

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

W. H. ALLEN - - - - - EDITOR

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A man's best things are nearest him, lie close to his feet.—R. M. Milnes.

HAWAII'S PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

What kind of a public utilities commission is now going to get from the next legislature? In a timely statement in the Star-Bulletin yesterday, Mr. J. R. Galt puts the question succinctly as follows:

It seems to me that the powers which necessarily must be given to a public service commission in order to enable it to act effectively and fairly in the interests of the people as well as of the public service corporations are so great that most serious consideration should be given to the advisability or impracticability of creating such a commission for our country until such time as we can be fully satisfied that:

- 1.—A competent set of men can be selected and appointed;
- 2.—That such men are given very full powers and authority;
- 3.—That each man devotes their entire time exclusively to their duties as commissioners; that they are well paid and should have ample funds to enable them to carry on their hearings, investigations and other work in general.

There is no doubt that the public utilities legislation measure is one which the next legislature must settle. Governor Peary, the community has been informed, will recommend in a special message to the legislature the formation of such a body. Both of the political parties which will share membership in the legislature have the utilities commission as part of their platform. Secretary Fisher spoke his mind on the subject during his visit here; he did so vigorously as to his belief that such a commission should be established.

Mr. Galt's general position will be taken by a large number of thinking men in Hawaii. There will be no difference of opinion on the proposition that a weak, incompetent or unduly hampered commission will be worse than none at all. It is self-evident that unless competent commissioners are selected and appointed, the commission will be a ridiculous failure. But the question is that competent men can be found in this territory, as states on the mainland have found men for their commissions. The men can be found, we will venture to say, if two conditions are observed: that sufficient salaries be paid to induce expert engineers, lawyers and accountants to accept positions on the board; and that the board itself be given not only the authority but the body of authority to handle the work.

The Star-Bulletin regards the question of authority as the most vital of the details regarding the public service commission. A board whose province is merely recommendatory, which can suggest action to public service corporations but cannot enforce orders, is not likely to do the territory much good. Experience on the mainland has shown that those commissions are most effective which are given the widest powers, and some of the most notable beneficial cases of rate-fixing have been, if not dictatorial, at least an expression of rigid public control.

Mainland commonwealths are now conferring extremely broad powers upon their commissions. Mr. Galt's communication yesterday, summarizing the powers of the New York commission, indicates the diversity of matters placed in the hands of the board. It has jurisdiction not only over common carriers, such as railroads and street railways, but over gas and electrical corporations, light, heat and power of all kinds, telephone and telegraph companies. It can not only abrogate old rates and establish new ones, but it assumed authority over safety devices and investigates accidents. One division of the work is to investigate traffic congestion and order measures for its relief. In fact, the board exercises supervising powers, both executive and legislative, of the widest scope.

The extent to which Hawaii places its public service corporations under the control of an able and impartial commission will largely measure the effectiveness of that commission. A government to which little is entrusted is sure to be a pretty poor sort of a government. To get big men, capable men, on this commission, Hawaii must put big powers in their hands.

One of the important questions which must be settled is that of the ultimate authority of the commission in fixing rates. Some commissions have been weakened to the point of uselessness because the acts creating them were drawn to allow easy recourse to the courts, and the courts were given final authority not only on questions of legal procedure by the commission, but also on questions of fact upon which the commission itself had already passed. The states which

more lately have adopted the utilities commission plan have not made this mistake. California, whose commission law was drawn after a thorough and expert study of every other existing body of the kind, has given its board plenary powers. Under certain strict conditions, a writ of review may be secured, and the supreme court may review any appeal from the commission's order. This review, however, may not be extended further than to determine whether the commission has regularly pursued its authority, including a determination of whether the order or decision violates any right of the petitioner under the constitution of the United States or of the state. The commission's findings on questions of fact are final and not subject to review; and it is to be carefully noted that such questions of fact specifically include the findings of the commission on reasonableness and discrimination. In other words, the public service corporation cannot secure a reversal of the commission's ruling on allegations that the ruling is unreasonable or shows discrimination. Plastic courts cannot be used by corrupt Big Business to overthrow the expert conclusions of the utilities commission. Some states have restricted the court's power to a determination as to whether an order, if carried out, will result in what is known in legal terminology as confiscation of property. Thus, if a commission issues an order for a certain set of freight or passenger tariffs, the court may judge only whether, if the order becomes effective, it will result in irreparable loss, and specific evidence to show that it will so result must be brought forward.

