

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Robert G. Hogan, 74, attorney and former Statehood Commission member

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Robert G. Hogan was born in Illinois but raised in Hawai'i. He attended Central Grammar, Lili'uokalani, and McKinley High School. Following graduation, he attended Louisiana State University, earning a degree in engineering.

After eventually earning a law degree, Hogan returned to Hawai'i and began working for the Attorney General's office. A few years later, he entered private practice. He still practices law today.

Hogan was a member of the Statehood Commission between 1949 and 1951. Appointed by then territorial Governor Ingram Stainback, Hogan lobbied Congress in 1950. He returned to Hawai'i convinced that statehood was then a near impossibility due to congressional opposition.

Hogan suggested that Hawai'i seek commonwealth status as a temporary alternative. Statehood supporters criticized Hogan for his suggestion, accusing him of being against statehood.

Tape No. 12-6-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Robert G. Hogan (RH)

February 4, 1985

Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Chris Conybeare (CC) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, Mr. Hogan, can you tell us something about your background, where you were born and your education?

RH: Well, I was born in Illinois by pure accident--Waukegan, Illinois, of all places. My folks happened to be there. But they were back in Hawai'i not too long after that. I've lived here all my life. I was educated in the public schools of Hawai'i. First at Central Grammar--well, first of all at Castle Kindergarten. And I think I had the envious, or not a very envious record of being one of the first kids that was ever kicked out of Castle Kindergarten. (Laughs) For what reason, I can't remember. Then I went to Central Grammar School which was up here on Queen Emma Street. Then from there to Lili'uokalani School up in Kaimuki. And then, a year at Lincoln School and over to McKinley High School. Following my graduation from McKinley High School, I went to a--summer--to a camp in Interlochen, Michigan--a music camp, the National Music Camp, which was a great experience, an experience I commend to anybody who has the opportunity.

Then I went to the sugar engineering school, the Audubon Sugar School at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. That was an interesting experience because at that point in time, the governor of Louisiana was Huey P. Long. And he took a great deal of interest in LSU, and in particular, the band. And I had a band scholarship there. And [he] took the band all over--took them with him for political and other purposes, but primarily political purposes. But he genuinely liked the University. I got to know him because we traveled in the same trains and learned a great deal about his philosophy. And while I can't say that he was a great person in the way he did some things, he certainly was rather overly maligned, because he was trying to accomplish things at a time when there needed to be accomplishment.

I graduated from there and came home to Hawai'i. Went into the real estate business, was a salesman couple of years to earn enough money to go back to law school. I did earn some money and I did go back in the January of 1937. I had the help of one of the estates here,

to whom I will ever be grateful, the Atherton Estate. We got out of law school in the summer of 1939, came home and took the bar examination, and paid the Atherton Estate. Then I went into the practice of law, passing the bar in November, 1939. Did so as a sole practitioner till the war started, World War II, and four days after that I was in the military service. I was a R.O.T.C. type so that I went in as a lieutenant and stayed in throughout the war to the end of 1945. After I got out, I spent a few months on the Mainland resting.

When I came home, [C.] Nils Tavares, who was attorney-general, asked me to join his staff at the attorney-general's office. That was a very interesting experience because Nils was a fine man, one of the finest individuals I've ever known and a great credit to Hawai'i. The staff was only seven in number then for the whole attorney-general's office. And I was there for about a year and a half, two years. Went into private practice, eventually went into a partnership with John Dyer, who became a judge. Excellent man. Incidentally, it's to his great credit, John Dyer won the first successful reapportionment case in the United States in 1957 or '56. The difficulty was, he did it at a time when we were a territory, but his efforts attracted tremendous attention nationally, and the briefs that he wrote were briefs sought by and sent to the various law firms in the country who were interested in reapportionment. And the famous Tennessee case that resulted in reapportionment on a state level used the briefs of John Dyer, which I think is greatly to his credit. It was a great association.

And then I had associations with others. Peter Howell, later, and then, others over the years until I ventuated into a solo practice three years ago, and then, now, I'm in association with Peter Howell on an of counsel basis. The military years I had, I think, were gratifying and I felt I learned a lot, if you can call the war service gratifying. But I learned a great deal and it was worthwhile.

