

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 911 018By GWNARA Date 6-6-08*Mr. Wilcox*

October 31 1955

Dear Mr. Wilkins:

This is in further response to your letter of October 5, 1955, recommending that consideration be given to sending a tripartite observer delegation from Hawaii and Alaska to the next session of the International Labor Conference. The Department of State has given very careful consideration to this matter and our conclusion is that it would be unwise to carry out this suggestion.

Leaving to one side the question of complications relating to Puerto Rico, I believe we should recognize that Hawaii and Alaska occupy, in reality, very different status in their relations to the United States than the several non-metropolitan territories of the United Kingdom, cited in your letter, do to that government. I doubt whether many persons would think of Alaska and Hawaii as being comparable to the non-metropolitan territories of most other governments. Furthermore, we should keep in mind that the Congress has under consideration legislation to give Hawaii and Alaska statehood. Under the circumstances, and not knowing at this time what action the Congress may take by June 1956, it would seem unwise for the Executive Branch to plan any action with respect to Alaska and Hawaii based on their status as non-metropolitan territories.

Even if it were not for this overriding consideration, there is, as you point out, the financial problem. I question whether at this juncture of events, in relation to the ILO, it would be desirable to reduce the size of the United States Delegation to the International Labor Conference in order to accommodate delegates from Hawaii and Alaska.

In view of the close relations between the organized labor movements in continental United States and in Hawaii and Alaska, it would seem possible for the American Federation of Labor to provide for representation of these territories among the labor advisers on the United States Delegation if it so desired.

Sincerely yours,

Francis G. Wilcox
Assistant SecretaryThe Honorable
J. Ernest Wilkins,
Assistant Secretary of Labor.

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