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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 22 June 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mrs. ANDERSON (United States of America)

1. Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of Nauru: annual report of the Administering Authority (continued)
2. Examination of petition concerning the Trust Territory of Nauru (continued)
3. General Assembly resolutions on the question of the Trust Territory of Nauru [2111 (XX) and 2226 (XXI)] (continued)
4. Organization of work

EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF NAURU: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (T/1659, 1662; T/L.1120) (continued)

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF NAURU (T/COM.9/L.3) [2111 (XX) and 2226 (XXI)] (continued)

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Reseigh, Special Representative for the Trust Territory of Nauru, and Mr. De Roburt and Mr. Bop, Advisers to the Special Representative, took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: We shall now continue the questioning of the Special Representative and his Advisers.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): I do not intend to ask any question in the area of the political future of Nauru. It seems to me that the statement of the Special Representative and the statement of Head Chief De Roburt have pretty well outlined the present state of discussions on that particular subject; and we must accept, I think, what appears to be the agreement of the Nauruans and the Australian Government that further discussions on this particular item will continue shortly after the closure of this Council session.

I would like, however, to ask several questions which fall in other areas and which I think, in a sense, ought to be asked, although it is quite natural that the Council should, at this point in time, be concentrating on a number of political questions. Nevertheless, our responsibility as a Council, it seems to me, is broader than political; our responsibility is to do what we can in aiding the Nauruans in the other areas which are mentioned in the Charter and in ensuring the carrying out of the other obligations which the Australian Government undertook at the time it signed the Trusteeship Agreement.

Therefore, I should like to address several questions to Head Chief De Roburt. One is impressed with the thoroughness with which some of your documents have been prepared, with the cogency of some of the arguments, and so forth. Could you tell us to what extent the Nauruans are presently receiving assistance, other than the assistance which the Special Representative indicated existed during the last negotiations? Is there a need for other guidance, apart from that furnished by the Australian Government?

Mr. De ROBERT: This year the Nauruans have received from Australian professional people the same assistance as last year, with the exception of one addition, in the person of a constitutional adviser who, as the Special Representative has said, is Professor Davidson of the Australian National University, the Chief of the Department of Civic History there. Professor Davidson was instrumental in drawing up the Constitutions for Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.

In answer to the question whether there is any need for assistance from countries other than Australia, at this stage our answer is "no". We are quite satisfied with the assistance we have been getting from the Australian professional people we have engaged to date.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): My second question relates to a different subject. One was very impressed with the figures which the Special Representative gave us yesterday on the amount of money which will have accumulated in the Nauruan Fund after the phosphate is completely mined out, or exhausted. If I remember correctly, the figure was about \$400 million, with an expected interest of about \$24 million per year. This is a rather large sum of money and I should like to ask, first if these figures tally, Mr. De Robert, with your own figures; and, secondly, whether or not the Nauruans have given any thought to the possibility that drastic changes may arise in the present phosphate market which would affect those figures. What I mean is that: what will happen if Nauru suddenly or slowly had to depend on less income from the phosphate industry due to the absence of a market?

Mr. De ROBERT: I am afraid that the work of calculating the monetary aspect of the returns from the phosphate is largely left to the economic advisers of the Council. I would venture to point out that those figures seem high to me. If the Trusteeship Council will give me some time, I shall contact our advisers in Australia and ask them to send me a breakdown of the arithmetical calculations which the Special Representative has been kind enough to give to this Council.

These figures are capital sums, and at this stage it is very difficult to be confident that the future requirements of the people of the island will be covered adequately by these figures, however large they may be. There will be variations, so we understand, which will be peculiar to the island itself because of its isolated condition. For example, the Trusteeship Council is well aware of the fact that water is imported from Australia and New Zealand. I doubt whether there are many similar situations anywhere in the world. The price is cheap at present because the phosphate boats go up to the island in ballast.

There are needs which will be expensive to meet if the people of the island are to live in conditions comparable to those in other countries of the world. In the field of communications and so on, to lay a cable to the island will, I understand, cost millions upon millions of dollars in capital expenditure. I have been led to understand that it will be beyond the resources of the island to take advantage of the Telstar facilities, and so forth. I apologize again for my shortcomings in matters such as this, but there are explanations which will no doubt be satisfactory to this Council if I may be given time to obtain them from our economic advisers.

On the second question; I think that the representative of the United States is foreseeing a situation which could eventuate. The phosphate industry has a market now, but if the synthetics people -- who are showing great promise in creating substitutes for phosphate -- succeed in producing synthetic phosphate, then of course the whole rosy picture which one sees in these figures will change. I think that the representative of the United States was correct in pointing out to us that things could change with regard to the reliability of the phosphate market in the future. However, it is fair to say that our advisers have told us that, as far as Australia is concerned, its foreseeable needs of phosphate are increasing.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): Head Chief De Roburt need not apologize for that answer, because I found it to be a very considered one, and one which indicated that some attention has been given to possible needs as Nauru continues along its path of development. I think his answer also indicates the need to rove on with the measures or steps which, he mentioned the other day, the Nauruans were considering -- namely, the effort to develop some kind of diversification, to develop some other means of economic income.

My delegation would hope that as much consideration would be given to some of those questions, which appear to be future questions, and which, it could be argued, we ought not to be interested in at this point. It seems to me, however, that those questions are very much related to some of the decisions which the Nauruan Council will have to be taking in the coming period.

Among the questions closely involved with the future is one which, I think, many countries of the world are concerned with. I notice from the annex which was circulated, on the possibility of restoring the mined-out phosphate land, that in a relatively short period a population of some 10,000 is envisaged -- an increase of some 7,000 over the present population.

We all know that there is only a limited quantity of land on Nauru. Has the Nauru Local Government Council given any consideration to some means of population control?

