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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Thirteenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 25 April 1962, at 3.20 p.m.

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14 p.

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. MALALASEKERA	(Ceylon)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. ROS	Argentina
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. HOOD	Australia
	Mr. MAHENDRAN	Ceylon
	Mr. VALENCIA	Ecuador
	Mr. DOISE	France
	Mr. EASTMAN	Liberia
	Mr. CALVILLO-TREVINO	Mexico
	Mr. GOEDHARD )	Netherlands
	Mr. de BRUYN )	
	Mr. NORRISH	New Zealand
	Mr. AKHUND	Pakistan
	Mr. CALINGASAN	Philippines
	Mr. de PINIES	Spain
	Mr. SANKEY )	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. HOUGHTON )	
	Mr. THORON	United States of America
	Mr. ILBOUDO	Upper Volta
<u>Representatives of specialized agencies:</u>		
	Mr. LLYOD	International Labour Organisation
	Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
	Dr. SACKS	World Health Organization
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. PROTITCH	Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self- Governing Territories
	Mr. KUNST	Secretary of the Committee

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS (continued)

Mr. MAHENDRAN (Ceylon) said that he wished to make a reservation regarding the submission by the Netherlands Government of information concerning West Irian, which his Government regarded as an integral part of Indonesia.

Mr. GOEDHART (Netherlands) said that his Government had no doubt regarding its sovereignty over Netherlands New Guinea and he formally reserved its rights in the matter.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/4111, A/4371, A/5078 and Add.1-6, A/5079 and Add.2, A/5080 and Add.1, 5, 7 and 9, A/5081 and Add.2)  
(continued):

- (a) INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION (A/AC.35/L.353, L.354)
- (b) TRAINING OF TEACHERS (A/AC.35/L.353, L.356)
- (c) SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION (A/AC.35/L.353, L.356)
- (d) VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING (A/AC.35/L.353, L.355, L.360)
- (e) ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY (A/AC.35/L.357)

Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that, as in previous years, his delegation would provide the Committee with information on various aspects of development in Papua. At the present meeting he would address himself to the subject of educational advancement in the Territory. His delegation was in a position to provide a great deal of more detailed information, which would be submitted in written form if the Committee so desired. He hoped that the statement he was about to make would reveal steady and continuous progress in respect of the education of the indigenous people. He would endeavour to confine his remarks to the Territory of Papua itself and to avoid confusion between that Territory and what was known for administrative purposes as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

The educational system of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea was governed by the Education Ordinance 1952-1957 and the Education Regulations, under which the control and direction of secular education were the responsibility of the Administration.

The Education Ordinance provided for the following: the establishment by the Administration of schools and pre-school centres and other educational

(Mr. Hood, Australia)

activities; compulsory registration, recognition or exemption of all schools conducted by educational agencies other than the Administration; grants by the Administration to missions and other educational agencies; the conducting of schools by indigenous authorities subject to the approval of the Director of Education; compulsory school attendance in specified areas; the determination of the language or languages to be used in the schools; the establishment of an Educational Advisory Board consisting of the Director of Education and four members appointed by the Administrator to represent the missions and other voluntary educational agencies; the appointment of a District Education Committee of not more than five members, including at least one mission representative.

The broad objectives of educational policy in Papua included the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples of the Territory, the blending of cultures and the voluntary acceptance of a religious practice by the indigenous people in the absence of any body of religious faith founded on indigenous teaching or ritual. To obtain those objectives it was necessary to teach all indigenous children to read and write in a common language, to awaken the interest of the indigenous people through progress, trade, a higher material level of living and a civilized mode of life, to teach the indigenous community to cope with the political, economic and social changes that were occurring throughout the Territory, to blend the best features of indigenous culture with those of civilization, and for those purposes to provide in the Territory a full range of primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and adult education for both sexes and all classes of the community.

With regard to the first task, it was recognized that universal literacy in English, which it was intended should become the common language of the Territory, was one of the most important single means of fostering the progress of the people as a whole. Accordingly, in the Administration schools the indigenous languages were rarely used as a medium of instruction and even then only in the first year or two in primary schools. In some mission schools local languages were used in the first years of primary education to teach reading and writing, but the missions were to an increasing extent introducing English in the first years in conjunction with the vernaculars.

