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Ambassador Anderson

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Following our conversation last week, I telephoned Mr. Basdevant and arranged a luncheon in order that Bill Brew and I might hear his reactions after his trip to the TTPI. Mr. Gaschignard was also present. I believe this was a worthwhile step since (1) it afforded Mr. Basdevant a polite indication of our interest in his educated views and (2) it provided us an advance hint of some future lines of criticism in the Visiting Mission's report, as well as in French presentations during the TC itself.

Mr. Basdevant said he is responsible for preparing the sections of the Visiting Mission's report dealing with health services and with the Congress of Micronesia. The views which he expressed were almost consistently critical, though perhaps less extreme than those expressed by Rogers of Australia. In expressing them, Mr. Basdevant stated several times with a smile that he was toning down his criticisms for the purposes of the Visiting Mission's report.

Mr. Basdevant's comments in essence were as follows:

1. Health: There are some very dedicated Micronesian doctors but the rest of the health situation is poor. Facilities are shocking, especially at the local dispensary level (mad floors, no screens, etc.). There is no sign of any real improvement since the WHO made its negative findings. Any token efforts made have not borne real fruit. To illustrate, an X-Ray machine which was rushed out remains crated in a corner because space and facilities for installation are lacking. There is no overall plan for the development of health services. This was brought forth when the Visiting Mission questioned the desirability of putting all the eggs in one basket and building a huge central hospital in Truk, rather than to disperse the hospital investment. It was clear that no one on Horwood's staff had really considered the long-range future development of these facilities. Leadership of Horwood's medical section is hapless since no medical director has lasted more than a year or two. The obvious solution is to bring the TTPI's medical services under the US Public Health Services.

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05- 420357

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-2-

2. Land: Insofar as they ever think about their political future, the Micronesians prefer continuing association with the US; if they ever become disenchanted with America it will be because of their dissatisfaction over our failure to resolve their two post-war obsessions: their claims to land ownership and to reimbursement for war-time damages suffered. Concerning the former claims, some steps by the TTPI administration to clear up the tangled land ownership mess are urgently called for. Many Micronesians occupy land which technically still belongs to the US authorities (as the inheritor of Japan's properties) or which is technically but not actually common village property. They hesitate to make any improvements on the land because they fear that they will be driven off at some future date. They should be given clear titles to their land, to encourage them to improve it.

The Nathan Report suggests that to ensure the optimum utilization of the limited plots of land available in the TTPI, those who do not make the most efficient use of the land should be forced to submit to outside direction, perhaps in the form of some kind of cooperative or collective arrangement. This recommendation, while perhaps technically justified in the interests of optimum land utilization, is not feasible because it would bring forth great opposition from the Micronesians.

3. Congress of Micronesia: Mr. Baudewant has apparently already completed writing the portion of the report which will deal with the Congress of Micronesia. He stated that his written analysis would be favorable although his personal views did not measure up to the terms in the report.

Mr. Baudewant's primary observation concerning the Congress was that it just did not have enough work or responsibility. All legislation was prepared by the High Commissioner and forwarded to the Congress for what appeared to him (Baudewant) to be a perfunctory stamp of approval. He agreed that the Congress did develop a number of resolutions of its own initiative, but these were in the nature of expressing the belief that the territory needed economic development.

Mr. Baudewant suggested that the first order of business in upgrading the responsibility of the Congress should be increased fiscal authority. The local revenues which they controlled were virtually eaten up by their own operating costs. The Congress had, apparently, attempted to distribute a portion of the remaining funds to district legislatures, but Harwood had vetoed the bill for reasons which were not altogether clear. Baudewant indicated that he had heard that either constitutional problems or administrative reasons had been the

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cause of the veto. Closer working relationships between the legislature and the administrative authorities would obviate the need for such vetoes, he said. Baskervent also commented that the review of the federal budget by the Congress of Micronesia was an inadequate means of acquiring fiscal knowledge and responsibility because the Congress of Micronesia realized that it had no authority. In general, the Congress was made up of very competent people, but they totally lacked any means of acquiring meaningful experience and, as a result, were confused and, possibly, disillusioned about their proper role.

Mr. Baskervent commented that the District Legislatures presented a totally different problem, that of limited usefulness coupled with the extreme difficulty of eliminating a form of despotism that is already established. An additional problem arose because of the influence of the hereditary chieftains and the strong clan system. The chieftains are able to exert considerable conservative influence with the legislatures. The clan system is a detrimental element because it embodies a status hierarchy, and legislators from the lower strata are often pressured by persons from a higher strata.

4. Education: Mr. Baskervent took a dim view of the results of the educational efforts in the TT. Micronesians who wanted to continue on to higher education were forced to spend at least a year in Guam just catching up with the rest of the world. The Peace Corps teachers were helping, but many were quite young and inexperienced or had to work in impossible facilities, i.e., teaching 7 grades in one room. The inexperienced teachers who acquired the skill necessary to teach English would, moreover, be leaving in a maximum of two years. In general, he felt that the PCVs were eager and valuable to the territory.

5. Human resources: He commented that he had met many capable Micronesians, but that they lacked experience. As one means of increasing the desire of the Micronesians to help themselves, he suggested that they be allowed to travel, particularly in the Pacific area, where they would see the work being done to solve problems similar to those found in the TT.

6. Separation - Union with Guam: A good deal of enthusiasm for union with Guam was encountered in the islands near Guam. Baskervent, does not feel that union with Guam would be desirable and has told the islanders that they should reconsider their reasons for proposing the union.

RS/Johnson/WILSON:ams