Mr. De ROBERT: The Local Government Council has not yet given any consideration to the question of possible population control for the future. However, I think it would be true to say that we are aware of the existence of this general problem in other parts of the world, and that the time might come when we may have to give it consideration. But for the present, and for the foreseeable future, the Nauru Local Government Council is giving no thought to the matter.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): With regard to the mined-out phosphate land, and land which we know presently contains phosphate but has not been mined, were the Nauruans ever actually living on that land? Was it ever cultivated? Are Nauruans living on the land which has not been mined?

Mr. De ROBERT: I am particularly happy to answer that question, because there has been much past misunderstanding about this on the part of people who are not Nauruans.

Before the benefits of the phosphate were received by the Nauruan community, the people subsisted entirely on food from the land and surrounding seas. While they did not use the phosphate area for dwelling purposes, quite a considerable part of that food came from trees growing on the phosphate plateau, as did almost all of the materials for the houses in which the people lived in those days before the phosphate era.

With the coming of the phosphate industry, and the benefits from the phosphate operations, the dependency of the people on the things I have just mentioned diminished. So it would be true to say that today the Nauruan people is neither dwelling on the phosphate lands nor using much of what is there on these phosphate lands for food.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): Would you anticipate, Head Chief De Robert, that, given the level of the economy, and the advances which have taken place, the Nauruan people would ever wish to revert to their former use of the land?

Mr. De ROBERT: If the substance of that question is, "Will the Nauruans want to live again in coconut-thatched huts and live on the things they have lived on in the past?", I do not think so; I am sure the answer is "no". If we have the normal means of a subsistence economy as enjoyed by other peoples, we will not revert to the former way of living.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): One accepts the view that it is the present desire of the Nauruan people to remain on the island of Nauru. I think Head Chief De Robert has made this quite clear, both at this and previous sessions of the Council, in view of the difficulties and problems which are met in efforts at relocation, and especially in view of what I take it was their dissatisfaction with some of the alternatives offered. So we must accept that this is the present desire of the Nauruans.

Future Nauruans, however, may take a different view, depending upon all those questions to which the Head Chief has himself referred: the development of the Phosphate market, the development of synthetic chemicals, the need for outside communication, the need for water -- a number of those problems of which I am sure he is well aware. One wonders, therefore, if it would be wise for anyone at this point to undertake a total restoration of the worked-out land, or whether it would be wiser to do as many industries, such as the strip-mining industry in the United States, have discovered they have had to do, and that is to follow a more enlightened conservation programme in the original mining process. I wonder if the Head Chief could comment on this.

Mr. De ROBERT: The question posed by the United States representative is one which we have heard on many previous occasions from representatives of the partner Governments. If the wisdom of my Council is being questioned on this need to restore the island, I think that the answer could be largely, if not totally, found in the statement which was very carefully considered and which we asked the Secretariat to distribute to members of the Council. Apart from that, however, I should like to say that there will be suitable ways of actually implementing planned programmes of land restoration, and I should like to draw the attention of this Council to the important fact that any restoration in the future will cost money.

The worry of my Council is that if we did not conserve funds at present from the returns from the phosphates, which is the Nauruans' only physical asset, when the need arose in the future to carry out restoration programmes it would cost money, and if we did not have any money to fund those operations, then we would be in great difficulty.

I think I have answered the question, but I would gladly answer other questions on this matter, if need be. But again, may I say that the restoration question is very well covered in the comments which we submitted to the partner Governments, and which I have asked to be circulated to the members of this Council.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): I wish to thank Head Chief De Roburt for his last answer in particular. I have read very carefully the comments which were circulated, and I raised the question simply because again it falls into line with the series of questions regarding the future which I have been raising, the desire that we do not concentrate so much on the present that we forget the bearing of future questions on present decisions.

I should like again to commend, however, to the attention of the Nauruans, as future operators of the phosphate industry, the possibility of following a more conservation-minded mining programme than appears to have been followed in the past. We have discovered that this kind of thing is possible with the mining of coal, but I am not an engineer, and therefore I do not know what application it would have for the mining of phosphates. One might at least want to look into it.

I have no further questions to ask of the Head Chief, and I wish to thank him for his very candid answers. I should again like to say that I have not sought to go into political questions because I think that the status of those questions is absolutely clear from the statements which the Head Chief and the Special Representative made at the beginning of our discussions.

Mr. RESEIGH (Special Representative): It may help the United States representative to know about some comments on this problem that were given in the report of the Expert Committee. The Expert Committee made certain observations and calculations about the restoration problem. If the United States representative reads that report, he will see that their judgement was that certain machinery -- not machinery that is used in the mining of phosphates -- could be obtained and used for the purpose of flattening the pinnacles of limestone that remain when the area has been worked out, and reducing the land to a level surface. They regard it as being more economical not to do it as an integral part of the mining operations, but to have machinery which could carry out this flattening, machinery which is not now there. It was significant, too, that the cost of this operation, in their judgement, would be comparatively moderate. They gave a figure -- and I am talking from memory -- of \$4,000-odd per acre. Very much the largest cost of the restoration programme was the bringing in of soil from another place and putting it on top of the levelled limestone area.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): I want to thank the Special Representative for his comments. I do not know whether having a machine there can be considered an integral part of the phosphate-mining programme or not. I would consider such a thing an integral part even if it were not necessarily planned to be done the next day but at least to be done eventually. The comment was not so much that phosphate mined today had to have the pinnacles knocked down tomorrow, but that some consideration might be given to the place of restoration in the total industry.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): As this is my delegation's first substantive intervention on the items on Nauru, I should like formally to express our pleasure at having with us Mr. Resaigh, the Special Representative, and the three Advisers: Head Chief Hammer De Robert and his two colleagues, Councillors Bop and Detudamo. We feel sure that their combined wisdom and experience and the first-hand knowledge which they can impart to us will assist us greatly in coming, without too much difficulty, to conclusions and recommendations about the situation in the Trust Territory. The very considerable contributions which they have already made have indeed left a very clear picture which I think greatly facilitates our task.

