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HEADQUARTERS CAMP SUSUPE

2 January 1945

SUBJECT: Government Organization on Island of Saipan. (Under Jap Control.)

TO: Deputy Chief Military Government Officers.

Garapan was the seat of government on the island of Saipan. Saipan as well as the other mandated islands, were a part of the South Seas government whose capitol was Palau.

The highest ranking executive officer on Saipan was the Shichocho. The Shichocho was a member of the Japanese Civil Service appointed by the governor of the South Seas. The government on Saipan under the Shichocho was divided into four departments as follows:

1. Plice Department.
2. Natural Resources, including agriculture, fisheries, forests and mining.
3. Commerce and Industry.
4. Miscellaneous, including elementary schools, churches, public welfare, propaganda, governmental personnel, etc.

The head of these departments were Civil Service employees appointed by the South Seas governor. The department heads also served as an advisory council for the Shichocho, although their duties in this respect were rather occasional. The government on Saipan was also divided into the following departments which were responsible directly to the governor of the South Seas government.

1. Post Offices
2. Hospitals
3. Higher Schools
4. Courts
5. Experimental Station for Tropical Foods.

The heads of these departments were Civil Service and were appointed by the governor of the South Seas government.

All general laws applicable to Saipan were enacted by the Japanese Diet or issued as decrees by the Emperor. However the Shichocho could issue certain minor regulations and orders usually after first obtaining the approval of the South Seas government.

As has been mentioned the judiciary was free from the control of the Shichocho and was responsible only to the governor of the South Seas Government. There was only one court in Saipan which tried all kinds of cases. The court had a single judge. No jury trials were permitted. Appeals were taken to an appellate court sitting in Palau. This court consisted of the three trial judges of the South Seas government. Appeals were infrequent and involved considerable delay.

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The island of Saipan was divided into the following districts for local governmental purposes: Charaka, (town); Garapan, (town); Kita, (village); Higashi, (village); Minami, (village); and Izumi, (village);. Over each town or village was a Sodai and an assistant appointed by the Shichocho. The towns and villages were also divided into wards, and ward leaders were appointed by the Shichocho to serve as an advisory council for the Sodai. Functions of the towns and villages were limited to such purely local matters as sanitation, reationing, marshalling of laborers and kindred matters.

Taxes on Saipan consisted only of Poll and Income taxes which were paid by all persons without regard to nationality. There were not land or property taxes.

The Chamorroes and Carolinians were governed as a separate body for certain purposes to wit: collection of Poll taxes, settlement of disputes between natives (not of a criminal nature) i. e. family and land boundary disputes, organization of voluntary laborers, recordation of births, deaths, and new arrivals, approval of leases and sales of land made by natives, monthly reports on livestock and farming, sanitation, and distribution of government land subsidies on all cultivated land. These last mentioned governmental functions were discharged by native chiefs who were originally appointed by the Shichocho. The native chiefs consisted of one head chief and five sub-chiefs. All of the natives lived in the towns of Garapan and Tanapag going to their farms each day to work. Four of the sub-chiefs were appointed for the four districts into which Garapan was divided and one for Tanapag. However the method of selecting chiefs was changed in 1937 when the natives were permitted for the first time to elect their own chiefs. The Koreans, being considered Japanese nationals, were governed in the same manner as the Japanese.

This form of civil government continued to function until the American invasion of 15 June 1944. Although large numbers of Japanese troops were present on Saipan from at least April 1944, no martial law was ever declared.

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