

PALMYRA TITLE MAY NOW BE TESTED

Sale of Fanning Brings the Little Hawaiian-Owned Group Into Prominence.

HISTORY HAS BEEN SEARCHED

American Title Clear—Flag of Kamehameha Raised a Half Century Ago.

Perhaps not one person in a thousand in the Territory of Hawaii knows that if one were to go a thousand miles almost due south there would be found a beautiful island upon which the royal flag of Hawaii was hoisted in sovereignty just half a century ago.

And not one person in ten thousand knows, until The Advertiser tells them this morning, that Palmyra Island, the political property of the United States and the private domain of one of Hawaii's foremost citizens, Judge H. E. Cooper, of the circuit court, may be a bone of contention between the governments of Great Britain and the United States.

From being a mere speck upon the charts of navigators, "unhallowed, unhonored and unsung," and far beyond the ken of any schoolboy student of geography, Palmyra Island suddenly looms up on the horizon of the Southern Seas as a possession to be acquired and held in high valuation.

With the sale of Washington (or New York) and Fanning Islands to a British syndicate, this Hawaiian islet of the South Pacific assumes a tremendous importance; while with the opening of the Panama Canal, now only a matter of months, the strategic and commercial worth of Palmyra is enhanced an hundred fold; and greedy eyes supported almost by greedier hands are upon it.

"Thou shalt not covet" has no place in books of the British syndicate which made the purchase of Fanning Island from Father Bouquier recently. But it wishes to set up the claim, based upon the flimsiest of pretext, that Judge Cooper's island is as a matter of fact a possession of Great Britain.

This claim has been made in private and to the parties interested, but so far as is known the English government has not been asked to back the claim nor to take up the matter with the Washington authorities. Nevertheless the actions and threats of the owners of Fanning and Washington islands gives ground for the belief in certain quarters that Palmyra Island may be made the subject of earnest correspondence between the State Department and Downing Street.

It is pointed out, however, that the claims of the Britishers—if "claims" they really pretend to be—are of the shallowest kind and, without attempting a pun, will in no way hold water. The Honolulu parties interested long ago satisfied themselves that Palmyra was as truly American territory and as truly protected by the Stars and Stripes—with all which that means—as the island of Oahu, or of Manhattan for that matter.

Still, with this assurance, born of careful and conscientious investigation, and feeling that there was not one chance in a thousand of being mistaken, yet Judge Cooper and his friends have more recently gone over the entire story of Palmyra Island and proved beyond the shadow of any doubt, reasonable or otherwise, that Great Britain has about as much title to this South Pacific islet as Dr. Cook has to the North Pole. Even less, indeed, for Cook "did" claim the northern end of the earth's axis as his own while Great Britain as a nation, until very lately, never said the Union Jack had a right to float over the coconut groves of Palmyra.

But the subjects of the British crown have in years gone by and in divers parts of the globe, made claims which were afterwards backed up by sloops-of-war and regiments of lancers; and there is no man on earth who would take oath that Britannia will not sooner or later poke her nose into the present business.

Judge Cooper acquired the island by purchase about a year ago, and he is not at all frightened or worried by the claims of the other fellows. Of course, if the latter ask John Hill to help them out and John starts in to do it, it is more than likely that the Territory of Hawaii, believing her integrity to be assailed, will call promptly upon Uncle Sam to send his fleet of gray sea fighters down Palmyra-ward.

However, Judge Cooper does not believe things will come to such a pass as that, for he feels that personally the island, or islands—for Palmyra is really a group—are as much his as the copy of Blackstone in his library.

It appears from the most careful research made, in which various authorities substantiate and fortify each other, that by right of discovery Palmyra Island is American; for in the year 1807 the American ship Palmyra bore in sight of the land. Captain Lewis, the commander, named the two low islands and made a landing.

More than a century before called an old Hawaiian island, Fanning and Washington Islands, all lying to the southeast of Palmyra, and some three hundred miles distant, were also discovered by the same man.

Islands were regarded as American territory and those parcels of land have been claimed by Great Britain ever since, nor has the claim, so far as is now known, ever been disputed.

With Palmyra it was different. In the late '30s it was taken possession of by two naturalized citizens of Hawaii—subjects, if you please, of His Majesty's King, and in the year 1862 these men, Captain Zenos Bent and Captain J. A. Wilkinson, came to Honolulu and petitioned the Hawaiian government to extend its sovereignty over their property.

Pursuant to this request a cabinet meeting was at once called, the matter gravely considered, and the petition finally granted. Thereupon a formal commission was executed in which Captains Bent and Wilkinson were fully authorized to take possession of the island in the name of the Hawaiian monarchy. The King, Kamehameha IV., signed this royal commission and sent the captains back to Palmyra, accompanied by a number of other citizens. Specific instructions as to what they should do were given them by Kamehameha and his ministers.

