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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Thirteenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 3 May 1962, at 3.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

Political and constitutional information on Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/5078/Add.3 and Add.7-18, A/5079 and Add.1 and Add.3-6, A/5080 and Add.2-4, Add.6, Add.8 and Add.10-17, A/5081 and Add.1 and Add.3-5, A/5120) (continued)

Preparation and training of indigenous civil and technical cadres in Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/5122) (continued)

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. MALALASEKERA	(Ceylon)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. RCS	Argentina
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. HOOD	Australia
	Mr. MAHENDRAN	Ceylon
	Mr. VALENCIA	Ecuador
	Mr. DOISE	France
	Mr. EASTMAN	Liberia
	Mr. GOEDHART)	Netherlands
	Mr. de BRUYN)	
	Mr. HENSLEY	New Zealand
	Mr. CALINGASAN	Philippines
	Mr. de PINIES	Spain
	Mr. SANKEY	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. POPPER	United States of America
<u>Representatives of specialized agencies:</u>		
	Mr. LLOYD	International Labour Organisation
	Mr. SALSAMENDI	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. CHU	Secretary of the Committee

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION ON NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/5078/Add.3 and Add.7-18, A/5079 and Add.1 and Add.3-6, A/5080 and Add.2-4, Add.6, Add.8 and Add.10-17, A/5081 and Add.1 and Add.3-5, A/5120) (continued)

PREPARATION AND TRAINING OF INDIGENOUS CIVIL AND TECHNICAL CADRES IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/5122) (continued)

Mr. HOOD (Australia) recalled that his Government had been voluntarily submitting political information on the Territories under its administration for a number of years.

By reason of the administrative union between Papua and the Trust Territory of New Guinea, information relating to New Guinea appeared in the same report as that relating to Papua. In that connexion he agreed with the United Kingdom representative that instead of delving into details the Committee should give general consideration to the development of the Territories and distil certain principles which were applicable to them all.

The most significant political event had been the reconstitution of the Legislative Council of Papua and New Guinea, which now comprised thirty-seven members, as against twenty-nine in the old Council, including twelve indigenous members, six of whom were elected and six appointed. There had been only three indigenous members, all appointed, in the old Council. Although the Council had eight more members, it had a reduced number of official members - fourteen as against sixteen. The reconstituted Council was a marked advance on the old Council; six indigenous members had been elected for the first time; indigenous and non-indigenous elected members were equal in numbers; excluding the official members, the indigenous members outnumbered the European members by two and the official majority had disappeared. The elections to the Council had themselves been remarkable; to achieve the required indigenous elected membership had been the result of years of effort and planning by the Administration and of adaptation by the indigenous people to the needs of a new age.

As had already been stated before the relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Fourth Committee, present conditions in the Territory were such that an individual adult franchise system could not be applied generally. During the 1961 elections for the Legislative Council the franchise had been extended to include all people who were sufficiently advanced to appreciate the issues. The impossibility of introducing universal suffrage had been due to causes beyond

(Mr. Hood, Australia)

the control of the Australian Government. Before universal franchise could be instituted there must be a "people". The 700 tribal groups of Papua and New Guinea, with no degree of cohesion, no common interests and little political awareness could not be called a people. Nevertheless it was the declared policy of the Australian Government that such a system would be introduced as soon as possible and it hoped that the Legislative Council would develop its own changing forms until self-government was attained.

By means of the Local Government Council system the indigenous inhabitants would acquire political awareness and responsibility. In 1950 there had been one Council serving 2,500 people. There were now twenty Councils serving 130,000 people. It was anticipated that in a few years 800,000 people in the combined Territories of Papua and New Guinea would be represented. The Australian Government did not wish to foist an alien political system upon a primitive people who were incapable of understanding it. The rate of progress should depend on the rate of response. As Mr. J.K. McCarthy, the Director of Native Affairs, had stated recently, administrative penetration of uncontrolled areas must be by stages; after the stage of exploratory patrols and the first contacts, patrol posts were established, the people were gradually introduced to the general idea of law and order, and tribal warfare was reduced to a minimum; then the people elected a village head, medical aid posts were established and a school was built. If matters were hastened and a Council was established before the people were prepared for it, the picture changed abruptly and the Territory became much more difficult to administer. If Local Government Councils were to function effectively, clan and village rivalries must be broken down and the people must learn to work together. Cash cropping must be fostered so that the people could participate directly in the material and cultural progress of the area.

One of the essential tasks of the Government was to train indigenous personnel to take over responsible positions within the public service. It was also endeavouring to enable the indigenous inhabitants to participate in various other Territory bodies. Besides the steadily increasing number of people covered by Local Government Councils, the indigenous people were taking an increasing part in Town and District Advisory Councils and in the activities of various other bodies.

(Mr. Hood, Australia)

As Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister of Australia, had said in the General Assembly on 5 October 1960 (A/PV.888), Australia regarded itself as having a duty to produce as soon as practicable an opportunity of complete self-determination for the people of Papua and New Guinea.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.