



TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Twenty-sixth Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Wednesday, 4 May 1960,
at 3.10 p.m.

NEW YORK

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President: Mr. Girolamo VITELLI (Italy).	

Present:

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

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.

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of Western Samoa: annual report of the Administering Authority for the year 1959 (T/1512, T/L.966) (*continued*)

[Agenda item 3 (h)]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. McEwen, 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 SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (*continued*)

Economic advancement (continued)

1. Mr. JHA (India) recalled that in view of the excessive fragmentation of holdings and the fact that the occupiers held their land at the discretion of the superior matai, the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of Western Samoa, 1959, had thought that it must be possible, without violating the Samoan custom, to introduce the usehold system which would give the occupier and his descendants security of tenure as long as the land was properly cultivated. He asked whether that suggestion had been considered by the authorities.

2. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that the suggestion had been brought to the attention of the Samoan Government. In recent years there had been some matai in Savai'i who had handed over to the members of the family the full use, for the term of their life, of designated portions of the family land.

3. Mr. JHA (India) inquired whether there had been any statistical analysis in recent years of the rate of economic growth of the Territory, of the national income or per caput income and of the degree of inflation.

4. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that statistics of production were available for a period of about sixty years. As far as the rate of inflation was concerned, the cost of living index, which was published in the appendices of the annual report of the Administering Authority,^{1/} did give a slight idea, but as the great majority of the inhabitants produced the bulk of their own food, that index was not a very reliable guide to the true cost of living in Western Samoa.

5. Mr. JHA (India) inquired what was the present per caput income and if any increase was expected.

6. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that in the last year or two the income per head had increased because income received from imports had increased considerably.

7. Mr. JHA (India) inquired whether there had ever been any survey of the fishing resources of the seas around the Territory.

8. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that there had not, but that the South Pacific Commission could make the services of an expert available to the Territory for that purpose.

9. Mr. JHA (India) inquired whether the Samoans had been trained in deep-sea fishing and whether such fishing was likely to be encouraged in the future.

10. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that there were for the moment no facilities for training in deep-sea fishing but that the Government would no doubt very closely watch the work being done in that connexion in the neighbouring United States Territory of Samoa.

11. Mr. JHA (India) asked the special representative if he could circulate a paper on the development project which he had mentioned at the previous meeting.

12. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that would be done. The development programme covered such things as agricultural experimental work and extensional work in agricultural education and completion of the land utilization programme, land settlement, roads and bridges and water supplies.

13. Mr. JHA (India) asked what was the general pattern of the assistance which Western Samoa expected from the United Nations and other international agencies.

^{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 1959 (Wellington, R. E. Owen, Government Printer, 1960). Transmitted to members of the Trusteeship Council by a note of the Secretary-General (T/1512).

14. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that WHO was giving considerable assistance to Western Samoa. In the economic field, the Territory was receiving assistance from other agencies through the South Pacific Commission. The Administering Authority would examine the question of what other international assistance could be obtained for any of the proposed development projects.

15. Mr. JHA (India) inquired whether the Samoan Government had considered the 1959 Visiting Mission's suggestion that it might consider the appointment of an outside expert on community development.

16. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that the Samoan Government had so far made no decision on that matter.

17. Mr. JHA (India) recalled in that connexion that the Indian Government had offered two scholarships for training in community development. He went on to ask whether any consideration had been given to the possibility of diversifying the destinations for exports of bananas, which at present went entirely to New Zealand.

18. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) explained that it would hardly be possible to find another market for bananas, as most countries in that region grew bananas and the fruit could not be carried in cold storage for more than three weeks.

19. Mr. SHANAHAN (New Zealand) said that his Government and the Government of Western Samoa were most grateful to the Indian Government for its offer of two scholarships in community development. The offer had not yet been taken up, owing to lack of qualified candidates, but the Government of New Zealand would be in communication with the Government of India as soon as it was possible.

20. Mr. RIFAI (United Arab Republic), referring to paragraphs 35 and 44 of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (T/L.966), asked why the public revenue in 1959 had not been higher than that in 1958, as 1959 had been a record year of prosperity for the Territory.

21. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) explained that that was due partly to the fact that the revenue from exports in 1959 would mainly affect the tax revenue in 1960.

22. Mr. RIFAI (United Arab Republic) asked whether a special development department had been created in the Bank of Western Samoa to provide low-interest loans to the Samoan people, as had been contemplated.

23. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that that had been done. So far there had not, however, been very many applications for loans.

