

# OPEN LETTER TO HOMESTEADERS

## Read, Mark and Inwardly Digest

As the time will soon arrive when many of you will receive the final payment for your cane, which will in most cases be a large sum of money, representing profits, I desire at this time to impress upon you the necessity of conserving this money to tide you over the less profitable years which will surely follow, instead of spending it recklessly or on non-essentials.

This year has demonstrated beyond any doubt that high class cane land can be successfully homesteaded when the homesteaders work their lots themselves and receive for their cane a price commensurate with their cost and risk.

I have noticed with regret however, that a wave of extravagance is sweeping over some of the larger homestead sections where the homesteaders, owing to favorable milling contracts and the high price received for their cane, find themselves in possession of considerable sums of money.

I have been informed by homesteaders that after paying off all obligations incurred in connection with the production of their crop, they had left a profit of from \$7,000.00 to \$12,000.00. These profits were obtained from areas of 20 acres or less. Profits being in like proportions from the larger areas.

In addition to the favorable contracts most of you have, the reason for the large profits obtained by those whose cane was harvested this year must not be overlooked. This cane was grown at a small labor cost as compared to the present cost, and sold at a price far above that received for any previous sugar crop in the history of Hawaii. Conditions are now reversed. Because of the abnormally

high labor costs together with the excessive rate above this which many of you have been paying, the cost to produce your 1921 and 1922 crops will exceed that of any crop heretofore grown in the Territory, while no one can now foresee what the price of sugar will be when these crops are harvested. I can safely predict however, that the price of sugar will not again soar to the height it did this year, and it will not next year, in the opinion of those best informed, average above 10 cents per pound and the price will be less in 1922.

During my last visit to Hawaii and Kauai, I was not only astonished but shocked to learn of the high wages, or, I should say "high salaries" many of you were paying your laborers. I was reliably informed that men were being paid \$4.50 per day and upward for seven hours work. I learned of contracts to cut seed cane under which the men were earning \$15.00 per day and women \$10.00. Upon emptying and examining the bags of seed upon which this high wage was paid, I found that after the seed had been gone over and properly prepared, and then re-bagged, that each bag contained less than one half a bag of seed suitable for planting. Sixty well filled bags of properly prepared seed are usually required to plant one acre of land. With bags of seed such as I saw, after the useless parts are removed, 120 bags are required. I have learned of hoeing contracts under which from \$45.00 to \$125.00 was paid to hoe one acre, once. On a large number of lots other classes of work were being paid for at the same high rate.

Many make the claim that to meet the bonus paid by the plantations, they were forced to pay these exorbitant wages. This claim is not borne out by the facts. No doubt there has been a misapprehension among the homesteaders and others as to what the plantation bonus this year, in addition to the basis wage, would amount to. Some have stated that a man on the \$20.00 base would receive from \$4.00 to \$7.00 per day during the year, while as a matter of fact the plantation bonus being based on the average price of sugar for the bonus year,

works out so that a man whose basic wage is \$20.00 per month, if he complies with other conditions, will receive \$2.00 per day. This includes both the monthly and yearly bonus for 1920.

The high wages were brought about in my opinion by the homesteaders and others bidding against one another for the laborers while the latter held back and helped the movement along, and later forcing the homesteaders to either pay any wage they might demand or to enter into contracts with them to cultivate the lots. The latter being what they were striving for.

I suggest that you no longer pay a wage above that paid by the plantations, including the bonus; that you discontinue the practice of having your fields cultivated under contract, and that you do more of the work on your lots yourselves, otherwise, the homesteading cane lands, instead of being the success it should and can be, will end in failure. No matter what the price of sugar may be you cannot continue to pay the high wage you have been paying and succeed. It cannot be done.

Many have purchased expensive automobiles and often this is the only piece of machinery they own; they have no mules nor agricultural implements, nor are they planning to buy any, with which to cultivate their fields. When plowing or cultivation is required men and mules are hired to do it at a very high rate. I have heard of \$18.00 being paid per day for two mules and one man. While this work is being done the homesteader is either idle; driving his auto about the country or employed elsewhere at a wage rate less than he is paying for men to work on his lot.