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He emphasized the greatly increased tempo of educational development as shown by the increase in expenditure. For example, in 1955-1956 the Administration had allotted for operational expenditure in the field of education less than £A500,000, while for the fiscal year 1960-61 the amount had been well over £A1 million.

All the educational services covered every section of the community, but the major commitment was, of course, on behalf of the indigenous Papuans. The difficulties of providing education for the people of Papua were considerable. He had already mentioned the difficulty in relation to language; where educational activities extended beyond one linguistic area the existence of hundreds of different languages made it impracticable to prepare literacy material in them all and reading and writing in English were therefore taught without prior literacy in the vernacular. There was also the difficulty of terrain and distance. Students might come from tiny hamlets scattered over a wide area and might have to travel great distances on foot to and from school. The problem of distance might necessitate the establishment of boarding schools, which were costly to maintain and required more staff for supervisory purposes. Furthermore, there was the problem of the economic status of the indigenous population. Parents could contribute little or nothing to the formal education of their children; indeed, by their adherence to primitive traditions they frequently tended to hold children back from school attendance. So far the people in many areas could contribute little to the cost of providing teachers, buildings or money for educational purposes.

District Education Committees appointed by the Administrator under the Education Ordinance, consisting of not more than five members, one of whom must be a mission representative, had been established in the Central and Milne Bay districts. Papuan observers had been appointed to attend meetings of the Committees and take part in the discussions. The Education Advisory Board, which consisted of the Director of Education, other departmental officers and representatives of missions, met at least twice a year. It discussed and advised on all aspects of educational policy and provided a useful means of co-operation between the

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Administration and the missions in the solution of educational problems. The first indigenous member of the Board had been appointed in 1960 as Administration representative. Meetings were usually attended by indigenous observers.

The immediate programme of educational development included concentration on the development of a primary-school system in which all children living in controlled areas would learn to read and write English; assistance to the missions in improving their schools so that their standards would be acceptable to the Department; recruitment and training of teachers; increases in supervisory staff; development of manual training at all levels and the provision of technical training at special schools; provision of secondary education for all those capable of profiting by it; stimulation of interest in education among girls and women; identification of education with community interests and the correlation of elementary training in agricultural sciences and general education at all stages; increased use of films, radio and local newspapers and provision of tutorial classes and correspondence tuition for members of the Auxiliary Division of the Public Service seeking higher academic qualifications and for Administration servants seeking admission to the Auxiliary Division.

Primary schools fell into two main groups, one of which had a syllabus especially designed for Papuan pupils, the other what might be called an Australian syllabus. The two curricula merged at Standard 7. Papuan pupils with a competent grasp of English who were considered generally capable of competing with non-Papuan pupils could attend the schools in the second group and twenty-one were at present doing so.

The development of the Papuan people required differential treatment for children in urbanized areas, in areas of frequent contact with Europeans, in areas with limited contact and in areas of minimum contact. The object was the eventual integration of the two types of syllabus. Curricula were adapted to regular needs according to the stage of development of the people and the need and opportunity for the use of English. Even in areas of minimum contact, where instruction was in a Melanesian pidgin or the local vernacular, oral English was taught. The basic policy was to provide Papuans with an education which was

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closely related to their lives and would prepare them for the changes resulting from European contact. Emphasis was placed on literacy in English with the object of making it the universal common language in the Territory. Basic technical, manual and agricultural skills were taught in order to assist students to adapt themselves to changing conditions and raise their level of living. Agricultural teaching stressed possible variety and improvement in subsistence and commercial cropping. At the same time emphasis was placed on the best elements of Papuan culture.

Children usually entered school at six years of age and completed primary schooling at twelve years of age. Attendance at school was good. The fact that many Papuan children did not proceed beyond the primary school level was the result of such factors as the diversity of standards of social advancement, the degree of contact with European influence, village customs and the domestic circumstances of the family group. The total enrolment of primary school pupils had increased from 56,331 in 1959-1960 to 71,855 in 1960-1961. In the combined Territories of Papua and New Guinea there were estimated to be 540,000 children of school age, nearly half of whom were attending school; about 30,000 attended the Administration schools and 170,000 mission schools. It was anticipated that during the next few years school enrolment would be increased to 350,000 and that by the end of 1975 all children would be within reach of schools.