24. Mr. RIFAI (United Arab Republic) asked whether there was any idea of mechanizing agriculture in the Territory.

25. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) did not think that it would ever be possible to apply large-scale mechanization in agriculture owing to the volcanic nature of the land; but mechanization was being used in connexion with such operations as the spraying of crops to reduce diseases and pests.

26. Mr. RIFAI (United Arab Republic) asked whether there was any plan to initiate a system of individual

ownership of land. Could an individual own land in Western Samoa?

27. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that it was not possible for an individual to buy Samoan land; an individual could buy freehold land, of which there was a certain amount. He thought that the best solution to the question of individual occupation of land would be some form of lease. The fact that the Government had introduced that type of tenure on some Government-owned land would undoubtedly demonstrate the advantages of the system to the people.

28. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia), referring to page 50 of the annual report, asked the special representative what the attempt at "liberalising" had comprised, why it had failed and for what reasons the Administering Authority had not continued to urge a reform that it had seemed to regard as necessary.

29. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) answered that, as a result of the Administering Authority's attempts to liberalize the land tenure system, the Samoan people had for a number of years refused to co-operate with the Administering Authority at all; it had therefore been quite impossible to persist in those attempts.

30. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) noted that, according to page 51 of the report, the land used for plantations by the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation or by private planters was more intensively cultivated than that belonging to Samoan communities. He inquired whether the Samoans had profited by the examples given them.

31. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) thought that the fact that some of the matai in Savai'i had given land to untitled people in the family and had themselves undertaken larger-scale farming was attributable directly to the example provided by the Corporation.

32. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) concluded that the Administration indirectly recognized that there was insecure tenancy within the matai system. Could not the Administering Authority make the prerogatives of the matai conditional on the fulfilment of certain obligations as had formerly been done in the New World in connexion with encomienda?

33. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) thought that the security of tenure under the matai system was much greater than might be thought by some members of the Council. If a matai abused his authority, the injured parties could lodge a complaint in a special court, the Land and Titles Court. The matai were not at all a class of aristocrats; they were members of the families that owned the land; they were appointed by their families, and could be deposed by them.

34. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) asked if such complaints against abuse by the matai were common and what procedure was followed in lodging such complaints.

35. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) pointed out that ninety-five cases of that kind had come before the Court in 1959 (page 53 of the annual report). The complaint was not so much a charge as an application, which was dealt with in much the same way as any other civil application to a court of civil jurisdiction.

36. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia) inquired whether with respect to trade New Zealand and Samoa constituted what might be called an integrated market.

37. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that the marketing of the produce of Western Samoa was completely in the hands of the Samoans. Only in the case of bananas did New Zealand take the whole crop, for reasons explained earlier. During the past year New Zealand had purchased only 20 per cent of the Territory's copra crop and 10 per cent of its cocoa crop; the balance of those crops had gone to other markets.
38. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) doubted that the New Zealand market could indefinitely absorb the entire banana production of Samoa, and he asked if, under the proposed treaty of friendship with New Zealand, the Samoan Government would be able to conclude trade agreements with other countries.
39. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that, despite the fact that it was still a Trust Territory, Samoa was entirely in charge of its export trade. On that basis the Copra Board had been established several years ago with full power to dispose of the copra production. Certainly there was no question of depriving the Samoan people, by the provisions of the treaty of friendship, of its right to trade with whomever it wished.
40. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) believed that the matat system presented perhaps even more drawbacks from the economic and social points of view than it did from the political point of view. He asked if the Administering Authority was considering the adoption of measures in the near future to guarantee some security of land tenure.
41. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) answered that the matter was for the Samoans themselves to decide. At the moment they were wedded to the traditional system, but there were signs of impending progress in the land tenure system.
42. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) would like to know if the transformation of the Bank of Western Samoa had been accompanied by an improvement of the credit system.
43. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that so far there had been no very great operations under the new system of bank credit, but undoubtedly operations would develop.
44. In reply to a further question from Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France), Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that there had been some increase in tourism in the last year or two. Some cruise ships were calling at Samoa, and the Samoans were beginning to realize the advantages to be gained from such visits.
45. U AUNG THANT (Burma) would like to know whether the assistance of FAO had ever been sought for the purpose of diversifying agriculture, modernizing agricultural methods and so forth.
46. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that it had not. For the diversification of crops, Samoa could receive assistance from the South Pacific Commission, and there were some qualified agronomists in the Territory. Emphasis was being placed on demonstration plots in various localities. Some crops would be economically profitable, but the first problem was to interest the people in them.
47. U AUNG THANT (Burma) asked if preparations had been begun on the long-range development plan, which was to follow the short-term development plan to be completed in 1961.
48. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) explained that the long-term plan would be based on the land utilization survey, which was practically completed. The formulation of the new plan was exclusively a matter for the Samoan Government, but his Government was ready to make available any expert or technical assistance required.
49. In reply to a further question from U AUNG THANT (Burma), Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) reported that the fifteen-year development plan undertaken by the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation was proceeding according to plan; considerable areas of coconut trees which had passed the economic age had been replaced, and a large area had been planted with coffee shrubs.
50. U AUNG THANT (Burma) asked whether, as the Visiting Mission had recommended in paragraph 118 of its report (T/1449), measures had been taken to encourage the development of secondary industries, and whether low-interest loans or other incentives had been offered for that purpose to individuals or business enterprises.
51. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) explained that the granting of concessions of that kind depended entirely on the Samoan Government, which had been very reluctant to permit firms with overseas capital to start businesses in Western Samoa. However, an airline company had been formed in 1959, financed entirely by Samoan capital. The manufacture of cases for the shipment of bananas had greatly expanded, and the possibilities of processing the surplus banana crop were being studied.
52. U AUNG THANT (Burma), observing that coffee-growing offered the best prospects for the diversification of agriculture, asked whether steps had been taken to develop coffee-growing, and what was the area of land suitable for that purpose.
53. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that the Western Samoa Trust Estates Corporation had devoted 356 acres to coffee-growing, and there were also many small plantations. The Land Utilization Survey would determine the exact area of the land at present being used for growing coffee.
54. Mr. KIANG (China) shared the concern expressed by some representatives on the subject of land tenure, which threatened to become a very serious problem for the economic and social development of the Territory. Knowing how much the Samoan population remained attached to the traditional land tenure system, he asked what attitude the younger generation was likely to adopt towards the problem.
55. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) thought that some change might come about as the result of education and greater contact with the outside world, but the drawbacks of the present land tenure system were not as great as might be imagined, given the very close personal relationships existing between those working the land and those holding control of it.
56. In reply to a further question by Mr. KIANG (China), Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said he was sure that if the need were felt the Samoan leaders would not hesitate to take steps to change the land tenure system after Samoa became independent.

