

Governor Carter Talks Hawaii

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 4.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—
"Uncle Sam can well afford to do something for the Sandwich islands."

These were the words of Mr. George Robert Carter, the young governor of Hawaii, who is now in this country, where he came to attend the national republican convention and the St. Louis exposition.

"Yes," continued the governor, "I say that Uncle Sam cannot afford not to do more for us than he is now doing. We are one of the best pieces of dividend-paying property that the old gentleman has. We are paying more into the national treasury in proportion to our numbers than any other part of the United States. We are netting the government almost \$7 per head every year, and there are no deficits. Our government taxes now amount to \$8.53 per capita, and the government spends upon us only \$1.53, so that there is a gain to the national treasury of \$6.91 for every man, woman and child in the Hawaiian islands every year. Here in the United States proper the annual cost of government is \$7.97 per capita, a wonderful showing in favor of Hawaii."

"But what the the Sandwich islands crying about, Mr. Carter? Do they not get all they need in the way of government funds?"

"No," replied the young governor. "We need new harbors and other public improvements. The United States is now spending something like \$60,000,000 on its harbors, and it is alleged that millions of that money go into dry rivers and creeks in the back counties. However that may be, none of it comes to Hawaii, one of the places where it is most needed. We ought to have better shipping facilities at Honolulu. We have overtaxed ourselves to supply them, and from now on the money should come from the national government. We have deepened the harbor from year to year, endeavoring to keep up with the great steamers which wish to enter it. It now needs additional dredging to a depth of about thirty-five feet, for the great ships which have been recently built for the transpacific trade draw thirty-two feet of water. They would come to our islands, but they have to anchor outside. We need also a breakwater at the port of Hilo, on the Island of Hawaii, and there are other places that should be improved."

"I doubt if the people here appreciate the commercial importance of the Hawaiian islands," continued Governor Carter. "We already stand eleventh among our ports as to the tonnage of our American shipping, and we are increasing every year. We are at the cross roads of the Pacific; at the great station between Australia and New Zealand and this continent and between the United States and Asia. When the Panama canal is completed our islands will be more important than ever, and we must have good harbors to accommodate the trade."

"Just how far are you from Panama, Governor Carter?" I asked.

"We are 4,540 miles from the western end of the big canal and a little more than half way on the route between that canal and Yokohama, Japan. We are 3,600 miles from Auckland, New Zealand, 5,000 miles from Hong Kong and a little more than 2,000 miles from San Francisco. We are the key to the Pacific ocean and ships from all parts of it now call at our ports."

"The steamers of the Pacific are steadily growing in number and size. The new boats of Jim Hill's line are among the largest of the world, and the Korea and Siberia of the Pacific Mail company, which now call at Honolulu on their way from San Francisco, have each 12,000 tons, and are as fine as any passenger steamers on the Atlantic. This company will soon add two other steamers equally large. The Korea and Siberia have a speed of twenty-two knots and the Korea has gone from Honolulu to San Francisco in less than five days. These ships bring the Sandwich islands almost as close to the United States in point of time as Porto Rico."

"What is the condition of the islands today, governor?" I asked. "Are your people prospering in a business way?"

"We have not been doing well in the last year or so," was the reply. "Our chief industry is sugar. We have about \$100,000,000 worth of plantations and last year our sugar product amounted to more than 400,000 tons, valued at \$25,000,000. Sugar has been very low, so low, indeed, that upon plantations capitalized at \$50,000,000 the average earnings—according to my own figures—have not been more than three-tenths of 1 per cent. This is estimated on the actual expenses and earnings for one year. Sugar is now going up and we look for much better times."

"Are the sugar plantations well managed, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes," replied the governor of Hawaii. "They are handled as carefully, as scientifically and as economically as any plantations of the world. They are equipped with the finest of modern machinery. The cane is brought to the factory on railroads, and some of the estates have miles



GEORGE R. CARTER, GOVERNOR OF HAWAII.

of railroad tracks. Steam plows are used and the irrigation works are of vast extent. Connected with some such establishments are pumps which lift millions of gallons of water a day, often carrying it over the hills from one valley to another. Reservoirs are built to hold the water, and on one plantation there are more than forty miles of flumes. The soil of the sugar lands is analyzed from year to year, and just the right fertilizer is added to make them produce to their fullest capacity. The labor on the plantations is organized under overseers and foremen, and the cost of everything is as carefully estimated as in one of your great American factories."

