



TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Twentieth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

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President: Mr. John D. L. HOOD (Australia).

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Burma, China, France, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Italy, New Zealand, Syria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority on the administration of the Trust Territory of Western Samoa for the calendar year 1956 (T/1330 and Add.1, T/L.781) (*continued*)

[Agenda item 4 (f)]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Smith, special representative of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of Western Samoa, took a place at the Council table.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY AND REPLIES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AND THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (*continued*)

1. In reply to questions by Mr. CHACKO (India), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) explained the difference between the proposed Samoan citizenship and domestic status. The problem of establishing a common status for all residents was not likely to have been settled by the time a common citizenship was introduced. As long as a distinction in status remained, only those having Samoan status would enjoy the right to hold Samoan titles and Samoan land.

2. Mr. CHACKO (India) asked what was the total number of *matai* in the new register to which the special representative had referred in his opening statement (828th meeting).

3. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that he thought the figure was 5,317.

4. Mr. CHACKO (India) asked when the Legislative Assembly which was to be elected early in November would hold its first meeting.

5. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that, if possible, it would be convened in December of the current year or, failing that, early in 1958.

6. Mr. CHACKO (India) asked what was the division of responsibility between the member and the associate member of the Executive Council mentioned on page 156 of the annual report¹ in connexion with the portfolio of Secretary to the Government.

7. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that responsibility was largely in the hands of the Secretary himself, the associate member being a Samoan, appointed in order that he should have the opportunity to gain experience.

8. Mr. CHACKO (India) asked whether the special representative could state which were the seven departments or sub-departments of the public service, the heads of which were locally born officers, as stated on page 29 of the report.

9. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that locally born officers were in charge of the Police, Prisons, the Post Office, the Radio Department and the Land and Titles Court, while a sixth was the Registrar of the High Court. He could not recall the seventh department.

10. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked if the special representative could enumerate the issues on which the Legislative Assembly had enacted legislation during its most recent session.

11. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that he had no list of the laws enacted at that session at hand, but would try to answer the question at a later meeting.

12. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked to what extent the decisions taken by the Legislative Assembly were binding on the Administration.

13. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that, if such decisions were embodied in laws, they became mandatory, but if they were embodied in resolutions which were recommendations to the Government, they were not necessarily binding.

14. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that in August 1956 certain members of the Legislative Assembly had urged the adoption of a motion expressing its deep concern at the manner in which the affairs of the Territory were at present being conducted and stating that this implementation and administration of government policy should be in full accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants. Although

¹ Report by the New Zealand Government to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Administration of Western Samoa for the Calendar Year 1956. Department of Island Territories (Wellington, R. E. Owen, Government Printer, 1957). Transmitted to members of the Trusteeship Council by the Secretary-General under cover of document T/1330 and Add.1.

the recommendation had been defeated, the total of those voting in favour of it and those abstaining had amounted to ten. He would like to know how the Administering Authority had reacted to that indication that there was considerable dissatisfaction with its policies.

15. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that it was not quite accurate to say that ten members had expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's policies, since four of them had abstained. Moreover, the timing of the motion was significant: the executive power had been scheduled to be transferred to the new Executive Council the same month and some members had conceived the idea that criticism of former policies would make the new body appear more capable than its predecessor. The Administration had regarded it as a purely political manoeuvre.

16. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether a list of the reserved subjects which were outside the competence of the Legislative Assembly, was available to its members. He pointed out that one of the members of the Assembly, Mr. Morgan, had stated that he had never seen such a list.

17. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the reserved subjects were clearly set out in the Samoa Act 1921, which was available to all members.

18. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether, in accordance with the recommendation adopted at the eighteenth session of the Trusteeship Council (A/3170, p. 270), the competence of the legislative and executive organs had been extended to matters pertaining to the public service.

19. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the public service was still a reserved subject.

20. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked if there was any limit to the period during which the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General would continue to serve as officials appointed by New Zealand.

21. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) answered that there was no time-limit, since the question depended entirely on the availability of local candidates qualified to fill those positions.

22. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether any indigenous persons were being trained to assume those responsibilities.

23. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that, while no one had been specifically designated for that purpose, young Samoans and part-Samoans were encouraged to study both law and finance and it was hoped that some of them would eventually qualify for the two positions in question.

24. Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that at the August session of the Legislative Assembly the Attorney-General had stated that, if a district in the Territory requested authorization to conduct an election on a basis other than that of the *matai* system, it would be necessary to hold a plebiscite to decide whether universal suffrage should be introduced on a Territory-wide basis. He asked whether his delegation was correct in understanding that statement to mean that the Administering Authority would not give consideration to the possibility of introducing universal suffrage in a particular district in spite of the fact that the majority of the population of that region might request universal suffrage.

25. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that he assumed that the Attorney-General's remarks had

had reference to existing legislation; there was at present no legal provision under which a special election could be held in a single district. That did not mean, however, that the Administering Authority would be unwilling to agree to the introduction of universal suffrage in a given district if the appropriate legislation were passed. In fact, it had stated on more than one occasion that it would favour legislative arrangements making it possible to conduct an election on the basis of universal suffrage in one district only. It had discussed the matter with Samoan representatives, but the Samoan people as a whole did not appear to favour the idea.

26. Mr. ORR (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that as his organization had not had time to submit its comments on the annual report, his remarks would be of a general nature and would seek to relate developments in the Territory to policies approved by the FAO Conference.

27. FAO had been pleased to note the reorganization and expansion of the Department of Agriculture. The report mentioned (p. 53) the demonstration work carried on by that Department, but it made no specific reference to the organization and functioning of agricultural extension, a matter to which FAO attached great importance. It was to be assumed, however, that the part-time agricultural officers in the villages were engaged in agricultural extension work. The soil survey now being conducted should provide information which would be of value in connexion with future agricultural developments. His organization was also pleased to note the establishment of a fisheries section in the Department, a development which would perhaps enable imports of canned fish to be replaced by locally caught fish. The action being taken to implement the forestry policy formulated in 1950 was timely, since forests played an important part in any policy of land and water use. Finally, he had been pleased to note from the special representative's opening statement (828th meeting) that an officer from Western Samoa was to participate in the training course on co-operatives organized by the Danish Government, the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations and FAO. That step could be expected to contribute further to the development of co-operatives in the Territory, which appeared to be progressing in a satisfactory manner.

28. Mr. BARGUES (France) noted that the decline in the value of imports and exports in 1956 did not appear to be a cause for concern, since imports of certain major articles of indigenous consumption, such as sugar and meat, had increased, leading to the inference that the people's standard of living had improved. He noted that the decline in the value of cocoa exports reflected only a temporary drop in prices, since the volume of such exports had actually increased. He would like to know whether the decline in the volume of exports of such items as bananas and copra was attributable only to the more stringent control now being exercised by the Administration over the quality of exports and to the fact that there had been a period of drought, or whether it had a more permanent cause.

29. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that the actual output of copra had increased from 15,677 tons in 1955 to 17,154 tons in 1956. The decline in the figure for exports was merely a matter of shipping clearances: at the end of 1955 most of the stocks in the local warehouses had been shipped, whereas the stocks accumulated in 1956 had not been entirely cleared out

and shipped until January 1957. The drop in banana exports was to be accounted for in part by the fact that, as the drought had effected the taro crop, the indigenous inhabitants had consumed more bananas than usual and had therefore had a smaller surplus for export. There had also been an outbreak of a virus disease affecting bananas, which, he thought, the Department of Agriculture now had under control. In addition, the expanding Samoan population was pushing farther inland and was planting bananas in new areas which were less fertile than the coastal areas and river valleys to which production had hitherto been confined. It should be remembered, too, that the peak figure reached in 1955 had been phenomenally high. Nevertheless, the Administering Authority hoped that, as a result of the soil survey and the increased activities of the Department of Agriculture, production would again approach the 1955 figure.

