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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 24 May 1984, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. RAPIN (France)

Examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 September 1983: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)

Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite in the Federated States of Micronesia, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, June 1983 (continued)

Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite in the Marshall Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, September 1983 (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1983: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1863; T/L.1240 and Add.1) (continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): We shall now continue our general debate on this item.

Mrs. COCHEME (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation has considered very carefully the report of the Administering Authority to the Council. We have also listened with great interest to the statements and the views presented by the representatives of the Trust Territory whom the delegation of the United States has been good enough to include in its delegation. Finally, we have carefully studied the comments of the petitioners who came here, some from a great distance, to share their thoughts with the Council.

These various statements and declarations were of particular assistance to us in fulfilling the responsibility conferred upon us by the Charter of the United Nations as a member of this Council. We should like to thank both the representatives of the Administering Authority and the petitioners for the patience and care with which they answered our questions, thus making it possible for us to get a clearer picture of the situation in the Trust Territory.

Before presenting my delegation's observations on the economic, social and political situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, I should like to recall France's position on two points. The first, which is more formal than substantive, relates to the presentation of the report of the Administering Authority and, more precisely, to the statistical tables which every year are included as part of the report.

We wish today to remind the Council of our previous position, which I believe was endorsed by all delegations. We hope that in future statistics on the various entities that make up the Trust Territory will be presented in the form of standard tables and headings, in accordance with the rules laid down by the United Nations in their reference work World Statistics in Brief. This innovation would facilitate everyone's work and would, we are sure, contribute to a better presentation of the reality of Micronesia and the developments that are taking place there.

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

My second point is a more general one. The French delegation has noted that a number of the functions of the High Commissioner's office are gradually being transferred to the constitutional Governments. The French delegation welcomes this. Nevertheless, we would like to make it clear that, as we see it, the Administering Authority retains all its responsibilities with regard to the Council - that is, the responsibilities incumbent upon it pursuant to article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement until the termination of the trusteeship.

I shall begin my comments by referring to the economic prospects of the Trust Territory. One of the main objectives is to make it possible for the various segments of the Territory to be developed in such a way as to ensure for their inhabitants the well-being and security to which they aspire.

The lack of natural resources, a very small population scattered over a vast area and an inadequate infrastructure are all obstacles that keep the economy of the Territory in a state of weakness and dependence.

On the initiative of the Administering Authority and the constitutional Governments considerable progress has been achieved in removing these constraints. The French delegation has taken note of the development activities in the form of projects for investment in the Trust Territory. This applies particularly to transport and communications, the establishment of manufacturing concerns, including small clothing firms, and large-scale facilities - water, electric and solar power and the telephone system, where there have been improvements, particularly in Yap and Palau - and the development of a hotel infrastructure. Here I am referring to the hotels recently constructed in Palau and the Marshall Islands. We also welcome what has been done to promote the local building industry, as illustrated, for example, by the construction of the Kosrae hotel. This sector of the economy, because of its flexibility, the saving it makes possible in terms of imports and the employment opportunities it offers, should, in our view, play an important role in the future.

Economic development is not something that can be improvised. The progress registered in the Trust Territory is encouraging in many respects. It bears witness to the real potential of Micronesia once the means and the desire to realize that potential are combined.

France believes, however, that it is still possible to do more and to do it better. More means to us not just continuing the efforts initiated so far, but also developing new spheres of activity which will enable the islands to ensure economic growth, promote employment and reduce their dependence on external sources.

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

First, the financial and technical assistance lavished by the Administering Authority on the constitutional Governments in the most essential sectors of economic activity of the islands must continue. This means agriculture, of course, which should be in a position to provide the Micronesians with an increasing share of their food needs through both extensive and intensive action, but also infrastructure, which is especially necessary because of the scattered nature and geographic isolation of the Territory, and small industry, which should be part of the economic development of the islands, making it possible at the same time to reduce imports, acquire experience and train a skilled local work force.

Also, new investors who could promote the economic growth of the Territory and make possible a more sustained diversification of these activities should be encouraged.

Finally, it is essential to encourage and exploit fully the potential wealth of the region. Exploitation of the sea bed, fishing, solar energy, handicrafts and tourism should all be given greater attention in view of the considerable benefits which the Territory could derive in these areas.

Thus, a quantitative effort is economically possible and desirable. But that effort will not be as fruitful as it should be unless a qualitative effort is made at the same time. I shall not refer again to the benefit, both for the islands themselves and for all their possible trading partners, of a viable, operational statistical instrument.

Two other points seem to be very important: improving the maintenance of equipment and harmonizing economic development.

The Visiting Missions to the Territory have already drawn the Council's attention to certain inadequacies in the maintenance of local equipment. Our delegation is very pleased at the progress that has been achieved in this area. This effort, we believe, deserves to be followed up so that the investments which have been made may be utilized in the best possible conditions of effectiveness and yield.

The co-ordination of the overall economic development of the Territory also needs to be improved. It is undoubtedly essential to respect the competence of each of the elected Governments of the islands, but it appears to us that the institutionalization of consulting procedures between the various authorities involved would be a positive factor in furthering the economic development of the islands. This would avoid a certain waste, a certain overlapping, which Micronesia certainly cannot afford.

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

Initiatives along these lines have already been taken and France is very pleased at this. There are other possibilities, such as a standing committee or commission which would bring together a few times a year representatives of the various constitutional Governments and of the Administering Authority and make it possible to ensure the harmony and coherence of development projects.

The importance of these qualitative factors in the development of the Trust Territory leads us to a second point, namely, the areas of social progress and education.

Our delegation recognizes the noteworthy work achieved in both of these areas. Despite occasional tardiness the hospital installations have made considerable progress. We hope in this connection that the situation regarding the new Palau Hospital will shortly come to a favourable conclusion. Generally speaking, France expects that the Administering Authority will continue its noble and effective efforts in combating epidemics, as in the case of the cholera outbreak in Truk.

Turning now to the paramount question of human rights, our delegation is pleased to note that these are fully guaranteed throughout the territory. The intermingling of the different communities which live in Micronesia does not seem to give rise to any specific difficulty, and the absence of any manifestation of racism or segregation is both heartening and exemplary.

Furthermore, we are gratified at the respect shown for the rights of women and for the rights of the child, to which the United Nations has always attached great importance.

