

Two Thousand Isles . . .

Three Million Square Miles of Sea

Trusteeship Council Considers Problems of Pacific Islands

WHEN, on June 13, the Trusteeship Council began considering the report of the United Nations visiting mission to the Pacific Islands and the annual report of the United States as the administering authority, members were mindful of the fact that in the not-too-distant future the area will be one of but four remaining trust territories. The other seven originally placed under trusteeship have already attained the goals of trusteeship or are about to do so.

The report of the visiting mission pointed out that the purposes of the tour of inspection had not been to ascertain how the territory had been administered in the past so much as to examine the possibilities for the future.

The territory comprises 2,141 islands and tiny atolls, with a total land area of approximately 700 square miles, spread over three million square miles of the western Pacific Ocean. The islands are grouped into the Marianas, the Carolines and the Marshalls.

An administration problem was emphasized by J. B. Bingham, of the United States, when he commented on the impossibility of visualizing the ratio of land to water without having been to the territory. "One can appreciate this," he told the Council, "after flying for four solid hours between one district headquarters and the next without seeing more than perhaps one or two tiny specks of land in the water in between. . . . This problem of communication and transportation . . . is really at the heart of the whole problem of the territory and its administration."

Bearing in mind the future, and "in the light of the tempo of the times," the visiting mission unanimously suggested that greater and speedier efforts be made to prepare the territory for self-government or independence; and that looking at things from a new angle was necessary.

It urged long-term economic planning for the entire territory, due emphasis on establishing processing and manufacturing industries, and more

satisfactory procedures for financing development by establishing a development fund involving a substantial increase in the financial and technical contribution by the United States.

The visiting mission was composed of four appointees of the Council: Carlos Salamanca, of Bolivia, Chairman; Jean Adriaenssen, of Belgium; Maharajakrishna Rasgotra, of India; and Geoffrey K. Caston, of the United Kingdom. It was the first mission sent to study conditions in this territory exclusively, and it spent more than six weeks traveling through the islands during February and March of this year.

While recognizing that the territory's revenue is meager, the mission expressed the opinion that its main natural economic resources have not yet been exploited. The potentials for heavy extractive or manufacturing industries were admittedly limited, but small-scale industries based on agricultural product and the resources of the vast seas surrounding the islands had not been explored, and agriculture itself was little developed. For many years the territory's economy had been tied to more advanced economies, first that of Japan and subsequently that of the United States. As a result it was no longer possible for the people to revert to a subsistence way of life. Furthermore, the necessity for economic growth was increased by the substantial increase in the Micronesian population.

The mission recognized that the United States has been making a "substantial contribution" to the territory's budget, about \$6 million annually, but it pointed out that "practically all" of this had been used for "housekeeping" purposes. The actual amount spent for economic development had been negligible, whereas substantial financial contributions should be made toward economic development of the territory, with the funds appropriated not annually but on a long-term basis.

At the same time, the mission's report said, more effort was needed to

increase local revenue by such means as the introduction of the territory's own postage stamps, import duties on alcoholic drinks, cigarettes and other items, and the introduction of income tax.

At public meetings and in private conversations, representatives of the people had repeatedly expressed anxiety about the poor state of the territory's economy and the administration's inertia in pushing ahead with the task of economic development.

On the other hand, the mission praised the territory's medical and health services and educational progress. Elementary education, it noted, was not only free and compulsory but also popular. However, trained teachers were lacking, and there were other shortcomings, such as in the quality of instruction, especially in English, and in a lack of proper buildings. There were no institutions of higher education within the territory, although a government scholarship program provided for higher studies abroad, mainly in Guam and Hawaii.

Dealing with the territory's political development, the mission asked that the islands' only territory-wide body, the Inter-District Advisory Committee to the High Commissioner, be transformed into a statutory, elected, territorial council with legislative and fiscal functions. It also suggested that the administrative headquarters be moved from Guam, a United States possession, to a site within the trust territory itself, and that the placing of the Saipan District, now administered by the United States Navy, under the authority of the High Commissioner, together perhaps with Rota, be seriously considered. The present administrative division, by which part is under the Navy and the remainder under the High Commissioner, helped to encourage separatist tendencies and was thus a hindrance to the development of the territory as a whole toward the objectives of the trusteeship agreement, the report said.

