

HAWAIIAN KINGDOM CONSTITUTION OF 1840

It is our design to regulate our kingdom according to the above principles and thus seek the greatest prosperity both of all the chiefs and all the people of these Hawaiian Islands. But we are aware that we cannot ourselves alone accomplish such an object – God must be our aid, for it is His province alone to give perfect protection and prosperity. –Wherefore we first present our supplication to Him, that he will guide us to right measures and sustain us in our work.

It is therefore our fixed decree,

I. That no law shall be enacted which is at variance with the word of the Lord Jehovah, or at variance with the general spirit of His word. All laws of the Islands shall be in consistency with the general spirit of God's law.

II. All men of every religion shall be protected in worshipping Jehovah, and serving Him, according to their own understanding, but no man shall ever be punished for neglect of God unless he injures his neighbor, or bring evil on the kingdom.

III. The law shall give redress to every man who is injured by another without a fault of his own, and shall protect all men while they conduct properly, and shall punish all men who commit crime against the kingdom or against Individuals, and no unequal law shall be passed for the benefit of one to the injury of another.

IV. No man shall be punished unless his crime be first made manifest, neither shall he be punished unless he be first brought to trial in the presence of his accusers, and they have met face to face, and the trial having been conducted according to law, and the crime made manifest in their presence, then punishment may be inflicted.

No man or chief shall be permitted to sit as judge or act on a jury to try his particular friend (or enemy), or one who is especially connected with him. Wherefore if any man be condemned or acquitted, and it shall afterwards be made to appear, that some one who tried him acted with partiality for the purpose of favoring his friend (or injuring his enemy), or for the purpose of enriching himself, then there shall be a new trial allowed before those who are impartial.

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE PRESENT DYNASTY IS FOUNDED.

The origin of the present government, and system of polity, is as follows. Kamehameha I, was the founder of the kingdom, and to him belonged all the land from one end of the islands to the other, though it was not his own private property. It belonged to the chiefs and people in common, of whom Kamehameha I. was the head, and had the management of the landed property. Wherefore, there was not formerly, and is not now any person who could or can convey away the smallest portion of land without the consent of the one who had, or has the direction of the kingdom. These are the persons who have had the direction of it from that time down, Kamehameha II, Kaahumanu I, and at the present time Kamehameha III.

These persons have had the direction of the kingdom down to the present time, and all documents written by them, and no others are the documents of the kingdom.

The kingdom is permanently confirmed to Kamehameha III, and his heirs, and his heir shall be the person whom he and the chiefs shall appoint, during his life time, but should there be no appointment, then the decision shall rest with the chiefs and house of Representatives.

PREROGATIVES OF THE KING.

The prerogatives of the King are as follows: He is the sovereign of all the people and all the chiefs. The kingdom is his. He shall have the direction of the army and all the implements of war of the

kingdom. He also shall have the direction of the government property—the poll tax—the land tax—the three days monthly labor, though in conformity to the laws. He also shall retain his own private lands, and lands forfeited for the nonpayment of taxes shall revert to him.

He shall be the chief judge of the Supreme Court, and it shall be his duty to execute the laws of the land, also all decrees and treaties with other countries, all however in accordance with the laws.

It shall also be his prerogative to form treaties with the rulers of all other kingdoms, also to receive ministers sent by other countries, and he shall have power to confirm agreements with them. He shall also have power to make war in time of emergency, when the chiefs cannot be assembled, and he shall be the commander in chief. He shall also have power to transact all important business of the kingdom which is not by law assigned to others.

RESPECTING THE PREMIER OF THE KINGDOM.

It shall be the duty of the King to appoint some chief of rank and ability, to be his particular minister, whose title shall be Premier of the Kingdom. His office and business shall be the same as that of Kaahumanu I, and Kaahumanu II. For even in the time of Kamehameha I, life and death, condemnation and acquittal were in the hands of Kaahumanu. When Kamehameha I, died, his will was, "The Kingdom is Liholiho's, and Kaahumanu is his Minister." That important feature of the government, originated by Kamehameha I, shall be perpetuated in these Hawaiian Islands, but shall always be in subserviency to the law.