My delegation would like to make concrete comments on two specific points: as far as war damage is concerned - a matter on which the Trusteeship Council focused much attention last year - my delegation noted the hope voiced by the representative of the United States that this is a matter which will be settled before trusteeship is terminated and in the interest of all parties concerned. My delegation hopes that there will be prompt payment of the sums which still remain due, and we are sure that they will be made along the lines already indicated by the representatives of the administering Power.

My delegation has also taken note of the commitment of the Government of the United States, which appears in the Compact of Free Association, to reinstate the population of Bikini on Bikini Atoll. It is our hope that the repopulation of the island will take place in the near future, so that the displaced inhabitants can return to their homeland, where they will be able to live and work as they see fit.

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

The French delegation has already had an opportunity in previous discussions to remind the Council of the importance which we attach to the question of education and schooling. Here again, extremely serious, substantive work has been accomplished. We noted with particular satisfaction that a large number of students who have been undertaking higher studies subsequently return to the island. We believe this should be encouraged because we feel that it will be of major importance for the future of the territory. At this very important moment in its history, Micronesia needs all its strength in order to develop successfully. Particular care should be given to maintaining and increasing the number of graduates still remaining in the islands.

I should like now to make some comments on the political and constitutional situation in the territory. Last year was a very eventful one for Micronesia institutionally. In fact, apart from the Northern Marianas, which several years ago had chosen the status of commonwealth with the United States, various other parts of the Pacific Islands territory were asked to pronounce themselves on their future political status in 1983.

The inhabitants of the Palau Islands voted through referendum on 10 February 1983, as did the people of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, who expressed their options respectively on 21 June and 7 September of last year.

In the course of these consultations, we should like to remind the Council that the ballots given to the electors contained a number of different choices, not only on the status of independence but also the possibility of closer association with the United States. Therefore, in these referendums on self-determination, the electors were able to choose their political future.

My delegation participated in the observer missions which were held on the various referendums in the Palau Islands, in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Our representative was thus able to observe the electoral campaigns, to listen to the political education programmes, to see that the electors were properly informed on the various choices before them and the consequences which would derive therefrom, and finally to ensure that the democratic process should be carried out properly.

My delegation was very pleased to note the unanimous conclusions reached by the States Members of the United Nations which made up the Visiting Missions, namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom and France.

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

The results of these referendums, in the case of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, led to the adoption of the status of free association between these islands and the United States. We noted that the free association agreements were now before the Congress of the United States.

As we have already had occasion to indicate, the question of the future political status of the Palau Islands has not yet been settled. In fact, if, during the balloting of February 1983 the question of the status of free association received a majority of votes, the second question, namely, the "nuclear question", did not obtain 75 per cent of the votes required under the Palau Constitution.

The Visiting Mission expressed the following opinion in this connection:

"... The Compact has been approved by the people of Palau but cannot enter into force because of the insufficient number of votes in favour of question B of proposition one. ..." (T/1851, para. 135 (d))

The Supreme Court of Palau, in considering this matter, concluded that the Compact of Free Association had, in fact, been rejected by the populations concerned.

We would like to remind the Council that it is essential for the Governments of the United States and the Palau Islands to find a mutually acceptable solution to the problem involved in the rejection by the Palauans of the conditions surrounding the coming into force of the Compact of Free Association.

We were pleased to note the statements made by the Administering Authority to the effect that negotiations on the future status of Palau are still in progress. It is our earnest hope that these discussions will lead to the devising of a positive solution satisfactory to all parties concerned.

My delegation also took due note of the desire frequently expressed by representatives of the constitutional governments during discussions in this Council that trusteeship be terminated as quickly as possible. My delegation shares the concerns expressed by those governments. We would like to remind the Council of our position today. It is our hope that an end will be put to the trusteeship status as soon as possible while respecting the will of the local populations and in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, particularly those of Article 83, which state:

"All functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas, including the approval of the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement and of their alteration or amendment, shall be exercised by the Security Council."

(Mrs. Cochemé, France)

In conclusion, may I stress the importance my delegation attaches to this fifty-first session of the Council. The Trust Territory is quite obviously about to undergo a political, economic and social transformation, which has to be undertaken with competence and wisdom, and with but one objective, the interests of the Micronesian people, which, in any event, should remain the master of its future.

This people has been able, in the course of the years, to develop a maturity and a will which has been amply illustrated by the competent and active presence of its representatives during our work. It is up to the members of the Council to respond to these hopes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Trusteeship Agreement. This is the responsibility which the French delegation has assumed and will continue to assume.

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I should like to begin my statement by thanking the Administering Authority for the answers to the many questions we have put to it over the past few days. I should also like to thank the many petitioners who have given up their time to speak before this Council. I would like to assure them that their petitions are appreciated; they form a very important part of our work and contribute greatly to our understanding of the problems facing the Trust Territory. I am particularly grateful to the Micronesian petitioners who have come so far to speak to us. Their participation in the work of this Council is a testimony to their commitment and to their sincerity, which we greatly admire.

I speak from experience, Sir, when I say that one of the advantages of being President of this Council is that it provides an opportunity for reflection. Last year, while holding the position you now occupy and listening to the many statements made, I found myself wondering whether diplomats were not at a disadvantage in dealing with concrete issues involving directly the livelihood of people and the land on which they live. In most committees of the United Nations we work towards a common, but essentially abstract, objective: for example disarmament, economic development, decolonization, respect for human rights. But with the Trust Territory we are not dealing with abstractions; we are dealing very directly with people and their very basic problems. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that in our discussion here the needs of the people of the Trust Territory seem frequently to become subordinated to what I would term United Nations mythology, and that our efforts at seeking out the truth, as one petitioner this year exhorted us to do, tend often to degenerate into exchanges based on pre-conceived and highly theoretical models of political and economic development.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

I hope the Soviet delegation will not mind if I take the statement which was made yesterday in the general debate by its leader to illustrate my point. I would like to consider for a few minutes the two central themes of his statement, which were also the themes of several Soviet statements last year and with which I disagree profoundly.

