



**TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL**  
*Twenty-sixth Session*  
**OFFICIAL RECORDS**

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**NEW YORK**

**C O N T E N T S**

	Page
<i>Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of New Guinea: 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 representative and special representative of the Administering Authority (continued) . . . . .</i>	181

**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: International Labour Organisation; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

*Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of New Guinea: annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 June 1959 (T/1514, T/L.967) (continued)*

[Agenda item 3 (d)]

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

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

***Economic advancement (continued)***

1. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) recalled the special representative's statement at the previous meeting that there was no shortage of land for subsistence farming in the Trust Territory. He would point out, however, that the Administering Authority's responsibilities went beyond the provision of a mere subsistence for the people of the Territory: it should be the aim of the Administering Authority to develop the resources of the indigenous people to the fullest extent possible, to bring those people a certain measure of prosperity, to diversify their diet and to ensure that they had proper nutrition. He asked the special representative whether it was the considered view of the Administration that the subsistence diet on which a majority

of the people of New Guinea lived was sufficient for nourishment and whether that kind of diet would, in the Administration's view, meet the needs of the people for years to come.

2. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that in all the areas under full Administration control or under Government influence the extension services of the Department of Agriculture had been active in raising the level of living of the indigenous people by improving agricultural methods and introducing new crops. In all those areas the diet was quite adequate at the present time; in some of the newly opened up areas the diet, while sufficient to sustain life, could and should be improved. He was confident that there was ample land, not only to provide sufficient food for the people but also to allow for the development of cash-cropping.

3. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) noted that according to the annual report of the Administering Authority<sup>1/</sup> the Territory had imported food to the value of £3,130,807 during the year under review. He wondered whether that food was intended mainly for the non-indigenous population.

4. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the majority of the food imported was consumed by the alien or immigrant population, which numbered about 15,000, and by the 43,000 indigenous workers to whom such food was issued as rations.

5. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that, in that case, some 50,000 people had to depend on imported food. That being so, he wondered how it was possible to claim that there was enough land in the possession of the indigenous people to meet their subsistence needs.

6. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) pointed out that the food imported included many tinned foods. The Administering Authority was making great efforts to raise indigenous production. As a result of the assistance given by agricultural extension officers there had been a truly remarkable increase in the indigenous production of copra, cocoa, coffee and other main crops.

7. In the areas under control, the indigenous population was now producing tens of thousands of tons of food a month and an ever-increasing number of cash crops. In the light of those facts he saw no foundation for the suggestion that there was not enough land available to the people or that they were not making full use of it. The fact was that there was adequate land available and that the indigenous inhabitants were making more and more use of it and supplying a growing part of the food needs of the Territory, as

<sup>1/</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea 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/1514).

well as the main export crops. There was sufficient land to allow that increase to continue.

8. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that for the present he wished to consider subsistence production only. The annual report showed that the imports of food included dairy products, fish and fish preparations, honey, tinned meat, tinned vegetables and so forth. In other words, the Territory had to rely upon imports for its basic necessities. The logical conclusion was that if the Territory was to produce the food it now imported, more land would be needed; if, on the other hand, it was to continue to import that food, it would have to produce more cash crops, which would require a great deal more land. It was a mistake to calculate the future land needs of the people on the basis of the subsistence level at present prevailing in the Territory. Hence he could not accept the special representative's statement that there was no shortage of land in the Territory.

9. Neither the special representative nor the administering Authority had been able to furnish any information on the rate of increase of the population. Moreover, it was stated on page 63 of the annual report that, while there was sufficient land available at present for the traditional system of subsistence agriculture, with an increasing population and the expansion of cash-cropping there might be insufficient land in some of the more heavily populated areas to meet the future needs of the people. Since there were no reliable data on the rate of increase of the population, and therefore no means of assessing its future needs, and no extensive survey of the land that was at present available, to say that there was no shortage of land seemed to him an overstatement.

10. He asked the special representative whether the commission of inquiry which had investigated the Navuneram affair had found that land shortage was causing concern to the indigenous people in that or other areas.

11. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) pointed out, to begin with, that the Indian representative was under a misapprehension if he thought that there was no land adjacent to the heavily populated areas to which the people in those areas could spread.