The following are the duties of the Premier. All business connected with the special interests of the kingdom, which the King wishes to transact, shall be done by the Premier under the authority of the king. All documents and business of the kingdom executed by the Premier, shall be considered as executed by the King's authority. All government property shall be reported to him (or her) and he (or she) shall make it over to the King.

The Premier shall be the King's special counsellor in the great business of the kingdom.

The King shall not act without the knowledge of the Premier, nor shall the Premier act without the knowledge of the King, and the veto of the King on the acts of the Premier shall arrest the business. All important business of the kingdom which the King chooses to transact in person, he may do it but not without the approbation of the Premier.

GOVERNORS

There shall be four Governors over these Hawaiian Islands – one for Hawaii – one for Maui and the Islands adjacent – one for Oahu, and one for Kauai and the adjacent Islands. All the Governors, from Hawaii to Kauai shall be subject to the king.

The prerogatives of the Governors and their duties shall be as follows: Each Governor shall have the general direction of the several tax gatherers of his island, and shall support them in the execution of all their orders which he considers to have been properly given, but shall pursue a course according to law, and not according to his own private views. He also shall preside over all the judges of his island, and shall see their sentences executed as above. He shall also appoint the judges and give them their certificates of office.

All the Governors, from Hawaii to Kauai shall be subject not only to the King, but also to the Premier.

The Governor shall be the superior over his particular island or islands. He shall have charge of the munitions of war, under the direction of the king, however, and the Premier. He shall have charge of the forts, the soldiery, the arms and all the implements of war. He shall receive the government

dues and shall deliver over the same to the Premier. All important decisions rest with him in time of emergency, unless the king or Premier be present. He shall have charge of all the King's business on the island, the taxation, new improvements to be extended, and plans for the increase of wealth, and all officers shall be subject to him. He shall also have power to decide all questions, and transact all island business which is not by law assigned to others.

When either of the Governors shall decease, then all the chiefs shall assemble at such place as the king shall appoint, and shall nominate a successor of the deceased Governor, and whosoever they shall nominate and be approved by the King, he shall be the new Governor.

HOUSE OF NOBLES.

At the present period, these are the persons who shall sit in the government councils, Kamehameha III, Kekauluohi, Hoapiliwahini, Kuakini, Kekauonohi, Kahekili, Paki, Konia, Keohokalole, Leleiohoku, Kekuanaoa, Kealiihonui, Kanaina, Keoni Ii, Keoni Ana, and Haalilio. Should any other person be received into the council, shall be made known by law. These persons shall have part in the councils of the kingdom. No law of the nation shall be passed without their assent. They shall act in the following manner: They shall assemble annually, for the purpose of seeking the welfare of the nation, and establishing laws for the kingdom. Their meetings shall commence in April, at such day and place as the King shall appoint.

It shall also be proper for the King to consult with the above persons respecting all the great concerns of the kingdom, in order to promote unanimity and secure the greatest good. They shall moreover transact such other business as the King shall commit to them.

They shall still retain their own appropriate lands, whether districts or plantations, or whatever divisions they may be, and they may conduct the business on said lands at their discretion, but not at variance with the laws of the kingdom.

RESPECTING THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY.

There shall be annually chosen certain persons to sit in council with the Nobles and establish laws for the nation. They shall be chosen by the people, according to their wish, from Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai. The law shall decide the form of choosing them and also the number to be chosen. This representative body shall have a voice in the business of the kingdom. No law shall be passed without the approbation of a majority of them.

RESPECTING THE MEETINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODY.

There shall be an annual meeting as stated above; but if the Rulers think it desirable to meet again they may do it at their discretion.

When they assemble, the Nobles shall meet by themselves and the representative body by themselves, though at such times as they shall think it necessary to consult together, they may unite at their discretion.

The form of doing business shall be as follows: The Nobles shall appoint a secretary for themselves who at the meetings shall record all decisions made by them, and that book of records shall be preserved in order that no decrees affecting the interests of the kingdom may be lost. The same shall be done by the representative body. They too shall choose a Secretary for themselves, and when they meet for the purpose of seeking the interests of the kingdom, and shall come to a decision on any point, then that decision shall be recorded in a book, and the book shall be preserved, in order that nothing valuable, affecting the interests of the kingdom should be lost; and there shall no new law be made, without the approbation of a majority of the Nobles and also a majority of the representative body.

