Atmosphere of Victory Pervades Pine Island; Workers Tell of Gain Won in Face of Dollar Strength

BY SPECIAL WRITER

LANAI CITY, Lanai—The Big Strike is over, and the Pine Island pineapple workers have triumphantly returned to their jobs.

The Pine Island, completely owned by Hawaiian Pineapple Co. Ltd., has been quiet for nearly seven months of “siter.” It is today literally a beehive of activity. Men and women, who worked from sun-up to sun-down, are now toiling away at their tasks, and women are picking the fruit in the fields and to put the huge 1568-acre plantation back into shape.

Salvaging 3,000 Acres of Fruit

There is a total of work for everyone on Lanai, including over-time, night shifts and Sunday work. Several temporary workers have been hired as the company makes every effort to get the 3,000 acres of valued pineapple plants back into production. In some cases, whole families of Filipino, German and Portugese, work are turning out for work.

A good guess is that almost 4,000 acres of fruit rotted away during the lengthy work stoppage.

Barrels have been working overtime to transport the large quantity of fruit to the Hapco cannery in Honolulu for processing.

Picture From the Sky

That the long, history-making strike has taken its toll of the Lanai pineapple crop has been estimated around the 25-million-dollar figure that was lost to the air. While flying over the pineapple fields, for the first time, the aerial camera, in a number of instances, one gets the impression that the whole countryside is a vast wasteland. The old, bleached stalks have been burned prior to being plowed under.

Lanai to a decided contrast from neighboring pine-growing Molokai where from the air, you see a green tapestry, row on row of neatly planted pineapple fields.

The Lanai strike officially began on March 1. Two days before, on February 28, the company announced an impending 15 union field stewards. Subsequently, the company refused to accept contract terms proposed by the company. Final settlement came on September 14, the day the memorandum of agreement was signed. The Lanai membership committee’s recommendation by an overwhelming majority, which sent all workers back to their jobs on Tuesday, September 10.

The atmosphere among the Lanai workers is healthy. Talk to any of the pineapple pickers about the strike, and they will tell you that the main reason was due to the inability of the big companies to reconcile their voices and actions.

The Ohio Cane Workers won’t let you tell them that the biggest raze, outside of the wage issue, is the relaxing of the company’s care for the workers, who are losing by the thousands of dollars, and the loss of the current crop. The workers, as a whole, believe the strike was a necessary one to get a just wage for their work.

More Than Workers Demanded

There were other vast improvements. The workers want recognition of Local 145, membership in the Hawaii pineapple workers’ union. The company, which also does not recognize its employees, has finally been forced to sign a contract recognizing the union. This is the first time the workers have ever been represented by a union, and the workers plan to use the union to negotiate better working conditions.

On wages, the workers’ original demands were met by the company, which offered a measly 8 cents an hour increase. But before the strike got under way, they did not budge an inch from their demand—this, despite a terrible company campaigned against them and attacks against the union’s leadership.

The final outcome: A wage increase of 15 cents per hour, all of which is paid for the workers in other companies.

“Then has been quite puzzling to the strikers and something that had to be clearly explained,” said Pedro Cruz, in reference to the wage boost. “They didn’t understand at first, but we came out with 8 cents more than we asked for. That’s the first time any strike ended up with the workers getting more than the original demand.”

Kawamoto “Well Worth It”

Going around the plantation

"The "BAMBOO DINNER ROOM" is still the main gathering place and center of activity among Lanai workers as is the playing the strike while its primary function was to provide three square meals a day for strikers.

California Grower Uses FBI To Intimidate, Control Filipino Laborers from Hawaii

A California grower and packer who recruited 22 Filipinos a few months ago, now has returned six laborers to the Islands without paying them wages. The Filipinos left 19 days of work, and almost had them deported to the Philippines.

The grower is Hamilton and Hamilton are members of the Hawaii pineapple workers’ local, who are known to be ardent Communists. Hamilton has been arrested on a charge of having used false documents and been sentenced to jail for six months.

The investigation of Hamilton’s contract and, according to reliable sources, a charge of trespassing was being brought to him against him.