My first question is simply on a point of detail, following up certain questions posed by the United States representative in relation to the prospect for water supplies for the Territory. The point has been brought out by the Head Chief that the Territory is now greatly dependent for water supplies on imports through the ships which call at Nauru to take away the phosphate. We appreciate that there can be no question, as far as the Head Chief and his people are concerned, of their returning to the kind of subsistence economy in which they lived before the commencement of commercial extraction of the phosphate; but could he perhaps tell us to what extent his people are in fact exclusively dependent on imported water, and what the situation used to be before external supplies were available?

Mr. De ROBERT (Adviser to the Special Representative): The dependence of the Nauruan population on water imported from Australia, and New Zealand occasionally, in phosphate boats is quite real. In sustained or relatively sustained periods of drought on Nauru, the water-storage facilities which we, the Nauruan people, have are quite insufficient to meet our needs. This has been our experience over the years. I think the Council is well aware that the water-storage facilities for the homes are comprised almost entirely of one Milne Bay pontoon tank per household, the capacity of which is 1,100 gallons. Of course, this is very small, and if there is no rain, say, for a period of three months, the community is then required to draw on stocks held by the British Phosphate Commissioners. The Commissioners themselves then have to import water, as I have explained, in the ships that come to Nauru to get the phosphate. That is how dependent the people are on water imported from overseas.

It would not be fair to omit mentioning that the Council is looking into this problem quite seriously, and a large part of the increased royalties we shall be receiving as a result of the recent decisions in Canberra, will be used to buy water tanks which are prefabricated in Australia. The programme at present is to supply all the homes with new concrete tanks of about 3,000 gallons in capacity to replace the other tanks, the pontoon tanks, which we think have reached the end of their useful life.

Mr. RESEIGH (Special Representative): Those representatives who have read the Experts' report will see there a very interesting suggestion which no doubt the Nauru Local Government Council will also be taking up for the purpose of checking. The suggestion is that when, at some time not too far distant, a larger air strip is built on the worked-out land on the plateau, it ought also to be constructed as a catchment for rain, and that underneath it there should be installed a large number of galleries that would hold water and, because they were underground, would be subject to a great deal less evaporation than would occur with normal surface storage of water. The engineer concerned in this inquiry made a number of interesting suggestions, and I have no doubt that this may be one means by which the Nauru Local Government Council may, if this suggestion is proved sound on further inquiry, be able to improve the situation in the future.

Mr. De ROBERT (Adviser to the Special Representative): I believe I did not answer the last part of the question asked by the representative of the United Kingdom -- that is, to what extent the Nauruan people rely on imported food-stuffs. The fact is that we rely quite considerably and are dependent to a great extent on imported food-stuffs.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Special Representative and the Head Chief for their very full answers. I take it, from what has been said, that it is generally accepted that there is scope for increasing local storage on an economic basis and thereby reducing, to some extent, dependence on imports of water supplies.

My next question refers to the subject of resettlement. I note that at last year's session of the Council, the thirty-third, when this question of resettlement of the population of the Trust Territory elsewhere came into discussion, Chief De Roburt is recorded as having said at the 1200th meeting that the Nauruans had not closed the door on the idea of resettlement.

We are now twelve months nearer the date which has been suggested for conferring independence on Nauru. I would simply like to inquire whether over the intervening twelve months the leaders of the Nauruan people have in any way modified their attitude towards resettlement as at least one long-term possibility. I know that they have been very much preoccupied with the problems which have been under close study for rehabilitating the soil in the mined areas. But I would like to know whether they still consider resettlement away from Nauru as an alternative which might, at some stage in the future, have to be seriously considered in contrast with remaining in their own homeland. Is this a factor which they feel they must still take account of, in considering the various long-term possibilities?

I would be very interested to have the views of the Special Representative on this matter and, more particularly, those of Chief Hammer De Roburt.

Mr. RESEIGH (Special Representative): The view of the Administering Authority is that if proposals for a particular resettlement proposition were put forward by the Nauru Local Government Council, it would be glad to consider them. As to what might be the views of the Nauru Local Government Council at this moment, I think perhaps the Head Chief would be the best person to say.

Mr. De ROBURT (Adviser to the Special Representative): The question of resettlement has been a great disappointment to our people because we have failed to reach agreement among ourselves: the Nauruan people and the representatives of the partner Governments.

(Mr. De Roburt, Adviser to the
Special Representative)

The decision of last year is still the same. I am not familiar with the record cited by the representative of the United Kingdom. However, I have here the verbatim record of my statement, which is as follows:

"The question of a permanent homeland for our people is a problem -- a serious one -- for reasons which are well known to this Council, and I shall not dwell on that. Suffice it to say that, upon the failure of the Australian Government and the Nauruan people to reach an agreement on resettlement, there was no other alternative left for the Nauruan people, and they had to decide to remain on their own island of Nauru."

(1285th meeting, p. 66)

In addition, the comments of our Council on the report of the Committee of Experts on rehabilitation also covered this situation in no uncertain terms. Briefly, I would like to say that resettlement is no longer part of the thinking of my Council. The reasons have been stated. But perhaps I should summarize them again.

We have always felt, with respect to the problem of resettlement, that this meant that the Nauruan people would lose their national identity. And if the speakers in this Council this morning are again referring to such resettlement, our answer very definitely is "no", we will not consider losing our cohesiveness as a people and as a small nation, with all that that entails.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Head Chief for his very firm and clear reply, which I think helps greatly to clarify the position in this respect. It puts beyond doubt the position of his people on this particular question, which has in some respects preoccupied the Council in earlier years.