CC: Somewhere back in that educational background, I recall, you came across a professor by the name of [J. William] Fulbright. How did that happen and could you describe that?

RH: Well, that was interesting. I had met him before, and he. . . . I was going to Washington in the winter, and I had a problem up there of having respiratory problems. And I was going to [University of] Arizona Law School for the summer and I happened to contact him. As a result of that, I went to [University of] Arkansas that summer. He was a tremendous professor. He had been a Rhodes scholar. A very brilliant man. Of course, I didn't know he was going into politics then, which he did, after I graduated. And there were some other great professors there. Fulbright left an indelible imprint on my life because he was smart and what he stood for was good. His record speaks for itself. You know, the famous Fulbright resolution which really gave birth to the United Nations, because without the Congress of the United States committing itself for the first time to participate in a world government type of thing,

there never would have been the United Nations. As you know, President [Woodrow] Wilson was an idealist. At the end of World War I, he wanted the United States to become a participant in world government so it would minimize the probabilities of another world war. And it was his concept. But the United States Congress never backed him up. And as a result, the United States never became a member of the League of Nations. And perhaps we were partly at fault for World War II. Had we been a member of that league, perhaps that would not have happened. That's surmise on my part. But Fulbright put through that resolution as a freshman congressman in 1944. The United Nations was formed, as you know, in 1945 at San Francisco. His other great, I think, contributions were the Fulbright scholarships which I think have probably done more than any one thing to encourage understanding between people throughout the world. I could go on at great length about him.

WN: Was it this association with Fulbright that got you sort of interested in the Democratic party?

RH: Yes. I had known, of course. . . . Yeah, it was. It was really him. And, of course, I became interested in the problems that I felt were facing Hawai'i after the war. I felt that perhaps the best way to address some of those problems was to do it through the Democratic party.

WN: What were some of the problems?

RH: Well, we had a lot of problems. Like any place, when you're out by yourself, you tend to become parochial. I mean, areas become parochial in their outlook. So it's very difficult for people who were set in their ways to change their ways. And I felt that perhaps the Democratic party was the vehicle by which this could be done. As a matter of fact, while I had nothing to do with it or very little to do with it, the Democratic party did turn out to be the vehicle that brought about great change in Hawai'i, which I think, in general, for the good. That, of course, is debatable, but, I think, by and large, it helped what we have here a great deal.

First thing, I felt one of the problems that has always concerned me is this concept of lease land. I mean, having a home on lease land. I just felt it was really an unAmerican concept. This was not to be critical of what had been happening, but it just riled me that a person couldn't buy the underlying fee. I was fortunate enough just before the war started, World War II started, to have bought a residence on the beach at Kahala. It was on lease land. And though the Bishop Estate terms were very reasonable, it just gripped me that I couldn't buy that land, because this was my home, bought and paid for. And it always stuck in my craw that something should be done about that.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

RH: One of the matters about which I had concern was this leased residential land system. While it was not evil in the sense that it was wrong and evilly wrong, still I felt it was really an unAmerican concept. Not so much the leasing of the land as the denial of an opportunity to purchase the land. I found from researching into the matter in the late '40s, I ascertained that 92 percent of all the land in the territory of Hawai'i was owned by the federal government, state [territorial] government, the county governments and the 100 largest landowners. That meant that less than 8 percent was available in fee, really. And that was not a very good thing for a state to have a situation like that. I want to make this certain and clear: that I wasn't of the belief that the Bishop Estate or any of the large estates should give away the land, but at least give people the opportunity to purchase that land in fee at proper prices. And I can remember when I first came out for that, why, some people suggested that was a communistic idea. Well, actually, it wasn't.

There was a number of things that caused me to write an article that I wrote in 1949 which attracted a certain amount of attention. In fact, it was a full page editorial in the Star-Bulletin. That grew out of a situation. . . . Well, it came about like this: the editor of the Advertiser was Lorrin Thurston at that point in time. And we were having a Tongshore strike. And the strike was raising the devil with the economy here. In fact, some corporations, a lot of small businessmen just went broke. Even the large corporations, the sugar factors were having their difficulty. And it was really a serious situation. And Lorrin Thurston was railing about this. They were claiming this was a Communist concept and so on. I'm not saying he did necessarily but--well, he did. What was the bar association going to do about it? Well, of course, it wasn't anything for the bar association to do, but I sort of felt, well, there was something that ought to be said about that. And I wrote an article saying I wasn't speaking for the bar association, but one of the reasons why we were having the problem which gave rise to the situation they--Thurston and others--contended was happening, namely, that we were going Communist, was that actually we had a situation in Hawai'i which precluded people from becoming capitalists. And the thrust of my argument was that if a person has an opportunity to buy the land he sits on, when he buys that land, he becomes a capitalist because he has a stake in the land, a stake in the territory, a stake in the whole country. And that was the way in which you could bring people into the ambit of what they felt was a good system, the capitalistic system, which I think is a good system.

