

Statement of John A. Carver, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Public Land Management, before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, February 5, 1963. (Briefing sessions on Public Land Management Bureaus - Office of Territories.)

Office of Territories

In many ways the "exterior" responsibilities of the Department of the Interior are the most challenging and the most interesting. Although the "bureau" was reduced to an "office" after Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to the Union, and the volume of work is reduced, there has been no reduction in the variety and the diversity of governmental problems presented.

As to Guam and the Virgin Islands, each as American culturally as Dubuque, the Department has placed great reliance upon the governmental structure provided in the Organic acts. Governors of these two territories are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate and the people of these territories elect legislatures with a wide scope of legislative responsibilities.

The High Commissioner of the Trust Islands of the Pacific is likewise appointed by the President although his appointment does not require Senate confirmation. This vast ocean area is important to the United States. The close working relationships which exist between the Departments of Defense, State and Interior, the interest of the President expressed through the creation of a Trust Territory Task Force under my chairmanship, and the special responsibilities of the High Commissioner to report his program to the United Nations on all matters are known to this committee.

The Governor of American Samoa is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and the performance of a career veteran of the Interior Department, H. Rex Lee, in this assignment has been outstanding. He has executed a sharply stepped-up program of education, health and physical rebuilding of a kind which we hope to have under way very soon in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. All of these men are present today and can and should outline their programs directly.

The Virgin Islands Corporation will be dealt with in a separate section.