"How do you get along with your labor?" I asked.

"We are doing very well," said the governor. "But we should be far better satisfied if the people here would not insist upon the same labor laws for us as for the United States. The conditions are different, and what is good for one place is not good for another. This will be found to be the case sooner or later as to the most of our outlying colonies. White men cannot do the every-day labor of the tropics, and our conditions are such that labor of certain classes is best performed by Chinese. We should like to have a limited number of Chinese. We want enough to develop the islands to their fullest capacity, and no more. The number should be limited, and when the supply falls off through death or immigration we should have the right to import

others to take their places. As it is now we can import Japanese, but not Chinese, and we have now about 50,000 Japanese in the islands. They do not make as good laborers as the Chinese. They are not so reliable, nor do they make as good citizens."

"Do you have labor unions among your celestials?"

"Not in the sense that the word is used in the United States," said Governor Carter. "The Japanese always go together. They may be said to have one great union of their own. The Chinese have their organizations, but these are more like social clubs than our trades unions. There are now and then strikes among the people of both races, but we have, on the whole, fewer labor troubles than you."

"Is there any chance for the poor white man in Hawaii?"

"Not much for the common laborer," replied Governor Carter. "The Japanese and Chinese will work more cheaply than he and almost equally well. Indeed, the white man can't work as well in the tropics as either the Chinman or Japanese. We use white men for our superintendents and clerks. We do not want them to do the hard work."

"What are the chances for young Americans in the Hawaiian islands, governor?"

"There are opportunities for young Americans everywhere," was the reply, "and there will always be places for the right men in our islands. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the country there is about as well taken up as in any part of

the United States. The islands have been settled for many years and the opportunities of a new and rapidly developing country are lacking. We prefer to have a few high-priced good men rather than many poor men to do our work, and the wages are, I think, higher than in the United States. Overseers and foremen are now receiving \$100 and upward per month. Sugar boilers and engineers \$100 and upward, while the plantation carpenters and blacksmiths are paid from \$50 to \$100. All the high-priced men on the sugar plantations have their houses and firewood furnished. There is good demand for mechanics in Honolulu, but even there the Japanese and Chinese compete. As to clerks and bookkeepers they are easily gotten, and the wages are not much higher than in the United States."

"How about men with money? Are there many opportunities for good investments?"

"Yes, but the conditions are not far different from those of other parts of the United States. It takes large capital to operate a sugar plantation and the best of the sugar lands are taken up and in cultivation. There are some opportunities in coffee growing and in raising pineapples and other fruits for shipment to the United States. The available lands are comparatively few. The islands all told have an area about one-fourth as large as the state of West Virginia and a very large proportion is mountainous and uncultivable. Such of the soil as can be used is, in many places, exceedingly rich; but, as I have said, the best lands are already owned and have been so for many years."