Well, a lot of people felt, well, this is taking the land away from the estates and turning it over to somebody else. Well, actually, when I went into it, I found an interesting case, a federal case, Ninth Circuit. It's called Puerto Rico versus the Eastern Sugar Estates. What had happened was the Puerto Rican Territorial Legislature enacted legislation which enabled the territory of Puerto Rico--at that point in time it was a territory--to condemn the lands

of the Eastern Sugar Estates, and then subdivide the land and sell out farm property to other individual owners. Precisely what they were doing under this present situation. And the Eastern Sugar Estates--a big Puerto Rican Eastern Sugar Company or Estates, whatever the name was--they took it up to the Puerto Rican Supreme Court and they got it ruled unconstitutional in that court. The case was taken up to the First Circuit Court of Appeals--I think it was Boston or New York, I've forgotten which. And there they upheld the act. By the way, the key to it was public purpose. And they said the question of what was a public purpose was a legislative question and not a judicial question. And if the legislature of Puerto Rico in its judgment felt that it would serve a public purpose in Puerto Rico to facilitate the purchase of land from one large landowner through the condemnation process by the government and then turn around and subdivide it and see that other people got it, that was the end of it. That was public purpose. That was the determination by the legislature of Puerto Rico. Now, that case has never been overruled. And that's the very case to which reference is made in this Bishop Estate case this past year.

CC: When you actually wrote this and then had it published as an editorial, what kind of . . .

RH: I didn't have it published . . .

CC: Well, when it was published . . .

RH: No. What happened was that, strangely enough, the Advertiser didn't publish it. But Riley Allen, who was the editor of the Star-Bulletin, he picked it up and he thought it was worthy of publication. And he had a full-page article on the thing. I was happy for that because I wanted to get that concept across.

CC: But at that time, there must have been other people who shared that view. I mean, you probably weren't alone . . .

RH: Well, there weren't too many. There were some other people who did. Governor [Ingram] Stainback felt that it was wrong--that the land system that we had was wrong--and he was for land reform as far as that's concerned.

CC: He was also very much concerned about Communism, wasn't he?

RH: He certainly was. I mean, he was . . .

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

CC: Governor Stainback, you said, was concerned about land reform. And I said he was also concerned about Communism.

RH: Very much so. He was very much so. He was violent. He didn't like the ILWU leadership at all. He felt that it was Communist inspired. I never agreed with him entirely on that. But it was his view, and

he was very much opposed to it. He was very strong against it. But by the same token he was very strong for Communism [land reform]. He was very much supportive of it.

CC: Of land reform.

RH: Oh, yes. I mean, land reform, yes. You know, he was an unusual man. His personality was not a very good one. And then, lot of people didn't like him, but he was a good governor who brought our bonded indebtedness way down to a very low point. And he ran a tight government fiscally. I know when you wanted to get even another deputy in the attorney-general's office, that you had to clear it with him personally. He was watching the money. A little idea of how he felt about fiscal matters in the territory is, one day, I happened to remark to him when I was driving him down the street to the Pacific Club, I guess it was. We were passing that Vineyard throughway. It was being constructed. I said, "Gee, these freeways are nice things."

He said, "There's not a goddamn thing nice about them." (Chuckles) He said, "They're certainly not free. There's not a damn good thing about them." (Chuckles) Words to that effect. Well, that was the way he was.

WN: How did you meet Governor Stainback?

