



Thirty-fifth Session

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 3 June 1968, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

Mrs. ANDERSON

(United States of America)

1. Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: Annual Report of the Administering Authority [4 (a)]
(continued)
2. Examination of petitions concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands [5] (continued)
3. General debate

Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e. the summary record, will appear in provisional mimeographed form under the symbol T/SR.1329 and will be subject to representatives' corrections. It will appear in final form in a printed version.

GENERAL ITEMS 4 (a) AND 5

EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (T/1680) (continued)

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/COM.10/L.7, L.8, L.9 and L.10; T/PET.10/L.12; T/PET.10/39, 40, 41, 42 and 43) (continued)

At the invitation of the President, Mr. William Norwood, Special Representative for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under United States administration, and Mr. Isaac Ianwi and Mr. Jacob Sawaichi, advisers to the Special Representative, took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: Before the Council proceeds with the general debate on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, I call on the representative of the World Health Organization, who wishes to make a statement on health conditions in the Trust Territory.

Dr. MALAN (World Health Organization): Thank you for inviting the World Health Organization's comments. The observations of the World Health Organization on health conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands have now been circulated as document T/1682. They are based on a study of the annual reports of the Administering Authority and on the report of the 1967 Visiting Mission. In introducing this document, I should like to call attention to a number of major points and to the main developments since the World Health Organization last submitted observations, to the thirty-second session of the Council.

It is rewarding to read in the outline of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, prepared by the Secretariat, that the Administering Authority is anxious to develop the public health and medical care services of the Territory, to improve the quality of those services in an orderly way and to extend their coverage throughout the Territory.

With reference to the obstacles which stand in the way of this work, I should like to mention the shortage of health manpower, one of the Territory's most crucial problems, which hampers the development of its health services.

(Dr. Melan, WHO)

It is also one of the problems pinpointed by the World Health Organization's report on its investigations in the Trust Territory in 1965, and by the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission in 1967. Education and training of health personnel is therefore a field where improvements and developments are most urgently needed.

A sizable addition to the health manpower of the Trust Territory has been made by the Peace Corps volunteers who, since the end of 1966, have been assisting the Administration in developing its programmes. It may, however, be noted in this connexion that the majority of these Peace Corps men are "health generalists", a designation which does not very clearly define their status and qualifications.

Although nearly all categories of health personnel show an increase between 1965 and 1967, this increase is still rather limited; nor can any spectacular result be achieved in this field in such a short period. Careful attention to a long-term trend programme, and intensification of efforts in this field by the Administration would therefore be of the greatest value.

The current attempt to bring the Peace Corps volunteers under the more direct control of the Health Administration and to integrate them within the existing services will greatly enhance their contribution to the development of health in the Pacific Islands.

To be pointed out is the relatively small number of qualified staff engaged in preventive as compared to curative services. It would also appear that most of the qualified health personnel is based either at Headquarters or at district centres.

Besides Peace Corps volunteers, the bulk of those working at peripheral levels is made up of health aides and village midwives; the latter are not government employees and the often insufficient skills of such workers are in many cases even further limited by poor supervision and lack of communications.

It is noted that undergraduate medical training at the Central School of Medicine at Suva has been resumed and that this school continues to play an important role in the training of doctors for the Territory. The intention to upgrade and extend the training given at the above-mentioned centre will, we are sure, greatly contribute towards improving the

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qualifications of doctors being graduated there and towards avoiding the production of various grades of practising physicians.

The acute shortage of qualified medical personnel highlights the urgent need to place greater reliance on nursing staff and auxiliary health workers. Unfortunately, the number of nursing students is increasing rather slowly, and it seems that there is no established standard for -- and little qualified professional supervision of -- the training of village midwives and health aides, which is carried out at the district level.

Mention is made in the working paper prepared by the Secretariat of the East-West Centre in Hawaii, which is developing a remarkable training programme for the benefit of the Trust Territory health workers, a programme which consists mainly of seminars and short training courses.