I should like to turn now to a point that is related to the work of this Expert Committee which has investigated the possibilities of rehabilitating the mined areas. In the very full statement which has been circulated to members of the Council by Chief Hammer De Roburt concerning these recommendations, I noticed that an important feature is the undertaking made by the Nauru Local Government Council to assume responsibility for rehabilitating all mined lands once the stage has been reached where the Nauruan people themselves receive "a full return on the phosphates mined". I wonder whether Chief De Roburt could say whether, before coming

(Mr. Shaw, United Kingdom)

to this conclusion, which clearly involves a very heavy and continuing commitment on the part of the Council, as long as the phosphate resources of the island are still being exploited, his Council had any independent and expert outside advice. My question indeed parallels to some extent one asked by the representative of the United States. I notice that the Local Government Council felt obliged to question many of the assumptions and the conclusions that were reached by the Expert Committee which studied this question; and I think it will be of interest to members of the Council to know whether the Local Government Council did have the benefit of other, independent advice in the economic field before coming to rather different conclusions themselves.

Mr. De ROBERT (Adviser to the Special Representative): If I understand the question correctly, my answer is yes; we had the benefit of advice from economic advisers who are very highly rated in their field in Australia. I am sure my colleague the Special Representative will attest to that.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): My next question relates to a reference which was made by the Head Chief. In his statement to the Council he mentioned as that one of the events of the next six or eight months would be a general election in December for the Local Government Council. My delegation would be interested to know whether political parties with different platforms are likely to emerge in the elections to the Local Government Council. Secondly, we should like to know whether, given the fact that at present the membership of the Local Government Council is, I think, largely identical to the nine elected members on the Legislative Council of the Territory, the political future of the Territory and the arrangements on which there now has been agreement for the future management and extraction of phosphate, and other such long-term issues are likely to be under discussion in the Local Government Council elections. Or is the interest displayed likely to be more in terms of individual personalities? I think it would be of great interest to the Council if the Head Chief would make any observations he might wish to make on this matter. In short, what are likely to be the subjects at issue in these elections?

Mr. De ROBERT (Adviser to the Special Representative): My answer to the first part of the question is that we have no political parties on the island, and I do not think that there will be any in the foreseeable future.

In answer to the second part of the question, I do not think that the question of the recent agreement on the phosphate industry will be issue, so to speak, in the elections. Our elections are quite different from the elections in bigger and more sophisticated countries, and I think it would be correct for me to say that the people in the electorate elect individuals who they think will represent them competently, fairly and efficiently. We do not conduct campaigns before elections. We understand that this is done in other countries, but we have not reached that stage yet. I do not think that there will be any election campaign in the elections to be held in December.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): Would it be true to say, therefore, that there is no great difference of views on -- and perhaps no very deep interest in -- these issues at this stage on the part of the electorate at large in Nauru? Would it be true to say that on the whole the electorate in Nauru is prepared to leave the handling of these issues, which we recognize to be of long-term importance to the Territory, to its elected leaders, rather than regarding them as matters on which there can be differing views?

Mr. De ROBURT (Adviser to the Special Representative): The answer is "yes". I would support the contention that the people in the electorates normally leave the matters such as the ones we have been discussing to the elected leaders.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): I should like to address a final question to the Head Chief. I am not sure whether it is one which he will wish to answer. If so, I shall understand perfectly.

In their statements to the Council, both the Special Representative and Head Chief De Roburt have made it clear that one of the matters still open in the negotiations now in train with the Administering Authority is responsibility for questions of external affairs. As I have said, my delegation will understand it very well if Head Chief De Roburt prefers at this stage of these discussions not to comment on the points in my question. But I wonder if he would be prepared to say anything about the general ideas which he himself and the other Nauruan leaders have so far formed on the ways in which -- assuming that there was agreement by all concerned to proceed to full, sovereign independence -- Nauru as a country with some 3,000 indigenous inhabitants would conduct its relations with other countries. I think it would be of interest to the members of the Council to know whether the Nauruan leaders have given thought to this point and to such matters, for example, as whether Nauru would wish, and whether it could afford, to seek membership of international organizations. Similarly, I think it would be of interest to know whether the leaders of Nauru have formed ideas on how the defence of Nauru would be assured in that event. In putting those questions rather tentatively, I repeat that I do not wish to put either the Special Representative or Head Chief De Roburt in a difficult position, much as we should welcome any detailed information that they feel that they could give. It would be understood, I am sure, if they felt able to deal with those points only in the broadest terms.

Mr. De ROBERT: I should like an opportunity to prepare a statement in reply to the question. But, if it would be of help, I should like to mention some broad conceptions we have on the question of external affairs. I should also like to draw the attention of the United Kingdom representative to our statement, which is included as an annex to the Special Representative's opening statement. In that document we explained what we ourselves envision would be involved with regard to the question of external affairs.

We do not see that we would have many transactions with many countries, apart from Australia and New Zealand. We now do a bit of trading with Japan, Hong Kong, the United States, and with Europe, which totals only a few thousand pounds. We certainly would not wish to establish trade offices or trade commissions in those countries to look after what in terms of world trade is so insignificant. We shall certainly have an office in Australia. We have agreed to continue to supply Australia with phosphate until the phosphate on Nauru runs out; and we shall continue to have intimate commercial intercourse with Australia. We have already started what we believe to be the forerunner of a proper office; it is presently situated in Melbourne. We believe it could possibly look after our affairs transacted with New Zealand, as well. The person we have elected to guide us along these paths for these ambitions is the former Administrator of the island, Mr. Leydin.

As to membership in the United Nations, we have said on some occasions that we do not think we should become a member of the United Nations, the reason being, of course, that we are too small to become eligible for membership and that it would be too expensive for us.