RH: Oh, you know, I've lived here all my life. And even before I went to law school, you knew generally who the people were in government. He was a U.S. attorney, I believe, at the time. Then he became a U.S. federal judge when we were a territory. And then, in 1942, he was named as the governor of the [territory] of Hawai'i. He succeeded [Joseph] Poindexter who had been the governor on December 7[, 1941]. Stainback always felt very strongly about martial law. He felt that it was a terrible imposition on the people of the [territory]. And I think its continuance most certainly was. And I know that during the war, within a year or so after, couple years after I was in the military, I became a general staff officer up at Fort Shafter. And I knew that we didn't need to maintain martial law for the period of time that it was continued. But the truth of the matter was that martial law was something that the powers at be, the local powers at be, wanted--the people in the so-called Big Five organization--I feel, as a method of control. Now, the people will dispute this, but I happen to know better because I've heard one of them tell General Richardson he wanted to continue martial law.

CC: Now, this sort of feeds into the sort of the subject matter we're all talking about, that this interview's about, because it was precisely martial law and some of those situations which many people reacted to when they returned from the war and felt we really needed to have Hawai'i's status as a territory changed to statehood. And that sort of gets us into a lot of involvement because, eventually, Governor Stainback appointed you to the Statehood Commission, is that right?

RH: Yes, he did. Well, to understand the statehood movement, and I can't speak with absolute authority on that point, but I know that after the famous Massie case [1931-32]. . . . In fact, I was in Louisiana at LSU during that Massie case and I was shocked at the publicity that was. . . . I guess William Randolph Hearst was a friend of Mrs. [Grace] Fortescue, the mother of Mrs. [Thalia] Massie. And they were painting Honolulu and the [territory] of Hawai'i as a place where no decent woman could walk the streets. I mean, the publicity was bad. And I know that there was a bill in Congress. I think it was--now, I could be wrong on this--by a congressman from Mississippi whose name, I believe, was Rankin, to take the territorial status away from Hawai'i and put it under the Navy Department, similar to the situation in which Guam was for many years, even for several years after World War II had been completed.

So, in a way, although the statehood movement had started earlier than that, it became very important from that point forward because that would have meant we would have had very little to say about the way we governed ourselves. And there were a lot of good people who supported statehood. And most certainly, we deserved it. I know our state situation, our schools, and everything else, put us in equality. In fact, I felt, better than some states. I'd had the good fortune of going through some of the states in the '30s when I was in college. And I know very well we were capable of running our own show and doing very well with it. But statehood really had its great impetus following that Massie case. Then right after the war, there was a big movement on to move for statehood.

WN: Was Governor Stainback in favor of statehood?

RH: Candidly, no, he was not. He was not. But he was the governor, and the legislature came out for statehood and I think he supported it, although he didn't like it. I don't think he felt it was a good thing for the [territory]. It was his own individual feeling. I didn't agree with him there at all.

WN: Was it because of the Communist issue or was it something else also?

RH: I think, in part, he felt that way. But I feel that his views were somewhat similar to those, I think, of one of our leading industrialists here who was opposed to statehood. I think there were those here who felt that it would be better to retain the territorial status because if things didn't go the way those wanted it to go here in Hawai'i, they always had recourse to change in Washington, particularly through the Department of Interior or through the direct access to the president. Now, that's my own view on the matter.

CC: So, they might have felt that they had more personal influence through those mechanisms and they would lose that if . . .

RH: I'm certain of that. I know that. I know that.

CC: But you were appointed to the Statehood Commission. So, he was fulfilling his role as governor by appointing people to a statehood commission.

RH: Well, he had first appointed me to the Board of Harbor Commissioners, which was a very interesting job. You didn't get paid for it. It was sort of like a member of a board of directors. It had to do with controlling the harbors throughout the [territory]. It was very interesting. We built Pier 2, that terminal, during that period of time and had a small boat program. It was very interesting and a worthwhile task. I enjoyed it. So, he'd come in contact--he knew who I was and he knew me from that board. So he put me on the Statehood Commission. And I went to Washington on that Statehood Commission, and that delegation that went up in November of 1950. And that was an interesting experience and, I might say, a very eye-opening experience. If you want me to elaborate on that, I'd be glad to do it.

CC: Yeah, how was it an eye-opening experience?

RH: Well, first of all, you must understand what the status of the statehood movement was in Congress at that point in time. Truman was for statehood. The House of Representatives had passed statehood. The appropriate committee in the Senate had passed it onto the floor. And in November of 1950, it was on the floor of the United States Senate. November, early December. In other words, everything was, you might say, greased so that the thing would go through. And that's when the Statehood Commission went to Washington.