Captain Bent, who was the leader of the party, and presumably the principal owner of the island, landed there again in the year 1862 and at once raised a monster flag pole within the fine harbor, and from this was flung to the breeze the royal Hawaiian colors; while upon the pole was affixed a proclamation of Kamehameha IV., declaring that the island had been taken possession of in the name of the Kingdom of Hawaii and that thereafter it was to be regarded as a part of his dominions.

This having been accomplished as ordered, Captain Bent returned to Honolulu, leaving a number of men behind in possession.

He informed the King immediately upon his arrival here of his action, and a proclamation was issued giving notice to all the world that Palmyra Island, having been formally annexed, was thereafter to be regarded as part and parcel of Hawaiian territory.

Again returning to the South Seas Captains Bent and Wilkinson continued the improvements they had begun years before. A fishing station of considerable pretensions was erected, with curing houses and wharves. A kiln for the proper drying and finishing of native woods was also built, and in this latter much lumber of a kind resemblingkoa, was hauled and cured. None of these original buildings now remain, but newer and better ones have taken their place.

The little group, for, as before stated, Palmyra is not a single island but a number of small islands forming an elongated horseshoe, in the center of which is a splendid harbor with a hundred feet of water, presented a beautiful sight to the settlers, and it was early decided that the native woods were of much value. Coconuts, pandanus and the tree resembling koa grew in profusion, and a more lovely aggregation of islets could scarcely be found in any ocean. While the exact number of islands in the group is not known here, as the charts vary somewhat, it is believed there are thirty-four in the group. Still all charts and documents appear to refer to them as Palmyra Island and later geographical maps give the group the single name.

That the United States had its eye upon the little wave-washed territory as far back as 1874 is known by the fact that in that year, following order from Washington, Captain Skerrett in command of the American man-of-war Portsmouth, visited the island and made an extended survey with measurements, soundings, elevation and so forth. He did not know, nor did his government at that time know, that Palmyra was Hawaiian territory; but, learning that it was, the American authorities refused to further molest or notice the place, and Hawaii's right to own and control it was not disputed. On the other hand, the action of the United States was a plain confirmation of Hawaiian sovereignty.

If Great Britain makes a pretense of any authority in the little group it is based solely upon the visit of a British warship in 1897—the year before Palmyra, along with all the other domains of the Republic of Hawaii became an integral part of the American Nation—and British naval surveyors worked some weeks upon the harbor and the shore lines. But the Union Jack was never hoisted, nor did the commander of the cruiser declare that he was there by authority.

As stated, Palmyra became an island property of the United States in 1898, and if John Bull has any little account to settle regarding it he will have to talk to Washington and not Honolulu—a fact that makes a difference to John.

As to the private title it has been in Hawaiian citizens and corporations since Kamehameha IV. proclaimed it a part of his kingdom, half a century ago. The various deeds and wills handing it down or transferring it are a matter of record in this city and there is no gainsaying the ownership.

But the recently set up claims of Britishers is of great interest just at this time, since Fanning Island is a station of the British cable and when the British admiralty is considering plans for a great coaling station upon it.

Ninety miles away from Fanning is Palmyra Island and it is doubly interesting to think that with the Panama waterway running full blast Uncle Sam may put a second edition of Pearl Harbor amid Palmyra's lovely islands.

SOCIALIST VOTE IN GERMANY HEAVY

BERLIN, January 12.—The Socialist vote polled was over four millions, the party gaining nineteen members in the Reichstag. The radicals voted all up position.

CAN EXAMINE BOOKS,

CHICAGO, January 12.—The government has won the point in the purchase of the book "The History of the United States" by the National Geographic Society. The court has held that the authors should have the right to examine the books of the company.

ONE OF ADMIRALS GOES TO SOUTH AMERICA, IS REPORT

WASHINGTON, January 12.—The state department is considering asking that one division of the Pacific Fleet, now at Honolulu, be sent to Guayaquil. The other division is to remain in Hawaiian waters for a time.

Upon receipt of this cable by The Advertiser last night, Rear-Admiral Channey Thomas was called up at the Moana and told its contents. He said that he had heard a rumor that one vessel might go from the Pacific Coast.

"I read in the paper some days ago that the Vicksburg, I think it was, had been ordered there, but I have had no intimation that the fleet here would go. I am glad to get the news as we have heard nothing from the mainland since the delay order," said the commander.

From a casual conversation it appears that as but one division is to go from the fleet, it will more likely be the second, the West Virginia and South Dakota, in command of Rear-Admiral Southerland, while the first division remains in Honolulu pending settlement of affairs in China.

MORE HONOLULU CHINESE AT THE HELM OF NEW CHINA

Oahu College Graduate Is Now Chief of the Canton Public Works.