We think we might take part in the activities of the South Pacific Commission, but, there again, we shall have to see whether it would be useful for us to do such a thing. We would, however, wish to become a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

On the question of defence, I must say that we do not think it is an important question to worry about at this stage. We were under the defence protection of the Administering Authority in the last war, and that did not protect us. I do not say that in any recriminatory sense, but is just a fact of life. I think that

(Mr. De Roburt.)

if a big nation wants to harm Nauru, it is quite capable of doing so, and none of the other big nations would be capable of stopping it. This is the broad thinking, at present, on the question of defence. But if it is discussed again after we have achieved independence, we will, as always, give careful consideration to advice from people who know better than we.

Mr. LIN (China): After so many questions have been asked and answered, I have only this one question: We understand that the question of resettlement has been settled, and that the Nauruans want to preserve their ethnic identity by remaining on Nauru. It occurs to me that Nauru is known as "the Pleasant Island". Am I correct in assuming that the Nauruans, apart from wishing to preserve their ethnic identity, are also very strongly attached, emotionally, to the land -- to that "Pleasant Island"?

Mr. De ROBERT: Yes, we do have an attachment to our homeland. The question of resettlement arose, however, from the realities: We had to face the reality that four fifths of our land would be mere quarries after the phosphate deposits are exhausted. We believe that the remaining one fifth of the island will not be enough to provide a permanent future for our people, which is one of the main reasons for our wanting to restore the island.

The PRESIDENT: If there are no other delegations wishing to ask questions, we shall now proceed to the general debate on the question of Nauru.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): From the statement submitted by the Nauruan delegation to the Trusteeship Council we see that the Nauru Local Government Council and its delegation to the Trusteeship Council continue to insist that independence should be granted to Nauru not later than 31 January 1968. That demand, as contained in the statement of the Nauruan delegation, was submitted to the Administering Authority at the negotiations which were resumed this past April, and which, as we understand, will be continued after the Trusteeship Council has concluded its consideration of the situation in Nauru.

(Mr. Shakhov, USSR)

The Soviet delegation would like to state its full support for the position of the representatives of the Nauruan delegation concerning the future status of Nauru.

With respect to the constitution of Nauru, the Soviet delegation would not like to go into such a discussion now, but would simply stress the fact that this question should be decided by the Nauruan people itself, and no one else.

The main element here should be that the full scope of authority, both in the legislative bodies as well as in the executive bodies, should belong to the elected representatives of the people. The people themselves should define both the form and the system of their administration, without any interference or pressure from outside. For this reason, we fully share the view of the Nauruan delegation that the new constitution of Nauru should be approved by the Constitutional Convention, which represents the interests of the people of Nauru, and no one else.

We also share the view of the Nauruan delegation that all matters concerning foreign relations should be in the hands of the Government of Nauru, and that no arrangements or agreements should be concluded behind the backs of the Nauruan people.

Further, we should like to stress that the desires of the Nauruan people for a sovereign existence and for the organization of their internal administration should not be conditioned by any attempts of the Administering Authority of the type which are contained in the alternative proposals of the Australian representative. The people of Nauru should be given full freedom to decide the question of their future constitution, as well as the manner of the administration of their internal, as well as foreign affairs.

For many years, the Nauruan people and their natural resources have been a source of enrichment for the Administering Authority. As we know, the island of Nauru is rich in phosphates, which are a source of enrichment for the colonial Powers, and despite any agreements that may have been reached on this matter, even if mutual agreements have been reached on this matter, we must note clearly that the colonial Powers are utilizing their domination over this island in order to exploit and plunder the natural resources of this territory.

As we can see from the Secretariat working paper, T/L.1120, in the last two years alone more than 3.2 million tons of phosphate have been extracted and exported from Nauru, and the value of this amounts to more than \$A18 million. The over-all value of the phosphate that has been exported during the existence of the British Phosphate Commissioners, which in 1919 asserted its authority over this natural resource, constitutes a tremendous sum which has been serving as a kind of compensation to be used for the agriculture of the Administering Authority itself.

The Nauruans are entitled to demand equitable compensation for the wealth that has been exported from their homeland, and they are entitled to demand the transfer of the phosphate resources to their own administration. This legitimate right of the people of Nauru was confirmed by the decision taken at the last session of the General Assembly which, in resolution 2226 (XXI), recommended that the Administering Authority should transfer control over the phosphate industry to the Nauruan people. The Soviet delegation fully supports this recommendation of the General Assembly. We support the just demand of the Nauruan people for the recognition of their right to inalienable sovereignty over the natural resources of their territory.

Furthermore, we should like to stress that this is not a matter of the transference by the Administering Authority of sovereignty over the phosphates, but rather of the restoration of this sovereignty of which the Nauruan people were deprived by the colonialists at the end of the last century. Thus, the Soviet delegation firmly supports the demand of the Nauruan people with respect to their future status and with respect to the constitutional form of their administration in accordance with their own desires.

We are in favour also of the transference to the Nauruan people of all rights and property in the phosphates and the phosphate industry in the territory, and we are also in favour of measures being taken by the Administering Authority to restore at its own expense, the top soil in the island of Nauru, because too much time has elapsed and too much exploitation has taken place of this resource of the territory. This should be done in order to create such conditions in the territory as would enable the Nauruan people to live as a sovereign nation, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2226 (XXI).

With respect to the problem of the resettlement of the Nauruans in another place, this is a matter which, in our view, should also be decided by the Nauruan people themselves, and only by the Nauruan people. The Administering Authority should refrain from resorting to manoeuvres on this matter and it should discontinue attempts to apply pressure on the Nauruan people to resettle in other places. It should allow them to live on their own territory, as has been stated by Head Chief De Roburt, in order to maintain the ethnical unity of the people. We fully share this view, and we support this position.