While enroute, this is towards the end of November, we were having a war in Korea and things went bad because the Chinese entered the war and came over the Yalu River, and they were pushing our troops back all the way down the Korean peninsula. It was really bad. And if there was ever a time that the United States could have needed world's opinion to support it or to have the world believe that the United States was not a colonial power, this they could do by bringing in Hawai'i as a state to show that they would take in an offshore area with an interesting multiple type of population. And that was the argument I used when I talked to a lot of the senators.

I was fortunate in that I did know some people in Washington, and in particular, Fulbright. Fulbright was helpful, but Fulbright couldn't vote for statehood. The reasons, I'll go into. I also knew [John] McClellan. And he wouldn't go for statehood. The reason for the turn down of statehood as I understand it--and I'm sure I'm right about it--was that there was something more important in the minds of the senators than Hawai'i's statehood. And that involved, at that point in time, the control of the United States Senate, and particularly by the Southerners. The Southerners had a habit, a history, of reelecting their people to the Congress, and the Senate included, so that in the seniority system that applied there, those senators moved to become the head of the committees and they controlled the committees. And control of a committee in the Senate is a very

important thing. Now, the concern was, at that point in time, that if two new states came--well, one or two, Hawai'i or Alaska could come in--that would add two or four more senators, depending. And that would water down their power. And more importantly, they were concerned that the senators that might come from Alaska and Hawai'i might be liberal senators who would vote against their rule limiting debate. It was a rule of cloture. This was their concern. They would lose control because they could not then debate to death a bill they didn't want to have. That was the way it was explained to me.

Here, we were up there. Lot of people went up, this committee, and lot of people went to work and they buttonholed senators, talked to people that were concerned. And the way that thing was shunted right aside by the U.S. Senate was hard to believe. I remember sitting there outside the Senate chambers. Now, at that point in time, I remember it well because the Senate chambers, for some reason, was either being fixed up or whatever, I've forgotten which. But the Senate was using the old Supreme Court chambers which were in the Capitol, the central part of the Capitol building, right, you might say, almost under the dome, where the Supreme Court of the United States used to meet before the new building was built, I guess, in the '30s. And you couldn't get in and watch the floor debate or anything else or whatever happened. But we were getting it fed out to us, the people who were members of the statehood committee, who happened to be there. And the thing was just moved right out. It was sort of tabled. The exact procedure, I can't recall with certainty. But that was what it amounted to. It was just passed over.

CC: So, you somewhat felt frustrated or disappointed, or did you just feel that statehood wasn't going to . . .

RH: Yes. Well, I felt it was a frustrating experience because here, you've gone up there knowing the background. It passed the House of Representatives, the president was for it, it passed the appropriate committee in the Senate, and here on the floor of the Senate. And top of that, that world situation. And to have that happen, it was a very frustrating thing. And I remember McClellan put it to me very well, Senator McClellan of Arkansas. Went in to see him, and I said, "Why?"

He said, "Well," he says, he called me "young man." (Laughs) He says, "Young man," he said, "you and I know that Hawai'i is well able to govern itself. I have a son-in-law," I think he said, "out at Schofield," at the time. He said, "I know that you have all the capabilities, this, that and the other things, to be a state." But he says, "Young man, I'm going to tell you something you don't know." And he said it this way: "You ain't a-gonna get statehood." (Laughs)

And I said, "Why?"

And he said, well, it came right down to cloture. You know, the

control of the Senate. You know that left me. . . . I'll never forget. I talked to Silverman, the Undersecretary of Interior who was there to help the members of the statehood committee, and he was very helpful. And I talked to him that day, as we were sitting outside the Senate chambers, about it. And he first broached to me the concept that was about to come for Puerto Rico, the commonwealth concept. And he talked about it at some length to me. And they did get that status, and it's a status which gave them a lot more self-government than did Hawai'i as a territory. He also mentioned that there wouldn't be any federal taxes under that concept. In other words, the Puerto Ricans don't have to pay federal taxes. So I talked to him about it. And I talked to him, too, about the probability of statehood succeeding in latter years, and he felt it would be very difficult.

