



TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Twenty-sixth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

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at 10.40 a.m.

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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of Nauru: annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 June 1959 (continued)</i>	
<i>Questions concerning the Trust Territory and replies of the special representative of the Administering Authority (concluded)</i>	29
<i>General debate</i>	33

President: Mr. Girolamo VITELLI (Italy).Present:

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

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of Nauru: annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 June 1959 (T/1509, T/1517, T/1518, T/L.963) (continued)

[Agenda item 3 (e)]

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

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

Educational and social advancement (continued)

1. Mr. VELLODI (India) noted the observation in the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Nauru, New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, 1959 (T/1448 and Add.1) that there was a certain amount of discontent among the Nauruans over the disparity between their working hours and those of Europeans. He asked if the special representative could confirm that there was no such disparity as far as positions in the Administration were concerned.

2. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the Indian representative's understanding was correct. The majority of the Administration's employees were office workers and they worked a thirty-six-hour week, whether they were European or Nauruan. Similarly, there was no disparity between the working hours of European and Nauruan teachers or other school employees. The sole exception was the Director of

Public Works, who was the only European in the Public Works Department and had no specific working hours, since as a senior executive he was on call at all times. The remainder of the Public Works staff worked a forty-four-hour week.

3. Mr. VELLODI (India) recalled that at the Trusteeship Council's twenty-second and twenty-fourth sessions, the special representative had said that the Administration was suggesting to the British Phosphate Commissioners that they should eliminate the disparity between the wages which they paid to Europeans and those paid to non-Europeans. At the current session, however, the special representative had said nothing further about the Administration's efforts along those lines and had even given the impression that it did not consider the disparity unfair. His delegation would therefore like to know whether the Administration had in fact tried to persuade the British Phosphate Commissioners to eliminate the disparity and, if so, if it had abandoned the attempt either because it had been unsuccessful or because it did not regard the situation as discriminatory.

4. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) referred the Indian representative to the statement in which he had explained the situation at the previous meeting. The whole matter was still under consideration and, according to the latest information he had received, the Nauruan Workers' Organization had stated that it was not yet in a position to proceed with its case in regard to employment conditions in general; the Administrator had suggested that the Organization should submit its proposals as soon as possible but had said that he did not think it would be wise to try to hasten the deliberations unduly.

5. Mr. VELLODI (India) said that he was not satisfied with the explanation, for it was his impression that the Nauru Local Government Council was clearly in favour of the forty-hour week and he could see no reason why the Administration and the British Phosphate Commissioners should delay any longer in stating whether they were in accord with that position.

6. Recalling the special representative's statement at the twenty-fourth session that if a qualified Nauruan were appointed to a post formerly held by a European he would be entitled to a like salary, he asked whether within the last few years any Nauruans had assumed such posts and, if so, whether they received the same salary as their predecessors.

7. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that there had been no such case within the past two years. The only Nauruan who held an executive position in the Administration was Mr. Raymond Gadabu, who was the Administrative and Nauruan Affairs Officer and as such received the same salary to which a European occupying that post would be entitled, less the expatriation allowance.

8. Mr. VELLODI (India) asked whether there had been any progress with the scheme of retirement benefits which, according to the 1959 Visiting Mission's report, was being prepared in conjunction with the Superannuation Ordinance that was to be issued together with the Public Service Ordinance. He noted that the Superannuation Ordinance had been approved by the Minister of State in 1952, and asked why it had not yet been submitted to the Local Government Council.

9. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that his only information in that connexion was that which he had given the Council earlier to the effect that the drafting of the Public Service Ordinance should be completed by February 1961. He did not know why the Superannuation Ordinance had not yet been put before the Local Government Council.

10. Mr. VELLODI (India) said that he had a few questions to ask with regard to educational advancement. Firstly, he noted that according to the 1959 Visiting Mission's report the Nauruans were dissatisfied with the Administering Authority's refusal to grant scholarships to Nauruans until they had completed the first stage of their secondary education at the high school on the island. At the Council's twenty-fourth session the special representative had said that the matter was to be discussed further with the Nauruan people. He asked whether those discussions had taken place.

11. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the matter had been discussed with the Education Advisory Committee and that the Administration had pointed out that the Nauru secondary school had been established because the Nauruan people themselves had requested it and it was consequently only proper that they should use it, a view which had been supported by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in the Pacific, 1956. The reason the school did not go beyond the intermediate stage was that there were not enough pupils in Nauru who could qualify to complete the final stage and receive the leaving certificate; hence, provision was made for those few who did to continue their studies in Australia. In the past, the progress made by Nauruan students who had been sent to Australia after completing their primary education in Nauru had been rather disappointing. The situation had been somewhat eased now, since some students who had not entirely met the requirements but had made a particularly commendable effort had been sent to Australia. Seven students had qualified for scholarships in 1959. Thus, the matter had been discussed but the Administration's decision was that the existing provisions with regard to the granting of scholarships should be retained.

