

HAWAII EMERGENCY LABOR COMMISSION

On April 18, 1921, Governor C.J. McCarthy called a conference of local business men to discuss labor conditions, the numerically preponderant Japanese, and the desire of several groups to import Chinese labor. A message outlining the situation was sent to the Legislature with a recommended bill establishing the Emergency Labor Commission. The bill was introduced in the Senate as S.B. No. 128 and subsequently passed by both houses and approved on April 27, 1921. It provided \$15,000 from general revenue to establish and maintain a Commission of three men appointed by the Governor, one as Chairman. The Commission was to proceed to Washington and present House Concurrent Resolution No. 38 authorizing the President to declare a labor emergency and to import 50,000 Chinese laborers for work in the sugar fields, same to be under the Department of Labor. Walter F. Dillingham was appointed as Chairman, Charles F. Chillingworth and Albert Horner as members. C.F. Weeber was hired as Secretary, E.P. Irwin as writer on the Japanese, and after June 17, Edgar Henriques as Special Agent to conduct the community campaign in the Territory.

Conference with cabinet officials and others resulted in a changed bill, J.R. 158, introduced by Delegate Kalaniana'ole on June 20, 1921. Hearings were held before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on June 21, 1921. Objections to this bill led to the substitution of J.R. 171 by the House Committee and the hearings were closed. Sen. J.R. 82 (identical with J.R. 171) was introduced by William P. Dillingham of Vermont on July 8, and referred to the Senate Committee on Immigration. Public hearings before the House Committee were reopened from July 22 to August 12 and Senate Committee hearings held on August 13 and 18. A one month recess by Congress and objection from the State Department because of the impending conference on limitation of armaments deferred the work of the Emergency Labor Commission until after adjournment. Its members returned to Honolulu in October, leaving Secretary Weeber in Washington. In February, 1922 Chairman Dillingham returned to Washington for conferences with government, civic and labor leaders. A final hearing was held on June 7, 1922, but the Senate Committee advised waiting until December because of opposition from the American Federation of Labor. Governor Farrington then asked the Government to send a special commission to investigate the Hawaiian situation. The Department of Labor sent one of its men, Paul Scharrenberg, and four A.F.ofL. men to evaluate conditions. The Committee's report was never made public, but the question of alien domination was referred to Congress for action. House Report No. 1717, 67th Congress, 4th Session, favored passage of J.R. 171, but the bill was never passed. On March 29, 1923, the Territorial Legislature approved Act 18 which authorized payment of \$30,000 to cover Commission expenses and those of the Commission sent from Washington. Lobbying continued, but by 1924 the efforts of the Labor Commission were diffused and absorbed by activity on behalf of other types of legislation. No specific date for its dissolution appears in the files.

Secretary's Records:

OGOV 14 Seventeen folders-

Minutes, May 2, 1921 to May 18, 1922.

Memorandum on the introduction of foreign labor into the Hawaiian Islands by R.C. Lydecker, Librarian of the Public Archives.

Hawaii and the Japanese - a mimeographed article circulated among Congressmen. First, second and third reports on the canvass of Congressmen, with quotations.

Exhibits: pamphlets, clippings, notes, memoranda, statistical data, articles. Petition in support of legislation submitted to Congress in 1921 with signatures.

Correspondence between Commission, Congressmen and campaign workers; chronologically arranged.

Correspondence between Henriques, Dillingham, Farrington and others, 1922-23. Chronologically arranged.

Correspondence between Henriques, Dillingham, Farrington and others, 1921. Chronologically arranged.

Correspondence between Henriques and the following: Congressmen, trade, civic and fraternal organizations, campaigning individuals, 1921, alphabetically arranged in three folders.

Cablegrams sent to mainland businessmen, 1921. Senders signed messages.

Cablegrams sent to Congressmen, 1921. Senders signed messages.

Correspondence between American Factors and mainland business firms, 1921, chronologically arranged in three folders.

Card indexes with information on persons active in campaign and excerpts from replies. In stacks: individuals writing to Congressmen, Senators, Representatives.

See Also: Executive files for Governors McCarthy and Farrington.
Library shelf for Senate and House Committee Hearings.
Historical Pamphlets file for prints of Bills and Committee Reports.
Newspaper files for the period.

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Bound Volumes: Correspondence of the Chairman. 10 volumes
Press Comments. 8 volumes