Well, I left Washington, and I came home very discouraged about it. I remember, I think it was soon after I arrived, somebody from the press talked to me about it. I said perhaps we ought to consider the commonwealth status. Well, there were some people who felt I was a Benedict Arnold. I was just telling it like it was. I frankly felt, at that point in time, because of that control situation in the Senate, we'd never get statehood. Well, it turned out I was wrong, and we did get it in 1959. But I really believe that most of the people who were working for it from 1950 up to maybe a year before it was enacted, or maybe till Alaska came in through, I think, fluke circumstances, honestly felt that we weren't going to get it. I felt it was my duty to tell it like it was, and that's what it was at that point in time. And I don't believe that anybody could honestly say that there was a realistic probability in 1951, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7--maybe in 8, the thing began to change, I don't know.

CC: Do you think that there were some members of that Statehood Commission who really weren't for statehood? Do you think the governor might have had some folks who. . . . I mean, I know that everybody publicly was for it, but do you think, privately, some people weren't that enthusiastic?

RH: I can't say that with certainty. I know that the governor wasn't for it. I know that he wasn't for it. I think most of the people while on that committee worked hard for statehood.

CC: But might have gotten frustrated as you did?

RH: Oh, I don't think anybody. . . . I was really frustrated. Because I felt, why shouldn't we have it? We deserve it. We've earned it. We've earned it both by the efforts in the war--we'd earned it before the war. We were capable of running ourselves. And we demonstrated it during the war. And there was no reason why we shouldn't have it. It was a very frustrating experience.

WN: Stainback, he's sort of credited with being the one . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, you were a part of the Statehood Commission and you were appointed by Governor Stainback. And you were telling us the story about the commonwealth idea, and you brought that idea back to Hawai'i. To what extent did you talk with Governor Stainback about this idea?

RH: Well, actually, I talked to him, I think, when I was in Washington. I talked to him about my conversations that I'd had with Undersecretary of the Interior Silverman. And then, after I got back here to Hawai'i, I talked to him a few times. I didn't go out and really espouse the thing. I mentioned I felt this was a concept that we should look into, we should not overlook. And I also argued that if we. . . . With the commonwealth concept which would give you more self-government, appointing your own judges, you know, as they did in Puerto Rico, then we'd have a further opportunity to demonstrate our qualifications for statehood. Although I didn't think it was necessary, yet there would be further evidence. Not that I felt that it would make any difference because of that underlying control of the Senate concept, but I talked to him. I never really. . . . I was asked to talk about it on a number of occasions. There were quite a number of commonwealth advocates. Harold Rice over on Maui was one. There were others. There were lot of people who didn't want to surface on the thing, including at least one of the Big Five presidents. He used to call me in and tell me to "go at it, go at it, go at it."

I used to say, "Well, why don't you do it?"

"Well, we can't do it, you know."

It sort of was a frustrating thing in and of itself. But I wasn't really out. . . . I mean, I said my peace on the thing and that was it. Now, there was a group of people who started a so-called Commonwealth party. I had nothing to do with them at all. Nothing to do with them.

CC: Who did that? Do you remember?

WN: Was it [Edward A.] Brennan who ran [for delegate to Congress in 1958 on a commonwealth platform] ?

RH: I don't know. I can't recall who it was.

CC: Yeah, Brennan was one name.

RH: I can't remember who it was. But I felt that was a mistake, you know. You split parties. It's bad enough having two. You'd have a bunch of fractured parties like you have in France and Italy, and everybody runs . . .

WN: Did you come across any kind of personal animosity or did anybody come up to you or communicate to you that they were very much against the idea of a commonwealth?

RH: Well, there was some, you know. As I said, some felt I was a Benedict Arnold because I'd mentioned it. The fact that I felt we should look into it didn't mean I was opposed to statehood, quite the contrary. But I just felt we weren't going to make it. Well, I was wrong, but I still feel that when we did obtain it, we did it because of a set of circumstances that existed in 1958 that did not exist back in 1950, or for that matter for the many years up to about 1958.

WN: Go ahead.

CC: Okay, I was going to say, when you talked to McClellan and Fulbright and . . .

RH: Others.

CC: . . . and others, did any of the, well, shall we say, the influence of IMUA, or the groups that were talking about Communism here, were they felt in the Senate?

