

Statement on Hawai‘i Omnibus Act

Senator Hiram L. Fong Papers

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Mr. President: I rise in opposition to the amendment proposed by the distinguished junior Senator from Wisconsin.

The Hawaii Omnibus Act passed last year by the Congress authorizes an appropriation of six million dollars to the State of Hawaii for the support of the College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts of the State. This authorization was made under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862. This Act makes a grant to each State entering the sisterhood of States of 30,000 acres of land for each Member of Congress from that State. If land is not available, scrip in comparable value is to be issued. This land is to be held as a permanent endowment and if sold its proceeds to be held as a permanent trust corpus to be invested. The income from such an endowment or investment is to be used for educational purposes.

Every State in the Union, those admitted since the Morrill Act as well as those admitted before that Act, have been given a grant of land or scrip specifically earmarked for endowment of an agricultural and mechanical college in its State.

Under this formula of the Morrill Act, Hawaii was entitled to 90,000 acres of land from the public domain or land scrip of equivalent value as it has three Members in the Congress of the United States.

As there is no public land of such acreage in the State of Hawaii, the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of both the Senate and the House recommended to their respective bodies that the sum of six million dollars be authorized in lieu of this land grant.

Pursuant to that authorization, the Senate appropriated the sum of six million dollars. The bill was accepted by the Senate but in conference with House Conferees the six million dollars was reduced to \$2,225,000, leaving a balance of \$3,775,000 of this authorization yet to be appropriated.

The amendment of the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin has for its purpose the deletion of this remaining balance which was authorized under the Hawaii Omnibus Act.

The sum of six million dollars authorized by the Congress last year under the Morrill Act for the State of Hawaii for its land grant college was indeed a minimal sum. Ninety-thousand acres of land in the State of Hawaii today, if available, would probably have a value in the neighborhood of two hundred million dollars, as land values on the Islands in the State of Hawaii for land comparable to what has been set aside for States which have come into the Union since 1862 would be valued in excess of \$2,000 per acre.

The average price per acre for any land that is half-way desirable on the Island of Oahu where the University of Hawaii is situated would amount to probably at least \$7,500 per acre. At this price, 90,000 acres would cost approximately 675 million dollars.

A study of the securities or funds and the acreage held by the ten States most recently admitted to the Union, excluding Alaska on which comparable data are not available, shows that if these lands were valued at \$100 an acre the value of the land today with the amount of securities or funds held by them, would amount to, in the case of South Dakota to ten million dollars, Montana, to 12 million dollars, Washington 36 million dollars, North Dakota, 3 million dollars, Idaho 22 million dollars, Wyoming 16 million dollars, Utah 3 million dollars, Oklahoma 18 million dollars, New Mexico 22 million dollars and Arizona 66 million dollars.

^{7.3M value of the holdings of}
The small ~~amount~~ of North Dakota and Utah of ~~three~~ ~~million~~ ~~dollars~~ is due largely to the fact that their lands were sold quite early and cheaply and only a very small portion of their original acreage remains -- that of North Dakota, 13,172 acres and Utah, 32,374 acres.

Even if ~~the~~ ^{the} lands held by these ten States were ^{priced} ~~valued~~ at \$50 an acre, ^{the value of the holdings of} ~~is~~ eight of the ten States ~~the value of these~~ ~~lands and funds held~~ exceeds the sum of six million dollars.

(X) The University of Hawaii, which will be the beneficiary under this land grant of the Morrill Act, was founded in 1907 and has an enrollment of approximately 9,000 students. It offers a wide

range of degrees and over many years has assumed a prominent role in social sciences and research, marine biology, geophysics, volcanology, and tropical agriculture. It is estimated that within ten years the student body will exceed 15,000.

The income from this small sum of \$3,775,000 will enable the University to improve the stature and effectiveness of the Institution's land grant programs.

Moreover, the State of Hawaii is undergoing rapid development which is increasing the demand for training in the fields of agriculture, industrial development, mechanical arts and other such specialized programs.

Hawaii justifiably deserves a Federal grant in the spirit of the original purpose of the Morrill Act and this minimal amount, ^{of \$6M,} which has been ^{authorized} ~~set~~ by careful deliberation of the Members of the Interior Committee of the House of Representatives, the Members of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the Senate, and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~which passed the Congress last year,~~ ^{Congress} does not begin to approach what we truly deserve.

I ask my colleagues, in the spirit of fair play and justice, to vote against the amendment presented by the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin.

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I would like to say further there is a great difference between the pre-Statehood status of Hawaii and most of the Western States of our Nation. The United States bought most of the land embraced in the States of Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and part of Colorado in the Louisiana Purchase.

Out of the lands acquired in the Treaty with Mexico the Gadsden Purchase, and the Boundary Agreement with the State of Texas came the States of New Mexico, Arizona, Washington, Nevada and the rest of Colorado.

Alaska, of course, was purchased from Russia.

When these States were granted land upon their admission they were given land which was bought and paid for by the United States but this is not so in the case of Hawaii. The United States did not buy Hawaii. When it was annexed as a Territory in 1898, Hawaii was an independent nation.

By the Resolution of Annexation, the Republic of Hawaii ceded to the United States all public lands belonging to the Government of the Hawaiian Islands. By Executive Order, thousands of acres are now being used by the Federal Government for military and other governmental purposes.

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These lands which have been set aside and which originally belonged to the sovereign nation of Hawaii were never compensated for by the United States Government.

The land which the United States Government is now using in Hawaii and which once belonged to the Republic of Hawaii is valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

We in Hawaii are not asking compensation for this land but we ask in all fairness that this minimal sum of six million dollars, which has been authorized by the Congress, be appropriated for the use of the State of Hawaii.

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