When any act shall have been agreed upon by them, it shall then be presented to the King, and if he approve and sign his name, and also the Premier, then it shall become a law of the kingdom, and that law shall not be repealed until it is done by the voice of those who established it.

RESPECTING THE TAX OFFICERS.

The King and Premier shall appoint Tax Officers, and give them their certificates of office. There shall be distinct tax officers for each of the islands, at the discretion of the King and Premier

When a tax officer has received his certificate of appointment, he shall not be dismissed from office without first having a formal trial, and having been convicted of fault, at which time he shall be dismissed. Though if the law should prescribe a given number of years as the term of office, it may be done.

The following are the established duties of the tax officers. They shall assess the taxes and give notice of the amount to all the people, that they may understand in suitable time. The tax officers shall make the assessment in subserviency to the orders of the Governors, and in accordance with the requirements of the law. And when the taxes are to be gathered, they shall gather them and deliver the property to the Governor, and the Governor shall pay it over to the Premier, and the Premier shall deliver it to the King.

The tax officers shall also have charge of the public labor done for the King, though if they see proper to commit it to the land agents it is well, but the tax officers being above the land agents shall be accountable for the work. They shall also have charge of all new business which the King shall wish to extend through the kingdom. In all business however they shall be subject to the Governor.

The tax officers shall be the judges in all cases arising under the tax law. In all cases where land agents or landlords are charged with oppressing the lower classes, and also in all cases of difficulty between land agents and tenants, the tax officers shall be the judges, and also all cases arising under the tax law enacted on the 7th of June, 1839.

They shall moreover perform their duties in the following manner: Each tax officer shall be confined in his authority to his own appropriate district. If a difficulty arises between a land agent and his tenant, the tax officer shall try the case and if the tenant be found guilty, then the tax officer, in connection with the land agent shall execute the law upon him. But if the tax officer judge the land agent to be in fault, then he shall notify all the tax officers of his particular island, and if they are agreed, they shall pass sentence on him and the Governor shall execute it. But in all trials, if any individual take exception to the decision of the tax officer, he may appeal to the Governor who shall have power to try the case again, and if exceptions are taken to the decision of the Governor, on information given to the Supreme Judges, there shall be a new and final trial before them.

OF THE JUDGES.

Each of the Governors shall at his discretion, appoint judges for his particular island, two or more as he shall think expedient, and shall give them certificates of office. After having received their certificates, they shall not be turned out, except by impeachment, though it shall be proper at any time for the law to limit the term of office.

They shall act in the following manner: They shall give notice before hand of the days on which courts are to be held. When the time specified arrives, they shall then enter on the trials according as the law shall direct. They shall be the judges in cases arising under all the laws excepting those which regard taxation, or difficulties between land agents, or landlords and their tenants. They shall be sustained by the Governor, whose duty it shall be to execute the law according to their decisions. But if exceptions are taken to their judgment, whosoever takes them may appeal to the supreme judges.

OF THE SUPREME JUDGES.

The representative body shall appoint four persons whose duty it shall be to aid the King and Premier, and these six persons shall constitute the Supreme Court of the kingdom.

Their business shall be to settle all cases of difficulty which are left unsettled by the tax officers and common judges. They shall give a new trial according to the conditions of the law. They shall give previous notice of the time for holding courts, in order that those who are in difficulty may appeal. The decision of these shall be final. There shall be no further trial after theirs. Life, death, confinement, fine, and freedom, from it, are all in their hands, and their decisions are final.

OF CHANGES IN THIS CONSTITUTION.

This constitution shall not be considered as finally established, until the people have generally heard it and have appointed persons according to the provisions herein made, and they have given their assent, then this constitution shall be considered as permanently established.

But hereafter, if it should be thought desirable to change it, notice shall be previously given, that all the people may understand the nature of the proposed change, and the succeeding year, at the meeting of the Nobles and the representative body, if they shall agree as to the addition proposed or as to the alteration, then they may make it.

The above constitution has been agreed to by the Nobles, and we have hereunto subscribed our names, this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord, 1840, at Honolulu, Oahu.

(Signed) KAMEHAMEHA III.
KEKAULUOHI.