The mission noted that one day before its arrival in Guam a plebiscite was conducted among the people in the Saipan District (who number 8,000 out of the territory's total population of 80,000) as a result of which a majority expressed a desire to become United States citizens, either by having Saipan merge with Guam or by becoming a separate United States possession. The mission noted that the people of Saipan that their district was one of seven forming the single territory of the Pacific Islands and that the United Nations would probably

not look with favor on the proposal, which would amount to dividing a trust territory and distributing the parts in various ways at various times. At the appropriate time the people would have an opportunity, under the trusteeship system, freely to express their wishes concerning their future.

Other matters dealt with in the mission's report included rehabilitation of the islands which suffered widespread damage by a series of typhoons since late 1957; settlement of land claims dating back to the Japan regime; compensation for land in Kwajalein being used for United States military pur-

poses; and problems flowing from nuclear tests conducted by the United States in past years in the territory.

Regarding an \$8.5 million damage suit filed by the people of Rongelap in the territory's high court against the United States as a result of fallout from 1954 nuclear tests in the area, the mission noted that the case was dismissed "for want of jurisdiction" and expressed the view that the people should be assured of access to appropriate legal or other means for seeking satisfaction of their claims.

Mr. Bingham paid tribute to the conscientious and able manner in

which the mission had carried out its duties. He noted that the report contained many recommendations, all of which would be studied with care; some, indeed, had already been carried out.

In addition to the transport and communications problems caused by the vast expanse of water between the islands, another problem was that of language, he said. There were nine major language groups and many dialects in the territory, so a common language was urgently needed.

In presenting the annual report of the administering authority, M. Wilfred Goding, the special representative, said that significant progress had been made with regard to political development in the islands. A hold-over subcommittee on economic development had been given the task of studying problems of economic development in all districts, and a similar subcommittee would be elected to study common problems in political fields. Also, the Palau District Congress had passed a bill, which he proposed to approve, calling for popular election of inter-district delegates instead of by Congress as now. Furthermore, the Saipan District would send two delegates instead of an observer to the September meeting of inter-district delegates. Both events would help to develop a territory-wide consciousness among the people.

One of the main tasks of the subcommittee on political development would be to work out plans, in collaboration with district leaders, to convert the Inter-District Committee into a Territorial Legislative Council, which it was hoped to establish before 1965.

At the municipal level, 43 municipalities had been chartered since 1959, and the goal of chartering an average of 10 a year had been realized. There was a growing awareness among the inhabitants of common political interests; to encourage this he proposed to add a political affairs officer to his staff.

So far as administration was concerned, pay had been increased by approximately 10 per cent, and a longevity schedule had been established. Also, steady progress had been made in replacing United States personnel with Micronesians: 60 major positions had been taken over by Micronesians since 1951.

With regard to economic development, copra production, which had risen from the 1958 level of 1958 and 1959, has over the last year represented an income of approximately \$1,578,000. Since the start of the



Members of the visiting mission (left to right): Jean Adriaenssen, of Belgium; Geoffrey Caston, of the United Kingdom; Maharajakrishna Rasgotra, of India; and Carlos Salamanca, of Bolivia, the Chairman.

A Pacific Compromise Explained

During the question and answer period, Chiping H. C. Kiang, of China, became curious about an *en passant* statement by the special representative that, in order to carry out its assignment, the visiting mission had had to travel by plane, by car, by outrigger canoe and, on one occasion, had even had to swim.

"May I request the Chairman of the visiting mission to tell us what the circumstances were in which all this *swimming* took place?" asked Mr. Kiang.

The Chairman, Carlos Salamanca, of Bolivia, replied that he felt that the question had no importance to the item on the agenda. However, if the representative of China was curious, he would tell him that the mission had arrived at a tiny island by plane and that he liked to swim: the visiting mission had made every effort to carry out its mission.

"If I may add a note to what the Chairman of the mission has said," commented M. Rasgotra,

of India, ". . . the plane landed on the water, and there were a lot of people standing ashore, but they were either going to church or had come from church, and they would not come out with their canoes or boats to help us across the water. Our very distinguished and powerful Chairman decided that, since we had come all this way, we must go to the island; so he swam across. And, very gallantly, the Chairman himself, who was the tallest member, offered to carry the smallest member—which is myself—on his back. I, somewhat less gallantly, accepted the offer. That is what happened."

"I still think," added Mr. Rasgotra, "it was appropriate and entirely right because, if the flow of gallantry had been in the reverse direction, the mission might have returned here short a member."

"I feel that these few light moments are needed very much in this Council," added Mr. Kiang.

cacao subsidy program, 265,000 new trees had been planted, and it was conceivable that half a million seedlings would be planted in 1961-2. District economic development boards were taking an increasingly active role in local economic affairs, such as organizing credit unions, cooperatives and fisheries projects and developing handicrafts and small-scale industries.

