

**SPECIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS IN REFERENCE TO AN
APPROPRIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION AND
ARRANGEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT
ARCHIVES AND THE PREPARATION OF A
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM**

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Special report of the Committee on foreign relations in reference to an appropriation for the preservation and arrangement of the government archives and the preparation of a bibliography of the Hawaiian kingdom by Various

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66-2-24-1

HONOLULU, JUNE 30, 1892.

THE HON. J. S. WALKER,
President of the Legislature,

SIR:—

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the consideration of the appropriation of \$6,000, proposed in Committee of the Whole, on the 24th instant, by His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the preservation and arrangement of the Government Archives, and the preparation of a Bibliography of the Hawaiian Kingdom, respectfully begs leave to offer the following report:—

The members of the Committee have personally visited the apartment in which the public and historical archives of this country are temporarily stored, and are reluctantly compelled to announce to the Legislature that these archives are in a condition that reflects nothing but discredit upon the Nation. It is their belief that no other civilized country on the face of the earth has been so indifferent as ours to the preservation and arrangement of the materials pertaining to its national history. For this condition of affairs no blame attaches itself to the members of the present Cabinet, for the mischief was done long before they came into office. It is to the credit of the present Cabinet, on the contrary, that one of its members, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, recognizing the existing evil, has brought the matter before the present Legislature in his biennial report (See Appendix "A"), and has asked for a suitable appropriation to repair, as far as is now possible, the damage that has already been done.

These archives embrace all kinds of public documents, in manuscript, from the time of Kamehameha II. subsequent to 1820, down to about the year 1860. Among them may be found original papers of the early Hawaiian Chiefs, letters of David Malo, the distinguished Hawaiian historian, hundreds of papers relating to the diplomatic complications with France and England, documents concerning the recognition of this Kingdom

by the United States, England and France, others pertaining to our treaties with various foreign Powers, besides the official papers relating to all the Departments of the Government, including many hundred manuscripts written by the Hon. Robert Creighton Wylie, who from March 26, 1845 until his death on the 19th of October, 1865, a period of more than twenty-one years, was Minister of Foreign Affairs of this Kingdom. The boxes in which these valuable papers were packed have not all been examined—some of them, indeed, have not yet been opened, and no living man knows the historical riches they may contain—but the manuscripts may easily be numbered by the tens of thousands, some of which are in a condition which renders their restoration and permanent preservation utterly impossible.

In a memorandum prepared by Prof. W. D. Alexander, and brought to the attention of our Committee, he says:—

“In the year 1873, when the Government offices were moved from the former premises on Union Street to Aliiolani Hale, the greater part of the archives were boxed up hastily and deposited in the rooms now occupied by the Board of Health, where they remained for a dozen years, almost unknown and uncared for.

“In 1886, I believe, these rooms were cleared out for the use of the Board of Health, and the boxes re-

moved to a room in the basement of the Hale Kapua-iwa, where most of them still remain.

"In 1888, I was requested to examine this supposed rubbish, and immediately found several documents of the greatest importance, which I turned over to the Foreign Office. I soon found, (what had been known to but few), that here was a large part of the archives of this Government from the time of Kamehameha II. to about 1860, comprising materials of the highest value to the historians or statesmen of Hawaii nei. Several of the boxes have since been removed to the Foreign Office, and a few of them are in the old vault of the Treasury. The contents are in a deplorable condition, mixed up higgledy-piggledy, and in some cases rat-eaten and mouldy. Tho whole should be properly arranged and filed away in a safe place, under lock and key, as is done in other civilized countries."

In September, 1891, the United States man-of-war "Pensacola" anchored in the harbor of Honolulu, and remained until the early part of March of the present year. The Chaplain of this ship was Rev. Roswell Randall Hoes, U. S. N., who is described by Prof. Alexander as "an expert as well as an enthusiast" in antiquarian and historical labors and research. He is, moreover, the Corresponding Secretary of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, Corresponding Member of the New England Historic Gene-

alogical Society, the State Historical Societies of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the Huguenot Society of America, and several other Historical Societies, and a Member of the American Historical Association, the Holland Society of New York, and the American Society of Church History. He was one of the chief movers in the organization of the Hawaiian Historical Society in January of the present year, (a society which already has an active membership of nearly 250 members), and, as its Librarian, he has already brought together the largest collection of books and pamphlets relating to Hawaii nei that is to be found in this country. Soon after reaching Honolulu, Chaplain Hoes commenced his historical labors and studies relating to this Kingdom, and the following letter from him to Prof. W. D. Alexander explains the nature of his work up to the date when it was written:—

U. S. S. "PENSACOLA," HONOLULU, H. I.

23 FEBRUARY, 1892.

PROF. W. D. ALEXANDER,

MY DEAR SIR:—

A few weeks subsequent to my arrival here in September last, you expressed a desire that I should prepare an exhaustive Bibliography of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Although for more than four months I have devoted a portion of my leisure to this enjoyable task, I

can regard it as but little more than fairly commenced. It would now seem as though my labors must close in a few days, as Capt. Kautz informed me this morning that the "Pensacola" would leave here for California early in March. I regret this fact the more, as the work upon which I have been engaged has been both interesting and congenial, while my experience in similar labors in the United States has been of great advantage to me in the preparation of that portion of the Hawaiian Bibliography to which I have given my special attention. The field is a large and important one, and the publication of such a work would do honor to the Nation and to Her Majesty the Queen, to whom it should by all means be dedicated. I venture to express the hope that the preparation of some such Bibliography as is indicated in the accompanying paper may be committed to some competent hands. It would give to the world a panoramic view of the history and development of this country such as could by no possibility be obtained from other sources, and would call renewed attention to the honored place to which Hawaii nei is justly entitled among the nations of the world.

Besides my labors upon the Bibliography, I have complied with your request, so far as I have been able, to examine and arrange those portions of the national archives which years ago were temporarily stored in

the basement of one of the public buildings. These papers, relating to all the Departments of the Government, cover the earlier and formative period of the Nation, and are therefore of inestimable value. They had been packed in the most careless manner many years ago in a large number of common wooden boxes, without the slightest attempt at systematic arrangement. The covers of a number of these boxes have, in the course of years, been detached and not replaced, and their contents have been covered in many instances with dirt and filth, while rats and dampness have caused fearful havoc. I have opened most of these boxes, and very superficially examined their contents, but I have not had the time to systematically arrange them. I sincerely trust that, in the interests of history, these invaluable archives may be properly arranged, and preserved from the destruction which now threatens them.

With cordial esteem, I remain

Very respectfully yours,

ROSWELL RANDALL HOES,

Chaplain U. S. N.

The plan for a Bibliography of the Hawaiian Islands, suggested by Chaplain Hoes in the foregoing letter, is given in full in Appendix "B" of this report.

In view of the value of the labors in which Chaplain Hoes had been engaged, and the great importance