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Statement by Rear Admiral Leon S. Fiske, United States Navy,
United States Special Representative for the Trust Territory of the Pacific
Islands, before the Trusteeship Council, June 19, 1950.

(Appended to this text are excerpts from Admiral
Fiske's statement to the Council in 1949 giving
factual material about the islands and their
inhabitants.)

Mr. President and Members of the Trusteeship Council:

It is a real privilege for me to appear before the Trusteeship
Council again as Special Representative of the United States for the Trust
Territory of the Pacific Islands. I am happy to meet once more members
of the delegations who were present here last year and to make the
acquaintance of the new members.

It was my great pleasure to welcome the members of your visiting
mission to the Pacific Islands last April. I wish they were here to give
you their impressions. I regret that the entire membership of the Council
could not have been with them.

As I feel sure that all members of the Council are familiar with
the geographical and ethnological situation in the Pacific Islands, I will
not recount the many details which I presented to the Council last July.
I would simply remind you that the Trust Territory covers an ocean area as
large as the United States, although the total dry land area is only 687
square miles; and that the total population of some 54,000 indigenous people
is comprised of eight different language and cultural groups, regularly resid-
ing in 64 of the 96 distinct island groups which are dispersed in the area.
Direct contact between large groups of the population is therefore difficult,
expensive, and time-consuming. In some instances, landings have to be made
directly over a reef and through the surf and can be effected with safety
only in calm weather. In a few instances, the weather has been so bad on
successive trips of the civil administration field parties that they have
been unable to land at a particular island over a period of several months.

This division of people geographically, linguistically, and
culturally, constitutes the big problem confronting the administration. To
meet it, and to be responsive to the objectives of the Trusteeship Agreement,
requires a much larger number of ships and airplanes and a larger administra-
tive, technical and educational staff than would be required for the same
number of people under ordinary conditions. This logistic problem, as we term
it, is a very expensive one and, because of the high costs involved, inevitably
affects the means available to the Administering Authority for the implementa-
tion of all programs for the advancement of the inhabitants. I feel sure
that the members of the Trusteeship Council will appreciate the fact that
the Administering Authority has been generous in making available metropolitan
funds and facilities in response to its trust.

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While locally derived revenues are perhaps on the order of \$300,000, the aggregate cost to the United States of administering the Pacific islands is estimated to be at least seven million dollars annually. The total cost is difficult to estimate precisely, as innumerable services and facilities in kind are supported out of subdivisions of the federal budget other than the specific appropriation for Island Governments. We do know that the ships and planes employed for the Pacific Island administration alone cost over four million dollars annually to maintain and operate, without regard to depreciation and the capital investment involved.

The year now under review, namely, that ending 30 June 1949, may be regarded as a period of consolidation in the administration of the Trust Territory. During this time the administration has been developing its program based on a continuing evaluation of the needs of the several communities and framed within the limits of funds available. The result has been a gradual but not always dramatic advance, providing, we believe, a good foundation for further progress in the future.

I wish particularly to invite your attention to the fact that the recommendations which you approved at the Fifth Session of the Council were not made until after the close of the year covered by the report now under examination. Consequently, the report does not reflect the action taken as a result of your recommendations. These have, nevertheless, been most carefully considered; but the action based on them will naturally be reflected in later reports. Several of the recommendations concerned matters upon which the Administering Authority was already at work. The action taken on some of these matters has been indicated in the replies to your written questions. I wish, however, to review briefly at this time the action taken to date on each of the specific recommendations approved by the Council last year.

While it has not seemed practicable as yet to transfer the seat of government to a site within the Territory itself, the Administering Authority has established a field headquarters on Truk, which is near both the geographical and population centers of the area. Officials whose duties entail the most direct contact with the indigenous inhabitants will henceforth operate from that headquarters. Those presently based there are the Chief Administrator of the Field Headquarters, the Chief Justice, the Associate Justice, the Staff Anthropologist, the Staff Agriculturist, the Staff Conservationist, the Staff Medical Officer, and the Staff Fishing and Shipping Commissioner. It is estimated that to build suitable headquarters for the High Commissioner's entire staff at Truk, or at some other point within the Territory, if based on the present scale of administration, would cost twenty-five million dollars or more. Even if funds were now available, a construction program would require at least four or five years for completion. A recommendation for construction of permanent facilities has been submitted by the High Commissioner to the Navy Department. Pending the availability of more adequate facilities within the Territory, the balance of the High Commissioner's staff, including the Deputy High Commissioner, moved last October from Guam to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. There they are immediately available for consultation with the High Commissioner and are in an advantageous position to coordinate arrangements for the logistic support of the Trust Territory, and to confer with the numerous scientific and professional advisors, many of whom reside in or pass through Hawaii. A small liaison office remains on Guam to facilitate the flow of personnel and goods to and from the Trust Territory.

