I do not believe that there was ever a bill to provide a government for a Territory presented to the American Congress more un-Democratic, un-American, and unprecedented than House bill 2972 in its original form. I doubt if the distinguished chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, without a very painful (Paynefull) effort, could produce a bill more "unRepublican, un-American, unwarranted, unprecedented, and unconstitutional" than this bill. [Applause.]

I invite the attention to a few of its most pernicious provisions:

The governor and the secretary of the Territory were to be appointed by the President. The governor should appoint the judges of the supreme court, judges of the circuit courts, and all other officers of the Territory except the members of the legislature. The supreme judges were to be appointed for life, or during good behavior.

The supreme court was to be the judge of the qualifications and elections of the members of the legislature. No one was to be eligible to election as a senator, nor could anyone vote for a senator, who did not have property to the value of $2,000, or an income of not less than $1,000. This meant the continuance of an oligarchical form of government in the Hawaiian Islands. The governor could make and control the courts. The supreme court could make and control the legislature. The governor and his favorites would have a corner on the public offices. The commission framed a bill under which it might be for anyone outside of the "Dole family compact" to hold a public office in the Territory. It is reported that every officer under the Dole regime is grandfather, or father, or father-in-law, or uncle, or brother, or brother-in-law, or son, or son-in-law, or nephew, or cousin, of some other public officer. The persons who have been in control of affairs in the Hawaiian Islands of late years are called "missionaries"—improperly so. There is evident need of the instrumentality of the genuine missionaries to remove the selfishness from the hearts of these people and make them more Christian-like.

Who ever heard of the judges of any Territory of the United States being appointed for life? The bill framed by the commission provided that the present incumbents of the supreme court should continue in office until their respective offices became vacant, which would be by death or impeachment, and then their successors should be appointed for life or during good behavior. It may be proper to remark that one of the supreme court justices was a member of the Hawaiian commission and a member of the committee to consider and report on the judiciary. He evidently believes that "self-preservation is the first law of life."

The Committee on Territories has amended the bill, with the view of eliminating the objectionable features already pointed out. The chief justice and the associate justices of the supreme court are to be appointed by the President, and for a term of years, instead of for life or during good behavior. The judges are not to have jurisdiction over elections and qualifications of members of the legislature. The property qualification provision has been stricken out. "We believe that all these changes are in the interests of a good government and a popular government in the Territory of Hawaii."

The commission’s bill provides that the public lands of Hawaii shall be under the control of a land commissioner appointed by the governor. This might afford an opportunity for land grabbing and favoritism in the sales, grants, and leases of lands. After the annexation, the Dole administration proceeded to dispose of large tracts of the public lands, and it became necessary for the President to put a check to this wrongful procedure by an Executive order. An amendment to the bill very properly refers the administration of the sales, grants, and leases of the public lands of Hawaii to the Commissioner of Public Lands here in Washington.