or about to be marketed and other data of interest in return for \$40 per month which the Board contributed towards each agent's salary. County agents also acted as representatives of the Federal Food Administration in 1918.

When Mr. Child, who was already Federal Food Administrator in Hawaii, became executive officer of the Territorial Food Commission in December, 1917, the Federal Food Administration began to assume most of the work formerly undertaken by the commission so that the commission was abolished on December 31, 1918. Responsibility for the county agent system was transferred to the College of Hawaii in January, 1919.

The bulk of the records of the Territorial Food Commission are correspondence and publications. They are filed as follows:

COM40-1 Minutes

Correspondence (11 folders) 1917-1918

1919 (correspondence of Arthur Dean, President of the College of Hawaii)

Kauai County Agent, A. Hebard Case

Maui County Agent, F. G. Krauss

County Agents' Daily Reports

Eash Hawaii, 1917-1918 - William G. Moir

West Hawaii, 1917 - John H. Midkiff

Kauai, 1917 - A. Hebard Case

Maui, 1917 - F. G. Krauss

Oahu, 1917 - John M. Watt

COM40-2 Oahu, 1917 & 1918 - John M. Watt & C. H. Durfee [COM40 vols 1 - 3]

Financial Statements

Weekly Letters (Extracts from Reports of County Agents)

Reports

COM40-2 U. S. Food Administration. Bulletins.

U. S. Food Administration. Publications.

Press Clippings and Articles

Scrapbook of press clippings (2 vols.) [COM40 vols 4 - 5]

See Also: Governor Lucius E. Pinkham's file - Territorial Departments. Food Commission, Minutes.

Governor C. J. McCarthy's file - Territorial Departments. Food Commission, Territorial.

Governor's Report. 1918.

Subject Index - Food Commission, Territorial and Federal.