57. Mr. KIANG (China) asked whether any of the Samoan leaders had already been thinking that some educational effort should be made to prepare the population for such changes.

58. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) believed that the best form of education was example; the fact that some of the matai had already changed the land tenure system would undoubtedly have an effect on other matai.

59. Mr. KIANG (China) said it would appear from that that the resistance of the people to change was not as great as it had been formerly.

60. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to page 39 of the annual report, asked what stage had been reached in the matter of providing Samoa with a separate currency.

61. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that the Samoa Amendment Act 1959 provided for the creation of a separate Samoan currency on the decision of the Samoan Government, at any time the latter chose.

62. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether there had been any further prospecting for minerals since 1956, and what the Administering Authority had done to encourage such exploration.

63. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) replied that a geological survey of the whole Territory had been carried out, and it appeared that Samoa had no mineral resources of any commercial value.

64. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), observing that the rubber growing would be one way of diversifying the Territory's economy, asked why rubber production had been stopped, as was indicated on page 46 of the annual report.

65. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) explained that the Western Samoan Trust Estates Corporation had given up growing rubber because it had not proved to be an economic proposition, probably because it was impossible to introduce mechanization in most parts of the Territory.

66. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that in November 1959 the Territory's

Ministry of Agriculture had the intention of increasing subsidies to fruit exporters, in order to encourage exports. He asked whether that had been done.

67. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that at the end of the year substantial bonuses had been paid to banana exporters.

68. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether measures had been taken to combat plant parasites by means of aerial spraying, to improve the insurance system and to carry out a survey of transportation.

69. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that aerial spraying had not yet been started, but that the authorities had done a great deal to control insect pests and fruit diseases. An ordinance had been passed in 1959 to control a disease known as "bunchy-top", which affected the banana crop, and the South Pacific Commission was continuing to give assistance in the control of the rhinoceros beetle, which attacked coconut trees.

70. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), noting that all means of public transport in the Territory belonged to private concerns, asked whether the public transport system was efficient, or whether there were any complaints.

71. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that the various companies operating buses and the boats which plied between the two main islands were subject to licensing by the Government, which thus exercised some measure of control over their operations. So far as he knew, there had been no complaints from passengers.

72. Mr. USTINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he had noted from the report that indigenous inhabitants desiring to establish business concerns in the Territory had to obtain a licence from the Council of State. He asked whether Europeans were exempted from that obligation.

73. Mr. McEWEN (Special Representative) said that anyone who wanted to establish a business in the Territory, whether Samoan or European, had first to obtain a trading licence from the Council of State.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.