The whole question of commission powers needs thorough thrashing-out here in Hawaii, where the utilities commission idea is almost unknown, where considerable antagonism is likely to be shown to any bill that confers broad authority over corporations of the territory. Publicity on the subject is badly needed, and the form of the bill to be sent to the legislature should be known as early as possible to allow of adequate discussion.

Mr. Galt brings up another point which will probably settle itself in practical working-out of the commission plan. He suggests that the commissioners should give their whole time to the work. Upon this point the Star-Bulletin is inclined to feel doubtful. The number of public service corporations falling under the commission's jurisdiction will be comparatively few, and rates, once established on an equitable basis in the few cases where perhaps they are not now equitable, will not change rapidly. We doubt if after the first few months there would be need for a board to devote its entire time to the score or so of public service corporations doing business in this territory. A statistician will probably be needed all the time, but certainly the territory does not wish to pay high salaries for experts unless they are earning their money every hour of the day.

However, this point will settle itself when the bill is drawn and the powers and duties of the commissioners are fixed. Meanwhile the general subject is pressing. The Star-Bulletin believes that the establishment of this commission will be one of the most important actions of the legislature of 1913, and this paper invites full discussion on the subject and will be glad to extend the use of its columns to interested citizens for the purpose of setting forth their views.

It is noticeable that the correspondents in Europe are writing from Sofia and Cetinje and Belgrade, but none of them seems to be sending out news from Constantinople or Adrianople.

Duke Kahanamoku has been invited to swim in Australia. That's easy. Now if he had been invited to swim to Australia, it would have been something worth "the Duke's" effort.

It is reported that Joe Cohen has joined a Democratic precinct club, but as yet we haven't been able to get any Bourbon to admit it.

Wonder if this pulmotor, the new device to resuscitate drowning people, is good for that post-election feeling?

If L. L. McCandless really wants to economize on the county payroll, let's give three cheers and help him!

Question: If the Democrats cut the county payroll, will they begin with the Democratic road-workers?

LETTERS ON TIMELY TOPICS

SUFFRAGIST LEADER ASKS JUSTICE BE GIVEN WOMEN'S WORK

Honolulu, T. H., November 14, 1912.
Editor Honolulu Star-Bulletin,
Sir:—I want to state that the speaker at the meeting of the Woman's Suffrage Association of Hawaii yesterday afternoon were Mrs. Walter Frear and Mrs. Hunter-Jones, not "two women speakers representing widely different spheres in the social world," as stated in this morning's Advertiser. All the suffragists of Hawaii, like Mrs. Frear, are womanly women, though some of the Hawaiians have been less fortunate in the matter of education; still they are just as earnest in the suffrage movement as their white sisters, and though not able to express in exact words what they mean, they are making the effort to rise above their present conditions, and should be encouraged and helped in a womanly way, and not be derided nor jested at through the columns of the papers.

The Hawaiian women of today understand and realize that suffrage stands for equality, justice and the uplift of the races.

I deny that the pigeon English stated to have been used by a Hawaiian woman was thus used.

Also I wish to state that I am not aware that Mrs. Harmon Hendrick enrolled as a member of the Woman's Suffrage Association of Hawaii, yesterday.

On behalf of the suffragists of Hawaii I ask that the representatives of the papers who attend the suffrage meetings make correct statements or leave the meetings unreported.

MRS. J. M. DOWSETT,
President of the Woman's Suffrage Association of Hawaii.

[The report which Mrs. Dowsett corrects was published this morning. The Star-Bulletin's report of the meeting is published in another column today.]

STUDENT ACTORS OF HAWAII ARE HARD AT WORK ON COLLEGE PLAY

The play which is to be given by the College of Hawaii the night before Thanksgiving is coming out better than was expected. The rehearsals have brought out much talent. The characters of the play are all either members of the student body or of the faculty.

Clayton Cousins, who will take the part of Mr. Martin, received his high school course in Maine and New York. He has played the part of Mr. Martin four times. Mr. Martin is the chief character in the play and needs a very clever actor to fill the part. Mr. Cousins has a great deal of talent and this, together with his experience, gives him the necessary attributes to fill the part perfectly.

Miss Shirley Foster, who will take the part of Nora, the maid, is a graduate of the Broadway High School, Seattle. Miss Foster possesses a great deal of dramatic talent and her interpretation of the part is perfect. She took considerable interest in dramatics at Broadway High School and her recent success in the work is largely due to that fact.

