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A-1701

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO : AMEMB TOKYO

FROM : USUN

SUBJECT : TTPI VM - Views of Members

REF :

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DATE: 28 April 1967

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Ambassador Anderson, Mr. Richard Johnson and the reporting officer, have met with individual members of the returned Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to discuss their views of economic, social and political conditions in the Trust Territory. The members are Miss Angle Brooks (Liberia, Chairman), Mr. Pierre Basdevant (France), Mr. Kenneth Rogers (Australia) and Mr. Richard Posnett (UK). Mr. Basdevant is preparing the sections of the Mission's report which will deal with health and the Congress of Micronesia, while Mr. Rogers is writing about education.

Mr. Basdevant and Mr. Rogers were both generally critical in their assessments of the state of the territory; Mr. Posnett's comments were of a positive, constructive nature; Miss Brooks was enthusiastic about the trip and spoke warmly of the High Commissioner.

Following are highlights of the conversations:

1. Economic Development:-

All members of the VM felt that there was a lack of long-term planning. All but Miss Brooks indicated that Micronesians should be brought more into the planning process; Posnett suggested the appointment of a Micronesian as Chief of Economic Development Plans (with a good U.S. adviser). There was a general feeling that the lack of Micronesian understanding of the potential of the Territory is caused by the fact that they have not been sufficiently included in any planning process. Basdevant and Rogers commented that land tenure was uncertain and that this precluded Micronesian initiative. Rogers also

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Amb. Anderson WRB/5-8-67

Page 2 of A-1701

questioned the desirability of applying the U.S. land tenure system to the Territory. Rogers felt that the most acute need in the Territory is for communications facilities and transportation. He was shocked by the lack of adequate transportation facilities.

2. Local Government:-

Basdevant and Rogers asserted that the Micronesian Governmental bodies, mainly the Congress of Micronesia, needed greater authority, particularly in fiscal matters. They also agreed that district legislatures were not worthwhile but that there would be difficulties in eliminating these lower level legislatures. All members felt that the first step toward greater fiscal authority should be increased tax collections.

3. Education:-

Rogers and Basdevant offered similar critical views concerning education. Both mentioned the need for improving English teaching, adding that they recognized the difficulties which Peace Corps Volunteers faced. Rogers felt that the emphasis on academic training was minimizing the number of Micronesians who were willing to undertake directly productive work.

4. Health Services:-

Basdevant felt that health conditions were very poor, although there were some dedicated Micronesian doctors. He believed that the preparation of an overall plan for the development of health services was essential, adding that it was clear that no one in the administration had even considered long range development of medical services. He suggested bringing the TTPI Medical Service under the U.S. Public Health Service.

5. Administration:-

Rogers felt that the priority problem for the Territorial Administration and development of the TTPI was the difficulty of travel. As a result, the central administrative staff could not visit outlying areas as much as would be desirable. Posnett suggested that the High Commissioner should have an advisory cabinet of Micronesians, who would thus be in a position to learn more about the administration.

6. Micronesian War Claims:-

War claims were the single subject brought up most often by Micronesians during the VM's sojourn. All members of the VM felt that war claims were among the most politically sensitive issues in the area, and Miss Brooks and Mr. Basdevant added that a delay in settlement could cause

Page 3 of A- 1701

the Micronesians to change their present attitude which favored continued association with the U.S.

7. Federal Appropriations;-

Miss Brooks expressed great interest in the progress of the appropriations bill in Congress, adding that the Trusteeship Council would be shocked if the planned increases did not go through.

8. Future of the TTPI:-

Posnett said that the Micronesians had often urged the UN not to "hurry" them into deciding on a future status. He believed that they would need a good deal of preparation in advance. He further noted that a status such as Guam's would not meet the terms of the Trust Agreement, but that a status patterned on that of Puerto Rico might suffice.

Details of the conversations are contained in the attached memoranda.

GOLDBERG

Attachments: Four