While the hiring of the 22 laborers was played up on a show business line, the real story was not so pleasant. Investigation by the FBI, a representative of the company, has revealed that most of the men were in the United States on a contract of recruitment at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

The Royal Hawaiian Dismissed

Hamilton, who is a guest at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, was told in a meeting of the hotel’s employees to get out of the country. A meeting of the Filipino service personnel to go with him to California. A hotel detective is reported to have informed the management about Hamilton’s conduct and, according to reliable sources, a charge of trespassing was being brought to him against him.

The men from California told Hamilton that they did not want to get into any unlawful conditions. They also protest that they could not afford to rent the food served in the boardroom because it was too high for a guest as one of the returned men said.

Hamilton returned independently and went to the Territorial agricultural commissioner, who demanded a contract, the REC- TIVED on September 10.

When the 22 men arrived at Dithara, Tulacon, Calif., Hamilton told them that the company would not recognize them. "Boys, you’ll have to live with this because the only union here is the workers. We are the only ones that are respected. The building was just being built.

The men protested. To men demanded living quarters, food and other conditions as promised by Hamilton. Finally Hamilton conceded to the extent that he let 12 men sleep in one small room and 10 in another.

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Hamilton’s former, John Sala, dressed in the boardroom. Sala was told by the hotel’s management that they were the only ones that are respected. The building was just being built.

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Pine Workers Get 7 Cent Hike; Lanai Tieup Ends

An industrywide [sic] agreement giving a 7 cent hourly raise and settling the 7 month old Lanai strike was signed last night by seven pineapple companies and the ILWU. The 7 cent raise agreement, briskly negotiated in a week of off the record bargaining, was reached two months ahead of the contract wage reopening date, November 15.

$1.16 FOR MALE WORKERS

Industrywide, [sic] the new base wage for about 9,000 workers will be $1.16 for men and $1.06 for women.

Agreement terms must be ratified by ILWU locals If any unit rejects the terms, the entire agreement would be voided.

Seven hundred and fifty Hawaiian Pineapple Co. workers on Lanai, world's largest pineapple plantation, struck last February 27. They demanded 12 cents more an hour. All other plantation units accepted 8 cents.

In effect, therefore. Lanai workers will get a 15 cent raise, but will have lost an estimated $1,200,000 in wages during the strike.

Hawaiian Pineapple Co. estimates seasonal cannery workers lost another $800,000 in wages because of the strike.

A joint industry-union statement said new union security and seniority terms were written into the contract, now extended a year beyond its original February 1, 1953 termination.

GOOD FAITH AGREEMENT

The joint statement said this is a 'good faith agreement, which, if carried out in the same spirit will spell a long period of peace in the pineapple industry."

Observers believe the companies insisted upon the clause that the contract is voided unless ratified by all union locals.

It was this sort of snag that prolonged the costly Lanai strike. All pine locals but one–Lanai–accepted the earlier 8 cent Lanai an hour accept increase.

The settlement means a total 15 cent industry raise this year.

ONE FORMAL SESSION

Informal negotiation meetings were held during the week, but yesterday's meeting was the only formal negotiation session.

Main points of the agreement, as reported by the Hawaii Employer’s council:

1 — The industry will recognize Local 142 ta consolidated pine local ' upon being shown legal proof that n is in fact the legal successor to the old units.

2— A wage increase of 7 rents per hour for all employees, subject to approval by the wage stabilization board, if necessary.

3— Improved union security.
4— Improved seniority provision.
5— One re-opening on wages and any other two items on February, 1, 1953. Notice of such opening may [Turn to page 4, Column 5] be given by either party on November 15, 1952.

LANAI STRIKE SUMMARY
Following is a summary of events leading up to the Lanai pineapple strike and developments during the strike:

September 22, 1950 – Hawaiian Pineapple Co. offers to reopen immediately its contracts with the ILWU in order to raise wages—four months ahead of the contract expiration date.

October 6 – First negotiation session.
October 7 – Company offers 8 cent an hour wage boost.
October 20 – Company and union negotiators agree on 8 cent increase and a 27 month contract, plus other improvements.
October 27 – Union informs company that all Hapco units, except the Lanai plantation, have signed the new contracts.
October 31 – Union informs company the Lanai plantation unit had rejected the contract by a vote of 618 to 33.