30. Mr. BARGUES (France) observed that the special representative's reply showed that the situation was less gloomy than appeared from the figures. Nevertheless, the decrease in foreign trade in 1956 had adversely affected the financial and economic situation. Monetary circulation had fallen and savings had decreased considerably. He asked whether there had been other reasons such as, for example, withdrawals of funds by firms or individuals for the purpose of financing certain works or projects.

31. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) thought the fall in trade was the principal reason, though there might also have been certain withdrawals.

32. Mr. BARGUES (France), referring to appendix VI to the annual report, asked whether there were many indigenous inhabitants among the depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank and the Bank of New Zealand.

33. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that there were not many individual depositors. Villages often saved money for a time for some communal project, such as the building of a school or the installation of a water supply, but those were not, of course, permanent savings.

34. Mr. BARGUES (France) observed that previous reports had included a table giving the position of selected Government accounts, including the Post Office Savings Bank Deposit Account. He hoped that it would be possible to include such a table in future reports.

35. With reference to the table on page 35 of the annual report, he asked whether it could be anticipated that future profits by the New Zealand Reparation Estates would make it possible to continue the activities carried out during the previous ten years.

36. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) took note of the French representative's request.

37. In reply to his question, he said that owing to the fall in prices there would inevitably be some recession from the previous profits of the New Zealand Reparation Estates, now known as the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation. The profits made would be devoted entirely to the economic and social development of Samoa.

38. In reply to a further question by Mr. BARGUES (France), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that price controls would be maintained where necessary in the interests of the consumers. He did not think there had been abuses, but the system was designed to prevent them from occurring.

39. Mr. BARGUES (France) asked what had been

the result of the experiments carried out with various kinds of wood for making cases for packing bananas, and whether the Administering Authority had considered the possibility of using paper or plastic for the purpose.

40. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the experiments had not been very successful, but they would be continued. The possibility of using other materials had been rejected because wooden crates were considered more satisfactory.

41. Mr. BARGUES (France) asked whether the Administering Authority had taken any steps to train indigenous inhabitants in the technique of kiln-drying of copra.

42. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) explained that sun-drying was the best process if it could be carried out properly. The solution seemed to lie in the development of cheap kilns for hot-air drying. The Department of Agriculture was now testing a very cheap form of dryer which it was hoped villagers would be able to build.

43. Mr. KIANG (China), referring to page 40 of the annual report, asked why the Samoan Government had not proceeded with the construction of a deep-water port.

44. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that the only reason was unwillingness to commit the Territory to a large financial investment. The question was still under examination.

45. Mr. KIANG (China) pointed out that according to the annual report (p. 49) the New Zealand Reparation Estates owned some 32,000 acres of land. The report also said that approximately 1,200 acres had been purchased from the estates. He asked whether the 1,200 acres should be deducted from the 32,000 acres of land referred to and whether there had been any land transactions between the end of the period covered by the annual report and 31 March 1957.

46. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied to the first question in the affirmative. The land purchased would be divided among Samoan villages whose population had been growing too large. With regard to the second question, he said that there had been no transactions during the period in question.

47. In reply to further questions by Mr. KIANG (China), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the Land Use Committee had been asked to recommend in what way the land purchased should be used. It had also made certain recommendations about the rent or purchase price of the land.

48. The question of land for young men had been discussed at length with the Land Use Committee, but the Administering Authority was anxious to work as far as possible within the limits of the Samoan land-tenure system. The main difficulty in connexion with the formation of a plantation corporation was the system by which the land was under the control of the *matai*, who allocated it among different members of the family. Some of the young men claimed that their tenure of the land was not sufficiently secure to justify a large expenditure of effort. A scheme was being discussed whereby different lots of land would be registered in the name of individuals but within the *matai* system. Another difficulty was the fragmentation of family lands.