May I mention here the provision of fellowships by the World Health Organization, which has formed the bulk of our assistance to the Trust Territory in the field of education and training. World Health Organization fellowships particularly assist the development of public health activities, leaving the assistance given to medical curative services to those other agencies which are traditionally interested in this field and already providing aid. The World Health Organization also plans to assist in developing a training programme to prepare nursing personnel for the health services and to improve the nursing services in the islands.

In connexion with the valuable simplification and improvement of the channels of communication between the Department of Health and the Public Health services at the district level, carried out by the Administration of the Trust Territory, we wish to point out that the proper functioning of the health services at the peripheral level depends to a great extent on the support they receive from an efficient system of administration. A smoothly running machinery is essential for the orderly development of health services and for the implementation of health programmes.

The recent World Health Organization and United Nations missions to the Trust Territory have emphasized the need for a comprehensive, long-term

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health plan, providing for the systematic and organized development of the health services. To date no firm plan seems to have been formulated. It is, however, noted with interest that a Peace Corps consultant in programme and planning is attached to the Department of Public Health. The surveys currently undertaken by the Peace Corps to assess the status of the population under demographic and health aspects will certainly provide a very useful baseline for future planning.

Lastly, an ambitious construction and reconstruction plan in the field of medical care is reported, but the necessary funds do not seem to have been committed yet.

In conclusion, while there has undeniably been considerable progress in the development of the health services during the last few years, the intensification of efforts towards their further improvement through the implementation of a well-balanced health plan are considered a priority task.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to thank the representative of the World Health Organization for his statement.

We shall now begin the general debate on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. LIN (China): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to submit brief observations on certain aspects of the administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. At the outset we should like to express our appreciation for the annual report, which contains comprehensive factual and statistical information on the Territory as a whole. We wish to thank Ambassador Seymour M. Finger, the representative of the United States, and Mr. William R. Norwood, the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, for their opening statements, which together constitute a general review of the recent developments and current programmes in Micronesia. We wish also to thank Senator Isaac Lanwi and Representative Jacob Sawaichi, of the Congress of Micronesia, for their very thoughtful messages on the state of Micronesia, its problems and its prospects.

(Mr. Lin, China)

As we stated last year, the creation of the Congress of Micronesia is a great landmark in the history of the Pacific Islands. As its very first acts, the Congress adopted an official flag of Micronesia and designated 12 July as Micronesia Day. By these acts Micronesia has established itself as a distinct political entity.

The Congress of Micronesia has now taken a significant step forward in the creation of a Status Commission, whose responsibility it is to recommend procedures whereby the wishes of the Micronesian people may be ascertained with respect to the political status of Micronesia. It is encouraging to note that the Status Commission, which is composed of six members of the Congress representing the six districts of the Territory, has already held meetings and hearings on the future status of the Territory.

(Mr. Lin, China)

Meanwhile, the President of the United States has proposed the establishment by the United States Congress of a Status Commission whose primary duty would be to recommend the best means of ascertaining the free wishes of the Micronesian people concerning the future status of the Territory. The Presidential proposal, we are told, calls for a plebiscite to be held not later than 30 June 1972.

If it is assumed that a plebiscite is to be held not later than — and possibly before — 30 June 1972, and if it is assumed that the Micronesian people will then decide to be self-governing or independent, it seems a matter of great urgency that Micronesians should now actively participate in policy-making and policy-planning and that they should begin to assume more and more responsible executive and administrative positions. They must learn by doing, for executive and administrative experience can hardly be acquired vicariously.

At the present time, a couple of Micronesians have already been appointed deputy or assistant directors of departments; one, district administrator; three or four, deputy or assistant district administrators. It is to be hoped that in the very near future there will be one or more Micronesians appointed to such senior positions in each department and in each district. This does not mean that the standards of competency and efficiency should be sacrificed. It does mean that the department director or the district administrator must guide and assist his principal lieutenant in policy-planning, policy-making, and policy-execution; for, sooner or later, Micronesians must direct and manage the public services of the Territory, and they should learn to do so sooner rather than later.

