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Commonwealth Status for Islands Backed by I.L.W.U. International

The big I.L.W.U. union today defected from the ranks of Statehood supporters and went on record instead in favor of commonwealth status for the Islands.

The action taken at an executive board meeting in San Francisco gives the commonwealth movement its largest group of organized supporters so far.

The union has some 25,000 members in Hawaii, about 75,000 in all, and maintains a Washington, D.C., office to handle its political and governmental affairs.

BRIDGES'S STATEMENT

In Hawaii last week, Harry Bridges, international president of the I.L.W.U., had said that he feels Statehood is so

remote that he favors commonwealth status for the Islands as a step toward Statehood.

Later, other union spokesmen said he was speaking only for himself, not the union.

Today's action, however, appears to make his position the union's position.

The Associated Press reported that the policy statement said "since Statehood seems remote of early achievement, we urge some form of commonwealth status as a step in bringing the people of Hawaii to full citizenship, as one means of stimulating economic growth."

The statement continued:

CITES ADVANTAGES

"As a commonwealth, Hawaii could elect its own Governor, could enjoy greater autonomy in the conduct of its local affairs, and would be free of Federal taxation.

"Close to \$150,000,000 that now comes out of the pockets of the people and the corporations of Hawaii would stay in the Islands for the purchase of goods and services."

Jack W. Hall, I.L.W.U. regional director, who is on Kauai on union business, told the Star-Bulletin via radiophone that officially Local 142 (Hawaii) is still backing Statehood.

The International doesn't have authority to change this and only a convention of the local has the power to change its stand, he said.

Hall said the local holds a convention every two years and one is not likely to be called until the fall of 1957.

However, Hall said that personally he has felt for some time that "Statehood is a dream. Anything that will save us money, we should be for."

Ingram M. Stainback, former governor and leading proponent of commonwealth for Hawaii, said "I have been in favor of commonwealth (for Hawaii) for a long time now.

"It (the union's adopting the policy statement) may have some beneficial effect here, but I don't know," he said.

'WILL-O-THE-WISP'

Governor King—"It is the same old will-o-the-wisp. We are to accept commonwealth status and obtain relief from payment of Federal taxes.

"The truth of the matter is that we would be exchanging our heritage for a mess of pottage because no one has yet assured Hawaii of this tax exemption.

"There is serious doubt that such exemption can be granted legally.

"The proponents of commonwealth should sponsor a bill providing for the return to the Territory of all Federal taxes collected in Hawaii and see what happens.

"In the meantime, we can proceed to amend the Organic Act to give us more complete self-government, including the election of our Governor in accordance with the State Constitution.

"Instead of the commonwealth plan, I would rather support the Tennessee plan." (A plan whereby a Territory "elects" its representatives to Congress

Commonwealth

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and sends them to Washington to work for Statehood.)

To Dan T. Nishimura, chairman of the Oahu Republican County Committee, the action came as a "big surprise."

"I thought they (the union) were strongly in favor of Statehood.

"The Hawaii local is on record in favor of Statehood. I think the International should respect local convictions unless the local has changed its mind."

Other comments today:

William S. Richardson, chairman of the Territorial Democratic Central Committee—"I stand by our party platform which is for Statehood and not for commonwealth.

"In my opinion, commonwealth is a backward step."

Senator Wilfred C. Tsukiyama, Oahu Republican and former Senate President—"I think commonwealth would farther remove us from our relations with the United States because commonwealth is the next step to independence from the United States."

OTHER STATEMENTS

In other policy statements made public, the I.L.W.U. board:

1—Told its members to discount party affiliation of candidates for office this November and to consider in each case "the man, his program and his commitments."

2—Called on Congress to "de-militarize" the American economy, specifically criticizing the 900 million dollars given the Air Force over the amount requested for it.

3—Called for a free election in Viet Nam under United Nations supervision.

4—Accused the State Internal Security Committee of intimidating Jack Hall, regional director for Hawaii.

5—Guaranteed continued support to Andrew Nelson, president of I.L.W.U. Local 207 in New Orleans, who has been indicted by the Department of Justice under the Taft-Hartley Law.

In a review of achievements in 1956, the I.L.W.U. board congratulated Hawaii longshoremen who "came through with a long-term contract which will wipe out the historic discriminatory race differential between West Coast and Island rates."



Harry Bridges discusses island labor scene with newspaper reporter

Commonwealth Backed As Step to Statehood

By BRUCE REMINGTON

THE ILLUINOIS WORKERS UNION (ILWU) today is discussing the possibility of a commonwealth for Hawaii as a step toward statehood, according to a spokesman here today.

The spokesman said the union is concerned with Hawaii's unemployment situation and probably will consider solutions to it Monday when the ILWU executive board meets in San Francisco. Among the possible solutions he said are federal and territorial aid and a request for commonwealth status.

"If a commonwealth of commonwealth status, while waiting for statehood, would create the opportunity for setting up an administration here," said Harry Bridges, "it will allow the commonwealth plan as has been done in Puerto Rico, to encourage new industry."

Mr. Bridges said he will support commonwealth "not as a substitute for statehood, but as a step toward statehood." He emphasized the ILWU has never indicated this commonwealth plan.