As I have indicated in my written answer to a question by the Delegation of the Philippines, the Executive Departments concerned are at present reviewing the proposed organic legislation for the Trust Territory, previously submitted to the Eightieth Congress, with a view to its resubmission to the present Congress.

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The Administering Authority has continued its efforts to develop regional governmental organs. The Marshall Islands Congress has been established. Proposed charters are under consideration for the establishment of similar bodies for the Northern Marianas (Saipan District) and for the Ponape District. At the invitation of the High Commissioner, indigenous representatives from each district, familiar particularly with economic conditions, participated in a staff conference at Guam. Indigenous superintendents of schools also participated in a conference at Honolulu with staff and district educational administrators and the Educational Advisory Committee for the Trust Territory.

The Administering Authority has continued to encourage, but not to demand, the selection of municipal officials by popular election rather than on a hereditary basis. In several municipalities officials have been elected to perform the governmental functions previously performed by hereditary leaders. The Administering Authority is convinced that the development of democratic local institutions in the Western sense must be an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process.

In furtherance of the separation of administrative and judicial powers, an Associate Justice has been appointed, who is independent of the Civil Administrators and devotes his entire time to judicial duties.

The Angaur phosphate mining arrangement, which had been under review by the Administering Authority for over a year prior to your recommendation on the subject, is being completely revised on the basis of a mutual agreement reached between agencies of the Administering Authority, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, and the Angaurese. This new agreement has been approved by all concerned, subject to the execution of a supplementary agreement between the High Commissioner and the Angaurese. Details of these agreements are set forth in the written answer to a question by the Delegation of the Philippines. Briefly, the new agreement provides for a severance fee of \$2.00 a ton paid into a trust fund to be administered by the High Commissioner for the benefit of the Angaurese people plus payment into the Trust Territory Treasury of a processing tax of 15% of the value of the phosphate removed.

The Administering Authority is continuing its effort to develop the fishing industry as an indigenous industry. To date no permits have been granted to outside fishing companies.

The Administering Authority is reviewing the existing taxation system, but believes that the time is not ripe for the abolition of the head tax. As yet and probably for some time to come, the Administering Authority considers that this is a satisfactory and desirable form of tax under the cultural, economic, and political conditions prevailing in the Trust Territory.

The Administering Authority is continuing its efforts to diversify and improve the island economy with a view to raising the standard of living as high as indigenous leadership and resources will permit.

In order to broaden the opportunities for secondary school training, the Administering Authority is offering new courses at the Pacific Island Teacher Training School on Truk, in addition to those in the teacher training program.

The Administering Authority is continuing to send a few promising indigenous students to Hawaii and the continental United States for higher education. It may also be of interest to the representative of the Philippines to know that five students from the Trust Territory are now pursuing their education in the Philippines. A young man from Yap is now on his way to Yale University where he will assist a professional linguist in the development of a standardized system for writing the Yapese language.

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I request your indulgence at this point to touch briefly upon what to my mind are the outstanding accomplishments of the Administering Authority in implementation of its mission of furthering the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the people of the Pacific Islands. In each of these broad fields, the initial steps taken following the American occupation and the repatriation of some 70,000 Japanese in 1945 and 1946 have broadened into well-defined programs.