Hawaiian-born Chinese are already aiding Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the first president of the Republic of China, in steering the new ship of state, and it is understood that Doctor Sun intends to avail himself of the services of a large number of the younger Chinese who have received their educations both in the local schools and colleges and on the mainland.

Ching Dow, born in Honolulu, and educated at Mills Institute and Oahu College, and also a graduate of a mainland college, was appointed December 6 by the governor of the Canton province as director of the department of public works. He received his seal immediately, and issued a circular announcing his appointment. According to the official letter of appointment Mr. Dow's duties are to undertake the construction and repair of the public highways, buildings, sewers and the like.

Ching Yu, also a Honolulu Chinese young man, now holding office in China, in a letter to a local friend, says of Mr. Dow and his work: "For the present all the funds are needed to maintain the soldiers, for the preservation of peace and order and to help the campaign in the north, so that except in the financial and military departments, very little work is being undertaken."

The department of commerce and industries has for its head, Wong Chang Yau, an American educated student in mining, and well known in Honolulu. Recently, we organized a society for the promotion and development of real estate, which uses the department of commerce and industries as its meeting place.

Chance for Local Boys. "If the present government is able to stand on its feet there is a good chance for our foreign educated students to be useful in helping on its work of progress and enlightenment.

On account of lack of funds the schools here abroad are frantically over the success of the revolutionists, for every one of them has a share in the welfare of the nation. Every patriotic Chinese ought to do his very best either by act or word to bring about the ultimate success of the rebellion.

Fighting for Free China. "If China is able to get rid of the Manchu rulers, her people, the Chinese, will then be able to say that they are a free people. When you come down to the root of the matter, you will notice that the masses, or rather the rebels, are fighting for a free China, without Manchu rule, and not for any particular form of government. That question ultimately will solve itself.

"Canton turned rebel on the nineteenth day of the ninth moon without bloodshed. The governor, Chung Min Kee, left for Hongkong and took away about \$800,000, while other officials such as Lee Chan, the admiral, also fled. On the twenty-second I came up here and found the city practically deserted, but its streets lined with soldiers chiefly robbers whose appearance was enough to scare any one.

"I was also a visitor at the meeting of the provincial assembly and witnessed the activities of that body during the first few days of reconstruction, but luckily, I was not there when the bomb burst, killing about twenty men and burning a part of the building. Radical Changes Everywhere.

"The radical changes that have taken place in consequence of the change of government here, are many. The Cantonese have all out of their quiver, societies are springing up like mushrooms, having for their objects the advancement of the rights of the people, while volunteer military corps are formed for the liberation of the north."

Ching Yu was born in Kauai, is a graduate of Mills Institute and Oahu College and later of the University of Chicago, where he received a degree, and is now professor of English and former of the Leung Kwong College of Canton.

NEW STATUS OF LEPROSY WORK

Removal of Experiments to Molokai Awaits Dr. McCoy's Recommendations.

That the removal of the federal leprosy experiment work from the Kalaheo Receiving Station to the federal Molokai leprosy station depends upon the recommendations of Dr. George W. McCoy, who has succeeded Doctor Currie in the work, is the status of the government's plans upon the promotion of Doctor Blue to the post of surgeon-general of the service.

This, it seems was the understanding when Doctor McCoy came out. Whether Doctor Blue's personal knowledge of the leprosy experiments here will result in a definite plan exclusive of those recommendations is, of course, not known, but it is improbable. Under these conditions the chances are in favor of the work remaining at the Kalaheo station where Doctor McCoy and Moses T. Clegg are continuing the work.

"If it can be clearly shown that the work will be benefited by being removed to Molokai," said Doctor McCoy last night, "I will have no hesitancy in recommending that course. At present there are no plans whatever to do this."

Doctor McCoy expressed himself several weeks ago as believing that the work could be performed equally well at Kalaheo, although he then also made the reservation that he would recommend its change if it was shown that it would be for the best. One of the reasons for the preference for the Kalaheo station, where by law patients must be kept six months before being sent to Kalaupapa, is that the patients here are in the earlier stage of the disease and if there is any chance of curing it at all it would most likely be at that period.

A point militating against the work there is a lack of room, but it is believed and hoped that this objection can be materially lessened. Doctor McCoy has prepared plans for a small addition to the quarters now occupied at the station by the federal doctors and the board of health will try and erect it. These quarters will contain kennels, yards and runways for animal subjects, and store rooms for supplies.

MAJOR SMITH IS UNABLE TO PAY

In an effort to get a reduction of the alimony he has been paying to the wife from whom he secured a divorce in July of 1910, Maj. Ernest V. Smith, U. S. A., attached to the Second Infantry, and due here today on the Sheridan, appeared before Superior Judge Van Nostrand at San Francisco on January 8 and produced statements showing him to be so badly embarrassed financially that he is compelled to pay nearly two-thirds of his salary each month as interest and partial payments on promissory notes held by brother officers and other persons in that city.