12. Mr. VELLODI (India) recalled that at its twenty-fourth session the Council had expressed the hope that progress in the teaching of English would make it possible in the near future to achieve a progressive unification of the different systems of education in the Territory. He asked whether there had been any progress along those lines.

13. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the reasons for the existence of separate schools at the present time was explained in the opening para-

graphs of part VIII of the annual report.^{1/} At present there were no Nauruans attending the European primary school but the reasons might well be that, even if they had attained sufficient proficiency in English to qualify for enrolment, they felt more at home in the Nauruan school. The Administration felt that they should not be made to attend the European school against their own wishes. The important thing to bear in mind was that there was no bar to enrolment in the European primary school other than the requirement that the applicant should have a good command of English. It should also be remembered that the facilities available, the subjects taught and the quality of the teaching were the same in all schools. As far as the Nauruan secondary school was concerned, it was of course multiracial in every respect and a number of European children had attended it at one time or another, although in the majority of cases their parents chose to send them to school in Australia.

14. Mr. VELLODI (India) said that the failure of Nauruan students in Australia to make good progress might be attributable to the fact that they had not had an opportunity to mix with non-Nauruans at the primary level. If it was true, however, that the Nauruans did not wish to attend the European primary school, they should not be obliged to do so.

15. He asked whether the Nauruan language was taught in the secondary school and whether any Nauruan textbooks had been published.

16. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the Nauruan language had never been reduced to writing. The people themselves had shown no desire to retain their language, for they realized that it was not spoken in any other part of the world and that English would be more useful to them.

17. Mr. VELLODI (India) asked if the medium of instruction in the Administration school and the mission school was English and, if so, why it was that the pupils' knowledge of English was not adequate to enable them to attend the European school if they wished.

18. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) explained that the Nauruan language was used in the lower grades but that by the time the children reached the third grade most of their instruction could be given in very simple English. As they went on to the higher grades their knowledge of English naturally improved but it was only when they reached the final stage of primary education that they were ready to undertake a higher study of the English language.

19. Mr. VELLODI (India) observed that from what the special representative had said at the previous meeting it appeared that the Administering Authority was dissatisfied with the educational achievements of the Nauruans, who did not seem to be making full use of the facilities available to them. He asked whether the Administering Authority was giving special consideration to that problem.

20. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the situation was being closely followed by both the Director of Education and the Australian Department

^{1/}Commonwealth of Australia, Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Administration of the Territory of Nauru from 1st July, 1958, to 30th June, 1959 (Canberra, A. J. Arthur, Commonwealth Government Printer). Transmitted to members of the Trusteeship Council by a note of the Secretary-General (T/1509).

of Education, which, by arrangement with the Administering Authority, sent representatives to visit the Nauruan students enrolled in Australian schools in an effort to help them to obtain better results.

21. Mr. VELLODI (India) asked whether there had been any increase in the total number of Nauruan students in Australia since the previous year.

22. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied in the negative. The total number studying in Australia on 30 June 1959 had been forty, whereas the figure now stood at thirty-three.

23. Mr. GERIG (United States of America) said that his delegation had intended to ask several questions relating to pay scales, job descriptions and employment conditions, but it would not do so, as the questions of the representative of India had already elicited answers on those subjects.

24. Mr. DE CAMARET (France) asked for some details concerning the milk distribution scheme which the special representative had mentioned in his opening statement (1052nd meeting).

25. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the milk would be imported from Australia and would arrive in sealed cans. The milk would be decanted into disposable cups and each child would receive seven ounces a day, which was the amount recommended by a nutritionist who had carried out a survey on the island some months previously. The milk would be issued under the direct supervision of the teachers and the whole scheme was being co-ordinated under the close supervision of the Government Medical Officer and the Director of Education. The importance of encouraging children to drink the milk had been explained to all the parents. The Nauru Local Government Council had a sub-committee on nutrition which was taking steps to assist the Administration in making the scheme a success.

26. Mr. DE CAMARET (France) asked what was the reason for the control over withdrawals of money from the banks by Nauruans and what form it took.

27. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the control had the support of the Local Government Council and of the majority of the Nauruan people. It related only to money received by way of royalties, land rents and other payments in connexion with the phosphates. Where the balance of an account exceeded £100 the depositor was permitted to withdraw £5 per month; where the balance was between £50 and £100 the depositor might withdraw £3 a month; where the balance was less than £50 withdrawals of up to £1 per month were allowed. In special cases withdrawals might be made in excess of those amounts but only with the prior approval of the Nauruan Affairs Officer, who was himself a Nauruan. All payments to Nauruans in excess of £5 were paid into their savings bank accounts.

28. Mr. DE CAMARET (France) asked whether there was any medical examination of immigrants, particularly with a view to discovering tuberculosis.

29. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that all immigrants were medically examined before leaving their own country and X-rayed on arriving in Nauru.

30. U TIN MAUNG (Burma), referring to the statement on page 33 of the annual report that in addition

to the 350 houses built under the Housing Scheme, twenty privately constructed homes had been completed by Nauruans and seven were under construction, asked whether the seven houses, which he assumed were being privately constructed, had yet been completed. At the twenty-fourth session the special representative had informed the Council that there was no housing shortage in Nauru, but it appeared to the Burmese delegation that there was a considerable shortage of homes for Nauruans, otherwise the seven houses would not have been built.

31. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) explained that although the Nauruans were supplied with houses free of cost a number of them had preferred to build their own. Those houses were of course outside the Housing Scheme. Under the Scheme twenty houses had been approved by the Local Government Council; five were in an advanced stage of construction and three others had been begun. He anticipated that the twenty houses would be completed by the end of 1960 or earlier.

32. He emphasized that ample housing was available to the Nauruans. The additional houses were required to meet the normal increase in population.

33. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked whether the eighty-eight Nauruan houses which were to be supplied with electricity included the twenty privately constructed houses. He also wished to know when the special representative thought the remaining Nauruan houses would be provided with electricity.

34. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the reticulation of electricity to the eighty-eight houses had been completed on 9 March 1960. The twenty privately constructed houses were scattered through the island and he could not say whether any of them was in a village which was supplied with electricity. No difference would be made between privately constructed houses and houses constructed under the Scheme so far as facilities were concerned. He had been informed that if the supply of electricity was to be extended to other villages additional generating machinery would have to be installed.

35. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked for information about the subjects discussed and disposed of at the three meetings of the Education Advisory Committee which had been held during the year under review and what differences of opinion had appeared between the Administration and the representatives of the Local Government Council. The Administration seemed to consider that in the last analysis its views must prevail.

36. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said he had no copy of the agenda and did not know details of the items that had been discussed. The Director of Education stated that full information on all educational matters was always provided to the Education Advisory Committee and discussed in full and that all projects were discussed in advance. The Nauruans were encouraged to submit their views, to which due weight was always given.

37. It appeared to be the view of the Burmese representative that the wishes of the Nauru Local Government Council should be paramount, but he would suggest that the Administering Authority would be failing in its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement if it were to adopt such a course. While everything was

discussed with the Nauruans and their views were taken into consideration, the Administering Authority must be the final judge of the best interests of the people, and in particular of the children, of Nauru.

38. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) said his delegation did not insist that the views of the Local Government Council should always prevail but it did feel that the Nauruans should be trained in the management of their local affairs and particularly of education. That was why the Local Government Council had asked for more meetings to exchange views and ideas. It should also participate even in the technical discussions on educational problems.

39. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) pointed out that three of the four members of the Education Advisory Committee were also members of the Local Government Council, at whose monthly meetings all matters were discussed. Educational questions were usually brought forward by one of the Nauruan members of the Education Advisory Committee and discussed in the presence of the Administrator.

40. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked how many Nauruan private students would be studying in Australia in 1961.

41. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that that could not be foreseen at the present time.

42. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked the special representative whether, in view of the fact that Nauruans would not need to go overseas to obtain higher education if satisfactory facilities were available in Nauru, he did not think that the Administration should provide such students with free medical and dental care in Australia, as suggested by the Local Government Council.

43. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the scholarships provided by the Administering Authority included school fees, hostel accommodation, clothing and medical and dental treatment. Such scholarships were available to any Nauruan who the Administering Authority thought would benefit from studying in Australia. The Administration did not feel that it should encourage private students whom it knew to be incapable of coping with further studies in Australia by meeting their medical and dental expenses.

44. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked whether during the year under review arrangements had been made to allow girls from the Administration Secondary School to attend courses in commercial subjects at the Sacred Heart Mission School.

45. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that very few Nauruan girls had asked for instruction in commercial subjects but that arrangements had been made for the few who were interested to receive tuition at the Mission School. Should a sufficient number of Nauruan girls desire to take up commercial subjects, the Administration would provide facilities at an Administration school.

46. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) recalled that the Local Government Council had drawn the attention of the 1959 Visiting Mission to the fact that scholarship students, after studying in Nauru under the Victoria system of education, were sent to New South Wales, where the system was different, the reason being that close personal guidance and supervision were

available in Sydney from the head office of the Commonwealth Office of Education. He wondered whether it would not be better if one or two education officers from the Office of Education were to make periodic visits to give the scholarship students in Victoria the same personal supervision and guidance they would have received in New South Wales.

47. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the fact that students who had studied in Nauru under the Victoria system of education were sent to New South Wales did not handicap them in any way, for there were only minor differences in the curricula of the various States and students in any State were competent, upon the completion of their primary education, to undertake secondary studies in any other State. The same applied to higher studies. The students themselves decided where they wanted to study; although the Administration gave them some advice, no restriction was placed upon them. There were Nauruan students in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand. Officers of the Education Department in Australia visited the students and assisted them, in whatever State they were studying; arrangements had been made by the Department of Education to assist the Administering Authority in that respect.

48. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked whether the first fully qualified Nauruan teacher, who according to paragraph 49 of the 1959 Visiting Mission's report had been expected to assume the directorship of schools eventually, had been appointed to that position yet.

49. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) pointed out that there was a great difference between a person, Nauruan or otherwise, being a fully qualified teacher and being qualified to be a headmaster, let alone the Director of Education. It was unthinkable that the Nauruan in question should in twelve months become capable of taking over the post of Director of Education. With study, additional degrees, an improved knowledge of administrative practice and the experience of, say, the headmastership of a school, he might be considered for a directorship in twenty years' time. It was the hope of the Administering Authority that as time went on Nauruans would not only qualify as teachers but would obtain the degrees which would fit them for higher positions after a period of training.

50. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked the special representative why the Nauruan Senior Works Foreman, who, the 1959 Visiting Mission had been given to understand, was being trained to take over the European-held position of Works Supervisor, had not yet assumed that post, since the required period of training could doubtless have been completed by now.

51. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the Senior Foreman was presumably being given the requisite training but that a Works Supervisor needed many qualifications: he must be a fully skilled artisan in some of the relevant trades and must be able to set out and plan certain works and even draw working drawings to implement them. Mr. Jones was confident, however, that if the Senior Foreman took the necessary training and passed the relevant examinations, there was no doubt whatsoever that he would be given the appointment.

52. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) noted that the highest post held by Nauruans in the accounts branch was that

of clerk, and not accountant or even assistant or sub-accountant. He asked what steps the Administering Authority had taken to train the Nauruans in accountancy.

53. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that over the years accountancy courses, taught by qualified accountants, had been given in Nauru but that the response by the Nauruans had been such that the courses had had to be abandoned. The Administration was prepared at any time to provide any courses for the Nauruans that they were willing to attend. Opportunities had also been provided for some students to study accountancy in Australia. Moreover, if any Nauruan was prepared to take correspondence courses, facilities would be made available to him and paid for by the Administration. The positions of accountant and sub-accountant naturally required the holders to be qualified accountants; the Administration was prepared to give every opportunity and assistance to any Nauruan who wished to attain those qualifications.

GENERAL DEBATE

54. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) said that the further information provided by the special representative during the past few days had revealed that a few significant developments might have taken place since the Trusteeship Council's last discussion of conditions in Nauru, but it was clear that on the whole the Territory had not made much progress. The Council would have nothing new to report to the General Assembly and the recommendations the Council had made at previous sessions remained unimplemented. Many issues which the Council had raised and to which it attached great importance were still unsettled. All that could be gathered from the Administering Authority was that those issues were constantly under review, but the Burmese delegation thought that some important policy decisions should already have been taken by the Administering Authority in regard to Nauru.

55. The stature of the new Nauru Local Government Council was scarcely higher than that of its predecessor and the Administering Authority evidently considered that, as yet, increased powers and responsibilities could not safely be entrusted to it. His delegation could not say how long the process of instructing the Nauruan councillors in the art of self-government would take, but it hoped that, in a year's time, the Administering Authority would be able to inform the Council that the powers and functions which the Nauruans had been demanding had been granted, thus giving the Nauruans the satisfaction of proving to the world that they were capable of managing their own affairs. Accordingly, his delegation felt that at the current session the Council should recommend that the Administering Authority should take steps to increase the powers and functions of the Nauru Local Government Council.

56. The Administering Authority had just decided to appoint an administrative assistant to co-ordinate Local Government Council and administrative activities. If an able and sympathetic officer was appointed to that post, a fruitful new relationship would be established between the Administration and the Local Government Council, and the myth that the Nauruans lacked initiative or were less intelligent than other peoples would be exploded once and for all. It was a significant development that the Administering Authority had indicated that it had no objection to the

inclusion of Nauruan leaders in the Australian delegation and he hoped that some would be present when next the Trusteeship Council discussed the affairs of Nauru.