In the field of political advancement, our most concrete accomplishment has been the development of over 100 municipalities, as basic units of local government. Our objective is to organize at least one of these on each inhabited atoll or separate island. Of the principal officials now holding office in these municipalities, 135 were selected by popular election, 45 by appointment, and 33 hold office on an hereditary basis. Many of those appointed and of those holding office on an hereditary basis are in the Palau District, which includes the very conservative and quite isolated islands south and east of Yap where the people still hold tenaciously to their ancient customs; here, however, it is only fair to say, the people are also surprisingly self-reliant and very largely self-sufficient. The development of municipalities was started under American military government and has progressed at a most gratifying rate with indigenous leaders taking a constantly increasing initiative and responsibility. At first, the conception of a municipality's responsibility for its own costs was a baffling one; but as a result of repeated visits of field trip officers, all except the more conservative islands now appear to have grasped the basic concepts of both the responsibility of officials to the people and the responsibility of the people for their own municipal needs. In some instances, the payment of elementary school teachers' salaries by municipalities, especially in the case of teachers from other islands, has been a problem. An experiment is being tried in meeting this in the Ponape and Truk Districts through the collection, at the request of the municipalities, of their cigarette tax on a district-wide basis and the payment of their teachers therefrom. As I have noted earlier in commenting on the action taken on your recommendations, we have also developed regional advisory bodies as rapidly as the people in any given region appear prepared to cope with the complexities of government above the community level. Here again a growing understanding of the value of Western democratic processes is to be noted. To enable illiterate persons to vote, various devices have been introduced, as explained in our Report. For example, in some instances, photographs have been conspicuously displayed and the voter allowed to indicate his choice from these photographs. In other instances, each voter, filing past a civil administration official seated at a point apart from the rest of the voters, has whispered the name of his preference.

To strengthen the judicial arm of the government, a Chief Justice, responsible directly to the head of the administering agency, was, as I mentioned last year, appointed in 1948.

A District Court of broad general jurisdiction, staffed by trained lawyers, has been established to handle the more serious cases and to give the indigenous inhabitants a clearer conception of justice as understood in the Western world. It also serves as a court of review to pass on actions of the lower courts. This District Court holds sessions at each of the civil administration centers and at other points as occasion may require. At the same time, indigenous leaders have been utilized in the lower courts and, guided by the two legally trained District Judges, are developing a consciousness of their responsibilities and an increasing proficiency in the administration of justice. A clerk's office under the charge of an indigenous Clerk of Courts has been established in each district. This serves as a permanent and public repository for court records, as well as for records of land transfers.

In the economic field, the Island Trading Company of Micronesia has been an outstanding factor in the rehabilitation and development of the commerce of the Trust Territory. The organization and operation of this Company are explained in further detail in the answer to one of the written

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questions by the Delegation of China. Briefly, this government agency persistently seeks for favorable markets for Trust Territory products throughout the world and imports trade goods for purchase by the indigenous inhabitants, while at the same time lending a helping hand to its indigenous competitors and curtailing its activities whenever and wherever it appears that indigenous interests are able adequately to meet the need. It fixes its trade goods prices so as to reflect the same cost factors faced by private importers. While this may occasionally make for disappointment and sometimes cause misunderstanding among certain individual inhabitants, a practice such as this is believed to be an all-important step in the economic education of the people and the building up of their self-reliance. I emphasize again that the Island Trading Company is an agency of the civil government of the Trust Territory and as such, all its profits and its entire net worth are for the benefit of the people of the Trust Territory. In addition to its other activities, the Company affords a freight-forwarding service for any of the indigenous merchants who desire to buy or sell independently. It has recently created the Economic Development Fund, described in my answer to the written question by the Delegation of China, and an Economic Division whose sole purpose is to foster the development of the economy of the Trust Territory. It is prepared to make loans or grants, or, if necessary, to set up and operate pilot plants on a demonstration basis, all with a view to establishing additional native enterprises and diversifying their productive economy.

While the Administering Authority continues to provide freight and passenger service on its vessels, it is also aiding in the development of indigenously operated shipping by making Navy small-craft hulls available for conversion by indigenous boat builders and pays bonuses on copra delivered by native boats. Eighty-nine such hulls have been so distributed throughout the Trust Territory since the first of the present calendar year. These locally-operated craft are carrying an increasing proportion of the intra-district commerce of the Territory, particularly in the Marshall Islands.

