



(p. 99, *History of Legislatures...*)

His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislature of 1864.

NOBLES AND REPRESENTATIVES :

God's hand has been heavy upon Our country since the meeting of the Legislature of 1862. My beloved Brother has been taken from the Throne I now occupy, to wear, as We believe, an immortal crown, His Son and Heir having gone before Him only a few months, after being baptized and admitted into the Church, to the great satisfaction of My Family, and I may say of the Nation at large, under the sponsorship of that illustrious Lady whose virtues have added a new lustre to the English Throne.

Seeing before Me, as I now do, so many gentlemen of proved loyalty and unquestionable talents, and all interested in the prosperity of Our common country, I cannot but offer you an earnest welcome as members of the first Legislative Assembly, called together under the provisions of the Constitution which I caused to be proclaimed on the twentieth day of last August.

The debates which were lately had in this place, resulted in much good. The principles upon which the Throne and the political system of this country are based were fully discussed for the first time, and My people have, as a consequence, been confirmed in their belief that a Monarchical Government holds out to them the only guarantee of a permanent independence. In calling a National Convention, I was influenced by a firm conviction of its being necessary that the system under which people lives should be strictly adapted to its genius and traditions. The Constitution granted by King Kamehameha III., in 1852, had undergone several amendments, and other changes had been proposed but remained in abeyance. That Instrument continued, in many important respects, to want the adaptedness to which I refer. The right to the Throne of this country, originally acquired by conquest and birth, belongs hereditarily to the family of Kamehameha I. The Constitution of 1852, by its ninety-fourth article, left the heir to the Throne free to take an oath to support that Constitution or to decline to do so; and its forty-fifth article reserved to the Sovereign the right to conduct personally, in co-operation with the Kuhina Nui, but without the intervention of a Ministry or the approval of the Legislature, such portions of the public business as he might choose to undertake. These anomalous provisions appeared to me to need alteration—for such, as I have stated it, was the construction always given during the late reign to those two articles; and that they were also so understood by King Kamehameha III., could be proved by abundant evidence. Indeed, he would not have signed the instrument unless he had been assured that such was the intent and meaning of the forty-fifth article. By the authority inherent in myself, I called the late Convention to remodel the Constitution, and the powers belonging to such a Convention have never been disputed. On the contrary, this right of revision by such a method had been distinctly referred to by my Predecessor in his speech from the Throne, delivered on the second day of April, 1859. But the Convention, when assembled, was found to contain elements antagonistic to those very ideas of improvement which I had hoped they would have assisted me in carrying out. On the thirteenth day of August I dissolved that Convention, and on the twentieth day of the same month, by virtue of the same sovereign power which was exercised by King Kamehameha III, in 1852, I caused to be proclaimed a new Constitution, which I believe to be better adapted to the wants of the people. Under this Constitution you are now assembled. The changes made were recommended by the experience of twelve years, and a provision for further changes leaves open a door for any other improvements that the future may suggest. I here repeat what I said on the thirteenth of August, that when the people, through their Representatives, shall express a desire to meet me in such a convention as the one then dissolved, I shall cheerfully accede to their wishes.

I do not claim that the existing Constitution is not susceptible of improvement, but I do assert that it was framed with great care, and that even its least important provisions were subjected to long and patient consideration, while by the terms of its twenty-fourth article it has become imperative upon my successors, at their accession, to take an oath to observe it.

The intense affliction into which the Queen Emma has been plunged by the successive deaths of her only Son and Husband, entitles her to the greatest sympathy. It is not for me to urge how far her benevolence and her affliction have endeared her to the people. I cannot forbear, however, from suggesting whether a Lady, whose virtues have rendered her the pride of her country, should not be permanently provided for by the nation.

I would also direct your attention to the circumstances of His Royal Highness, KEKUANAOA. His life has been devoted to the public service! He has often been placed in situations of such difficulty as we, of this day, I am thankful to say, seldom encounter. His age calls for repose, and his past services seem to demand the gratitude of those who have benefitted by the labors of the prime of his life.