In this context, we wish to express our appreciation for the frankness and earnestness with which the High Commissioner made the following concluding remark in his opening statement:

"Greater effort must be made to train, qualify and assign Micronesians to senior administrative positions. Some progress has been made in this area, but we have not given the training of Micronesians for administrative responsibility the attention and emphasis which it should have received by this point in time. We intend to correct this deficiency." (1325th meeting, p. 61)

In recent years, the Administration has devoted a great deal of time and energy to economic planning and district planning. The Nathan Report has provided useful guidelines for economic development, and an economic development division has been established within the Department of Resources and Development. Master plans for the district centres and the islands of Ebeye and Carlson have been prepared, and planning commissions have been established.

The Administration is to be commended for having drawn up the master plans for the district centres, under which the location and the construction of schools, hospitals, roads, utilities, and other public facilities would be properly programmed and co-ordinated; and for having established a new commercial jet air service, which could make Micronesia an attractive tourist centre in the Pacific. The shipping services are being improved, but not in large measure; the vast ocean resources remain to be surveyed and developed; farming and marketing plans have not as yet produced significant results. It appears that, because of the severe shortage of managerial and technical staff, various community programmes and economic projects cannot speedily be implemented.

We have been greatly impressed by the opening statements of Senator Lanwi and Representative Sawaichi. The Senator finds it disturbing that 26 per cent of the professional, technical and managerial posts in the Administration are vacant. According to Representative Sawaichi, one of the pressing requirements in the Territory is "a corps of highly qualified and motivated Micronesian civil servants". Both statements underline the imperative necessity of having Micronesian administrators, economists, teachers, physicians, engineers and technicians if Micronesia is going to be self-governing or independent.

We are aware that, while the Administration has devoted a great deal of attention to economic planning and district planning, it has by no means ignored the importance of developing the human resources of the Territory. In fact, one of the most impressive achievements in the Territory is that out of a total population of 92,000 there are more than 30,000 students in elementary and secondary schools and some 300 students studying in colleges abroad. The question before the Administration is whether the present educational system adequately serves the needs of the Territory.

(Mr. Lin, China)

In this connexion, we are pleased to learn that a new vocational school to serve all Micronesians will be established next year, and that the Stanford Research Institute's Report has recommended the establishment of specialized institutes, such as teachers' institutes, and of a Territory-wide college preparatory school. It is hoped that the idea of establishing a Territorial college is not entirely ruled out. Also worthy of consideration is the suggestion that an office of higher education should be established within the Department of Education, which would "match study abroad as closely as possible with manpower needs and opportunities of the Trust Territory".

In view of the pending plebiscite, there is no more urgent task facing the Administration than that of training a corps of professional men and women who will, one day in the near future, manage the public affairs as well as the private enterprises of the Territory and the districts. The Chinese delegation ventures the opinion that, at this point in time, the promotion of technical and vocational education and of higher education should be the paramount objective of the Trusteeship Administration.

Mr. GASCHIGNARD (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation has studied with great attention and interest the statements made last week by the representatives of the United States Government, which is entrusted with administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We were favourably impressed, in particular, by the frankness with which the Special Representative tried to give us a faithful picture of the situation, without concealing the fact that in some spheres of the development of Micronesia there are still shortcomings.

As I had said last year, it would appear nevertheless that the net result is definitely positive. The French delegation is indeed pleased to note that the administering Power, far from slackening its efforts, has again increased the volume of its financial assistance to \$35 million for each of the years 1968 and 1969. My delegation hopes that the bill drawn up by the Senate Sub-Committee mentioned by Mr. Norwood will be adopted, which would permit the Territory to receive, between 1970 and 1972, a subsidy which might amount to \$40 million per annum.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

It remains to be seen how those resources, as well as the unfortunately more limited resources of the Territory, will be used for its development.