In view of the uncertainty of the it would be a much safer and wiser immediate future which confronts you, policy for you to pursue if you turned your autos or an equal value, into mules and agricultural implements and use these more extensively in your fields than you have done heretofore. It would be better for your cane, and you would avoid the costly hoeing so universally practiced. Most of you are quite able with mules and proper

tools, to do most of the work of cultivation yourselves and if you did you would soon be relieved of many of your troubles.

The tendency of the homesteader to have his lot cultivated by others under some form of labor contract, instead of doing the greater part of the work himself, is to be regretted. There are exceptions, but in a majority of cases the homesteader does not do the cultivation or any part of it himself. Those who made the large profits this year are those who worked their lots, as far as it was possible, themselves, but who now in most cases, owing to the peculiar labor conditions, wish to have the cultivation done by others, on a percentage basis, notwithstanding the fact that the latter demand and receive the larger share of the profits.

The Government is behind you and will do everything possible, in the matter of getting fair and equitable contracts for you, and will otherwise assist you in making your homesteading venture a success, but, while so little is being done by the homesteader to help himself and while he continues to permit the larger part of the profits to go to labor contractors, you can hardly expect the government to continue its active interest in your behalf.

Most of the sugar companies are now paying a fair and equitable price for your cane and those who may still be under-paying will soon fall into line. It is now your duty to do your part in the matter of living up to the spirit of the homestead agreement you have with the Government to occupy and cultivate the land allotted to you, as far as this may be possible, yourself, as well to live up to the letter and spirit of the contracts obtained for you from the milling companies, or admit your inability to do so and make way for others who can and will live up to their plain duty in both cases.

Senator Smoot in discussing the Rehabilitation bill before the Hawaiian Civic Club in Honolulu, among other things said:

"In all of the developments in the great Western states, the solid man, the man who made a home, who has created a home, the man who has be-

come the best citizen, is the man who relied on his own brain and brawn that God gave him."

This applies with equal force to practical homesteading as to the development of the western states, and the Hawaiians who may take up land under the Rehabilitation bill, should it become law. By doing most of the work on your small holdings yourselves much of your trouble will be dissipated. A mule or two on each lot and a few simple tools will greatly improve the situation.

Some of those who made a considerable sum of money this year are using it judiciously and wisely, and if they continue in this course will have permanent success. I predict that within a few years these people will have gained a comfortable fortune in addition to the land and improvements. Those who are spending their profits unwisely and who are doing none of the actual work on their lots themselves, should take heed and profit by the good example set by the others before it is too late.

There can be no doubt that when the present practice of the homesteaders in entering into contracts with aliens for the cultivation of their homesteads shall be brought to the attention of Congress, that body will immediately put a stop to all homesteading of high class land in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,  
A. HORNER,  
Territorial Sugar Expert.  
Honolulu, Sept. 7th, 1920.

NOT JUST YET

The Inter-Island has notified Hilo that they cannot think of ordering a new and larger steamer for the Hilo run in place of the Mauna Kea. A new steamer, 50 per cent larger than the Mauna Kea, will cost three times as much as she did. Such extravagance is repugnant to Scottish Thrift! This means nothing better than the Kinau for us!

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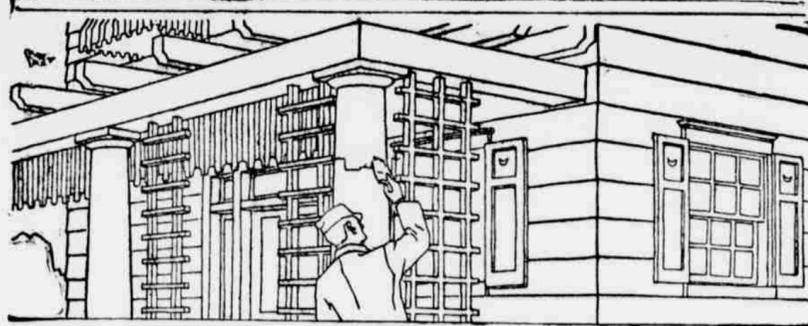
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