Since 1945 a number of detailed economic surveys had been made, and the territory's economic potential had been well defined. The administration was now recruiting economists whose primary function would be to bring up to date all available economic data and give support to local development projects.

Mr. Goding also enumerated other steps being taken in the agriculture and allied fields, such as the coconut replanting program and an insect eradication program under which the United States Department of Agriculture had carried out experimental work on the control of fruit pests through the use of irradiated flies.

The fisheries development program for the coming year provided for the opening of a fisheries school in the Palau District and completion of a freezing plant and fish storage facilities. Other projects to follow would include construction of a pilot fish cannery, a new hospital in Palau District and a dock project at Truk which would enable ocean-going vessels to discharge cargo and pick up copra. New schools and hospitals were under construction in the Marshall Islands and Saipan.

In public health, the district programs were being administered to an increasing extent by qualified Micronesian directors; post-graduate refresher courses were provided for Micronesian medical and dental staff, and specialized public health training had been speeded.

The main difficulty in education, Mr. Goding pointed out, arose from the fact that half the territory's population was under the age of 20. One fifth of the population attended public and private schools, and the bulk of the District Congress revenues was absorbed by school teachers' salaries. A new unified curriculum had been put into effect for the first stage of intermediate education. The administration would take into account the visiting mission's recommendations regarding education, especially English language instruction in elementary schools. The teacher training program had already been intensified to meet the need of 16 new schools being

provided under the grant-in-aid program.

The territory had maintained contact with international organizations. Three Micronesians had studied abroad under United Nations fellowships, and administrative personnel from the territory had participated in the South Pacific Commission's conferences on health education and cooperatives.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nakayama, adviser to the special representative, also addressed the Council. Mr. Nakayama is President of the Truk District Congress, a member of the District political development scheme and economic and political development adviser to the district administrator. He outlined the political developments that had taken place in his district.

The people of the territory, he said, felt much closer to their Government now that their own compatriots took

part, and Micronesians realized that administration was their responsibility and that to discharge it they must educate themselves. The district congresses, he said, could be regarded as a training ground for future indigenous members of a legislative body for the whole territory. Despite progress made, a great deal remained to be done; more education was needed to bring the territory closer to the rest of the world.

Mr. Nakayama mentioned that young people holding key positions in the administration were able, through scholarships, to pursue special studies at the college on Guam while still drawing their salaries from the Government of the territory. Although many obstacles remained, he added, it was clear that the territory as a whole, under the vigorous guidance of the administering authority, had been able to achieve encouraging progress in its political and social development.

Council's Conclusions and Recommendations

On July 14 the Council, after changing the wording of some paragraphs, adopted 46 conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of its drafting committee.

Noting the observations of the visiting mission that the people of Rongelap have not recovered from the shock of their experiences and are "seized by fear and anxiety," the Council considered that further efforts are urgently essential to rehabilitate the community, and to that end it commended the suggestions of the visiting mission. It noted also the statement of the administering authority that a team of experts conducted medical surveys in March 1959, 1960 and 1961 and that regular examinations would continue, with every effort made to minimize the psychological impact of the people. The Council had before it the published report of the 1960 survey and noted that the findings of the teams of experts as to the probable effects of fallout are, now and for the future, inconclusive. The Council recognized the need for continued surveys, particularly in the light of the opinion of the team of experts that the next five years will be the critical period to observe the possible adverse developments, and expressed the hope that activities connected with such surveys would be conducted in such a manner as to avoid causing constant anxiety and apprehension in the minds of the people.

The Council also expressed the

opinion that the people of Rongelap should be assured of appropriate legal or other means of seeking satisfaction of their claims for compensation, which were dismissed by the high court of the territory for lack of jurisdiction, and that speedy action would be taken to solve the matter in a fair and equitable way. It noted the statement of the administering authority that the necessary legislation was in preparation; also the statement that there were no plans to resume nuclear or thermonuclear tests in the territory. The Council added that it earnestly hoped that no such tests would be carried out in the future.

Regarding war damage claims, the Council, noting that the administering authority recognized its obligation, endorsed the views of the visiting mission that payment of compensation should be made without further delay, and that, except in cases of acute individual hardship in which claims can be clearly established, the amount of compensation should be determined on a territory-wide basis and disbursed to the maximum benefit of the people as a whole.

On political matters the Council made several recommendations. It noted with satisfaction that a subcommittee on economic development had been established and that one on political affairs would be set up at the next meeting of the advisory committee; it also welcomed the administering authority's statement that representatives from Saipan would participate

as full and equal members of the committee instead of as observers.