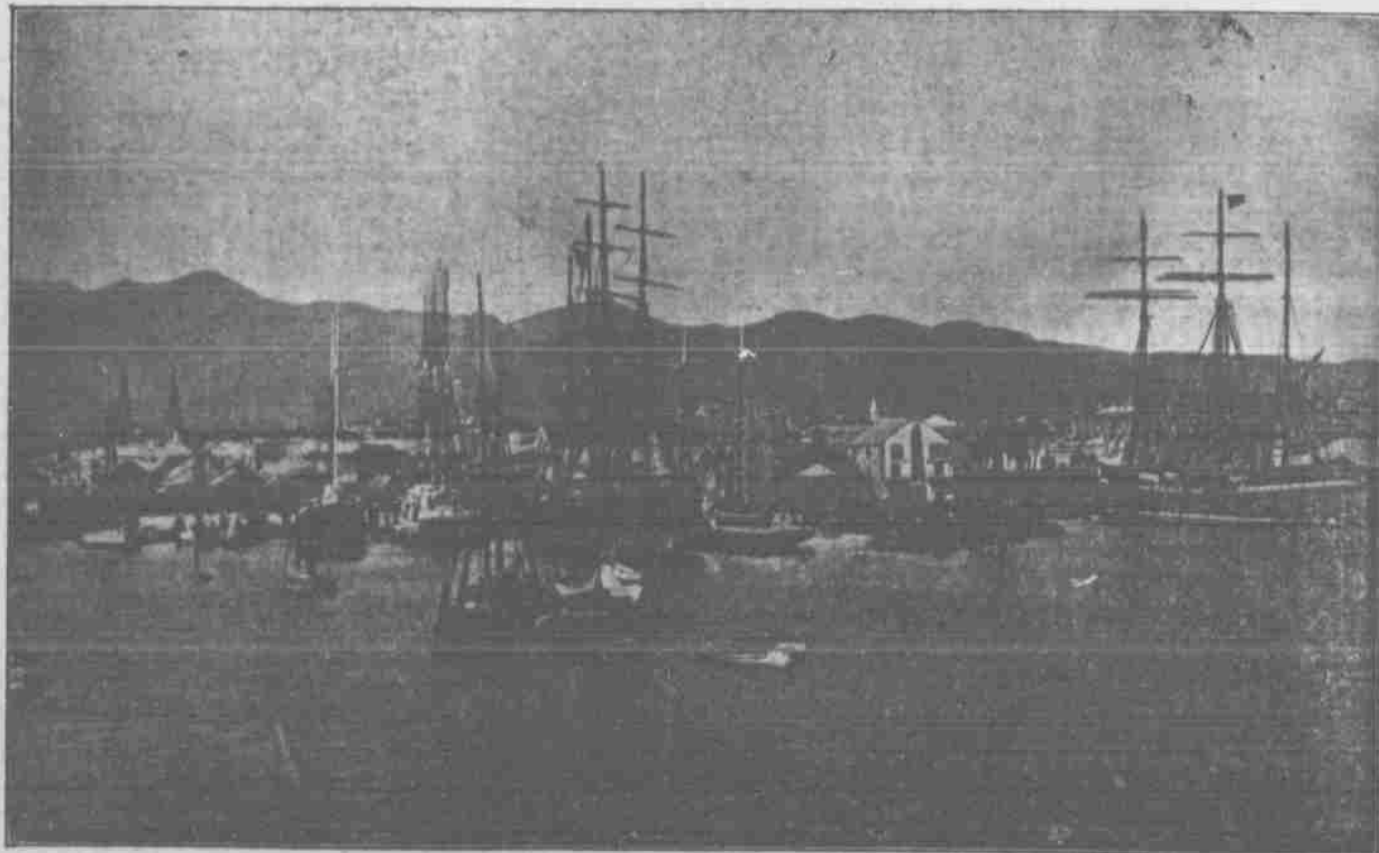
"Are there not some government lands?"

"Yes, there are altogether about 2,000,000 acres, but much of it is sterile or inaccessible or covered with lava. There are perhaps 500,000 acres that have some value, and half of that amount is good land. The government is anxious that its lands should be taken up by small planters, but, at 100 acres to the man, they could accommodate comparatively few people."

"What are you doing with your leper colony governor?"

"We have our lepers on the island of Molokai, situated north of Lanai island, on the other side of the Palolo channel. Molokai is a narrow strip of land about seven miles wide and thirty-nine miles long. It is of volcanic origin, the eastern part of it rising more than half a mile above the sea. The leper settlement is on a low peninsula, on the south side of the island. It has some fertile lands connected with it, including a few thousand acres upon which sugar might be grown. The lepers are supported and cared for by the people of the islands. We think that they should be in charge of the United States government and directly under the marine hospital service. Our leper colony should be made an experimental station for the study of leprosy and its cure. There is a government leper colony on an island off the coast of Porto Rico, and other lepers are supported by the government in the Philippine islands. The disease is a terrible one and congress could not do better than make an appropriation for a leper hospital on Molokai, and for a laboratory here at Washington where the disease might be studied. It is, you know, a bacterial disease and a cure might possibly be discovered. It would not need a large appropriation. I should think \$25,000 a year might be sufficient to carry on the investigations; they might result in vast good not only to Hawaii, but to the whole world. You have lepers in almost every city of the United States and there is a leper colony not far from New Orleans. We do not absolutely know that leprosy is hereditary. Indeed, the doctors now say

(Continued on Page Thirteen.)



HARBOR AT HONOLULU.