Although priority was at present given to primary education, the Administration had begun to develop high schools, technical schools and other training institutions. Intermediate, secondary and higher education would be made available to all students who satisfactorily completed their primary education and had a good knowledge of English. At present 263 Papuans were receiving secondary education in the Territory and sixty-one in schools in Australia. High schools in the Territory were multiracial, the only prerequisite for enrolment being attainment of the necessary academic qualifications. In the case of Papuans attending secondary schools in Australia, the Administration of the Territory met the full cost of board, tuition, clothing and other incidental costs and their fares to and from Australia once a year.

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Within the last ten days or so the Minister for Territories had decided to proceed with the recommendations of a special review body set up in 1961. He would refer to some of its recommendations in a later statement, but would mention now that the Administration had decided to establish a university of Papua and New Guinea, it was hoped within the next three years. The university would probably be situated at Port Moresby.

Mr. NORRISH (New Zealand) said that, although the Committee was dealing with Territories with a bewildering variety of political, social and economic structures which was necessarily reflected in their educational systems, it was often possible to discern general principles of development which were valid for all developing countries, whether independent or non-self-governing. Just as the accounts of the problems faced by the Administering Members with much larger responsibilities had been of great value to New Zealand, so his delegation hoped that a brief account of the lines of progress and the particular problems encountered in the Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelau Islands might be of use to others. His comments would be mainly limited to educational advancement, the item at present under consideration, but he would also cover some other points in order to avoid having to make frequent interventions with brief items of information at a later stage.

The Territories administered by New Zealand comprised a total of nineteen small islands, of which the northern group, including the Tokelaus, were low-lying coral atolls, infertile and with limited possibilities of development. Those in the south, including Niue, were of volcanic origin and rather more productive. Despite the isolation of centuries, the Polynesian peoples of the islands shared many common social institutions and their language was fundamentally the same. The combined land area, of which Niue represented about one half, was only 200 square miles and the total population was under 25,000. The problems of administration were complicated by the fact that the islands were scattered over a million square miles of ocean, their soil resources were limited and their populations were increasing rapidly.



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The political institutions of the Cook Islands and Niue had been evolving rapidly, particularly during the past four years. Executive government was carried on by Resident Commissioners, one for the Cook Islands and one for Niue, who were responsible to the Minister for Island Territories in New Zealand. In practice, however, they consulted closely with the Legislative Assemblies, elected by universal and secret ballot, which enjoyed wide powers of domestic legislation, taxation and appropriation of tax revenues. In the current year the subsidies being granted had been announced for three years ahead and the respective Assemblies had been empowered to take full responsibility for the appropriation of the subsidies as well as of local revenue. That meant that the programmes of capital expenditure would be determined by the Legislative Assemblies and no authority would be required from New Zealand for the individual projects. For the Cook Islands the subsidies granted for 1961-62 totalled £653,000, which sum would be progressively increased to reach the figure of £770,000 in 1964-65. In Niue the total subsidies for 1961-62 amounted to £244,000 and would reach £295,000 in 1964-65. In order to encourage the Assemblies to reduce the extent of their dependence upon finance from New Zealand, specific grants had been included in the subsidies to each Assembly to build up a fund for economic development, the main purpose being to provide a source of credit for agricultural development.

In the past two years the Cook Islands Legislative Assembly had increased the local income tax, imposed a sales tax and increased water rates in the island of Rarotonga. The Rarotonga Island Council had imposed a wharfage tax and a road tax, thus enabling the Council to undertake harbour improvements and so forth without calling on New Zealand for financial aid. The Niue Island Assembly had introduced a local income tax and had competently administered a re-housing loan scheme. Thus it was clear that the policy of increasing local responsibility for administration was proving successful and was widening the outlook of the island peoples.

The possibility of including the three isolated atolls of the Tokelau group within some wider grouping had been discussed informally with the Tokelau people by the New Zealand Minister for Island Territories when he had visited the

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islands the previous year. The outcome would of course depend upon the preferences of the people. The domestic affairs of each island were entirely controlled by the inhabitants, but, pending a decision on future political developments, financial matters such as the administration of the copra fund and the organization of ship charters remained the responsibility of New Zealand.