12. With regard to food production, it was the policy of the Administering Authority to promote the production of more and more food within the Territory itself; the steps it was taking in that direction were indicated on page 70 of the annual report. The people were being encouraged and assisted to increase fish production; the production of dairy produce was receiving attention; and the Administration was endeavouring to overcome the lack of interest shown by the people in animal husbandry. He had already explained the reasons for the drop in the production of rice for export, but the number of rice fields in the Territory showed that rice was becoming an increasingly important element of the indigenous diet.

13. The rate of population increase could be worked out from the statistics on the natural increase in the settled areas given in the annual reports. The Administering Authority was fully aware of the importance of having adequate land available to meet the needs of an increasing population and the Land Development Board had worked out to the best of its ability the expected increase of population, taking into account such considerations as the probable results of the malaria control campaign.

14. The statement in the annual report that with an increasing population and the expansion of share-cropping there might be insufficient land in some of the heavily populated areas referred to a shortage of land in those actual areas only. He had already spoken of the action being taken to obtain additional areas of land, which were being set aside in anticipation of the increase. A soil survey now being conducted would make an additional 38,000 acres available to the Maprik people; a reclamation scheme in parts of the Highlands, where the burning off of grass had been prohibited, would provide thousands of acres suitable for agricultural production; again in the Highlands District the drainage scheme in the Wahgi Valley, which had very rich soils but had not hitherto been used owing to the presence of the malaria mosquito, would provide many thousands of additional acres. He could therefore assure the Council that the Administration was aware of the importance of the problem and was taking very active steps to ensure that there would be sufficient land for the indigenous people.

15. It was his impression that the comments of the Commissioner who had conducted the Navuneram inquiry had concerned the hereditary system of land tenure rather than actual land shortages. In any event, the three schemes now being implemented would eventually provide the people living on the Gazelle Peninsula with the land they required for cash-crop development.

16. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) pointed out that the fact that there was a land shortage was confirmed by the statement made on 19 February 1959 by Mr. Paul Hasluck, the Australian Minister for Territories, that the problem of land shortage had been receiving close attention for some years.<sup>2/</sup>

17. He asked what was the ownership status of land which was at present being cultivated by settlers from outside the Territory.

18. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that part of the land in question was freehold to which title had been granted during the period of German administration of the Territory. Since the transfer of administration to the Australian Government in 1921, land had been made available to non-indigenous inhabitants on a leasehold basis only, for agricultural purposes, the term of the lease usually being ninety-nine years. Land was leased only if it was not thought to be required for the expansion of indigenous industry. All such leaseholds represented land which had first been acquired, with the consent of the indigenous owners, by the Administration; on the expiration of the lease, the land reverted to the Administration. When the indigenous population became self-governing, the ownership of the land in question would pass to the indigenous Government.

19. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) asked whether any land had yet reverted to the Administration upon the expiration of a lease and whether the Administering Authority had examined the legal position, in order to ensure that a future indigenous Government might not encounter any legal difficulties in the matter.

20. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that he had no knowledge of any leases having expired up to

<sup>2/</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), First Session of the Twenty-third Parliament (First Period), House of Representatives (Canberra, A. J. Arthur, Commonwealth Government Printer, 1959), p. 107.

the present time. Whenever a given lease expired, however, the Government then in power would be free either to renew it or to use the land in question for the indigenous population.

21. To his knowledge, no special study had been made of the legal aspects of the matter.

22. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) asked the special representative to draw the Administering Authority's attention to his concern over the question, with a view to enlightening the Trusteeship Council at a later date with regard to the legal situation.

23. He noted from the annual report that during the year under review 7,669 acres of land had been acquired by the Administration from indigenous inhabitants, 6,603 acres had been leased to non-indigenous persons and 1,263 to missions. A total of more than 300,000 acres was now held by non-indigenous persons. Since there were only about 25 million acres of cultivable land in the Territory, the Administering Authority should exercise great caution in the matter of leasing land to non-indigenous persons.

24. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) recalled his earlier statement that land was made available for non-indigenous development only when it had been determined that it was not required by the indigenous population. He hoped the Indian representative was not suggesting that there should be no non-indigenous development whatever in the Territory.

25. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that that had not been his intention. He had merely wished to point out that alienation of land at the rate of 7,000 acres a year was excessive. Instead, the indigenous population should be encouraged to undertake large-scale farming. The Administering Authority could provide important assistance by establishing model farms, like the one in Papua.

26. He asked what was the composition of the Land Development Board, whether it included an indigenous member and whether it consulted the local government councils or other local bodies of opinion in connexion with land distribution.

27. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the Board was made up of the Assistant Administrator, the Directors of the Departments of Native Affairs, Forests, and Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, and the Head of one other Department. It did not include an indigenous member. In the course of its work, it consulted not only the indigenous inhabitants of the various areas concerned but also representatives of the local government councils and of the co-operative movement. He could assure the Indian representative that it took the needs of the indigenous population fully into account.

28. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that he did not question the competence and integrity of the Board. Since, however, the indigenous inhabitants had demonstrated in the local government councils that they were developing politically, it was proper that they should have one or more representatives on a body which played an important role in matters pertaining to the land.

29. He expressed concern at the special representative's statement at the previous meeting that there were no plans to establish industry in the Territory. That was difficult to understand in the light of the fact that it had been necessary to import some £4 million

worth of manufactured goods the previous year. The resources needed for industrial development were available in the Territory and the necessary technical assistance could be provided by Australia.

30. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the Administering Authority was always prepared to encourage the development of secondary industries in the Territory, of which there were already a considerable number. If the fishing industry was developed sufficiently, canneries might be established. The main problem was that of attracting private enterprise to the Territory.

31. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that he was glad to know that the Administration was not opposed to the development of industry and he hoped that it would soon adopt a vigorous policy in favour of it. There were a number of items which the Territory should be able to produce at a relatively small cost. From the trade figures furnished by the special representative it appeared that soap was imported; as the Territory produced copra and other raw materials required for the production of soap he saw no reason why that item should have to be imported. What was needed was an assessment of the Territory's present and potential resources, after which the inhabitants should be encouraged to undertake co-operative ventures for the exploitation of those resources and should be given the necessary technical assistance and advice. Capital should then be sought from Australia if necessary. Forestry appeared to offer another promising avenue of development.

32. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) observed that the Administering Authority was actively encouraging the development of secondary industry and had published many pamphlets, for distribution in both New Guinea and Australia, drawing attention to the possibilities which the Territory offered in that regard. The recently adopted Income Tax Ordinance included a provision for assisting new industries by giving them tax relief. The value of forest products had exceeded £A2 million during the year under review. Furniture was made in the Territory from the timber produced there.

33. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) noted the statement by the Administering Authority, in reply to a recommendation by the Trusteeship Council at its twenty-fourth session (A/4100, p. 143), that it did not consider it advisable either to encourage the production of sugar-cane or to establish a sugar industry, because the demand in the Territory was too small and world market conditions were not encouraging. With regard to the first objection he noted that the Territory imported considerable quantities of such items as sugar, rum and sweets; as for the second objection, it would seem logical, in view of the unusually high quality of such sugar-cane as the Territory produced, that Australia might provide a market for it. He would like to know whether the Administering Authority had given the matter careful consideration.

34. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that it would be very expensive to launch a sugar industry and outside capital would probably be required. The Administering Authority therefore did not think it would be economical to try to produce sugar in the Territory at the present time. If, however, any outside enterprise thought that it could be done successfully the Administering Authority would assist it in every way. The over-production of sugar in different parts

of the world had necessitated the conclusion of the International Sugar Agreement fixing quotas for the sugar-producing countries. He recalled in that connexion that Fiji had recently exceeded its quota and had consequently been obliged to close down one of its mills. The Administering Authority would continue, however, to bear in mind the possibility of producing sugar in the Territory, just as it did in the case of other crops.

35. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) observed that sugar consumption was something that increased in proportion to a country's prosperity. Thus, although the Territory's current sugar consumption might be relatively low it was to be expected that the demand would increase as its economic development progressed. His delegation would therefore suggest that the Administering Authority should establish an experimental farm for the production of sugar-cane and then encourage the people to manufacture raw sugar for their own consumption, which would cost them considerably less than what they were now paying for imported sugar. Subsequently the Government might assist them in the establishment of a small factory, so that imports could be reduced and surplus foreign exchange earnings saved. The industry might thus develop gradually until it met the domestic demand. He thought it unlikely that New Guinea's sugar production would add to the surpluses on the world market within the next five or ten years.

