

Lanai Story

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 ILWU Lanai pineapple workers have triumphantly returned to their jobs.

The Pine Island, completely owned by Hawaiian Pineapple Co. Ltd., has awakened from almost seven months of "slumber." It is today literally a beehive of activity as machines and laborers alike work from sun-up to sun-down, trying to salvage mature fruit in the fields and to put the huge 16,000-acre plantation back into shape.

Salvaging 3,000 Acres of Fruit

There is plenty of work for everyone on Lanai, including overtime, night shifts and Sunday work. Several temporary workers have been hired as the company makes every effort to salvage some 3,000 acres of golden ripe pineapples. In some cases whole families—those capable of doing any work, are turning out for work.

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

Barges have been working overtime to transport the cargo 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 pine crop—a loss estimated around the 25-million-dollar figure—can be clearly seen from the air. While flying over the pine fields, overgrown by grass and vines, one gets the impression that the whole countryside is a cow pasture. Some of the fields have been burned prior to being plowed under.

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

The Lanai strike officially began on March 1. Two days before, on February 26, the company suspended 19 union field stewards. Subsequently, the union 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 ratified the negotiating committee's recommendation by an overwhelming majority, which sent all workers back to their jobs on Tuesday, September 18.

Atmosphere Healthy

The atmosphere among the Lanai workers is healthy. Talk to any Lanai pine worker, from Pedro dela Cruz, union business agent and strike leader, down to any rank and file and you will be immediately impressed by the feeling of security and victory expressed by their voices and actions.

Right off the bat they will tell you that the biggest gain, outside of the wage increase, is the return of all pine companies to industry-wide bargaining. The workers know this is an important factor in future pine negotiations. The employers, as almost everyone knows, tried to split up the negotiations in 1950, by attempting to negotiate company by company. This resulted in at least one company, Maui Pine, signing a one-year contract and the five other companies winding up with two-year agreements.

Shiro Hokama, Lanai strike finance chairman, put it this way:

"The bosses are the ones that are now asking for industry-wide bargaining. One year ago it was just the opposite. Now they want all our units to okay the contract or no dice for anyone. Man, they sure can change their minds fast."

More Than Workers Demanded

There were other vast improvements in the new contract—union security, recognition of Local 142 as a consolidated union, job security, etc.—to which the Lanai workers point with pride, as "spoils" of the long battle, won not only for pine workers on Lanai, but also for other workers in the entire industry.

On wages, the workers' original demand was 12 cents an hour. The company offered a measly 8 cents. The workers stuck by their guns and did not budge an inch from their demand—this, despite a terrific company propaganda cam-



THE "BAMBOO DINING ROOM" is still the main gathering place and center of activity among Lanai workers as it was during the strike when its primary function was to provide three square meals a day for strikers.

paign and attacks against the union's leadership.

The final outcome: A wage increase of 15 cents per hour, also 7 cents per hour for workers in other companies.

"That has been quite puzzling to the strikers and something that had to be clearly explained," said Pedro dela Cruz, in reference to the wage boost. "They didn't understand at first how we came out with 3 cents more than we asked for. That's the first time any strike ended up with the workers getting more than the original demand."

Sacrifice "Well Worth It"

Going around the plantation

and just "shooting the breeze" with the boys is enough to convince you that in the final analysis, solidarity and unity were the biggest factors in winning the 198-day strike. Their spirit somehow can be compared to that of a victorious football team, having just emerged from winning the "big one." And many of the strikers are athletes of renowned ability.

Young Jack Zaan, a tractor mechanic, who did yeoman work, both as a "bumming team" captain and a member of the union's negotiating committee, probably expressed the sentiments of other Lanaians when he said:

"Sure it was a tough haul. But I think the sacrifice was well worth it. Our enemies will try and confuse us by continually reminding us of the wages lost during the strike. They spread the same kind of stuff every time our union gets into a beef. I think that's a lotta baloney, because we are in this union to go ahead, not go backwards, or remain as we are and get our rear chewed off. The future is much brighter for everyone concerned as a result of our victory."

Mariano Capalato, a veteran pine worker, who has been through plenty of hard times as a sugar worker in the old days, pointed to the fact that not only did the workers win a substantial wage increase and excellent contract language, but also dignity and respect from the employers. Mariano played a leading role in the strike as chairman of the important relief committee.

Pio Did Good Job

The strike was orderly. There was no violence or disorder of any kind. Pio Hadulco, old in age but with still plenty of fight left in him, should be congratulated for the fine work he did as captain of the strike union police. Looking back on the strike days, Pio said everything was peaceful because the strikers were well organized and everything was well under control.

Brother Hadulco said the strikers got along fine with the

local police department. He singled out Sam Onaga, husky Lanai police officer and an ex-Maui high grider, as a fine example of a "good cop."