Leslie Clark, (Bob Martin), is a graduate of Oahu College and also of the College of Hawaii of which he is now a member of the faculty. He is assisting Mr. Shaw on the cast and his work and interpretation of the part are excellent.

Ted Tracy (Ned Biddle) took the first part of his high school course at the Lowell High School, San Francisco, and completed the McKinley High at this city. In all the rehearsals he has shown himself extremely capable.

Harold Starratt, who will take the part of Dr. Brown, is a graduate of the Waianai High School, Waianai, Illinois. He was on the cast of

"The College Widow" a play given by the Waianai High School and is showing up well in the present work. Scott Pratt, (Mike Dolan), graduated from the McKinley High. The part of the Irish policeman, though not long, is difficult, but Mr. Pratt has overcome all difficulties and his interpretation of the part is extremely commendable.

Miss Bernice Smith, who plays Nell, Bob Martin's sister, is a graduate of Oahu College. She was on the cast of several plays given at that school, and here, as in several other cases, the advantages of experience as well as talent are evident.

Miss Lillian Boyd, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Martin's wife, graduated from the Drury Academy, Springfield, Missouri. Her part, though comparatively short, is necessary to the production of the play. Much careful work and preparation was needed for this part and Miss Boyd has spent both upon it.

The play is being coached by Dr. and Mrs. Andrews and they are giving much time and invaluable advice to the members of the cast. They are present at every rehearsal and their coaching is what is making the play possible.

The play is "The Revolving Wedge" a football romance in one act. It is to be given on the night before Thanksgiving in the Charles R. Bishop Hall at Punahou. An admission fee of twenty-five cents will be charged. Tickets are on sale at the College of Hawaii, Punahou and McKinley.

The proceeds derived from the play are to be divided between the College and Punahou. The Athletic Committee of the College is to have charge of the expenditures for the money at the College and at Punahou the money is to be used for the benefit of the Oahuans.

PERSONALITIES

B. L. TURNER of Chicago, is in the city on a business trip and is registered at the Young.

ARTHUR GAY, who has been visiting friends and relatives on the coast, has returned to Honolulu.

D. W. DRISCOLL, of Lahaina, Maui, is in the city on a business trip. He is accompanied by his daughter.

J. C. COHEN, accompanied by Mrs. Cohen, will leave for the coast Saturday. They will be away several weeks.

DR. A. BEHR, of Berkeley, accompanied by his wife, is making a tour of the islands. They are guests at the Young.

SERGEANT MAJOR L. GERSON, for years stationed in the Philippines and recently on the mainland, is returning to Manila in the United States Army transport Sherman. Sergeant Gerson is an old-timer in the service.

CIRCUIT JUDGE WHITNEY will leave next Wednesday for Hilo, where he will open the land court the following day several hearings involving properties on the Big Island. The most important of these is the Unsum boundary case involving a dispute between the Territory and the Bishop Estate over the surveys and boundaries of a tract in the Kakaia district, with about 388 acres at stake.

READY FOR DANCE

Arrangements for the first annual dance of Honolulu Aerie No. 149, F. O. E., in Knights of Pythias Hall Saturday night, are now practically complete. Every effort has been made to make the affair a success and the indications reported to the committees in charge of the dance are that the attendance will be large. The tickets are now on sale.

LITTLE INTERVIEWS

J. WALTER DOYLE—Having gone through the political campaign as publicity agent, I feel that I have acquired a big league reputation.

W. A. LOVE—The Honolulu Symphony Orchestra Society is trying to build up Honolulu musically, and the concert next Tuesday night will be largely an exploitation of home talent.

P. C. JONES—A great many people on the mainland would come here for a visit if we could advertise that we have good roads for automobile on all the islands.

JAMES WAKEFIELD—The harbor commission is proceeding carefully in its plans for an agreement as to an oil pipe line, because we wish to safeguard public rights and give all companies a fair deal in getting access to the wharves.

HONOKAA ADVANCES: OAHU UNCHANGED

Honokaa shows a gain of an eighth point in a sale on the board of 25 shares at 8.12 1/2. Oahu on the other hand has dropped a quarter point in a recess sale of 100 shares and board sales of 85 and 5 at 5.55. Other sugar stocks are steady. Oahu holding at 25.25 for blocks of 75 and 30 shares between boards. Kekaha makes a sale quotation of 157.50 for 60 shares reported, and 161 is asked for it. Pineapple indicates great activity unchanged from the recent advance to 47.50, at which 100 and 10 shares in recess and 25 and 5 on the board were sold.

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Waikiki \$30.00
Kalihi Road \$30.00

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