49. Mr. KIANG (China) drew attention to a passage on page 113 of the report and asked what where the main economic and social problems which called for

farsightedness and courage on the part of both Samoans and Europeans.

50. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the main economic problem was the development of the country and its production to meet the needs of the increasing population. It was something new for Polynesian peoples to have to plan ahead.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.

51. Mr. CLAEYS BOUUAERT (Belgium), referring to appendix V, table B, of the annual report, observed that it included neither landowners nor farmers and asked whether that meant that none of them earned enough to be liable to taxation. He noted that item 3 of the table was entitled "Companies" and wondered whether there were no non-Samoan individual farmers.

52. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) explained that under the customary system there were no individual landholders; all land was held in the name of the *matai*. Tax was paid on production and not on land by both Samoans and non-Samoans.

53. In reply to further questions by Mr. CLAEYS BOUUAERT (Belgium), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that some of the rubber plantations were owned by Samoans, the largest one by the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation.

54. The regulation prohibiting Samoans from joining business firms without authorization from the High Commissioner had been introduced many years previously to protect Samoans from the risk of losing their capital. It was now out of date and would probably be abolished shortly. He knew of no case in which a Samoan had been refused permission to join a business firm.

55. Mr. CLAEYS BOUUAERT (Belgium) noted that there was a tendency for skilled and semi-skilled workers to emigrate to work in New Zealand. It would seem to him that the new trades training scheme might not offset the shortage of skilled labour in the Territory but rather encourage the migratory trend to New Zealand. He would welcome the special representative's comments on that point.

56. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the Administering Authority had never felt that there was any justification for restricting the movement of Samoans to New Zealand. Many young Samoans went there because they wanted to see something of the world outside their islands. They usually tended to go after they had gained some initial skill which they could use overseas, but they were not skilled tradesmen. The latter were more likely to stay in the Territory because of the keen competition they would encounter in New Zealand. It was in the skilled trades that there was a shortage of labour in the Territory and it was those trades which would be covered by the new training scheme.

57. In reply to a question by Mr. SALOMON (Haiti), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the Samoan Government had discussed the question of an economic plan but the matter had not gone beyond the discussion stage.

58. Mr. SALOMON (Haiti) noted that the ten-year copra purchasing agreement with the United Kingdom Government would expire at the end of 1957. He would like to know whether any steps had been taken to provide for the eventuality that the current negotiations with the United Kingdom for a new agreement might come to nothing.

59. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that tentative inquiries had been made in other countries, but there was every expectation that the negotiations would end satisfactorily; the main market was in the United Kingdom and buyers there were anxious to purchase Samoan copra.

60. In reply to a further question by Mr. SALOMON (Haiti), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the self-help programme had been developed particularly in relation to roads, but it was also used to encourage communities to build their own schools and hospitals.

61. Mr. SALOMON (Haiti) asked whether the relatively small number of pupils at secondary schools compared with the number at primary schools was accounted for by the fact, stressed in the annual report (p. 97), that it would be several years before the standard of primary education in the village and district schools would allow all their pupils to continue successfully at a secondary school.

62. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that that was one factor in the situation. The educational system had not been placed on a satisfactory basis until 1946. It had taken some time to train teachers to a satisfactory standard for the village schools and the Administration had not had enough schools or trained teachers to enable it to bring all the children up to a secondary school standard. In addition, at present there were many children who did not go beyond the primary school either because they did not wish to do so or because they worked on their parents' plantations.

63. Mr. FELD (United States of America) noted from the annual report (p. 39) that Samoans were beginning to appreciate the benefits to be derived from planned development of the Territory's resources. It would be interesting to know whether their interest had been generated as a result of the land and research surveys and whether it indicated that a formal agricultural development plan was gradually taking shape in their minds.

64. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that the more enlightened Samoan leaders were increasingly coming to realize that a planned development programme was possible. The soil surveyor's experiments had shown them what could be done by a more scientific approach to agriculture and many of them were following the examples they had seen. On an individual basis, some of them were developing their own village lands on quite a large scale and the Administering Authority hoped that their example would be noted by others.

65. In reply to a further question by Mr. FELD (United States of America), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that it would be premature to indicate the main conclusions of the three-man financial survey team which had visited the Territory to investigate financial and banking problems and which he had mentioned in his opening statement (828th meeting). The team's report should be out at an early date.

66. Mr. FELD (United States of America) noted that, although domestic industry was virtually non-existent, an ordinance had been passed providing for the setting up of wages councils with authority to report on all matters affecting industrial conditions. He asked whether that was an indication that industrial expansion was expected.

67. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that some expansion was hoped for, but the wages councils

could also operate in the case of plantation and stevedoring labour and in the transport industry.

68. In reply to a question by Mr. GIDDEN (United Kingdom), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) assured the Council that the Samoan Government was anxious to tap all possible sources of revenue. A special committee had carefully examined all possible sources of tax income before the new tax system had been inaugurated and he would be surprised to know that there was any untapped source. The only group of persons, not salary earners, with incomes over £200, would be plantation owners and their tax was paid on their export crops.

69. Mr. GIDDEN (United Kingdom) asked whether the new fisheries section in the Department of Agriculture would have authority to control loans or even grants to local fishermen for the purchase of equipment, possibly on a large scale.

70. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) said that any large-scale extension of fishing would have to take place outside the coral reefs and would probably require the use of new equipment and new methods of fishing, since the Samoan people did not engage in deep-sea fishing at present. That was a field in which the Department of Agriculture would have to pioneer and give advice. A representative had been sent to the fisheries training course in New Caledonia. The next stage of possible assistance in the purchase of equipment had been briefly discussed, but no plans had yet been made. Something along those lines would undoubtedly have to be done in the future.

71. In reply to further questions by Mr. GIDDEN (United Kingdom), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) explained that the new trades training classes were in the embryonic stage; the premises and equipment installed for technical education were being used and the scheme would be developed further. At present it was not adequate to meet the demand for vocational training.

72. Mr. ARAGON (Guatemala) asked what was the relationship between the copra producers and the Copra Board, and what role the copra traders played as middlemen.

73. Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) replied that the traders had originally sold goods to the Samoans in return for copra and they had their trading stations all over the islands. They continued to buy copra in small amounts at those stations, to pack it

and bring it in larger quantities to Apia, where the Copra Board bought it and arranged to market it abroad. Broadly speaking, the traders acted as agents for the Copra Board in places where the Board had no offices. Prices were controlled and the amount which the traders paid the producer was fixed by the Government. There was a proposal for the Board itself to establish depots in the villages and to take over from the traders the purchase, collection and cartage of the copra from the producers to the centre.

74. In reply to further questions by Mr. ARAGON (Guatemala), Mr. SMITH (Special Representative) explained that the profits made by the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation were paid into a special fund from which payments for certain economic and social development projects were made at the discretion of the Legislative Assembly. Such monies were not considered a current part of the revenue included in the budget.

75. The Territory's reserve fund was invested in New Zealand Government securities, which could be sold at short notice. Such investments were required to be in a form which could be realized quickly, if necessary.

76. The Administering Authority would include full information in subsequent annual reports on the geological and soil surveys that were being undertaken.

Mr. Smith, special representative of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of Western Samoa withdrew.

Revision of the Questionnaire relating to Trust Territories: third and fourth progress reports of the Sub-Committee on the Questionnaire (T/1267, T/1327, T/L.785)

77. The PRESIDENT proposed that the Council should take note of the fourth progress report of the Sub-Committee on the Questionnaire (T/1327).

It was so decided.

78. The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the working paper submitted by the Australian delegation (T/L.785) setting forth a number of amendments to the proposals made by the Sub-Committee in its third progress report (T/1267). He proposed that the Council should refer both documents back to the Sub-Committee.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.