The first is the charge that the Administering Authority has deliberately divided up the Trust Territory in order more easily to effect its colonialist aims. The second is that it has compounded this crime by militarizing the islands in order to promote its imperialistic objectives. We have heard, as I say, these particular themes on very many occasions in this Council chamber, and I have no doubt that they are propounded very sincerely by the delegation of the Soviet Union. But these assertions merit examination because - if my Soviet colleague will forgive me - I think they exemplify just how far we have got from the real task of this Council and how far we are sometimes drawn away from consideration of the practical problems of trusteeship into highly speculative theorizing.

I take first, the theme that the Americans have divided and now rule. It is of course perfectly true that what was originally one Territory now consists of four separately administered constitutional entities. We have always taken the view that it would have been better had the Micronesians decided to face the future as one united federation. I think all of us in this Council would agree to that extent with my Soviet colleague. But my delegation takes a further step and recognizes and accepts that it was the will of the people that charted the course they have now chosen - to divide the country into four.

The United States role in this process was to ensure that the people of the Trust Territory had the opportunity to discuss, to debate and to decide freely for themselves what they, the people, wanted, and thereafter the United States role was to encourage them in whatever path they selected. It seems to me that the proof that this was the process, and not some preconceived, Machiavellian American plot, is the picture we have today: one entity has opted for Commonwealth status, two others have endorsed a Compact of Free Association and yet a fourth still has doubts about its future status. In my view, this is an untidy and, on the face of it, exceedingly unsatisfactory situation which, far from helping the United States pursue its allegedly nefarious objectives, can only have made life a lot more difficult for it. We can perhaps conclude that administrative messiness is the price one sometimes has to pay for upholding democratic freedom and allowing people to determine their own future.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

What we have seen, therefore, is precisely the opposite of what my Soviet colleague asserts. The Administering Authority has not imposed what he would call its "colonialist ambitions" on the people of the Trust Territory. On the contrary, it is the people of the Trust Territory themselves who have chosen, in freely conducted plebiscites, to divide the Trust Territory in accordance with their own wishes. And they have done so in accordance with the principles and rights outlined in the United Nations Charter, which we all seek to support.

So, despite our reservations about the practical effect of the people's choice, we are delighted at this example of the triumph of the democratic process. It is no real criticism of the Soviet representatives when I say that they have obviously not understood this process. The Soviet delegation suffers from the dual disadvantage of having no experience of a political system in which the individual will is not subordinated to the higher interests of the State and of not having been to the Trust Territory to see and hear for themselves.

Anyone who goes to Micronesia is struck very forcibly by the immense distances between the islands and atolls and by the cultural and linguistic differences to be found there. We should not therefore be surprised for one second that these differences have led to political and constitutional differences between the various island groups. Perhaps I might once more suggest to my Soviet colleagues that they should join the Visiting Missions to the Trust Territory. There is nothing better than to see for yourself.

The second theme of my Soviet colleague, repeated often at each session of the Council, is the militarization of the Trust Territory. Now, anyone who has visited the Trust Territory, as I have, does not need to consult the United States High Commissioner in Saipan or the Pentagon in Washington to see that the number of United States military personnel in the Trust Territory is minute. Such military personnel as are there are engaged almost exclusively in public infrastructure projects, for example the civic action groups which were mentioned in our discussion yesterday. I understand that the total number of United States military servicemen in the Territory amounts to less than 100, and this in an area larger than that of the United States. If this is militarization, it is surely an extraordinary Orwellian distortion of the word.

I sensed the same thinking when earlier in this session the leader of the Soviet delegation informed the Council that I had once been part of a "colonial military" administration in Tanganyika. As I explained, the military element in

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Tanganyika consisted of a few hundred not very well armed, local, not British, troops, in an area the size of France and West Germany combined. If those two examples are examples of militarization, then all of us who work for peace should perhaps like to have rather more of it.

So why is this theory advanced as a central plank in the Soviet speeches in the Council? It is not easy to understand. Perhaps it is because the Trust Territory does not fit into the Marxist-Leninist theory of colonialism. The United States relation with Micronesia is clearly not one of colonial exploitation. How could it be? There is so little in Micronesia to exploit. Another stick must perhaps, therefore, be found with which to beat the imperialist Power and militarization conveniently fits the bill. But, again, it is a theory that completely ignores what should be our main concern in this Council, namely the people of the Trust Territory. In so far as the people's interests are concerned, it is well to point out that what is perhaps the only military facility in the Trusteeship Territory, namely the missile tracking station in Kwajalein, in fact provides much-needed employment and foreign revenue. In short, it brings with it social benefits, and that is why people go to live and work there. This in turn brings with it social costs such as the appalling overcrowding on Ebeye Island.

What is it in fact that the United States is trying to do with Micronesia in the field of defence? As I understand it, it is, by means of the strategic denial clauses in the Compact of Free Association, to keep the area as it is now, free from militarization and, in effect, an area of peace, isolated from the tensions of conflict elsewhere in the world. All of us who visit Micronesia know this is what the situation is today.

I should now like to turn to the question of economic and social development. There has never been anything quite like the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Administering Authority is faced with immense difficulties in applying traditional models of economic development to the area. The Territory has virtually no natural resources. The population is tiny; distances between islands are enormous; communications are bad. In short, the Territory has all the problems of the small island territories of the Caribbean - many of which were of course British dependent territories, and so we understand the problems - magnified many times over.

We have already talked about the decision of the islanders to go their separate constitutional ways. This has not made the problems of economic

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development any easier. Moreover, it always seems to me that the United States, perhaps because of its basic historical antipathy towards colonial administration, sought at the outset to divest itself of political and economic responsibility and to decentralize control to the islands themselves. As my United States colleagues will know from what I have said, both privately and in this Council, in the course of this session, we in the United Kingdom would not have done it that way. Indeed, many of the problems we see in the Trust Territory today, namely, its lack of inward investment, poor social amenities, inadequate economic structure and incoherent development planning, can be traced to this lack of concentrated control and co-ordination. But we do not wish to question the way in which the United States tackled the problem. That was its own decision and one made in good faith with the best interests of the Territory at heart.

But, however one thinks the matter should have been handled, it seems to me that the United States had at the very outset two choices with regard to the Territory: either to commit relatively small amounts of money, which would have meant that the Territory developed at a very slow pace and managed only to have a very low standard of living; or to pump in large sums of money in the hope that this would compensate for the Territory's disadvantages. The United States, of course, chose the latter. This comes as no surprise to a European delegation which benefited from the enormous financial injection of the Marshall Aid Plan after the Second World War. We have always known that the American people are amongst the most generous in the world. Add to that a certain feeling about colonialism, indeed, a sense of shame at the backwardness of the Trust Territory: and the desire to "do something", and to be seen to be doing it, must have been very strong.