THREATS REPORTED
November 9 – Company reports receiving complaints that threats were made against employees who wanted to vote for acceptance of the contract; that union officers did not recommend acceptance as they had promised to do in negotiations.
December 14 – Negotiations for Lanai plantation continued.
February 1 – Old contract expires.
February 11 – Union asks for 12 cent wage increase retroactive to October 24, plus other changes. Company offers 8 cents retroactive to February 1, plus other benefits.
February 15 – ILWU files strike notice with Hawaii employment relations board.
February 26 – Ten days waiting period of strike notice ends.
February 26 – Nineteen employees, 18 of them ILWU stewards, laid off indefinitely by company for alleged slowdown tactics.

RETURN TO HOMES
February 27 – Employees report for work but return to their homes after their demand for reinstatement of the 19 men is refused by the company.
February 28 – Employees turn out but return home again when the 19 suspended men are not reinstated.
March 1 – Pickets appear for the first time. Ronald B. Jamieson, Honolulu attorney, is sworn in as territorial conciliator.
March 2 – Conciliator starts first of many separate conferences with company and union representatives. Deadlock continues.
May 6 – Conciliator attempts new peace talks
May 15 – Peace talk suspended.
May 17 – ILWU proposes ending to be made by conciliator, if company also would agree to the terms.
May 18 – Company rejects union proposal.
May 21 – Conciliator arranges more peace talks.
May 26 – Negotiators reach agreement on settlement terms.

SETTLEMENT TERMS REJECTED
May 31 – Strikers reject terms and vote to continue strike.
June 27 – Company rejects ILWU proposal for arbitration.
June 30 – Terms of May 26 agreement, rejected by strikers and kept secret, are finally released. Terms include 8 cents an hour wage increase and retroactivity to October 20, plus certain company commitments.
July 2 – ILWU starts attempt at nationwide boycott of Dole products.
July 14 – Assets of 480 strikers, totaling $37,026 are attached in court action by Plantation Housing, Ltd., for collection of back rent.
July 20 – Conciliator Jamieson resigns.
July 21 – Governor Long asks immediate assistance of federal conciliators: Hapco says it is prepared to sacrifice peak crop “in the best long range interests of the company.” ILWU proposes committees of stockholders and strikers negotiate settlement.
July 23 – Hapco rejects ILWU proposal.

SECOND ROUND BOOSTS
July 25 – ILWU asks all seven pineapple companies for second round of wage increases within nine months; companies, including Hapco reject bid.
July 31 – Conciliators arrive on Lanai for “on the spot” talks.
Aug. 2 – Strike talks remain deadlocked.
Aug. 3 – Union proposals on wage and union shop issues rejected by Hapco.
Aug. 7 – Governor Long offers specific proposal for settling strike.

NEW ATTEMPT
August 8 – Disputants disagree over union shop settlement terms of governor’s peace plan, but talks continue.
August 9 – Company and union begin new attempt at strike settlement without aid from the governor and his advisers.
August 11 – Governor proposes new settlement plan and the company accepts it without qualification. Union announces that federal conciliators proposed arbitration of the strike during conferences and that the company rejected the idea.
August 13 – Union accepts governor’s proposal on condition that it be included in the contract, thus allowing arbitration of wages and union security at later date. Company reaffirms refusal to accept arbitration. Governor holds fruitless talks with union leaders.
August 14 – Federal conciliators withdraw from attempted settlement and restate their advocacy of arbitration.

August 15 – Federal conciliators return to San Francisco. Governor indicates he has given up hope for finding a way to immediate strike settlement.

2ND LONGEST STRIKE

August 24 – Strike reaches 179th day, surpasses 1949 Longshore strike; exceeded in duration only by the 298 day 1940-41 longshore strike at Port Allen, Kauai.

August 25 – Company offers to include governor’s proposal of August 11 in contract if it does not mean arbitration.

August 30 – Company estimates strike losses to date: $1,750,000 in net profit: $2,000,000 in wages - $1,200,000 lost by Lanai strikers, $800,000 by seasonal cannery workers.

September 6 – Governor Long speaks with company and union officials. No announcement comes from meeting.

September 10 to 14 – Off the record talks held on industry wide basis. 7 companies meeting informally with union spokesmen.

September 14 – Settlement reached, providing 7 cents an hour industry wide increase and ending Lanai strike. But settlement subject to ratification by all ILWU locals, or else entire agreement voided. Contract extended year beyond February 1, 1953 termination.