



TAKING SHAPE — This 298-room beachfront hotel, to be operated by Sheraton, is being built in a series of low-rise buildings on Molokai's west end. — Photo by Warren R. Roll.

West Molokai Development Nears the Halfway Mark

By Robert McCabe
Maui Bureau Chief

KAUNAKAKAI, Molokai — The west end of Molokai is undergoing a rapid change.

Once the undisturbed domain of cattle, wild deer and an assortment of game birds, the area is now buzzing with construction activity.

Scores of workmen, many of them former employes of Dole Co.'s phased-out pineapple plantation on the Friendly Island, have been laboring at an extremely fast pace in the construction of a 298-room beachfront hotel and an 18-hole golf course.

WORK ON THE project, which covers 136 acres, started in April, and as of last week 45 per cent of the construction had been completed.

According to spokesmen, the \$25 million program is five months ahead of schedule.

the hotel, to be operated by Sheraton Corp., can begin in March.

Completion of the project, sponsored by Louisiana Land and Exploration Co. of New Orleans, will mark the fulfillment of a 15-year dream to give Molokai the means of sharing the wealth tourism brings to the State each year.

AT PRESENT, Molokai receives a negligible amount of the lucrative tourist trade.

Development plans for the project were first drawn up in 1960 and formalized seven years later, but the project was not allowed to proceed because of a long and bitter controversy over whether such a development was proper for Molokai.

Strenuous objections to the resort development were first raised by Life of the Land in the belief that the project would destroy the Island's agricultural character, ruin its

property taxes and clutter the Island with unwanted visitors.

HOWEVER, ACCORDING to planners of the development, the resort is not being geared to compete with established high-density resort areas in other parts of the State, but has been planned as a low-level development compatible with Molokai's relaxing, out-of-the-way rural environment.

Buildings at the project site are no more than two stories high, and each has been designed to resemble a Polynesian structure.

In addition to the hotel and the golf course, the development will consist of a 10-acre public park at the nearby three-mile-long Papohaku Beach, considered the longest stretch of white sand in Hawaii.

Also, as part of the construction, the developer is required to build and dedicate to the County of Maui fully improved roads to Kepuhi and Kawakiunui, the area's two other



Walter Ritte Jr.

Says Ritte: Credit People, Not Officials

By Robert McCabe
Maui Bureau Chief

WAILUKU, Maui — Hawaiian activist Walter Ritte has accused Mayor Elmer F. Cravalho of "hogging the glory" in obtaining public use of Palaau Road on Molokai.

In a statement issued Tuesday, Ritte charged that Cravalho overlooked the efforts of the Hui Alaloa Association in seeking the opening of the 12-mile stretch of road that follows the coastline west of Kaunakakai.

Ritte said efforts by the group led to a demand by the people of Molokai for the return of the road from the Molokai Ranch Co.

The road, once a public thoroughfare, was obtained by the ranch more than 40 years ago and turned over to the County in a cemetery Friday.

Referring to the transfer ceremony, which he claimed took place in secret, Ritte charged that the occasion was "selfishly used by Cravalho as a political plum" in which Cravalho allegedly "praised the politicians and large landowners for being so nice to the community of Molokai."

"IT WAS NOT Elmer, it was not Louis Hao (the mayor's administrative assistant for Molokai), it was definitely not Loy Cluney (Molokai member of the County Council) and it was not the Molokai Ranch" who deserve the credit, Ritte said.

"It was the people of Molokai who opened that road," he said.

"The people organized themselves, working over three months as volunteers, and spending much time and money for research, and finally getting together to walk over six hours along the hot, dusty road in a demonstration aimed at making a wrong a right."

Ritte charged that Cravalho invited only a "select" group of people and held the transfer ceremony in secret "because he did not want the truth to be heard."

Ritte said the ceremony should have been the signal for "a great victory celebration" for the people of Molokai.

In responding to the accusations, Cravalho denied that the transfer ceremony was conducted in secret.

"It was not a secret ceremony and the public had been informed of the event," he said.

"In fact, although Ritte did not show up, quite a few of his friends were there, and I did make it a point to stress that the opening of the road was largely an accomplishment of the people," Cravalho said.