In conclusion, I should like to greet Head Chief De Roburt here and his colleague from the Nauruan Local Government Council, and I should like to wish them all success in attaining the purposes enshrined in the aspirations of their people to become a sovereign nation and to ensure for their people such a standard of living as would meet the needs of human dignity. We will follow the success and progress of the Nauruan people with great interest.

The Soviet delegation is in favour of these people defending their own interests, because by so doing they defend the interests of peace. Our demand for an assurance and guarantee of the future of these people is a just demand.

For this reason, we fully support the demands of all peoples who are coming out in favour of the liquidation of domination throughout the world. These peoples will secure the support of the Soviet delegation which, during the discussion of this matter in the Trusteeship Council, has always supported and is supporting the just demands of the Nauruan people for freedom and independence. The perseverance shown by the Nauruan people in seeking this independence can only arouse the enthusiasm and support of all men of good will.

Once again, we should like to extend to the people of Nauru, through Head Chief De Roburt, our best wishes in their struggle along the road to self-determination and independence. We wish them all possible success.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): I do not wish to reply at any length to what our colleague from the Soviet Union has said. I would just observe that the complete answer to his assertions regarding the phosphate industry, etc., is in the papers which have been so carefully and scrupulously placed before him and in the information which has been given to him regarding the agreement that has been freely entered into -- freely entered into, I say, and not under any pressure of any sort -- by the Nauruan people with the Australian Government.

I reject also the statements that pressure is being exercised on the Nauruan people in various directions. First of all, the Nauruan people are a very hard people to exercise pressure on. Secondly, what is happening is a series of negotiations and discussions which are proper and necessary to ensure the discharge of the Trusteeship obligations assumed by the Administering Authority, and to ensure that the Nauruan people appreciate as fully as possible every aspect of any proposals that may come or be put before them. There is no pressure. Negotiations in an atmosphere of friendliness and mutual respect -- these, I think, are the terms used by the Head Chief himself -- have gone on towards the phosphate agreements and are going on towards the final details of whatever political settlement will be arrived at.

With regard to the phosphate operations, the ownership thereof, and the reference made by our colleague from the Soviet Union to the General Assembly resolution, I would again refer to the opening statement made by the Special Representative, and in particular to the following passage from that statement:

"The Nauru Local Government Council -- or its successor in any changed constitutional situation -- will on the consummation of the arrangements become the owner of the phosphate enterprise at Nauru and will take over its entire control and management." (1313th meeting, p. 21)

The last point on which I would like to make a brief comment is the matter of resettlement. I wish to assure our colleague from the Soviet Union that there are no proposals from the Australian Government presently before the Nauruan people in any new form, that there are no manoeuvrings by the Administering Authority, and that the decisions of the Nauruans have been freely made and their agreement on the various matters regarding their future freely

entered into with the Australian Government. You will note that in the statement of the Special Representative the only reference, I believe, to anything which might be considered relevant to the matter of resettlement is a very brief one. In this connexion I will quote the last sentence of his summary regarding the detail of the discussions which have been going on between the representatives of the Governments concerned and the Nauruan people:

"There would also be no difficulty in the way of admitting Nauruan people to Australia for all purposes, including that of permanent residence, if required." (Ibid., p. 32)

That is entirely a matter for the Nauruan people to consider at any time, as they wish, or for any individual Nauruan to consider.

I repeat, there are no proposals for resettlement, there is no pressure being put on the Nauruan people, and there are no manoeuvrings on the part of the Administering Authority. And if the writing into whatever agreement may subsequently emerge regarding the future constitutional nature of the Nauruan government, of an offer to any Nauruan at any time for permanent residence in Australia is, in the eyes of the Soviet delegation, an offence, then I must express my complete disagreement.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): As usual, the representative of Australia has addressed himself to points different from those I raised in my statement. I said that the administering Powers have been plundering the Nauruan people for too long a time, and that because of this fact they are now obliged to make good the damages they have caused to the Nauruan people. The representative of Australia spoke about certain agreements for the future. I should like to remind him that at a previous meeting figures were quoted indicating that in the period since 1949 Nauru's contribution to the agriculture of Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain, calculated on the basis of world prices for phosphates, was in excess of £67 million. This one fact alone refutes what the Administering Authority asserts when it speaks of its "unselfish" administration.

Regarding the question of resettlement, I will say the following. We have been told that there is no manoeuvring going on. But this Council is quite aware of the desire of the Nauruan people; they have declared that they do not wish to be resettled on any other island and thus lose their national identity. Still, during the last three or four years since the matter came up, the administering Powers have, during the negotiations and in the Trusteeship Council, sought in every way to keep this idea alive and to convince the Nauruan people that they ought to reconsider the matter, that they should change their decision and not reject the idea of settling elsewhere. And now we are told that the Administering Authority is prepared to allow the Nauruans to resettle in Australia. But what would this mean? This would mean possibly an erosion of the ethnic unity of the Nauruan people.

What does the Nauruan people want? This is what we called for in our statement. What we want is that there should be no manoeuvring, that there should be no pressure exerted on the Nauruan people to subordinate them to the wishes of the administering Power, and that this problem should be settled by the Nauruan people and the Nauruan people alone.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): I wish only to assure our colleague from the Soviet Union once again that there are no proposals with respect to resettlement at present being discussed or scheduled to be discussed by the Governments and the people concerned. The sentence which I quoted, and which the Soviet representative has chosen to distort in a fashion not unfamiliar to this Council, represents simply the provision of the best that we can offer to any Nauruan who, in the future, may feel some need or wish to exercise a choice in regard to his country.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): I have just heard the interesting thesis, coming as it does from the Soviet Union, that colonial peoples themselves should settle the details of their own constitution and their future status and should have the right to exploit their own resources. Coming from this particular representative, this is an interesting thesis. My delegation can only regard it as an implied criticism by this representative of his own national policy -- remorselessly pursued -- of integrating into the Soviet State and exploiting ruthlessly every inch of colonial Territory it ever lays its hands on.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I would like to say, first, that the representative of New Zealand is touching upon a matter that is not before the Trusteeship Council for consideration. Secondly, I do not understand the insinuations and allegations which he has made concerning territories which the Soviet Union supposedly incorporated without the express wish of the people concerned. I categorically reject these slanderous statements, which have been made several times in this Council.