IN A ONE HOUR interview at a news conference today, Mr. Bridges said that the other points of the commonwealth plan are to encourage new industries to develop, setting up a plan as the part of the union. It is still an aim of the ILWU to raise plantation wages in Hawaii on a par with non-union labor on the mainland, a differential of more than 40 cents an hour.

The principles which were brought about in the three contracts were achieved at summit meetings. The union has the order of

companies. At that time, each side agreed to a "live and let live" attitude toward the other.

3. In Hawaii as elsewhere, the ILWU will make no attempt to organize workers who are already organized. "We don't intend to do any raiding and we don't intend to have anybody do any raiding on us."

4. The ILWU is supporting the International Longshoremen's Association on the East Coast, but is not trying to do any waterfront organizing on the East Coast.

5. The ILWU will be politically active in state elections, but on a local, not a national level.

THE ILWU chief said Hawaii's unemployment situation must be taken care of immediately because increased federal funds are putting a burden on the community.

"We intend to seek some federal aid to alleviate the situation where these people are unemployed and unemployable, except possibly during peak seasons," he said. "We think federal funds should be made available. We do not think it's fair to this community to support people who don't want to be on relief."

He said federal funds could be used to retrain persons now unemployable to help others be retrained to their homelands.

"WE WILL SEE what we can

do about getting together with employers and appropriate government agencies and see what help we can expect from the territorial administration and legislature," he said.

At this point, Mr. Bridges said he personally would support commonwealth status as a means of encouraging new industries to move into Hawaii.

He said he expected the prob-

lem of unemployment and the statehood question to come up at Monday's executive board meeting. That's where they'll be considered if they are going to be considered at all," he said.

The union chief agreed with industry leaders in the Islands that the recently concluded agreements "point in the direction" of an era of labor peace in Hawaii.

He said the three new contracts date back to last fall's summit meetings which resulted in "down-to-earth settlements" on many points.

IN THOSE DAYS, he said, the two sides showed a gentlemanly live and let live policy. We won't try to overthrow them and they won't try to overthrow us.

They recognized that the union is here to stay. We recognized their right to stay in business down here and agreed not to make it so difficult for a side which would bankrupt them.

The peaceful settlements don't mean that the ILWU philosophy has changed, Mr. Bridges said.

"Just because there were no strikes, it doesn't mean we're losing our grip on our punch. The biggest test is for fighting ability. The place we need to know how to handle is the state."

ANOTHER WAGES IN Hawaii are discussed. Mr. Bridges said revealing the average aim of the union is to close the differential between the pay of island workers and the mainland. The basic wage in Hawaii sugar plantations is \$1.00 an hour. Unskilled labor on the mainland is \$1.40 an hour.

He said that the workers in the commonwealth plan, he said, "that means we're going to close the gap all at once. Our workers need \$1.50 an hour in these days. That's our prospectus. There is no saying how long it will take."

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Commonwealth Just Stepping Stone

ILWU Reaffirms Statehood Support

Local 142 of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) has reaffirmed its support for the ILWU's long-standing policy of opposing commonwealth status for Hawaii. The union's position was made clear in a resolution passed at a recent meeting in San Francisco.

The ILWU has long maintained that commonwealth status is a step backward from statehood. It is a step that would strip the islands of their rights as a territory and would place them under the control of a federal government. The union believes that the only way to achieve true independence for Hawaii is through statehood.

The resolution also stated that the union would continue to support the ILWU's efforts to secure statehood for Hawaii. It called for the federal government to grant statehood to the islands as soon as possible.

THE SPOKESMAN pointed out that Local 142, which comprises the union's membership in Hawaii, is the only union in the statehood and makes no mention of commonwealth status.

But he said that doesn't mean Local 142 is opposed to commonwealth as a step in the direction of statehood. If we're for honey, it doesn't mean we're against strawberries.

"Nothing can be read into that action by the executive board that could possibly mean Local 142 would substitute common-

wealth for statehood. The commonwealth status is a step backward from statehood, as far as the union is concerned."

GOVERNOR KING and **ATTORNEY GENERAL EDWARD N. GILVA** have expressed their views on the resolution. The attorney general stated that commonwealth status would mean that the islands would be treated as a territory rather than as a state. He said that this would result in the loss of many rights and privileges that the islands currently enjoy.

The governor also expressed his opposition to commonwealth status. He said that it would be a step backward and that the islands should strive for statehood. He called for the federal government to grant statehood to the islands as soon as possible.

MR. GILVA pointed out that Congress is without power to relieve us from payment of tax. He said that these commonwealth people who think we are going to be forgiven from federal taxation don't know what they are talking about.

The attorney general also accused the ILWU of being a union of the mainland and the islands. He said that the union's actions were in the interest of the mainland and not the islands.

I hope the local union officials don't follow him blindly.

EX-GOVERNOR Ingram M. Stainback, a long-time commonwealth supporter and long-time member of the ILWU leadership, said he didn't know whether the union would support the commonwealth cause. He said that he was a territorial Democratic chairman and he would support the party's platform in support of statehood. He called commonwealth "a backward step."