The French delegation, which last year was hoping that the people of the Territory would be closely associated with the implementation of the economic development plan, was pleased to learn that the inhabitants had been consulted -- through local planning commissions in particular -- in the drawing up of the district master plans.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

However, Senator Lanwi complained, on 27 May, that the Administration, in its desire to move rapidly, was neglecting to obtain the agreement of the inhabitants. It is to be hoped that the constant desire to consult the people and to take account of their aspirations, which was mentioned by Mr. Norwood, will put an end to the difficulties noted by Senator Lanwi.

The question of transportation in the Territory is of great importance, and special problems arise precisely because of the distances which separate these islands scattered over large areas. The French delegation was therefore pleased to learn not only that air transportation is developing rapidly but also that a large Micronesian company, the United Micronesian Development Association, is participating in that development, since it owns 45 per cent of the capital of the new airline, Air Micronesian.

Of course, the American and other companies which work in the Territory should not be overlooked, but it is a good sign that the local interests are playing an ever-increasing role in its development; the United Micronesian Development Association, for example, has obtained a two-year monopoly over the purchase and marketing of copra.

Agriculture, fishing and tourism are, we believe, the principal activities which, at least for the time being, provide resources for the inhabitants. It is regrettable that the production of copra, the main product exported from the Territory, has decreased since 1966, not only because of a drop in the world prices but also because of the disorganization and ineffectiveness of transportation by sea, especially in the Marshall Islands and in the Truk district, as is recognized both in the report of the administering Power and in the reply given by the Special Representative to the representative of the Soviet Union.

This fact once again stresses the advantages to be derived from improving sea transport, and we sincerely hope that the limited hopes in this regard expressed by Mr. Norwood on 27 May will not be dashed.

To revert to agriculture, the report of the administering Power stresses that the returns are similar to those in a developing country. Hence, we can only encourage the administering Power to pursue vigorously the programmes it has undertaken to improve crops, particularly copra, which should receive priority since it is the principal resource of the Territory.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

As is also recognized by the report of the administering Power, fishing remains a resource which is largely unexploited. The efforts which have been undertaken since 1964 should therefore be pursued. In this regard the French delegation welcomes the fact that the contract signed with the Van Camp Seafood Company obliges that company to train Micronesian fishermen, and that the Administration plans to establish a laboratory for maritime research. If the funds which the Administration expects to receive from public or private sources are not sufficient, perhaps recourse -- in this one case -- might be had to assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

The extraordinary growth of tourism in the world, thanks to the jet age and the considerable increase in the living standards of many countries, is one of the striking facts of our era, and it would be a pity if the Territory did not take benefit from that growth. The French delegation was therefore pleased to learn that the contract signed with Air Micronesia provides for the construction of six hotels and the training of hotel personnel of local origin.

In spite of the efforts made since 1962, it seems, as the report of the 1967 Visiting Mission states, that a good deal remains to be done in primary and secondary education to achieve a satisfactory level. Of course, the funds allocated to education are sizable -- about \$4,650,000 in 1967 for the administration and the construction of schools; but it has to be noted that there has been no increase in these funds for several years.

The French delegation is pleased to know that a special effort will be made in technical training and that a vocational training school is to be opened in Palau in 1969. We approve of the importance given to the teaching of English throughout the Territory.

On the subject of public health, the World Health Organization, in its comments on the report of the administering Power, points out the constant progress being made. The French delegation is pleased about this, as well as about the appointment of a Micronesian to the post of Assistant Director of Health.

But efforts should be pursued to make good the lack of trained staff just mentioned by the representative of the World Health Organization.

On the social level, the entry into force on 1 July next of the new law on social security is welcomed. We also welcome the intention expressed by the Special Representative to establish a fund which would enable low-interest loans to be granted for the construction of private houses. It is apparent, in fact, that the situation with regard to low-cost housing is not satisfactory; this was brought out in the statements made here by Senator Lanwi. Moreover, in its annual report the Administration admits that adequate housing is seriously lacking in most districts, and it attributes this state of affairs mainly to difficulties in financing which result from the system of land ownership. It is to be hoped that the new fund, if it is created, and the entry into service of qualified land surveyors, mentioned by Mr. Norwood, will improve the position.