It is clear from the many United States petitioners who have written to or who have spoken before this Council that American sentiments are equally strong today. The problem, however, was that large injections of financial assistance created a sort of artificial prosperity, a somewhat dependent economy which, I fear, may perhaps sometimes have a debilitating effect on local initiative. This is not a criticism, merely an observation. It is ironic that the United States is often criticized for not doing enough for the Territory in the economic field. From what I have said, I hope it will not sound too insensitive if I suggest that in some senses, through the pumping in of large quantities of dollars, it may have done too much.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

Let me elaborate on that. When one visits Micronesia, as I have on two occasions, one realizes that one is not dealing with an unprosperous society. The developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa, coping as they do with recurrent attacks of famine, drought and disease, have it much worse. By comparison with the peoples of those countries, the people of Micronesia are extraordinarily healthy and well-fed. The shops and supermarkets are full. People have money for leisure. I have a lasting memory of the gentleman who swept the hotel where I was staying in Ponape who seemed possessed with an endless supply of quarters with which to prime the jukebox so as to have music while he worked. But, at the same time, one cannot escape a general feeling of backwardness, of uncertainty about the future, of being suspended in a cultural vacuum, that is partly a consequence of the dependent relationship with the United States. It is distressing, for example, for a foreigner to see the beautiful island children drinking artificially flavoured lemon and lime sodas while watching 1950s Hollywood soap operas on the closed-circuit television. It is distressing to see the beer cans scattered indiscriminately all over the islands, and indeed frequently floating on the calm waters of the lagoons. It is distressing to travel all the way to the Marshall Islands and to find so little in the way of local food, and virtually no fresh fruit. I tried for two weeks to get a fresh papaya in my hotel in Majuro, but with no success.

Father Wood, of the Focus on Micronesia Coalition, when he petitioned this Council last week, spoke of the need for self-sufficiency. I questioned that, because I think it is self-reliance that is needed, not self-sufficiency. The United States has provided the financial resources and has made available considerable amounts of technical know-how. It has in its High Commissioner a lady whose dedication to the islanders and their way of life is beyond question and who is, her colleagues readily admit, among the very best the Territory has ever had. It is now up to the leaders of the four constitutional entities to profit from and exploit the foundations that have been laid for them. I have every confidence that they will do so. Their national pride, their commitment, their determination have been very apparent to those who have had the privilege of listening to them in this chamber.

That said, their task is a formidable one, as I am sure they are well aware. I hesitate from my ivory tower in New York to proffer advice. But my own experience tells me that the first task must be to reduce the Territory's

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

dependence on imported food and, in consequence, the expensive Western tastes that such food has encouraged, and to grow more food locally. When in the Marshall Islands last September, I visited an experimental agricultural project which convinced me that there was plenty of scope for agricultural development. Then there is the interconnected and sensitive issue of population planning, without which no really sensible development plan can be drawn up. There are many, many areas which must be regarded as priority tasks, but those two - food and population - will be crucial determinants of the Territory's future prosperity and should be given immediate attention.

I have talked at some length about the Territory's dependency on the Administering Authority and the attitude this has engendered. I should like to turn now to the question of Bikini, a vexed and disturbing issue that has been a central theme of this session.

No one can fail to have been moved by the plight of these islanders. Theirs is not, contrary to impressions, a complicated case. The atoll was used to conduct nuclear explosions. The main island has been badly contaminated, others less so. There is no question but that they are entitled to compensation. Unfortunately, an emotional head of steam has been built up behind the issue, and I think this is because of its nuclear dimension. I ask myself whether their plight would have struck such a chord had they been moved from their homes for, for instance, the building of a dam or the building of a major road. No, it is surely the nuclear aspect which has tended to colour the facts.

The essence of the case against the United States is that it was legally and morally obliged to meet the cost of decontaminating Bikini Island. But virtually no mention is made of the fact that, so far, some \$278,000 has been spent for every man, woman and child from Bikini - excluding the cost of free medical care and education, and excluding the cost that would result from the implementation of section 177 of the Compact of Free Association; under that section, the Bikini islanders stand to receive half of the \$150 million trust fund set up to compensate the Marshall Islands for damages resulting from nuclear testing. Nothing, of course, will compensate the islanders for the loss of their homeland. But, on an objective analysis, it would seem that the United States authorities have readily acknowledged their responsibility in this matter and have been, and doubtless will continue to be, generous in the provision of financial compensation.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

The year 1938 was a significant milestone in the constitutional development of the Trust Territory. Three plebiscites took place, all observed by United Nations Visiting Missions. I have already had the pleasure of introducing the two reports of the Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscites in, respectively, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. I would say now only that what we witnessed there was the democratic process at work - a democratic process which has functioned soundly and freely and which the Administering Authority has unceasingly sought to encourage and strengthen.

I am not depressed, as so many petitioners appear to have been, at the situation in Palau. It seems to me that we have there another example of the democratic process at work - warts and all. Obviously, things will have to be sorted out, but we are encouraged by the statements of both Ambassador Zeder and the representatives of the Palau Government that steps are being taken towards that end. We hope it will not be long before a mutually acceptable solution is agreed.

I cannot help but remember that it is more than 30 years since the then leader of the United States delegation to the Trusteeship Council criticized my country for the slowness with which it was bringing the Trust Territory of Tanganyika, in which I was working, to independence. The Trusteeship Agreement with Tanganyika was terminated more than 20 years ago. I look forward to the United States bringing to termination their Agreement with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It will be something of a momentous event - not merely the termination of the trusteeship, but the termination of the last of the trusteeships. It will be momentous in other ways too, since it will realize a new concept in international relations: that of free association.

Against that background, one can understand if the leaders of the four Governments approach termination with mixed feelings.

