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Dangers In Growth

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"As a resident," he said, "I feel at the mercy of non-residents whose decisions largely dictate the conditions my children will inherit. As an economist, my sense of efficiency and equity is offended—the resource waste alone is appalling. But it is a development planner in the service of the Government of Guam that I most acutely feel our condition. In simple terms," he continued, "we lack the essential power required to plan our community's destiny."

Gilliam offered three steps which he said would help cure Guam's economic afflictions: first, a redistribution of power ("Imperialism must go"); second resource development from within must replace restraint imposed from without; and finally, "a growing stock of power consistent with a growing resident wealth must be cultivated."

He concluded by saying that Guam's economic reality depends upon its political status. This present status, he said, "is an entirely inappropriate tool for these times."

Unpingco opened his talk with the observation that "quite frankly, our government is inexperienced in handling the increasing complexity of the local economy, and in answering the social needs." He cited the fact that in the last six years alone, the island's tourism has jumped from 4,000 to 185,000 visitors per year, placing heavy demands on a civil government which has come into its own only within the past 23 years, and only men with serious limitations.

He also hit the theme of erosion of local control, saying that "Guam's expanding economy is benefiting a few large corporations at the expense of local control, ownership, and pride." To stem this erosion, Unpingco called for increased efforts to educate Guam's people to the realities of the democratic process, so that voters can more effectively control their own destiny.

He also said that education is needed so that island residents will understand and be able to handle tourism, environmental problems, and their own cultural heritage. He called for reviving the Chamorro language and pride in Guam's past, and for increasing communication between the people and their government.

He proposed "that the entire Organic Act be reviewed and updated."