Onaga, incidentally, was recently transferred to Wailuku, Maui. He was honored at a farewell party by a few of the local boys before his departure for Maui. During his hitch on Lanai, Sam gained a reputation as a "regular guy" among the Lanai residents.

"Bamboo Dining Room"

The strike may be all pau, but one vivid reminder of by-gone strike days—the "Bamboo Dining Room," official name for the union's community soup kitchen—is still the main gathering place and center of activity, where the men and their families meet to talk over the day's activities and also to get their "3 squares."

Not only are hot meals still served the workers in this soup kitchen but a regular schedule of free movies is also shown for adults and kiddies.

Much credit for the successful operation of the soup kitchen goes to the crew of hard-working and expert "chefs" headed by Alejandro Piaspilas, Teofredo Bello and George Loquoio. Mrs. Chiyoko Goshi, wife of a union member, Brother Katsuki Goshi, a tractor operator, was of great assistance throughout the strike. She put her wide experience as a cook to good use, preparing the menus and making "sure that well-balanced, nutritious meals were served. Mrs. Goshi is well versed in the cafeteria-style of cooking, through her experience in a boarding house.

Received Wide Support

A typical meal served at the "Bamboo Dining Room" would consist of stew and rice, green vegetables, bread, crackers, butter or jelly and coffee or cocoa.

A total of over 1,000 persons were served regular meals during the strike. Today the number is much less. School children, for instance, now eat their lunches at the school cafeteria. Passes or tokens are given each student and the meals are paid for in bulk at the end of each week by the union.

Take-out meals are still prepared for both day and night field shift workers. Those working in the nearby garage and shops eat their lunches at the soup kitchen.

Just to Show Who's Boss
Donations from throughout the Territory and the Mainland—from faraway New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Cleveland, Canada—kept the soup kitchen larder well stocked with rice, canned goods, onions, potatoes, flour, etc. Nothing was spared to "shoot the works" when it came to chow time.

Five bags of rice daily are needed to keep everybody well fed. Also 15 gallons of coffee and 3 gallons of cocoa daily.

When the history of the Lanai strike is finally written, the kokua given by the small merchants on the tiny island should certainly be made a part of it. The Tamashiro brothers of Richard's Shopping Center, aided the strikers no little throughout the strike. Richard, owner of the Shopping Center, and his brother Takeo, World War II veteran and member of the famed 100th infantry battalion, are well known on Lanai.

The Lanai strike is now past history but the workers will never forget the strike in which the Hawaiian Pineapple Co. sacrificed a 25-million-dollar crop to save \$64,000—the union's total wage demand—just to show who's boss around here.

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

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

The FBI was used by L. R. Hamilton to harass the Filipinos, who insisted that the packer carry out the contract agreement.

While the hiring of the 22 laborers was played up in news stories here as employment of the unemployed, investigation by the RECORD has revealed that most of the men were working at the time of recruitment at the Royal Hawaiian and Moana hotels.

Royal Hawaiian Displeased

Hamilton, who was a guest at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, held a big meeting of the hotel's employees in its parking lot to induce 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 going to be brought against him.

The discovery that Hamilton was a guest at the Royal stopped this action.

Roy Brent, personnel manager at the Royal, denied that the hotel had any difficulty with Hamilton. He said that the California packer worked through the Territorial labor and industrial relations department and hired seasonal workers at the hotel.

Hamilton recruited independently and went to the Territorial agency when the workers demanded a contract, the RECORD learned reliably.

When the 22 men arrived at Dinuba, Tulare county, Calif., Hamilton is reported to have told them, "Boys, you'll have to live in the garage for a while till quarters are finished." The building was just being built.

Workers Protested

Ten 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.

The men from Hawaii told Hamilton that they did not

want to get sick under unsanitary conditions. They also protested that they could not stomach the food served in the boarding house "swarmed by flies," as one of the returned men said.

"Mexicans and Filipinos, about thirty of them, were in Hamilton's Dinuba camp and they were treated like animals. We had a contract and wanted to enforce it," the man said.

Boss Had Spy

Hamilton's foreman, John Salasal, cooked at the boarding house. Salasal was termed Hamilton's "stooge" who picked up mess hall gossip and complaints and reported them to his boss.

The men bought their cooking utensils and Hamilton gave them a stove. But after two weeks their money ran out and they asked Hamilton for \$5 each to buy groceries and supplies like stationery.

This Hamilton refused and said he was following the contract, according to the returned laborer.

The next day eight men did not show up for work, complaining (more on page 6)

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 as consolidated pine local ' upon being shown legal proof that it is in fact the legal successor to the old units.

2— A wage increase of 7 cents 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 28 – Federal Conciliators Arthur C. Viat and George L. Hillenband arrive from San Francisco.

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.