Before concluding my remarks on economic and social conditions, that is to say, the well-being of the people, I should like to say something about a problem to which, as we are aware, the people attach great importance -- that is, the settlement of war damages. Once again, we note the assurances given by the administering Power that progress has been made in the negotiations with the Japanese Government. We hope that these negotiations will be successful and that the administering Power will do everything it can to settle in one way or another a question whose solution has been too long delayed.

In connexion with political institutions, we have not noted any major changes in the past year. The powers of the Congress of Micronesia have remained the same, and the Micronesians still do not participate effectively in the executive branch.

The French delegation believes, as it did in 1967, that the representatives of the people should be more closely associated in the taking of decisions on the use and distribution of the sizable assistance provided by the United States Government. We believe that the exercise of budgetary responsibility is an essential part of the apprenticeship that is indispensable if one day the Micronesians wish to manage their own affairs.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

Mr. Norwood outlined various decisions and plans designed to make it possible for the Congress of Micronesia to play a greater role in the distribution of funds. For instance, the plan for the preliminary budget will henceforth be submitted to the Congress on the first day of its session, and a special budgetary session is planned for the beginning of the year. All these ideas are very praiseworthy, but Mr. Norwood himself admitted that he was not convinced they were sufficient to solve the problem of the greater participation of the Micronesians in the distribution of funds.

Of course, the representatives of the people can take decisions regarding the resources of local origin. We are pleased, in this connexion, that the Administration is anxious to increase the returns from local taxes by improving the collection procedures, among other things. We still think that it might be a good idea to provide for an income tax -- payable also by foreigners -- the income from which, even though small, would increase existing resources.

As the Visiting Mission said last year:

"... the payment of direct taxes plays an important part in developing political consciousness in the body politic..." (T/1658, para. 268)

We are pleased that Mr. Norwood, in a reply to the representative of the United Kingdom, pointed out that the time was coming when such taxes -- modest though they may be -- might be useful and that the levying of such taxes was part of the approach of the administration to the question of the development of a responsible community.

Another way of increasing the resources which the Congress might have at its disposal would be, as recommended last year by the Visiting Mission -- following a resolution adopted by the Congress in August 1956 -- that the funds necessary for its functioning should not be taken from local resources but rather should be provided by subsidies from the United States.

The composition itself of the Congress may be changed considerably during the forthcoming elections because of the obligation placed upon the officials now sitting in it to choose between administration and politics. This is an important problem with which it is well for the administration to be occupied, as Mr. Norwood has said, in particular by providing for the introduction of an annual salary for the members of the Congress. It remains to be hoped that the necessary funds can be set aside. In the same field the French delegation noted with interest the idea mentioned by Mr. Norwood, in a reply to Miss Brooks, that the Congress or some of its members could, outside session time, set up an advisory body which would look continuously to the smooth functioning of the administration.

By and large the French delegation believes that development should move towards an increase in the power of the Congress and a parallel decrease in the powers of the administration which retains an important role in the legislative field because -- in particular -- of its ability to exercise the right of veto, and because also the High Commissioner, who is not elected, has certain law-making powers in emergency cases.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

In the executive branch, the problem of participation of the Micronesians remains undiminished. In the present state of affairs, and since Mr. Norwood believes that it would be premature at the present time to think in terms of the creation of an elected cabinet, the practical objective would be to have an ever-increasing number of Micronesians take part in a cabinet made up of officials.

The French delegation was pleased to note that, as Mr. Norwood indicated in answer to a question which it put to him, the administration is aware of the need to give greater responsibility in the administrative field to Micronesians who have shown that they can perform their tasks properly in the legislative field.

The fact that a number of higher Micronesian officials, including Mr. Falcon, the Co-ordinator of the Cabinet, attend its meetings is certainly a good thing. But, as Mr. Norwood said, progress in the administrative advancement of Micronesians -- which is the only way in the present state of affairs to allow them to participate in the exercise of executive powers -- is slow because none of them has yet attained the rank of head of an administrative department.

