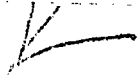


EDITORIALS



A Chance To See.....

With both Ambassador Williams, and Secretary Hughes circulating in these parts, visiting all the district centers, we hope that the island leaders of Micronesia will have an opportunity to explain exactly what it is that is bugging the island people as far as the U.S. administration goes.

Both Hughes and Williams will presumably have the ear of the Nixon Administration, and consequently are in a position to do a good deal towards implementing any changes in administration policy over the next few years.

There are many problems, of course, throughout the Trust Territory. Not the least of these are 20 years of neglect. It has only been in the last several years that any real progress has been made in Micronesia. Unfortunately, this progress has been sneered at by a student minority, who regard it as Americanization. This is apparently a dirty word among Micronesians.

We have fallen short in many ways. Education, while a high point of the American years, is still sad, only a thin veneer of what should be provided. Very little Micronesian material is used in any of the schools, for instance. There is almost no effort to build up, and elaborate on the local languages. There has been no attempt to provide the Micronesians with a college or a university of their own, and very little liaison attempt to utilize the University of Guam for a Trust Territory educational institution. If the University of Guam officials were to meet periodically with Trust Territory officials, and give financial assistance, we're sure that a truly Micronesian school program could be worked out that could go a long way towards making Micronesians carry the leadership burden in the future.

Communication, while better now, has been one of our most deplorable failures. To think that for twenty five years we have been unable to set up a system that would allow the district centers to call the capital offices with regularity sounds pretty sad for a nation that prides itself on technology.

Transportation, while better under wing of Air Micronesia, still has many gaps and snags. There are still many islands that have abandoned air strips that are not being put to use.

Public Health is still in a state of infancy. There is practically no mental health program, for instance. There are few doctors, or dentists, and few hospitals worthy of the name.

Public Works is an area where we've fallen further and further behind. During the Japanese time roads and harbors were built. The war and the subsequent years of neglect, lack of financing, lack of interest have turned the roads and harbors back to the jungle. Few streets, even in the district centers, are paved. Housing, in general, is atrocious, fit for the worst slum of the most underdeveloped nation in the world. Visiting visitors from the U.S. are appalled at the living conditions of the island, as compared to the richest nation in the world.

Economic development is a joke. Other than a small amount of fishing, largely in Palau, and an occasional agricultural plot, we've done practically nothing over the years to put the islands on a sustaining economy. When you consider that Japan Air Lines has had the rights to land on Saipan for the past six months, but are unable to do so because there is no air field for them to land, you wonder if the administration is encouraging tourism, or discouraging it. The economy of the Trust Territory is simply a government economy, all through contributions of Uncle Sam's dollars. If this is removed, how will the islanders live? Are we making any effort to build an economy that will sustain the people after the United States leaves.

Even in political activities, we seem to have failed the islanders. The Congress of Micronesia, while an outstanding group, is only five years old. And we have allowed the Congress no veto over-ride power, which in a very real sense, shows our lack of confidence in the island leaders. This veto over-ride power must be granted to the Congress immediately.

Now, we feel that the Congress of Micronesia must be given a more direct say in appropriations. Now, almost all the funds go into the hands of the administration, and few of the monies are under the direct jurisdiction of the Congress, the elected leaders of the people. If we're ever going to expect them to act in a rational manner, then we had better stop playing games and give the Micronesians themselves the chance to budget and spend.

We're sure that the islanders themselves will make sure Ambassador Williams, and Secretary Hughes knows what is really happening in Micronesia. While over the years we've managed to make a good many Micronesians unhappy with the U.S. we don't think it is yet too late to make some changes.