36. He would also like to know if thought had been given to the cultivation and production of cotton.

37. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the Department of Agriculture had experimented with cotton in various parts of the Territory but that the humidity was such that it could not be cultivated successfully.

38. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) noted that economic development was dependent on the development of an adequate system of road communications. There was a statement in the annual report to the effect that the Administering Authority had undertaken a very vigorous programme of road construction, yet the statistical data on the mileage of vehicular roads in the Territory did not seem to confirm it. He asked if the Administering Authority had fixed any targets for the construction of roads in the Territory.

39. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the Administering Authority was fully aware of the need for road development and during the year under review had spent nearly £A577,000 on road and bridge construction, exclusive of a large number of bridle paths and jeep tracks proposed by the indigenous inhabitants and built by paid indigenous labour under Administration supervision. No targets had been fixed for the implementation of the road programme, which was aimed primarily at building roads in areas where cash-cropping and agricultural development were taking place. It should be noted that the cost of building vehicular roads into the mountainous areas, which were those that the road programme was now reaching, was enormous, amounting to many thousands of pounds for a single mile.

40. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) noted that the annual report, which described the four types of land holdings in the Territory at present, indicated that the 1958 Land Ordinance would be or had been amended.

He would like to know why that amendment was being introduced.

41. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that there had been no actual change yet but that it was proposed to encourage the indigenous people themselves to change their hereditary system of land ownership to one which would lend itself more adequately to agricultural and economic development and would give indigenous inhabitants the right to own land and bequeath it to their heirs. As he had mentioned at the 1076th meeting, it had been indicated at the Conference of Native Local Government Councils, held at Madang, that the indigenous inhabitants were now beginning to realize that the introduction of a new system of land tenure would be to their advantage. The matter to which he had referred in his opening statement (1073rd meeting), and which was presumably what the Bolivian representative had in mind, related to the principles laid down as the new policy of the Administering Authority.

42. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) observed that if the seven principles in question were actually put into effect they would bring about a significant change in the Administering Authority's policy.

43. In his opening statement the special representative had said that research by anthropologists and geographers had revealed that native customs and usage with regard to land tenure could not be transcribed in terms familiar in English law. That was hardly surprising in view of the primitive, and in some cases even nomadic, character of the communities in question. Hence it should be recognized from the outset that certain given areas belonged, whether collectively or on an individual basis, to certain communities. He asked whether the indigenous inhabitants whose rights either had not been registered or were protected by the Administration could dispose of their lands.

44. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that he would like first of all to make it clear that the Land Ordinance did not provide for the ownership of indigenous land, but it had always been recognized that, subject to any proof to the contrary, land claimed by the indigenous inhabitants was acknowledged as their property, and their rights in such land were protected. The Administering Authority's first step towards improving the land tenure system had been not so much to grant new titles as to determine who were the owners of the various areas of land, so that those areas could be registered, and the owners provided with a document, setting forth the names of all persons concerned in the case of collectively owned land, showing that their ownership was acknowledged to be valid. As that did not entirely solve the land problem, however, and as quite a number of people had expressed the desire for a change, the Administering Authority was now trying to persuade the inhabitants in areas where there was collective ownership to agree to divide the land among themselves. Each parcel of land would then be registered in the name of the owner and could be passed on to his heirs. Another important effect of the programme would be that the areas to which the indigenous peoples made no claim would be clearly defined, after which they could be taken over by the Administration for distribution, as it saw fit, to indigenous inhabitants to meet their expanding needs.

45. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) said he would like some further clarification of the problem. As he understood it, unregistered land did not create any rights. He asked whether that meant that there were in fact very few property owners who were entitled to transfer or sell their land.
46. According to a Secretariat study submitted to the United Nations Commission on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (A/AC.97/5 and Corr.1), there were in the Territory 58,136,276 acres of unalienated land, 518,490 acres of freehold land and 865,234 acres of Administration land. He would like to know what action the Administration was taking with regard to the occupiers of the vast area of land which had not been registered, for it must surely have some settled policy in that respect. Instead of seeking for rights which it might be impossible to find, the Administration would do better to lay down that certain areas belonged to certain groups.
47. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that there were very few areas of land which were registered and owned or leased by the indigenous people. Some areas had been leased by local government councils and a number had been leased to individual indigenous inhabitants. The rest of the Territory was owned by the indigenous people in accordance with custom, which varied in different parts of the Territory. Their ownership was recognized by the Administering Authority. The principles which he had mentioned in his opening statement were now to be put into practice so that all the indigenous-owned land in the Territory would be registered, either in the name of the individual or in that of the family, extended family group or clan, as the people wished. The new policy would not be imposed on the people; it would be explained to them why it would be to their advantage to have their land registered under the new policy in preference to retaining it under the indigenous system.
48. There was nothing to prevent the people from giving or selling land to one another. They could not dispose of their land to non-indigenous inhabitants but only to the Administration.
49. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) referred to the statement in the annual report that the ultimate and long-term objective was to introduce throughout the Territory a single system of land holdings, regulated by the Territorial Government by statute. It would be useful if the law to be enacted by the Administering Authority on the subject could be included in the next report to the Trusteeship Council, for in his view it was not sufficient merely to enunciate principles in connexion with a problem which ought to be definitely settled. The Australian law on expropriation and the law of the Territory administered by Australia should be identical, subject to certain differences for practical reasons.
50. He asked whether the wardens referred to on page 82 of the annual report had the duty of protecting the land rights of indigenous inhabitants as well as mining rights.
51. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the wardens were concerned only with mining activities and the administration of the mining laws. They would protect the rights of indigenous inhabitants who owned land within a mining field but had no function outside a mining area.
52. U TIN MAUNG (Burma), referring to page 69 of the annual report, asked whether the results of the survey of the inland plains of the Sepik District would be included in the next annual report.
53. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that he would take note of that suggestion.
54. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked why the soil of the Sepik plains, while apparently good for the cultivation of robusta coffee, coco-nut palms, peanuts, sweet potatoes, yams, taro, maize, fruit and castor beans, was not considered suitable for the production of cacao.
55. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the decision concerning the soil had been taken on the advice of the officers of the Department of Agriculture who had made investigations in the area. He added that they were persevering in their efforts to grow cacao in parts of the Hawn area, where a soil survey had been made, and it was hoped that those efforts would be successful.
56. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) noted that the Australian Government had exported 175,122 cwt. of brown rice and 68,953 cwt. of white rice to New Guinea and that Japan had exported 9 cwt. of white rice to the Territory. During the year under review there had been a considerable decrease in the production of paddy for local consumption. He asked whether the Administering Authority was taking any steps to check the decline in the production of rice.
57. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that, as he had already stated more than once, there were many other cash crops which were more attractive to the indigenous people, such as peanuts, coffee, cocoa, and copra. The reason of course was that the price of rice had dropped to a low level. The indigenous people were given every encouragement to cultivate rice and it had been pointed out to them that they should not discontinue its production merely because of the drop in price, which would no doubt be only temporary. Attempts had been made at the experimental stations throughout the Territory to produce a better quality than that which was at present available—which was already very good—in an effort to obtain a higher price in the open market.
58. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) asked whether the rice agronomist who was stationed in Papua had been able to assist the Administration in connexion with the cultivation of rice in the Trust Territory.
59. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) said that the agronomist in question had been carrying out research into the growing of rice and the improvement of its quality both in Papua and in New Guinea. As a result of his activities an improved rice was now being made available to growers.
60. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) observed that the Madang District was perhaps the only area where rice was the main crop, although even there there had been some reduction in rice planting. He asked whether the Administration intended to encourage the indigenous growers in the Madang District to concentrate their energies on the cultivation of rice.
61. Mr. JONES (Special Representative) replied that the Madang District was the most suitable area for rice cultivation in the Territory. For that reason the Administration's efforts there had been very

successful and the rural progress societies in the area which engaged in rice growing had purchased mills and built sheds where the rice could be milled. That was one of the reasons why they had continued

to grow rice, although it was true that their interest was waning.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.