57. Now that it had established the nucleus of a legislature, the Administering Authority would have to take steps to set up an executive body. Unfortunately, the Public Service of the Territory continued to be reserved to Europeans, a colonial defect which he thought was more glaringly obvious in Nauru than anywhere else. The handful of Nauruans now assuming leadership in the Territory were performing functions beyond their physical and mental capacity and it was high time that a corps of civil servants and senior administrative officers was established. In order to ensure that there were adequate numbers of Nauruan cadets, it would be necessary to take vigorous steps to improve the whole system of secondary education. He could not help feeling that there must be something wrong with the Nauruan educational system, otherwise there would not be so many cases of failure by Nauruan pupils in the Australian secondary schools. The Administering Authority made no secret of the lack of qualified Nauruan teachers or of its over-generous attitude towards the granting of leave to expatriate teachers, which resulted in many schools remaining closed for long periods owing to the lack of staff.

58. The Territory would need doctors, engineers, nurses and mechanics; it would also need lawyers, and his delegation regretted that the Administering Authority had not been able to persuade Nauruan students to study law. It was unfortunate that no heed had been paid to the Trusteeship Council's recommendation that the executive and the judiciary should be completely separated. If law graduates were readily available there would be no reason why magistrates should not be appointed from among the Nauruans, but apparently the Administering Authority did not wish to encourage the study of law, possibly owing to the mistaken belief that lawyers were potential political leaders and revolutionaries.

59. In less than forty years Nauru would be entirely barren. Yet the all-powerful British Phosphate Commissioners, who were exploiting the only resources that the people of Nauru possessed, had not been able to accede to the Nauruans' desire for a revision of royalty payments. It was unfortunate indeed that the Trusteeship Council was in no position to establish whether the Nauruans were receiving a fair return and that, whenever it wished to make a comparative study between the price the Nauruans were receiving and the world price, the Administering Authority always gave the impression that the Nauruans were receiving more than they could reasonably expect. The Administering Authority claimed as a benefit to the people the fact that the expenses of the Administration were paid by the British Phosphate Commissioners. But surely there was nowhere in the world where the expenses of government were regarded as benefits to the governed.

60. The economic situation of the Territory was indeed unique: there was no secondary industry and the fishing industry, unless heavily subsidized by the Administering Authority in the initial stages, would prove to be a failure.

61. The Council had been told that housing did not constitute a problem; yet every year many houses

continued to be built by private enterprise. Whatever other amenities the Nauruans possessed, they continued to be deprived of electricity, the provision of which proceeded very slowly.

62. Different hours of work and remuneration continued to be applicable to different categories of workers and wages were based on the cost of living of a family unit consisting of a man and his wife, although, according to modern ideas, basic wages were determined on the cost of living of a family unit consisting of a married couple and three children. With regard to health, phosphate dust still remained a hazard. Although the roads in the compound of the British Phosphate Commissioners were surfaced, a start had only just been made with macadamizing the main island road and those Nauruan families whose houses did not border the few miles of road that had been dealt with would still be subject to the phosphate dust nuisance. However, the Nauruans would be able to participate in community programmes to improve their environment, provided that the Administering Authority encouraged them to compete with one another.

63. He regretted that the Council had not been able at the current session to discuss the various possibilities for the resettlement of the Nauruans. It was true that no hasty decision should be taken, but the Council would no doubt wish to discuss those possibilities at length and in particular to ascertain the views

of the Nauruans themselves. Even before any final decision was made, the Nauruans might wish to know whether they would achieve the objectives of the International Trusteeship System within the next four or five years. The only legal instrument on which they could base themselves, and which also bound the United Nations and the Administering Authority, was the Trusteeship Agreement. Questions such as the obligations of the joint Administering Authority towards the United Nations and the Nauruans, and the prospect which remained of the Nauruans ever becoming masters of their own destiny, would have to be squarely faced in the Council and the General Assembly and unless an answer was received from the joint Administering Authority by 1961 the Council would be failing miserably in its duty.

64. He desired to express his delegation's appreciation of the efforts made by the Administering Authority to promote the advancement of the Nauruans. His delegation hoped that the Administering Authority would make further efforts to reassure the United Nations that, in the discharge of its responsibilities, it had not lagged behind other Administering Authorities which had concluded similar Agreements with the United Nations at about the same time. His delegation also wished to thank the special representative for his co-operation.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.