Our relations with other countries were never on a more satisfactory footing than at this moment, and I continue to receive from all quarters the most gratifying expressions of good will and amity, coupled with evidences of strong interest in the perpetuity of my Dynasty and the Independence of my Kingdom. Since the Session of 1862, Treaties of Amity and Commerce have been negotiated and completed between this country and the Kingdoms of Holland and Belgium, and Treaties of a similar character have been negotiated with the Queen of Spain and the King of Italy. In the case of these latter, however, some formalities have yet to be complied with.

An important mission has been confided to the Hon. E. H. Allen, Chancellor and Chief Justice of the Kingdom, whom I have accredited my Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. I am satisfied that he will do his utmost to promote our interests, and secure the objects of his mission.

Sir John Bowring still continues to be entrusted with the important objects committed to his care, and from his long experience in public business, and the ready access which is accorded to him in all the European Courts, it is hardly to be supposed but that to the already valuable services which he has rendered others equally important will be added.

The favorable report and estimates of my Minister of Finance are proper subjects of congratulation. By them you will see that the Finances are in a satisfactory condition, and that there will be no further calls for loans, or for increased taxation, to meet the present exigencies of Government, which will continue to be conducted with all possible regard to a reasonable economy. Our exports likewise have begun to bear a more satisfactory comparison with our imports.

Justice has continued to be administered during the last two years in an impartial manner to all classes, so that not only our own subjects, but those foreigners who are residents among us, or visit our shores, find the utmost security for life, right and property.

Our Agricultural enterprises have been urged forward with such energy on every Island of the group as to render the importation of laborers necessary. I am of opinion that the Government is the proper agent to carry out such a measure, and that means ought to be placed at its disposal to undertake it promptly. The wants of our agriculture, the dictates of humanity and the preservation of our race demand that the Government should control this operation. An Act to this effect will be submitted to you, together with amendments to the Master and Servant Law. Both deserve and will doubtless have your earnest attention.

The Sanitary condition of the people, and the proper means to improve it, have occupied an important place in the deliberations of my Council. This object, the nearest to my heart, demands your diligent attention, and, I trust, the measures which you may think proper to adopt will counteract the evils which, for years, have conspired against the life of the people.

A Bill to prevent the empirical and superstitious practices of a set of imposters will be introduced during the course of the session. I trust you will adopt such measures as may tend to check further tampering with human life by abusing the belief of my subjects in pretended supernatural powers.

No subject more justly claims your very serious attention than that of our Public Schools, in the management of which the health and morality of the rising generation should receive as much consideration as the effort to impart knowledge. A Reformatory Industrial School for young persons who are not subject to, or who disregard, parental authority, is very much needed, and a plan for the establishment of such an institution will be submitted to you.

The members of the Board of Public Instruction will submit to you the views they respectively entertain upon our present system of education. In a matter of such importance to the country, and on which our whole future advancement rests, I trust you will act with that deliberation and due regard to the interests of the mass of the people, without which no systematic and well devised plan can be started and successfully carried out.

The increase of Leprosy has caused me much anxiety, and is such as to make decisive steps imperative upon us. My Minister of the Interior will communicate to you all the facts, and will propose measures to prevent the spread of this fearful disease.

It will be necessary to enact such changes in the Law Regulating Elections as will make it conform to the requirements of the Constitution. This and such other changes as it is thought will be necessary to reconcile our laws to the Constitution will be submitted to you by the members of my Government.

NOBLES AND REPRESENTATIVES :

I rely upon your wisdom and your loyalty to strengthen me in my efforts to advance the good of our Common Country, and, with heartfelt earnestness, I invoke upon your deliberations the blessings of the Almighty. May He, in His infinite goodness, direct you so that all things may be established on a sure foundation, and the interest and happiness of my people be promoted.