With the transfer of financial powers to the Legislative Assemblies one stage of political development had been completed. Further progress would depend largely on the rate at which senior civil servants, medical and agricultural specialists could be trained, and that in turn hinged on the capacity of the educational system, which had come to be recognized as the key to all forms of progress.

In connexion with educational policy, the dilemma implicit in any traditional society arose in an acute form in the isolated atoll societies whose patterns of life were in varying degrees removed from those of modern technology. The question was whether educational policy should aim primarily at fitting the island people to their natural environment by concentrating on agriculture and fishing techniques as well as providing a base of general instructions, or whether it should aim at a standard liberal and technological education as advanced as possible, at the risk of educating the pupils out of contact with their own environment. There was, of course, no solution except to achieve a practical balance directed at general educational progress and the training of administrative and technical personnel while avoiding the rootlessness which came from the needless destruction of traditional ways. That was what New Zealand had tried to do; its educational policy was designed to enable the people to raise their level of living and to take their place in a more complex and industrialized society if they so wished, while at the same time placing almost equal emphasis on improving conditions on the islands by introducing more specialized agricultural and technical knowledge.

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Those fundamental aims were worked out through the entire educational structure. Primary-school education in the islands was universal, compulsory and free; there was virtually no illiteracy. Secondary education, provided at the two high schools, Tereora College in Rarotonga and the Niue High School, was also free but, owing to shortage of teachers and accommodation, entrance was at present restricted to those reaching a certain level of attainment. The effects of those two secondary schools could already be noted in the calibre of young islanders taking up administrative positions in the islands, but the demand by the Government for graduates of those schools had so far outrun the supply. Expansion was therefore proceeding as rapidly as possible.

Since the island Territories could not support a university college or technological institute, a higher education had to be given through a system of scholarships to New Zealand or other overseas institutions. The New Zealand Government Scholarship Scheme had contributed £14,518 in the eleven months ended February 1962 and expenditure for the current financial year would be increased to approximately £20,000 to cater for a 40 per cent increased intake from the Cook Islands. There were at present 114 students benefiting from the Scheme. That figure included forty-one Cook Islanders undergoing career training in New Zealand; three of them were attending university full-time and one graduate doctor of medicine was in his house-surgeon year, while seven others were undergoing teacher training. The first fully qualified Cook Island surveyor had been registered in New Zealand early in the year and would eventually join the staff of the Survey Department in the Cook Islands. Two university graduates were now holding responsible positions in the Cook Islands Administration. Other fields in which training was being given to Cook Islanders included nursing, carpentry and cabinet making, electrical engineering, motor engineering, fitting and turning, surveying, radio, clerical and shorthand typing, police training and dentistry. Forty-five Cook Island children and twenty-one Niueans were attending New Zealand secondary schools under the Scheme and seven Niueans were receiving career training.

Technical and vocational training, therefore, was playing an important part in the educational development of the Cook Islands and Niue. On the

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principle that the curriculum, though aiming at academic excellence, must also be adapted to local needs and specialities, vocational training began as soon as the child entered primary school where, alongside the staple academic subjects, instruction was given in such subjects as the local language and the traditions of Polynesian history and folklore. In the last three years of primary school, particularly for those pupils who were not going on to secondary school, there was increasing training in homecrafts, agriculture and woodwork. The most important vocational work was of course agricultural education, since the islands would continue to be mainly dependent on agriculture for a cash income for some time to come. New Zealand, however, was not a tropical country and instruction at its agricultural colleges was so divorced from the needs of the Pacific islands as to be of little practical value. His country had therefore financed the building of Avelle Agriculture College in Western Samoa to serve as a regional centre for agricultural research and training in the South Pacific. In the past year, eight students from the Cook Islands and Niue had graduated from the College.

Since there was almost no illiteracy in those Territories, adult education there did not follow a systematic programme but ranged over a wide number of practical matters such as instruction on health and child welfare, demonstrations by agricultural extension services, distribution of local news-sheets, film strips and radio broadcasts. Radio was very popular in the islands and considerable information about the United Nations was disseminated through that medium and through film strips. The women's committees in many villages had been particularly active in adult education; community spirit was strong and both Territories could boast of a consistently declining rate of crime and juvenile delinquency.