Constitutional advance is never easy. As an administering Power, we know only too well the difficulties which both the United States and the local Governments face, and we sympathize with them. What we as Council members can do is to pinpoint the obstacles and pitfalls and from the wings, as it were, whisper words of encouragement. I hope that in some small way we have helped. But until the Trusteeship Agreement is terminated we in this Council have an important job to perform. We can only do this on the basis of knowledge of the facts of what is actually happening in the Trust Territory.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

That is why I should like once more to underline the importance which we attach to the annual report of the Administering Authority. It is not just a question of statistics. I sympathize with the difficulties which the Administering Authority may have in this field, but those difficulties are self-inflicted. The Administering Authority has a duty to provide the Trusteeship Council with a readable account of its policies in the Trust Territory, of how these policies are being implemented, of its progress and its difficulties, in every field of government. Only if we have such an annual account can we in this Council perform our task properly.

The acid test, it seems to me, is this: can a reasonably intelligent person pick up the annual report of the Administering Authority, read it through and at the end have a clear picture of the Trust Territory and the work that the Administering Authority is performing in fulfilling its duties under the Trusteeship Agreement.

I commend that test to my American colleagues and ask them to apply it so as to ensure that next year we get a report from which we can all profit and which will form a true basis of our work at the next session of the Trusteeship Council.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council has thus concluded its general debate on the examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority.

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO OBSERVE THE PLEBISCITE IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, JUNE 1983 (T/1860) (continued)

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO OBSERVE THE PLEBISCITE IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, SEPTEMBER 1983 (T/1865) (continued)

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We should like to know whether we are to ask Visiting Missions of the Trusteeship Council to observe the so-called plebiscite in the Marshall Islands and in the Federated States of Micronesia both at the same time or separately.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Questions may be asked pertaining to both reports, which were presented simultaneously.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I have one comment to make before I begin my questions. The work of the Trusteeship Council would be facilitated if the practice of distributing documents

(Mr. Grigutis, USSR)

before the session were followed. Some documents reach us during the session, like the report on the Marshall Islands, and some on the eve of the session. We would also like to ask that distribution of the records be speeded up.

Having studied the reports of the Visiting Missions, the Soviet delegation would like to ask for clarification on various details and to some questions. First of all, with regard to the report on the Federated States of Micronesia, does the Visiting Mission consider that the population of Micronesia was sufficiently well-informed of the content of the Compact, and the additional bilateral agreements, and was the population well prepared for the plebiscite?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I have two preliminary points. First, I noted that the representative of the Soviet Union chose to refer to "the so-called plebiscite". I must say straight away that the Visiting Mission went to observe not a so-called plebiscite, but a plebiscite. The word "plebiscite" is firmly down on the agenda, which was accepted by the Soviet Union. Therefore, I would be grateful if the representative of the Soviet Union would refer to the plebiscite by its correct name, which is "plebiscite", not "so-called plebiscite".

Secondly, on the distribution of documents, I sympathize very much with the Soviet representative on this point. I think it is important that documents be distributed in good time. I had a feeling that it might well be that the report on the Marshall Islands would not be distributed well in advance of this session of the Trusteeship Council. For that reason, I sent an early copy, before it was even printed, on a personal and informal basis, to the Soviet Mission. It may well be that he did not see this himself, but I would like to assure him that it was actually received by the Mission, and I hope it was a help to them, for the very reasons which he has given.

Now, on the question of the people of the Federated States of Micronesia being sufficiently well-informed on the matters placed before them in the plebiscite, this of course is the question which the Visiting Mission put to themselves. As I said yesterday in introducing the reports, our first aim was to satisfy ourselves that the voting public understood the issues involved in the plebiscite, and the whole of chapter II, on the public information programme, is devoted to answering that question. I quote from that report our conclusion that

"although few of the voters had a full grasp of the details of the Compact, the majority at least had some idea of the main issues involved".

(T/1860, para. 30)

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): On the basis of that clarification, another question arises. We have been told that it was not possible to understand the main problems. Was the population able to understand the consequences of the adoption of the Compact for the future status of Micronesia?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): The peoples of Micronesia are an intelligent people and, if they understood the main issues of the Compact, as I have reported, then indeed it would not be hard for them to project this into the future and to consider what the consequences would be. It was on that basis that they cast their votes.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): With reference to the document that has been distributed to us, I should like to seek clarification on some other details. The report says that the members of the Visiting Mission were not able to answer some of the questions asked by the people. What is his opinion? Why is it that so many questions raised by the local inhabitants of the Federated States of Micronesia could not receive any replies from the Mission? Is it that the members of the Mission themselves did not know the answers?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I am not quite sure what part of the report my Soviet colleague is referring to, so I do not know precisely what his question is. But I could say that, indeed, we were asked many questions which we chose deliberately not to answer. The fact is that many people would get up at public meetings and say: "How should we vote? What do you think is in our best interests?"

As the Council will readily realize, our duty was not to tell people how to vote but to witness the plebiscite. Whatever we ourselves may have felt about certain matters, we always, quite deliberately, refused to answer such questions. I am sure that my Soviet colleague will agree that it would have been quite improper for us to have answered such questions.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I cannot quite agree with Mr. Margetson, especially since in paragraph 22 of the report it says that members of the Visiting Mission did not often meet the inhabitants. I suppose the inhabitants were concerned about certain questions which members of the Visiting Mission were unable to answer.

(Mr. Grigutis, USSR)

We also read in the report that in some parts of Micronesia there was great apathy: often people did not go to meetings and did not take part in other such events. What is the main reason for that?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): It is very difficult to answer the question why there should have been apathy. Indeed, to do so would be to stray outside the particular terms of reference of the Mission.

In Ponape, where I was, I did on a personal basis actually try to reach a conclusion on that question, and I shall be happy to share my personal thoughts on this subject with the representative of the Soviet Union. There I discerned two main reasons. First of all, there had in the course of that year been an extraordinary number of elections - I do not remember exactly, but I think the people had been asked to vote on some three or four occasions - and here there was yet another in the form of the plebiscite. I suppose that if one has quite a number of these elections the public interest does tend to wane. Secondly, I think that one of the reasons for the apathy was that there was no political campaign, which is of course something we mentioned in the report. If there are some people propounding ideas and others opposing them, that tends to produce interest among the general public. But there was no such campaign and, therefore, I think that to a large extent the public was somewhat unmoved.