Major Smith was granted a divorce from Mrs. Cora Young Smith on July 19, 1910, the decree being given on the ground of desertion. Mrs. Smith was in New York at the time, and did not contest the suit. She was represented by counsel, however, and was allowed \$100 a month alimony.

This alimony has been regularly paid by the Army officer, but several weeks ago he served notice that he would move the court to reduce the sum to \$60 a month. In support of this motion, he appeared with a statement of his financial condition. His salary is \$333.33 a month, but he has promissory notes outstanding which aggregate \$5014. Some of these are held by brother officers and bear but nominal interest, while two notes, amounting to \$850, are held by other persons, and draw interest at the rate of two per cent. a month.

In an affidavit filed with the court Mrs. Smith combats her former husband's plea for a reduction of the alimony. She is still living in New York, and declares she cannot get along on less than \$100 a month. In support of this, she presents a physician's certificate that she is suffering from cardiac trouble and in need of medical treatment, and also gives a detailed statement of her living expenditures.

ALL JAPANESE IN HAWAII ARE SUBJECT TO WAR CALL

WASHINGTON, January 12.—That all Japanese in Hawaii are subject to war call from their government, and that they are a potential army of no small proportions was the statement made today.

Major General Carter of the general staff, before the house committee on military affairs, told the members that there were 35,000 Japanese in Hawaii who had seen service in the army of the Mikado, and that this army could be put in the field at once in event of trouble between the United States and Japan.

He said that it was imperative for the government to organize its military forces, and to equip its islands with military stores.

DRASTIC ORDER HITS STEAMER CAPTAINS

Opium Fines Aggregating \$100,000 Must Be Paid Stratton.

CLEARANCES ARE REFUSED

The Treasury Department Tired of Delay and Action is Now On.

SAN FRANCISCO, January 12.—Collector of the Port Stratton has received orders from the secretary of the treasury at Washington to collect the \$100,000 in fines imposed on various masters of transpacific steamships for the illegal carrying of opium.

The order further states that no clearance is to be granted any vessel whose captain has been fined, until the total amount assessed against him has been paid.

In the past the rule in Honolulu has been the assessment of the fine by the collector of customs in accordance with the value of the opium found on board. If there was time before sailing of the vessel a hearing was held in district court for the master of the ship, and the facts brought out in this hearing were forwarded to Washington to the secretary of the treasury for his information, the plea of the skipper for the remission of the fine being sent at the same time. Some masters in the Pacific Mail service have had several fines imposed.

Another Skipper Fined. SEATTLE, January 12.—Captain Green of the American-Hawaiian steamer Virginia, which has just arrived from Salina Cruz and Coast ports, was fined \$550 by the collector of customs here for having opium on board. The drug was unearthed by the customs inspectors in going over the vessel.

RANCHER MURDERS BABE—LIFE URGED

SANTA BARBARA, January 12.—John Roch, an Italian rancher near here, has been found guilty of murdering his babe.

Imprisonment for life is asked for by the prosecution.

EASTERN WEATHER BECOMING BETTER

WASHINGTON, January 12.—Weather conditions throughout the East are improving with a gradual rising of the temperature all over that section.

Kansas City reports twenty degrees below zero.

CARNEGIE DID PUT UP.

WASHINGTON, January 12.—Andrew Carnegie yesterday finished his testimony before the house committee. He admitted a contribution of the Steel Trust of \$15,000 in aid of the lobby to oppose annexation of the Philippines.

CAIRNS WANTS HELP.

WASHINGTON, January 12.—F. S. Cairns, the American whom Shuster left in charge of the Persian treasury has cabled Representative Sulzer an urgent appeal for the United States to help Persia to avoid general confusion in its finances.

ITALIAN VICTORY.

ROME, January 12.—Seven Turkish gunboats and an armed yacht have been sunk in the Red Sea by the Italians.

BRYAN IS MUM.

NEW YORK, January 12.—Wm. J. Bryan has left this city on a southern lecture tour. He is non-committal on the subject of the presidency.

COAL MINERS STRIKE.

LONDON, January 12.—A strike of 900,000 coal miners is now assured by their balloting. It will be effective in a month.

FIFTEENTH TO CHINA.

MANILA, January 12.—The transport Legua has left this port for China with a battalion of the 15th Infantry.

WILKINS HANGED.

SAN QUENTIN, January 12.—Mari A. Wilkin was hanged today for the murder of Mrs. Verne Carano, his paramour.

FARMERS DENY.

WASHINGTON, January 12.—Cable radio has farmers deny that labor and farmers in that State are bad.

STRIKERS RIOT.

NEWARK, N. J., January 12.—The striking mill operatives here at today.