

April 6, 1900
House
v. 33 (4)
p. 3865-3866

GOVERNMENT FOR HAWAII.

The committee resumed its session.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Mississippi. I ask unanimous consent to address the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Mississippi asks unanimous consent to address the committee. Is there objection?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, there are two opinions as to the legal status of Territories of the United States. One is that under the Constitution every Territory is necessarily in process of formation for statehood. The other is that this view is a mere dictum of a court and is not law.

Now, let us take both sides of that proposition. If the announcement of the court be a decision, then the amendment of the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. HILL] would place upon the statute books an unconstitutional pronouncement. If, upon the other hand, the contention of the other side is correct and the announcement of the court be mere obiter dictum and it be not true that a Territory is necessarily a country in process of formation for statehood, then the gentleman's amendment is unnecessary.

Now, why is it unnecessary? For two reasons: First, if Congress desires to prevent Hawaii from becoming a State it has a very easy method of preventing it, and that is simply never to vote to make Hawaii a State. And then there is another reason why it is unnecessary. Even if this Congress could bind all successive Congresses, as far as any Congress can possibly bind another, by an utterance to the effect that Hawaii should never become a State, that act of this Congress could be repealed by the very next Congress, or the very next Congress after that, if that Congress chose. Therefore I think I agree with the gentleman who is chairman of the committee, without repeating the language of my old friend Mr. Walker, that this thing is "demnition nonsense," either because it is unconstitutional or else because it is unnecessary. [Applause.]

Mr. RIDGELY. Let us have the reading of the amendment again.

The amendment was again reported.

Mr. RIDGELY. I move to amend by striking out the last word of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. That motion is not in order, this being an amendment to an amendment. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Connecticut.

The amendment of Mr. HILL was rejected.

Mr. KNOX. Mr. Chairman, I desire to offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts offers an amendment which the Clerk will report.

The Clerk read as follows:

In place of section 103 of the bill insert a new section, to be numbered 105, and to read as follows:

"SEC. 105. This act shall take effect sixty days from and after the date of the approval thereof, excepting only as to section 52, relating to appropriations, which shall take effect upon such approval."

Mr. RIDGELY. Mr. Chairman, I will not take the full time apportioned to me, but I wish at this stage of our proceedings to call the attention of members here to the fact that while we are claiming that these new possessions are to give us an outlet for our labor element, we have by our action here refused the very conservative provision offered by the gentleman from Nevada [Mr. NEWLANDS], providing that the people in Hawaii employing labor shall gradually give preference to our people by requiring that at least 10 per cent of their employees shall be citizens, adding to this 10 per cent each year until all employees are citizens, allowing them to take the colored people from this country to displace the Asiatics if they so desire.

In opposition to this, the chairman of this committee calls attention to the fact that the peculiar conditions and kinds of work in that country may demand the employment of the Asiatics, who by the bill are denied the right of citizenship. I simply call attention to the fact that we, by our action here, are admitting that we at least hold it to be a matter of grave doubt whether we have any laborers that are adapted to the chief industries of our new possessions.

Another thing I earnestly condemn. We have just passed an amendment to this bill which directly destroys the postal savings bank that the government of Hawaii had established without offering anything in its place. Thus we drive all deposits to private banks, which too often fail. We are really carrying those people backward instead of forward in this, while we boast of our superior civilization.

I will not take up any more time now, but I will extend my remarks in the RECORD.