But I am not an expert in this field. Those are personal views, and I would not necessarily say that they are correct or that, indeed, those are the only reasons. It was really outside our terms of reference to go into such deep matters and we could merely record that we found a degree of apathy.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Could Mr. Margetson tell us what the members of the Mission think? Were the parts of the documents that were translated into the local languages tendentious? In that material, was there an indication of what the Micronesians would get as a result of the approval of the Compact, while the second possibility was glossed over?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): As my Soviet colleague will have read in chapter II of the report, on the public information programme, there were not very many documents at all. In fact, a minor criticism the Mission made was that the work of the public information programme was not assisted by more written aids. In fact, there was only one written document, which was widely used in that programme, and that was the Compact of Free Association itself, which was translated into all the vernacular languages.

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As we stated in our report, there was in addition to that an extremely good summary produced, not as an official or governmental summary, but by Brother Henry Schwalbenberg. We included it in annex III of the report, and my Soviet colleague can judge for himself whether he considers it to be tendentious. I consider it to be an extraordinarily good summary of a very complicated document.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Can we conclude therefore that the information and clarification provided for the Micronesian people did not contain any clear indication of the possibility of a choice? Is that correct?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): No, I do not think that is true at all. It is perfectly true, however, that the political information programme in the Federated States of Micronesia, as opposed to the political education programme in the Marshall Islands, did concentrate very particularly on the Compact of Free Association. We found that the work in connection with part two of the ballot was less impressive; there was less effort put into that. One can speculate on the reasons. One most certainly was that the general public were far more interested in the Compact of Free Association than in any of the alternatives, and that speculation is of course based on the statistics of those who never bothered to fill in part two of the ballot paper.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In paragraph 33 of the report it says that the overwhelming majority in Ponape was in favour of independence. It was apparently 51 per cent of those participating in the elections. But the Visiting Mission interpreted the result of this vote in Ponape as a sort of separate vote, applicable only to that island. Why did the Mission think that?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): The vote on part two of the ballot paper in Ponape raised various questions in our minds. They are in fact answered in paragraph 33 - I think that is the paragraph to which my Soviet colleague was referring. What we mentioned was that the large number of votes for independence in part two of the ballot may well have been cast for the independence of Ponape, rather than of the Federated States of Micronesia as a whole. In other words, this represented the very tendency which my Soviet colleague deplors, which is to divide the Trust Territory even further into more and more component parts. There is in some islands - I must tell my Soviet colleague frankly - a wish for the cutting up of the Trust Territory into even more parts, and in Ponape there are

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sections of the population that would like to see a separate Ponape State. That tendency, which I do not favour and nor does my Soviet colleague, accounts I think for that rather strange figure in part two of the ballot relating to Ponape.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In the report of the Visiting Mission there are many examples adduced of public officials openly advocating the adoption of the Compact - the Governor of Yap, the President and the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia. One could say, that they agitated in favour of the Compact. How is one to interpret that?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I must say that I was very surprised that more members of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia did not advocate in public the adoption of the Compact. After all, these were the people who had negotiated this Compact over many years with the Administering Authority. They had negotiated this extremely patiently and, if I may say so, cleverly, in what they considered to be the best interests of the Federated States of Micronesia. An agreement on this document having been obtained, it seems to me that the most natural thing to do would be then to turn to the people of the Federated States of Micronesia and say: "Look, this is the agreement. We have worked hard for it and we think you should adopt it." Speaking personally, if I had worked that hard to get an agreement I certainly would have campaigned like anything to get it adopted. The extraordinary thing was that very few actually did so. Whether this was from some idea that they should hold themselves aloof I do not know. It was not, of course, the case in the Marshall Islands, where the Government was very strong in advocating adoption of the Compact which they had negotiated. But in the Federated States, as my Soviet colleague has rightly said, it was not really a big feature of the campaign at all. Most of the leaders did not actively campaign for the adoption of the Compact, though there were, as my Soviet colleague has seen, certain exceptions to this rule, and there were one or two radio broadcasts - this is mentioned in paragraph 31 of the report:

"The President and the Vice-President ... broadcast messages in favour of the compact ...".

The report also mentions that the Speaker of the Ponape Legislature spoke on the radio in critical terms. Of course, the Speaker was not one of those who negotiated the Compact.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The report tells us that there was a boycott of the plebiscite in several islands, but for some reason it concludes that the boycott was the result of the influence of traditional chiefs and some political leaders. Is this to be interpreted as meaning that the boycott was due only to the influence of political leaders or traditional chiefs? Are we sure that there were no deeper reasons for the boycott of the plebiscite by the population?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): The boycott took place in the governmental entity of Truk. I was not there myself. Mr. Paul Poudade went to Truk, accompanied by Mr. Ralph Karepa of Papua New Guinea. I know they took a considerable interest in the boycott, which was entirely local. It occurred only in the Faichuk and Udot islands. Their conclusion, which I have no reason to doubt was extremely wise and good, was that it was the influence of traditional chiefs and some political leaders that had determined the outcome in that area.

I believe that subsequently some work has been done on this. I have read very superficially a paper by someone who was working in that area, and I think it all points to the fact that this was a very local attitude towards the plebiscite. It certainly was not to be found anywhere else, either in the Federated States or subsequently in the plebiscite in the Marshall Islands.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Does this not testify to the fact that the population was protesting against the plebiscite?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): Yes, certainly, it was a protest.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Federated States report gives examples of the most elementary conditions not being met during the plebiscite. There were no booths, and names and ballot paper numbers were recorded, as we read in paragraphs 43, 49 and 56. The report talks about all these shortcomings. Does not the representative of the United Kingdom think that they were a violation of the conditions in which the plebiscite should have been held, and possibly also a violation of democracy?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I do not know if my Soviet colleague really considers that to be a balanced view of the polling. I could not possibly agree with what he says.

It is perfectly true that polling booths were not supplied. The members of the Mission considered very seriously whether this was a failure to achieve a secret ballot, and we concluded that it was not. The fact is that we were not

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dealing with a developed country, and to expect the erection of polling booths such as we might have in London, Moscow or New York would have been a little out of proportion. What was important was that everyone should vote in secrecy, and we were perfectly satisfied that that was what happened. People in such polling stations would take their piece of paper and go into a corner or separate room where they could not be overlooked - we checked on this constantly - and record their vote, which was then placed in the ballot box. So, although I am grateful to my Soviet colleague for drawing attention to this aspect - a lack of polling booths, which is perfectly true - I would not want him for one moment to conclude that this was somehow a serious defect in the plebiscite. It was not at all.