In the field of social advancement, most conspicuous progress has been made in public health. As indicated in our Report, active yaws, which was originally estimated to be present in 90% of the population, has been reduced until an open lesion of yaws is now seen infrequently, probably in less than 1% of the patients presenting themselves for treatment. Dispensaries, serving in effect as small hospitals, have been established at each civil administration center. At other locations we have established three sub-dispensaries with provision for in-patient care, and 87 sub-dispensaries with provision for out-patient care only. Health aides, trained at these dispensaries by administration medical personnel, are located at outlying islands. They are visited by medical officers and dentists every few months; cases requiring hospitalization are transferred to a dispensary. Perhaps the most striking experiment in the field of public health has been the equipping of a medical survey ship, specially fitted out as a floating clinic and laboratory, with the most modern equipment and a staff of medical and dental officers and technicians. This vessel, the USS WHIDBEY, proceeds from island to island and makes physical examinations, chest x-rays, seriological and other analyses of the inhabitants, from which individual health records are being set up for virtually the entire population. We have already examined approximately 35% of the total population of the Territory. It is expected that it will take another year to complete this detailed survey. While the statistics compiled thus far by the medical survey unit aboard the USS WHIDBEY indicate that the incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis is not as great as some had feared, tuberculosis continues to be a problem; but we are continuing to attack it vigorously and have established a tuberculosis ward in each district dispensary.

To assist in understanding the human and cultural needs of the population, we have employed four anthropologists on a full-time basis during the past year, and two more have been recruited to start work this summer.

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In the field of education, almost universal elementary school attendance for children of school age has been attained except at a few outlying points. Intermediate school education is offered at each civil administration center, and also at Yap. One of the prime essentials to the self-sufficiency of the people is a larger number of professionally and technically trained indigenous leaders. To meet this need, the School of Medical Assistants, the School of Dental Assistants, and the School of Nursing on Guam and the Pacific Island Teacher Training School on Truk, have been established. The Teacher Training School, as I have mentioned, is now broadening the scope of its activities. Commencing this Fall it is planned to offer courses leading to diplomas in Government, Agriculture, Business, and Liberal Arts, in addition to the established courses now offered in Teaching and Communications. As more teachers are graduated from the Teacher Training School we will raise the standard of teaching in the outlying elementary schools and plan to increase the number of years of instruction offered until all of them are up to our goal of six grades, already attained at the larger centers.

In order to preserve the best elements of the indigenous cultures, the Administering Authority encourages the perpetuation of native folk-lore, songs, dances, and arts, and, where appropriate, fosters this through the schools. In a Yap school, for instance, an aged, tattooed patriarch, dressed in a loin cloth, may from time to time be seen recounting Yapese traditions and customs to an earnestly attentive group of school children.

The United States officials responsible for the determination and execution of programs in consonance with obligations undertaken in the Trusteeship Agreement, have sought to bring to the problem in all its complexities the best professional, technical and scientific advice obtainable. Numerous survey and technical studies have been undertaken, such as the Economic Survey by U.S. Commercial Company in 1946, the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology in 1947 and 1948, and the Scientific Investigations in Micronesia in 1949 and 1950. Over 100 scientists have participated or are participating in this research work.

The last two of these programs were processed under the auspices of the Pacific Science Board of the National Research. In 1948 the Pacific Science Board conducted conferences in Honolulu and Washington on the subject of Conservation in Micronesia, attended by an aggregate of 75 scientists and other experts, representing a large number of the scientific institutions and agencies in the United States. Sub-committees of the Pacific Science Board meet annually in Hawaii to review "Conservation in Micronesia" and "Insect Control for Micronesia". These committees conduct continuous studies of their subjects; the technical members are available for consultation with the Staff of the High Commissioner at all times. The Administering Authority owes much to their generous help.

We must acknowledge our debt also to the Educational Advisory Committee for the Trust Territory, composed of distinguished educators from the University and other institutions in Hawaii. Its members have made frequent visits to the districts including remote islands, and meet periodically with the district and staff educational administrators either at the University of Hawaii or in the field. They have been of inestimable value in advising as to the fundamental outline of our educational program, in reviewing the progress from time to time, and in screening candidates for teaching positions in the Trust Territory.

In its second Annual Report and in the answers to the written questions submitted to the Special Representative, the Administering Authority has again endeavored to present a full and very frank account of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. I invite your questions on any matters not entirely clear.