RH: Let's put it this way, I don't think the IMUA group as such really swung a lot of weight, but they used. . . . The concepts they were espousing, the claim that we were communistic or were moving in that direction, was picked up by some of the senators as a basis why we shouldn't get statehood. But that wasn't the real reason. The real reason was control of the United States Senate. All of the rest of it was window dressing, that's what it was. Now, there may be those who will disagree with me, but I don't think they could honestly disagree with me there.

CC: It became a peg to hang your hat on.

RH: Yeah. In other words, "Oh, why should they? They're a bunch of Communists out there." That sort of thing. But I don't think that was it at all.

WN: Governor Stainback in a lot of history books is sort of aligned with people like Walter Dillingham because he was opposing statehood and Walter Dillingham was opposing statehood. Was there any kind of a close relationship between the two?

CC: You know, I don't really think so. I don't think so. They were two different types of men, both strong in their own ways. But I don't think they were. I'm sure they may have talked to each other, but

Walter Dillingham was sort of an aristocrat on one hand. And he was. You know, if we had that type of a person, he was one. Stainback was, in his own way, that way, but in a different sense. Their personalities were different, so I don't think they really closed ranks. I could be wrong. That's surmise on my part.

WN: So, you were in favor of a commonwealth as a step toward the eventual goal of statehood?

RH: Well, put it this way. . . . I felt we weren't going to ever get statehood. That's the first thing. Because of what I've just told you. And I felt that if we weren't going to get it, we better take something that was better than the territorial status, what we had, and that was behind it. But statehood, we deserved. I mean, as a matter of--not a matter of right, but. . . . Well, really as a matter of right. We had proved ourselves. We should have had it.

CC: Some of the other folks who were operating in that era. . . . Actually, there's a little irony that it was under a Republican administration that statehood happened, not under the other, and it was just at the time when Hawai'i was changing from a Republican state to a Democratic party state. What was it like during those years? Who were some of the people that you remember as being very active in the party and things like. . . . You remember Jack Burns, for instance?

RH: I knew Jack Burns, yes. Jack Burns worked from behind the scenes initially. Well, he ran for the delegate to Congress in 1954 or '56, or both. Jack Burns, you got to hand it to him, he built the Democratic party. There was also Tom Gill who was an influence himself. A very upright man who had his own ideas, and those ideas clashed with Burns's. It was a shame that both of them never really got together so to speak. And then, there was the other group, Stainback. Stainback liked to have his people who were really for the old guard, for the territorial status, like Harold Rice, and some others, quite a number of others. That was a very small group. Eventually, I think, the Burns group brought about the replacement of Stainback as governor. Now, that again, is surmise, but I know that in 1951 Oren Long was made the governor of the territory. Stainback, however, being the influential man he was, was placed on the [territorial] supreme court.

Incidentally, what really sort of brought home to me how unimportant we were in the eyes of the hierarchy in Washington was that. . . . I remember going to the Democratic National Headquarters in Washington. They were saying, "Maybe we should put Stainback on the Bishop Estate." Well, what the devil was the Democratic party. . . . But it showed you that they felt that this is what they could do and that sort of thing. We always used to think, why, we were right in the foremost eye of everything in Washington. Actually, the governor of the territory was only a subofficer of the Department of Interior and wasn't that important. Unfortunately, there were periods when our courts weren't fully manned. Our supreme court wasn't manned

because they just weren't going to get around to appointing somebody. So we weren't that important, but we always thought we were. The other thing we found out when I was in Washington in 1950 was Hawai'i had a reputation of being a poison pen jurisdiction. When anybody was nominated for anything, letters used to flow into the Department of Interior saying what a lousy SOB this guy was or that guy, whatever. And I guess that it had that reputation, anyway. At least, that's what I was told.

CC: They always got a reaction.

RH: Oh, yeah.

WN: You know, you were talking about the old guard--you were part of an old guard that was sort of a minority within a Republican state, and then you have the young turks of Burns's group taking over. How did you feel about that, being a long-time Democrat in Hawai'i and seeing this changeover in the social structure of Hawai'i?