As for the question of recording both the names and the registration numbers on the ballot papers, this happened only in one small instance in Truk, and as soon as it was discovered by Mr. Paul Poudade he drew attention to it and it was stopped. I remember his telling me he did not think this was intentional, with a view to being able to check up on how any person had voted. That was his own personal view; it does not appear in the report. What we have said in the report is the completely objective truth: this took place, it was discovered quickly and it was stopped. But in the context of a plebiscite extending over hundreds and hundreds of polling stations all over the Federated States of Micronesia it must not be assumed that this particular incident was typical. It was not at all. It was an unfortunate local failing which we as a Mission took immediate action to correct and reported on fully in the report.

I am happy that I have now been joined by Mr. Mortimer, who was also a member of the Visiting Mission. He has been at a meeting of the Committee of 24. Unfortunately Mr. Bal Ram of Fiji is still there. I should be very pleased if both could be here to help me and to enlarge on any answer I may give, which I think would be helpful to the Council as a whole. Unfortunately, I see no prospect of Mr. Bal Ram's arriving, but at least we have Mr. Mortimer here, and he would like to enlarge a little on what I have just said.

Mr. MORTIMER (United Kingdom): I wanted to add briefly to what the Ambassador has said, not in my capacity as a member of the British delegation but as a member of the Visiting Mission who went to Yap in my individual capacity as a Mission member.

In our report we have made no secret of what I would call the minor administrative shortcomings which characterized the poll. Yap was no exception. Ballot papers were not properly displayed and so on, and some posters did not

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arrive on the right day. But the overriding, lasting impression I had from my stay in Yap was that for an electorate of about 4,500 there were no fewer than 53 places where they could record their vote. Surely that was the prime purpose of the plebiscite: to create conditions in which people could exercise their free and democratic choice as easily as possible. I dare say that if, for example, there had been five places where people could vote it would have been a lot easier to construct polling booths and see that everything was absolutely according to the last letter of the law.

But it seemed to me, especially in the islands, with the communications problems that existed there, that the important thing was simply to create places where people could exercise this democratic choice. That was my lasting impression of Yap. I congratulate the authorities on having overcome all the logistic problems and, indeed, in my view, having provided the conditions under which people could vote in as free a situation as possible.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should now like to come back to the question of statistics, which were mentioned earlier. I also got stuck over the statistics. The report glosses over, whether deliberately or not, such things as the total population of Micronesia, how many people were eligible to vote, how many were registered, and how many actually took part in the vote. These data are rather important if we are to form an opinion on the plebiscite and its results, both in the various areas and in each state as a whole.

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): These are of course important statistics and I am happy to say that the authorities in the Federated States of Micronesia did provide us with the necessary statistics in this field. On page 16 of the report, we find what, I think, is needed - namely, a list showing the number of registered voters in each state and then, against that, the number of people who actually cast their vote, giving the percentage of the voter turn-out in each case.

The additional figures for the total population can be obtained from the 1980 census. We have not included that in the Mission report, but of course, it is included in the report of the last general Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory, which I think took place in 1982.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like now to go on to the other report - that pertaining to the Marshall Islands.

(Mr. Griqutis, USSR)

The report states, in paragraph 17, that meetings were held during working hours and that a considerable number of people were therefore unable to attend them although these meetings were so important if they were to get the necessary political information. Why is it that those meetings were held during working hours? I should also like to know what were the principal questions raised during those meetings.

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): As I am sure everybody realizes, and certainly all of us on the Mission recognized, many people who turned up at our meetings were opposed to the Compact of Free Association and were only too happy to give us many reasons why they felt that the political education programme had not been well run. So one should not necessarily take what they said too much at face value.

Nevertheless, one should of course pursue these complaints, and we did so. And what we have done here is to record that some people complained that meetings had sometimes been held during working hours. That is not altogether surprising. These teams were extraordinarily active in their political education work. I think that comes through very strongly from a reading of chapter II of this report. I know they gave us a figure of the total number of people who had attended their meetings and it was quite enormously impressive. They made every possible effort to reach as many people as possible and I have no doubt this involved holding some meetings during working hours, some meetings before working hours and some meetings after working hours.

That said, I think the term "working hours" is rather more elastic in the Marshall Islands than it might be in a more heavily industrialized developed country. So perhaps one should not take those words too literally or look at them through the spectacles of a person who is used to the rather rigid working hours that we have, for instance, in New York, if not necessarily at the United Nations.

I have now found the figures concerning attendance at the meetings, they are at the top of page 4. We record there that according to the statistics compiled by the Commission on Political Education, some 4,500 people - about one third of the registered voters - attended. Given the fact that these islands are scattered all over an enormous area of the Pacific, I think that is a very remarkable figure and a great testimony to the energy of these teams, who travelled everywhere in order to try to help people understand what the Compact of Free Association was about.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In paragraph 24, it says that a pro-Compact rally was organized in Majuro on 5 September. Were rallies in favour of the other options ever organized?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I have looked to see whether we might have recorded the fact that there were rallies on the part of opposition groups. The coalition of opposition groups was extremely active. Members of those groups tended to wear hats and T-shirts with "Vote No" written on them, and there were many meetings of opposition groups. Whether there was one which could strictly speaking be called a rally, I cannot remember. But I can assure the Council that when one arrived at Majuro, one was very well aware from the large number of posters, from these T-shirts and from the meetings that were being held that the opposition groups were very active - every bit as active as the pro-Compact group.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Margetson referred to a coalition; against the Compact. In what conditions did that coalition work? Did it have sufficient funds during the information campaign? Can we say that the members of the coalition were not hamstrung during their anti-Compact propaganda?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I think it would be a reasonable deduction, from what I have already said - namely, that they handed out, free of charge, a large number of T-shirts and hats (I even have one myself, actually) saying "Vote No", that they did not seem to be suffering from any lack of funds. And, indeed, the fact that this coalition was in very large measure led by people who could I think fairly be described as extremely prosperous California lawyers, led one to suppose that there were adequate funds available. Indeed, none of us saw any evidence that this very lively campaign by the coalition in opposition was hamstrung in any way. It was a very lively campaign, fairly fought and without any violence. We recorded that it was, perhaps I could use the words, a good-humoured campaign. I think the people of the Marshall Islands have a wonderful sense of humour and they took it all in very good part.