Seem to be included
in the "Papers of the
Legislatures..."



THE KING'S SPEECH

AT THE

OPENING OF THE CONVENTION.

Nobles and Delegates of the people,

It has pleased God Almighty to call hence to a better world my Brother, KAMEHAMEHA IV., whose death has filled the Nation with mourning and my own heart with profound grief. The sudden and unexpected demise of this Sovereign whose love you have all experienced, and whose time and talent were devoted to your good is indeed a national loss. This deplorable instance of the uncertainty of life warns me of the necessity of earnestly and diligently trying to do what I can for the benefit of my people.

It has been the traditional policy of my Predecessors, to whom the Kingdom is indebted for the liberal reforms that have been made, to lead the nation forward and to watch over its welfare. My subjects will find in me, as they did in them, a jealous guardian of their liberties and an earnest promoter of all measures calculated to increase their happiness, and to check the evils that tend to their destruction.

I return to you, Nobles and Delegates of the people, my thanks for your prompt answer to the appeal I have made to your loyalty and patriotism. You have discarded certain assertions impugning my motives and my intentions, and this confidence indicates that you now meet me with the same spirit and sentiments which animated me in my appeal to you.

During the course of the last twelve years, the weak points of the Constitution of 1852 have been made apparent to all. The wisdom of the Rulers and of the people combined, have smoothed down its defects, but have not however succeeded in removing them. Difficult as the task we are about to undertake might have been a few years ago, time has succeeded in making it easier, and I think that now these modifications can be discussed by us with adequate knowledge and with the authority of experience.

Several articles of the Constitution are so loosely worded as to leave room for doubts and uncertainty; these I shall successively point out to you in the course of our meetings. The order of succession to the Throne should be more fully established, and a clause making the marriages of the Royal family subservient to the public good might properly be inserted in the Constitution. The article providing for the alienation of the Kingdom, although perhaps dictated at the time by peculiar circumstances, is one which, I think, ought to be erased from our Organic Law: such a provision can do no good and may do harm, and is repugnant to the feelings of all loyal men.

The institution of the *Kuhina Nui* originated, in my opinion, in a wrong conception of our past history and is an unnecessary check upon the Legislative in giving to this Officer an absolute control over the acts of a body of which he himself is a member and in which he has a vote. A provision for a Council of Regency, in case of minority of the Heir to the Throne, would be in accordance with all monarchical customs.

The protracted sittings of the Legislature have been caused, in many instances, by the absence of all direct intercourse between the House of Representatives and the Executive. I think the presence in this branch of the Legislature of one or two of the members of the Cabinet, would be conducive to the prompt dispatch of business.

I am of opinion that the Representation of the People ought to be apportioned and regulated according to the population by Districts, and I would suggest the adoption of such an apportionment as would leave the number of Representatives equal to what it now is.

Experience has proved to my satisfaction, and I hope to yours, that a property qualification for the House of Representatives would have the effect of promoting industry and perseverance among my people, by making a seat in the House, an object of ambition and a test of respectability. I am of opinion that this property qualification should be made so low as to bring this honor within the reach of every industrious man.

The number and the importance of these modifications have induced me to call this Convention, in which, the People being represented by you, gentlemen, their freely elected Delegates, you, my Nobles, sitting for yourselves, and I for myself, all the Constituting Powers of this Realm are concentrated. I hope that every Noble and Delegate will exercise freely the right of suggesting any provision on which he may have maturely reflected, with the assurance that such suggestions will be listened to, on my part, with the same consideration which I expect for my own. At the same time I shall claim for myself or others speaking by my authority, in my name and in my presence, the same right of debate that I freely accord to each Noble and Delegate.

May God, in His divine mercy, enlighten us in the course of our deliberations and inspire all of us with the wisdom necessary to prosecute in mutual accord, objects so dear to my heart as the welfare and the prosperity of the People upon whom He has called me to rule.

And I do now declare this Convention opened.