Obviously, the representative of New Zealand has accepted the role which has been assigned to him by others here and is not speaking in his own voice, but is using the voice of others in this Council.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): The representative of the Soviet Union suggests that he does not understand what I am talking about, and I am happy to enlighten him. It is an undeniable fact of world history that, alone among the great Powers that acquired territory by conquest during the Second World War and after it, the Soviet Union failed to place a single one of these territories under Chapter XI, XII or XIII of the United Nations Charter. And I challenge the Soviet representative to deny that.

The PRESIDENT: Before I recognize the next speaker, I would appeal to the members of the Council to confine themselves to the matters at issue, now that we are proceeding with the general debate. We are trying very hard to meet our schedule; and if we digress at this point, we will probably have to prolong our session by a day. This argument is very interesting and could go on for some time, but I would appeal to representatives to be very brief, so that we can continue with the general debate.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation notes with disgust the heinous manoeuvres which have just been indulged in by the representative of New Zealand.

The PRESIDENT: Are there any other delegations that are ready to speak now in the general debate?

Since there appear to be no other delegations ready to speak this morning, we shall continue the general debate tomorrow morning. We would like to be able to conclude the general debate tomorrow morning and be prepared to meet again in the afternoon and, if possible, have the concluding statement of the Special Representative at that time.

Would it be possible for the Australian delegation to do this?

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): This is a difficult assignment, Madam President, as you well know. The concluding statement of the Special Representative or any other representative, after debate like this, depends much on what is said in the course of the general debate itself. Am I to assume that every representative who wishes to speak in the general debate will be speaking tomorrow morning?

The PRESIDENT: Is there any member of the Council who would not be able to make the general debate statement tomorrow morning?

I believe that the answer is apparent: all members who have not yet spoken in the general debate will be prepared to speak tomorrow morning. If their statements are relatively brief, we might be able to conclude the general debate tomorrow morning.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): I am not seeking to be difficult, Madam President, as you well know; and I am just as anxious as you are to conclude these proceedings at the earliest possible time -- particularly anxious, in fact. It would help my delegation if, as soon as possible, there were made available copies of statements to be made in the general debate by various representatives. The task we face is preparing the concluding statement between the end of the morning meeting and the beginning of the afternoon meeting. It would also help my delegation if the afternoon meeting, under those circumstances, could start at 4 o'clock instead of 3 o'clock.

(Mr. McCarthy, Australia)

Further, it would help my delegation to have a copy of the statement just made by the representative of the Soviet Union, if he has one in English, assuming that there will be no verbatim record. And I again come back to this point, which I have stressed before, that the absence of verbatim records in this principal organ of the United Nations is proving a very, very serious handicap indeed, not only to my own delegation as representing an Administering Authority here but, I am sure, to every other delegation.

Is there any possibility of having the verbatim records by tomorrow morning, Madam President?

The PRESIDENT: I regret that there is no possibility of having verbatim records because of the continuation of the session of the General Assembly.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): I realize the special and unexpected nature of the General Assembly. But I also realize that even when a General Assembly is normally in session, there are verbatim records of other organs -- certainly not all organs, but some of the Committees. In these circumstances, I wonder why a special effort could not be made in relation to these meetings, which are important meetings. This is a particularly important subject for the United Nations, concerned as it is with the future of a people who are seeking independence.

I have not so far seen what I would regard as an adequate explanation from the Secretariat for not having proper records available to all representatives at these meetings. Is it not possible for the Secretariat to make a special effort tomorrow to have the verbatim record of today's proceedings? If my delegation can make a special effort, and if other delegations can make special efforts, surely some arrangements could be made to meet their convenience.

Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Council): In reply to the representative of Australia, I can say no more than what I have said earlier on behalf of the Department concerned. As far as the records of this meeting are concerned, obviously since no verbatim reporters are present, it would be extremely difficult to produce the verbatim record of today's meeting.

I should also like to bring this to the attention of the members of the Council: I have been told that sometimes during the General Assembly extra teams are hired on an ad hoc basis for the purpose of providing verbatim records to certain Committees. The simple fact facing members of the Council is this: if similar circumstances should arise in the future, and the Council desired to have verbatim records, it would have to take a formal decision so that the necessary funds could be made available to engage a team of verbatim reporters on an ad hoc basis.

We trust and hope that future sessions of the Council will not take place in similar circumstances and that with the facilities already available to the Secretariat it will be possible to produce, as has been done in the past, the verbatim records of the Trusteeship Council.

Mr. McCARTHY (Australia): It is not my custom, as this Council well knows, to take up the time of this Council or of any other United Nations body in fruitless or prolonged discussion. However, I feel strongly on this matter, which, I repeat, has caused very considerable inconvenience indeed to my delegation and, I believe, to all other delegations represented around this table.

I should like to ask some questions. If in the past extra provision has been made when the General Assembly was meeting to furnish verbatim records on important matters on other organs of the United Nations, why could not that extra provision have been made on this occasion? That is my first question. I do not expect an immediate answer to it because I understand the workings of bureaucracies, national and international.

My second question is this: Is my assumption correct that there is a verbatim record on tape of today's meeting?

My third question is as follows: If the verbatim record of today's meeting is available on tape -- and this relates back to the observation of our Secretary that verbatim reporters were not present here today -- why cannot the Secretariat prepare from that tape a verbatim record for the convenience of all delegations represented on this principal organ of the United Nations?