As Mr. Norwood mentioned on a number of occasions, and quite rightly, a special effort should be made to train Micronesians in their respective departments so as to hasten their promotion within the administration.

The foregoing considerations and the fact that the Executive Council is made up only of officials does not, in the opinion of the French delegation, detract from the value of the recommendations of the last Visiting Mission, according to which the High Commissioner could, as a beginning, choose a number of Micronesians from among the members of the Congress or from the civil service to be included in the Executive Council.

The question of the training and promotion of officials brings us to the question of vacancies in the administration, to which our attention was drawn by Senator Lanwi. With his customary frankness, Mr. Norwood explained, in response to a question put by our British colleague, the difficulties experienced by the administration in recruiting. On the other hand, he stressed that the problem was less serious than it seemed because of the fact that a large number of vacancies are in fact being filled by volunteers from the Peace Corps, which of course reduces the seriousness of the state of affairs mentioned by

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

Senator Lanwi, although it may be felt a priori that qualified officials are better in the long run than volunteers, regardless of the goodwill they bring to the job -- which is not doubted -- and their ability.

It is only fair in this connexion to recognize that by sending some 600 Peace Corps volunteers to the Territory the American administration has made a considerable effort. Last year the French delegation stressed the need to give the volunteers training which would make it possible for them to acquire as accurate a knowledge as possible of the environment of which they must become a part. We were therefore pleased to learn that in 1967 the volunteers had been trained partly in the Truk District and that the members of the second group were going to be trained in the very districts where they were going to be working.

As regards the future of the Pacific Islands, the French delegation was pleased to hear the representative of the United States affirm that his Government was fully determined to permit the rapid exercise of the right of self-determination in the Territory. It was pleased also with the efforts being made at the present time to set up a "statutory commission" of the United States Congress which would be charged with making proposals concerning the future of the territory, including setting a date for a plebiscite which would take place by 30 June 1972 at the latest. In this connexion Mr. Sawaichi told the Council of certain differences of opinion and doubts which were manifested by the Micronesians regarding their future and, in particular, about the prospect of a plebiscite. We do not doubt that the population will be consulted fully in this respect because it is up to it, in agreement with the administering Power, freely to choose its status and to determine the conditions under which this choice should be made.

We know, moreover, that the Congress of Micronesia is dealing with these problems now since it also has established its own statutory Commission; it would be a good thing, particularly, for this Commission to look into the experience of other Territories or nations which have already attained autonomy or independence.

(Mr. Gaschignard, France)

No matter what methods are used to inform the population, to consult it or to lead it towards autonomy or independence, the French delegation again this year has no doubt that the administering Power, which has already done a great deal in the Territory, is anxious to continue with the task it has already undertaken by making it possible for the people -- whose representatives here described the hesitations to us -- to become fully aware of its possibilities and responsibilities by associating it ever more closely with the exercise of power and by informing it fully regarding the importance of the choice before it so that it can exercise fully, with complete knowledge, and without useless delay, its right to self-determination. We are confident that the United States Government will, by doing this, fulfil the task which it assumed when it signed the Trusteeship Agreements.

The PRESIDENT: There are no other speakers listed for this afternoon, but four are listed for tomorrow. Therefore we shall plan to have two meetings tomorrow, the first to begin at 10.30 a.m. If we conclude this item at the morning's meeting, we shall go on to the examination of the petitions. If we conclude the consideration of the petitions also in the morning, we shall not need to have a meeting in the afternoon.

Before we adjourn this meeting, I should like to welcome to the Trusteeship Council Mr. Theodore Kupferman, member of the United States Congress, who is seated with the United States delegation this afternoon. Mr. Kupferman has shown particular interest in the Trusteeship Council, having visited our session last year also. Mr. Kupferman is a member of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and is also a member of the Sub-Committee on Territories. We are very pleased to note Mr. Kupferman's continuing interest in this Council.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.