Mr. GRIGUTIS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The results in Kwajalein, we are told, were 448 in favour and 993 against. In Bikini/Kili there were only 65 in favour. In Jaluit there were 268, and so forth. Now, this points to the fact that the population rejected the Compact of Free Association. What is the main reason for this negative vote of the inhabitants of these atolls? Could it be that they better understood the charms of the trusteeship system, or were there any other reasons?

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I do not really want to stray outside the proper field of work of the Visiting Mission. We were there to observe what people did, what they decided. The reason why they decided to vote the way they did is really a matter for speculation and political analysis after the event, which was not our job. What I can say quite firmly is that there certainly were a large number of people who voted in part one against the political compact. The figures are given in chapter VI of the report and are well known.

There doubtless were very many reasons why people voted "No". I think one can deduce from the political campaign and from what the opposition said, that many of the people who voted against the Compact felt that it did not give sufficient compensation for radiation damage and for the loss of land. Those were two matters on which the opposition concentrated, and which is described in the report. I think it is fair to assume that many people concluded that the Compact was not sufficiently generous in those fields. Those are my own views. They do not form part of the report, but what is clear from the report is that those who wished to vote "No" could do so and did so freely, and that we thought that the result of the plebiscite was a fair reflection of what people wanted or did not want on the Marshall Islands.

Mr. TUN (Adviser): The report of the Council's observers is very accurate, but in some areas the interpretation of the facts contained therein is slightly different from my own. As regards the turn-out at the polls, I would say it was very, very high. It went from 54 per cent all the way to 80 per cent and the average was 63 per cent. The turn-out could have been even higher, had it not been for the boycott in Truk, which I will go into later.

With regard to the public information programme, in addition to the Compact we had other materials, which are listed in volume II of my commission's report. There were seven in all, which, together with the Compact, we had to translate into eight local languages. We had very little time in which to do this, since the Compact was initialled by our negotiators in October. We only had from then until June to do so, in addition to preparing the set-up procedures and regulations - which were mainly for the people conducting the programme, not for the public - and sending them to the interested parties in the different States.

I would also like to mention here that the public information programme was not undertaken there for the first time. Back in 1975 we had a trial referendum preceded by a very intensive public education programme on free association and other options.

(Mr. Tun, Adviser)

Free association had not then been fully negotiated, but all the basic ideas and principles upon which the Compact of Free Association was based were already understood. I would therefore say that the programme has been going on for nearly a decade. In Yap we began very early in the 1970s, so for that State it is probably more than a decade.

I fully agree with the Ambassador about the low turn-out at meetings. A lot of people had been through too many elections and they were simply tired of them. That is one factor, but it is not the only factor. Some people were tired of listening to information about free association. I would go out to communities and I would hear people saying, "When are we going to have free association? Let us stop talking about it and do it." My guess is that they did not have that much time to spend attending meetings to talk about their future status.

As for the question whether the people understood what they were voting on, I would only say this. The Compact is a very complex document; if people were to set out to understand everything in it down to the last detail they would be all be lawyers before they were through. It would also take for ever. However, I think that the basic ideas in it were very well understood.

Regarding the issue of independence for Ponape, the result of the trial referendum in 1975 showed that at that time a very large number of voters in Ponape voted for independence. There are people in Ponape - I would say a small group - who want to see Ponape become independent from the rest of the area, and when they vote in favour of independence they are really not voting for independence for the entire area from everyone, the United Nations and the United States. It is, as I say, a very small group. I cannot conclude from that that the majority of the people who voted in favour of independence were voting in favour of a Ponape independent from the rest of the Federated States of Micronesia. If there were people who voted in that way, they made up a small group. In 1975 we did not have a Federated States of Micronesia, and it was very clear then that we were voting on a political status on a trial basis for the entire region - excluding the Northern Marianas of course, since at that time the Northern Marianas had already separated. Many people in Ponape voted for independence at that time.

As for the boycott in Truk, it is true that the people were protesting, but not against free association or, for that matter, against any status for the entire area. What they were protesting against was their own status, their local status. They wanted to call attention to their situation. They wanted more economic

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development, and they had tried earlier by various means to separate from the State of Truk and to become another State in order to get more attention and thereby get more economic development. The boycott was an attempt to call attention to their situation. At least, that is my interpretation of what happened. The people were not really protesting. Their leaders - some traditional, some elected - were the ones protesting, and they instructed their constituents to boycott the plebiscite.

The Visiting Mission claims that people found the second part of the ballot difficult to understand, and to some extent that is true. However, it is not really that complicated. A person voted in part one on the question whether or not to accept free association; in the event that free association was not approved, the question, in part two, was which of the following would be preferred? It is very easily explained and understood, I believe. Some people did perhaps have some problem with it, but not the majority of the people.

We did not prepare very much information on other alternatives. We had some tables comparing the various types of status and comparing the status quo with free association. That was in addition to the programme I mentioned earlier that had gone on for a long time, even prior to 1975, and documents were also prepared for that programme.

Mr. MARGETSON (United Kingdom): I want to respond to several of the things Mr. Petrus Tun has just said. First, I should like to say that of course he was himself responsible in large measure for the excellence of the plebiscite in the Federated States of Micronesia, so the credit which goes to the authorities there for that plebiscite must, in large measure, go to him. I am sure we all wish to congratulate him on the part he played.

I agree with everything he said. I thought he made one most important distinction that I should have made myself. I was asked earlier by our Soviet colleague about the apathy about the plebiscite, and I should have made a clear distinction between the apparent apathy in the political campaign and the actual voter turn-out. There is no relation between the two. It is quite interesting that in Ponape, where the political campaign was so low key it was hardly visible, there was nevertheless an 80 per cent voter turn-out. That is very remarkable. So I entirely support the distinction which emerged from what Mr. Petrus Tun was saying - a low-key political campaign, but nevertheless a very high turn-out when it came to the vote.

(Mr. Margetson, United Kingdom)

I was also extremely interested in what he said about the Faichuk and Udot boycott. It is very much in line with our speculation within the Mission, which we did not record in our report as it was pure speculation. But it does serve to emphasize this problem which I mentioned in connection with Ponape, that even though the Trust Territory is now divided into four there are still tendencies to be found in favour of further subdivision. This, I know, is something that none of us would like to see, least of all my Soviet colleague, who feels particularly strongly on this point.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.