The PRESIDENT: I shall ask the Secretary to prepare answers to those questions -- unless he is able to give the answers at this time.

Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Council): I will certainly follow this matter up and I will give the appropriate answers to the representative of Australia and to the other members of the Council. I can say right away that the verbatim reporting team is engaged in preparing the verbatim records of the meetings of the General Assembly. Thus they will not be available to prepare from the tape the verbatim record of this meeting. For that reason, as the representative of Australia is well aware, it is well nigh impossible to comply with his request.

Mr. SHAW (United Kingdom): The representative of Australia has drawn attention to the disabilities from which all of us suffer, in varying degree and particularly the delegations of the Administering Authorities, in this matter of verbatim record.

Could the Secretary of the Council tell us anything about the status of the draft reports on New Guinea and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands in case we could usefully make some progress on those subjects tomorrow afternoon? That would give the representative of Australia and his delegation a little more time in which to prepare the final statement. Would it be of assistance if we could at least examine the draft report on New Guinea?

Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Council): In answer to the representative of the United Kingdom, I would say that as far as the report of the Drafting Committee on New Guinea is concerned, apparently the Committee has concluded its work but the draft report will probably not be ready until tomorrow morning. And it will be ready only in English, not in the other languages. I know that delegations around this table would like to have that report in their own language so that they can study it carefully before they take a decision on it.

Apart from that fact, there is one other which should be kept in mind, namely, that if the work of the Council is to be concluded by the end of next week, certainly the Drafting Committee on Nauru should start working by Monday.

This cannot be done unless the representative of Australia -- and I sympathize fully with him and understand his predicament -- makes his final statement tomorrow afternoon. I think it will be extremely difficult in view of the present circumstances, which I do not have to go into at this stage, to produce the documents and conclude our work by the end of next week if the final statement is not made by tomorrow afternoon at the latest.

Mr. McHENRY (United States of America): I should like to state formally that the United States, for one, will be unable to submit to the Secretariat corrections to the summary records in the period of time in which this is normally done. I do not say whose fault this is, but we have discovered that we are having to devote far more attention to the summary records as regards corrections and so forth than is normally the case. This is compounded by the absence of verbatim records. Therefore, it may take some time for us to complete the corrections to the summary records.

Mr. SHAKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to stress one very important fact, namely, that the Soviet delegation considers that the Trusteeship Council should finish its work in the time prescribed, perhaps at the end of next week, as was stated here.

(Mr. Shakhov, USSR)

In any case, we must conclude our work not later than 29 June; we must approve the report that will be submitted to us. I understand the difficulties of the Australian and other delegations in view of the absence of verbatim records. That is a certain inconvenience, but there are many other problems which constitute an inconvenience for other delegations -- not only the lack of verbatim records, but also the question of translation into the official languages, and so on; but we have to take into account the circumstances mentioned by the Secretariat.

As to the possibility that the representative of Australia might make his concluding statement tomorrow so that the Secretariat could then proceed to prepare the report of the Trusteeship Council on Nauru for submission to the General Assembly, it might perhaps be useful to meet the request of the Australian representative, to the effect that the Council could listen to his concluding statement, not at 3 p.m., but later -- perhaps at 4 p.m. Perhaps we could even give more time to the Australian representative. He might make his statement at 5 o'clock, and we could thus conclude our discussion on this item so that the Secretariat could immediately proceed to prepare those parts of the Trusteeship Council report on this particular Trust Territory.

I repeat: we understand the difficulties encountered by the Australian delegation, but if a desire to co-operate is shown, and if the Australian delegation could make its statement on this question tomorrow, that would expedite matters.

Mr. McCarthy (Australia): I thank our colleague from the Soviet Union for his rather guarded support of what I have been saying and suggesting for the last twenty minutes. I am bound to observe -- reverting briefly to the subject of my previous remarks -- that I am not satisfied with the explanations given by the Secretariat in respect of the convenience of the members of this Council. It is not unprecedented, as we well know, even under more normal circumstances, for the Secretariat to be called upon to service other important bodies as well as the General Assembly. If I remember rightly, the Security Council, for example, has met at the same time as the General Assembly. And may I ask, in my ignorance, what arrangements have been made for verbatim coverage of those two very important bodies when they have met simultaneously?

(Mr. McCarthy, Australia)

I make those observations to show why I am not satisfied with the explanation given by the Secretariat. Again, I would ask the Secretariat to do everything it can in this matter to see to it that verbatim records from the tapes, or in whatever way it may be possible, are provided by tomorrow morning.

Having said that, I would reluctantly agree that the Australian delegation will make its closing statement tomorrow afternoon, merely to expedite the work of this Council; and I would gratefully seize at the straw offered by our colleague from the Soviet Union, who has suggested 5 o'clock instead of 4 o'clock; I would dare to suggest that, myself.

I would close with this observation: If, through the absence of efficient and proper records of the meetings of this Council, the Australian delegation, or any other delegation, should not be in a position to shorten the work of this Council or to keep it within the prescribed limits; if, indeed, the result should be that the work of this Council was extended by one day, by two days or, more likely, by three days -- then the cost involved would be very much greater.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to assure the representative of Australia and other members of this Council who have expressed concern about the lack of verbatim records that I will ask the Secretary of the Council to bring this whole question to the urgent attention of the Under-Secretary for Conference Services, with the request that provisions be made for future sessions of the Trusteeship Council in order that this critical situation will not arise again.

I wish to thank the representative of Australia for his co-operation, and I would suggest that, in order to assist him, those members of the Council who will be speaking tomorrow morning should make an effort to make available to the Australian representative copies of their statements in advance of that meeting, if possible; or, if not possible, at least at the beginning of the meeting tomorrow morning. If they should be available by the close of business today, I am sure that the Australian delegation would find that even more helpful.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.