Turning to the economic development of the island Territories, he said that the inherent difficulty lay in their dispersion over a million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. To overcome that isolation and reduce the very high costs of transport, New Zealand had for many years maintained its own shipping service to the Cook Islands. In 1960 a larger and more modern ship had been built and New Zealand had since begun to subsidize ship owners trading within the islands.

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Partly as a result of that improved shipping service, 1961 had been a record year for Cook Island exports, which had totalled nearly £600,000. The same year had seen the opening of a fruit canning factory in Rarotonga; the success of the venture had exceeded expectations and a large expansion was planned for the coming year. The opening of the factory had been a major step towards finding satisfactory industries to boost employment and income figures in the Group. There had also been a major expansion in co-operative activities in the Cook Islands in 1961.

Exports of copra and bananas from Niue were still suffering the after-effects of the disastrous hurricanes of 1959 and 1960 but were recovering rapidly. The most spectacular economic progress on that island had been the organized development of individual small holdings. The Government had brought 130 small plots into the Scheme and given advice to growers in the culture of staple crops and in the diversification of crops for export. The Scheme, which was being fostered in conjunction with a parallel scheme run by the Legislative Assembly under which loans were granted to approved growers for the erection of water tanks, had resulted in startling increases in productivity. Investigations were also being made into the development of fisheries in Niuean waters and the South Pacific Commission would provide specialist advice on the problem in 1962.

In the field of health the Cook Islands and Niue were fortunate in their isolation since neither malaria nor any other crippling tropical disease was known to the islands. The infant mortality rate had reached a record low figure in 1960 and was still dropping. An intensive effort was being made to stamp out tuberculosis, which remained the islands' major health hazard, although it now seemed likely that the disease was not so prevalent as had first been suspected. Leprosy was now under complete control in the New Zealand Territories. A filariasis control project on the island of Atiu had resulted in the virtual elimination of the disease there and had yielded valuable information on the effectiveness of various drugs in its treatment. The work was now to be extended to the island of Manihiki and a medical and dental survey team was to be sent

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to the Tokelau islands in 1963 to make a thorough assessment of the health situation there. Work had started on a new hospital on Rarotonga and the reconstruction of the Niue Island Hospital was going ahead as quickly as possible. A new hospital had been opened in Penrhyn in 1961. Elementary health education was given in all schools and through women's committees. Such education was being given special emphasis in Niue, following recommendations by specialists of the WHO and South Pacific Commission. He paid a tribute to the work of both those bodies, which had given a practical demonstration of the benefits of international co-operation; as a result of the yaws campaign conducted in 1955 by WHO, for example, the disease had been virtually eliminated.

In the social sphere the biggest advances had been made in the construction of modern housing. The £172,000 rehousing scheme on Niue, started in 1959 after the first hurricane, had been expanded after the second hurricane in 1960, when virtually all housing on the island had been destroyed. The scheme was progressing well and the people of Niue were learning the best principles of aided self-help, for they were building the houses themselves under the guidance of New Zealand building experts with loans in the form of building materials. A housing loan scheme was also operating in the Cook Islands.

Social development, however, was not revealed merely in improved housing. Emigration patterns in the Cook Islands and Niue continued, as they had done for many years, to reveal a steady movement of population to New Zealand. That raised no problems since there were ample employment opportunities in New Zealand and emigration helped to balance the very high birth rate in the islands. On the other hand, the ease of emigration added to the difficulty of building up a sufficient core of local doctors, agriculturists and civil servants.

The policy of New Zealand as an Administering Power was to develop the islands to their individual capacity. The work of development was a partnership combining New Zealand technical and financial assistance with the efforts of the islanders themselves and was increasingly being carried out under their control and direction. The progressive transfer of responsibility to the indigenous inhabitants had as its immediate goal the achievement of full internal self-government. Both New Zealand and the local Governments were aware that, to be successful, that in turn required increasing emphasis on the islands' educational services. Educational development was thus of paramount importance.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.