RH: Well, I wasn't really aligned with anybody. I guess I've always been sort of an independent type of a person. I supported some things that one group stood for, and some that another. I wasn't really aligned with any particular group--the Burns group, the Gill group, or for that matter, the Stainback group. I admired Stainback. He was a brilliant man. I admired him for his brilliance and those things which he accomplished. He had some bad personality traits, but that had nothing to do with his ability being a governor and performing as a governor. And as a justice, he was a brilliant supreme court justice. And had he not been around in the early '50s, we would have had an absolute drought in our supreme court in terms of productivity, intelligence, and that sort of thing. And all one has to do is to read the reports of the supreme court beginning at about '38 of Hawai'i, into the early '40s of Hawai'i. You can see that.

CC: You know, in a way, I think it's interesting. One of the people who ended up, I think, in part becoming governor because of his stand on or at least his stated position on land reform, was Bill Quinn. And I just wonder what your attitude was about Quinn since obviously you shared some views that were similar about land reform and things like that.

RH: Well, Bill Quinn is a very bright guy. He was then, he still is. Funny, we had parallel careers in a sense. He was appointed to the Board of Harbor Commissioners. He was appointed to the Statehood Commission. His big move came along at a time when apparently some people wanted to have a change in the governorship of Hawai'i. He had gone back [to Washington] and he had appeared [as a member of] the Statehood [Commission]. That was it. He went back when [Fred] Seaton was the secretary of the interior. That was it. This is back in '56 or '57, somewhere along there. And they were looking for somebody. And Bill Quinn apparently caught the eye of Seaton as a bright young guy coming up. And he was. And they appointed

him as governor. He became the last appointed governor of the [territory].

In between there were some important periods. The Democratic party swept the territorial elections in 1954, whereas for fifty-four years approximately before then the Republican party had controlled the legislative houses of the [territory]. All of a sudden, the Democrats controlled the houses of the [territory]. And of course, that has eventuated to the point today where there is almost complete control. The one change was that Bill Quinn, who was the last territorial governor, ran for and became the first elected governor. That's because I think he was a popular governor, at first certainly. And he did a good job, I might add, in being the first state governor because he had the job of setting the organization into shape which was a big job. Sort of like the mayor or the group that builds the sewers, which are very important. Nobody sees them. He set up the framework of governor or had a lot to do with it. And he did a good job. But a lot of people didn't really recognize it for the great work that it was. I think he did a good job. Then, of course, Burns became governor, and Burns, of course, had a long term. And then, we have Governor Ariyoshi. We've only had three elected governors in all this period of time.

CC: Want to ask anything else, like. . . . What's in store? What do you see? If you have a crystal ball, where do we go from here?

RH: (Laughs) I don't know. Hell, I'm getting along in years to have a crystal ball. But I think we have a great future here. I think that there's going to come a time when I think we'll be--there are people who will disagree with me--and I think eventually we'll be out of the sugar business here. But I think what we should do is orient towards making this a great place in the world to live. I see the day when there'll be a lot of heavy residence, not heavy as in Honolulu. Between Kamuela, for example, and down into Kona because that's where the sun is. That's where the good beaches are up there. Just look at Maui, the way that's grown. And I see that this is where our future lies. Perhaps we don't have a great amount of natural resources in the sense that some of the other states do. We have a good population and that sort of thing. I think that's where we're going to eventuate. And I used to say that. I said one benefit of being a commonwealth would be to attract people who wanted to come over here and live on a relatively--I mean, a federal tax-free status. We'd bring in all that kind of money. I even suggested that perhaps with the advent of the jet plane, that maybe Standard Oil of California would want to move over here so that their executives could come (chuckles) into a tax-free status. I used that as an example. I doubt whether that would be the consideration, well, I can't say. But I believe that this is where we're going to eventuate toward. We're going to have a nice place to live. We have a nice place, but it's going to be continued in that vein for people who want to follow the sun. Just as they've done to Florida, except I hope we do not become the lousy place that Florida has become. We're more selective. Maybe the 2,500 miles of water

between here and the Mainland is going to make that a real possibility. You can't get into an old automobile and drive across here. So, that's where I think we're going. I don't know. Maybe some high-tech things. That's a little bit beyond my understanding.

WN: Mine, too. (Laughs)

CC: Mine, too. Maybe that's where we should end.

WN: Okay. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ON HAWAII'S STATEHOOD

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