The Council considered that the process of transforming the Inter-District Advisory Committee into a legislature of representatives of all seven districts elected by universal adult suffrage should be greatly accelerated; and it noted the statement by the special representative that 1965 was not necessarily the earliest date at which a territorial legislature could be established and that the administering authority would advance that date if possible. The Council hoped that this would be done. Meanwhile the administering authority should, at the earliest possible time, introduce popular elections as a basis of appointments to the advisory committee.

The Council further endorsed the views of the visiting mission on improving the organization and expanding the powers and functions of the district congresses, considering that it should be done to the fullest extent possible without prejudice to the future authority of the proposed territorial legislature.

It noted with satisfaction that 10 municipalities had been chartered during the year under review and hoped that the number would be increased so that the whole territory might have a uniform system of municipal administration at the earliest possible date.

Noting the well-laid foundations for political development at the local and district levels, and bearing in mind the pressing need further to promote territorial consciousness and a sense of national identity in the territory as a whole, the Council recommended that the administering authority now concentrate, in consultation with representatives of the people, on accelerating the rate of development at the territorial level. In this connection it welcomed the statement by the administering authority that a political affairs officer will shortly be added to the headquarters staff and expressed the hope that this officer, working in close association with the proposed subcommittee on political affairs, would materially assist in accelerating the political education of the people and in further developing political institutions, territorial as well as local.

Regarding previous recommendations concerning the need to place the whole of the territory under a single civilian administration, the Council welcomed the statement by the special representative that it was agreed in principle that administration of the territory should be unified and that detailed steps toward this objective



Special Representative Goding

were now being worked out. It considered this to be a matter of the utmost urgency and importance and expressed the hope that the decision would be implemented without delay. Furthermore, the Council drew attention to the views of the visiting mission and considered that a decision on a site to locate headquarters within the territory should be made as soon as possible.

Regarding the appointment of indigenous persons to administrative positions of importance, the Council noted the view of the visiting mission that educated Micronesians could be entrusted with at least some positions of high administrative responsibility, and it expressed the hope that this would soon be brought about. The Council also recommended special efforts to train Micronesians for the posts of district administrator and assistant district administrator.

Regarding the so-called referendum held in Saipan in February 1961, concerning the future status of that district, the Council endorsed the action taken and the views expressed by the visiting mission. It also endorsed the view that it would be useful for the administering authority to prepare a document for use all over the territory explaining the objectives of trusteeship and pointing out that, at the appropriate time, the people would have the opportunity freely to express their wishes concerning their future.

On the subject of the territory's economy, the Council considered that a concentrated effort to develop the territory's economic potential was called for in the next few years.

It welcomed the statement by Mr. Bingham that the detailed recommendations of the visiting mission concerning economic development would receive the careful attention of the administering authority and that action had already been taken on some. The Council endorsed in general the recommendations of the mission, particularly that machinery for territory-wide economic planning should be set up under the direction of an economic

development officer; that a long-term plan with well-defined priorities and stages for the entire territory should be prepared; that substantial contributions should be made by the administering authority for economic development; that the development budget should be separate from the current revenue and expenditure budget; that greater facilities for savings and the mobilization of internal capital for development purposes should be provided, particularly through cooperatives; and that more Micronesians should be given vocational and technical training, including practical training abroad.

It especially drew the administering authority's attention to the visiting mission's observation that the territory has an impressive potential for a tourist industry.

Surveying economic territorial revenue potentials, the Council recommended that urgent consideration be given to the introduction of a territory-wide income tax for all residents.

It commended the administering authority for a proposed school of fisheries and a farm institute but recommended that the fisheries project should be considerably expanded to include canning and processing on a scale that would enable the territory to supply fish for export. The Council hoped that the territory's coconut project would result in an appreciable increase in the territory's cash income and that indigenous agricultural projects, for cacao and others forms of tropical agriculture, could be developed into major export crops.

The Council also suggested that a marketing expert might study the scope and availability of foreign markets for the territory's produce.

It also noted with appreciation efforts of the administering authority in the field of medical and health services and noted that the special representative was in full agreement with the visiting mission regarding the need for the improvement of such services in the outlying islands.

Thinking of education, the Council suggested that the central funds for education be increased to meet the growing needs of the territory, and it agreed with the visiting mission's recommendation that English should be taught from the first grade.

Finally the Council considered it necessary to establish realistic target dates reflecting a proper sense of urgency for the rapid and planned advance of the territory in all aspects of its political life and invited the administering authority to establish such dates.