

## TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, consisting of those islands, formerly mandated to Japan by the League of Nations, was granted to the United States in trust in 1947. The Trust Territory includes the Marshalls, the Carolines and the Marianas Islands (except Guam), some 2146 islands, islets, atolls and reefs located in mid-Pacific just north of the equator and extending 1200 miles north to south and 2500 miles east to west. The total land area of the Trust Territory is 715 statute square miles, and the over-all area of land and water is 3,121,722 nautical square miles.

### HISTORY

In the period of discovery, beginning in the 16th century, the islands now included in the Trust Territory were visited by Spanish, German, Dutch, Portuguese and English explorers. At an early date, Spain established a firm control over the Marianas Islands. In 1886, the conflicting claims of Spain and Germany over the Marshalls and Carolines were resolved through the mediation of Pope Leo XIII, pursuant to which Spain regained title to the Carolines and Germany secured undisputed control of the Marshalls. Following the Spanish-American War, Spain in 1899 sold the Carolines and the Marianas (except Guam, which had been ceded to the United States in 1898) to Germany for 25,000,000 pesetas. The German rule over these islands was terminated in 1914 when the Japanese, not long after entering the First World War on the side of the Allied Powers, took possession. At the end of the First World War, Japan received a Class "C" mandate from the League of Nations over these islands. Soon thereafter the mandate was almost completely closed to non-Japanese visitors and, as is now known, fortification of strategic islands was begun. In 1935, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, but did not relinquish control of the mandated territory. During the Second World War, these islands became the scene of decisive naval and military operations. The names of such remote ramparts as Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Truk, Ulithi, Pelelieu, Saipan and Tinian became world famous. Beginning early in 1944, the islands were either wrested from Japanese control or were isolated from further effective participation in the war.

### GOVERNMENT

From the termination of Japanese control until July 18, 1947, the islands comprising what is now the Trust Territory were under military government administered by the United States Navy. On that date, military government was ended by the President's approval of the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States and the Security Council of the United Nations from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, (former Japanese mandated). By that agreement, among other provisions, the Trust Territory was designated as a strategic area; the United States was granted authority to fortify the area, to apply to the territory such laws of the United States as might be deemed appropriate and to exercise veto power over any proposal to alter, amend or terminate the trusteeship agreement. In return, the United States, among other particulars, bound herself to act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to foster the development of self-government or

The president, also on July 18, 1947, by Executive Order 9875, delegated to the Secretary of the Navy the responsibility of the civil administration of the Trust Territory on an interim basis until such time as a civilian agency should be designated to have permanent supervision of the government of the area. For reasons of logistics and communications, the seat of government for the Trust Territory has until recently been located in Guam. At the present time, a staff field headquarters has been established on Truk, with the High Commissioner maintaining his offices at Pearl Harbor.

The Trust Territory, for purposes of administration, has been divided into the following areas: Marshall Islands, Eastern Caroline Islands, Western Caroline Islands, and Northern Marianas Islands. The government of the area is supervised by naval officers specially trained in island administration and by a small staff of civilian specialists in such fields as education, political science, economics and agriculture.

In so far as possible, consistent with the fundamental principles of democracy, the indigenous people of the islands have been encouraged to maintain their traditional forms of government and to assume responsibility for conducting their own local affairs. Accordingly, local laws are enacted by village councils and enforced by local officials. On each island having a significant population, there is a community court presided over by a local judge and having jurisdiction generally over misdemeanors and of civil cases involving not more than \$100. Community court decisions are reviewable by a representative of naval civil administration who periodically visits each island for the purpose of supervising and assisting the local people in the management of their government. Other courts in the Territory are the Justice Court, the Superior Court, and the Court of Appeals.

#### PEOPLE

The great majority of the indigenes of the Trust Territory are of the Micronesian race, with a minority of Polynesians, who, like the Micronesians, are of Asiatic origin. The natural loyalties in the islands of Micronesia are local rather than area-wide; there is similarity but not uniformity of local organization, social custom and language throughout the whole of the area. The reported population of the Trust Territory as of 1 July 1949, was 53,446. Population by Districts is as follows: Palau, 11,839; Truk, 14,936; Ponape, 9798; Marshalls 10,802; Saipan, 6071.

#### EDUCATION

In 1949, there were 152 schools in the Trust Territory, in which 252 teachers were employed and 8962 pupils enrolled. Teacher training was conducted at the Pacific Islands Teacher Training School on Moen Island in the Truk Atoll, which was transferred from Guam in 1948. Instruction is offered in both English and the local language.

big jaws, tuberculosis, and internal parasites, the most prevalent ailments in the area, continues to be reported. Schools for medical assistants, dental assistants and nurses are maintained on Guam, to which the best qualified candidates from the various islands are sent for training. A medical officer makes regular inspection trips to each island to administer treatments and to supervise the work of the local medical assistants. Persons requiring hospitalization are transported to district headquarters or to Guam by ship. The medical survey ship USS WHIDBEY, is continuing its field work in the Trust Territory. This floating clinic proceeds from island to island in the area, and makes possible the accomplishment of chest X-rays for all islanders, and other examinations of health and sanitation conditions on even the most remote island.

#### PRODUCTION AND TRADE

The natural resources of the Trust Territory are meager, and for the most part the soil is unproductive. During World War II, the economy of the islands was seriously disrupted. Coconut trees were devastated and fish were driven from the lagoons by combat operations. Because of the remote location and distances involved in interisland shipping, the problem of sea transportation is acute. Every effort is being made to revitalize the island economy. Principal products for export are copra (dried coconut), handicraft, trochus shells and charcoal. Exports of these products for the first nine months of 1949 were valued at \$947,359. Imports for the same period amounted to \$1,112,253.17. Trading operations in the area are conducted principally by the Island Trading Company of Micronesia, a Navy sponsored corporation, incorporated under the laws of Guam to serve the indigenous people of the Trust Territory until such time as they are able to assume these economic responsibilities for themselves.

#### CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The President has approved a Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon by the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Interior, which provides for the transfer of administrative responsibility for the Trust Territory to the latter department by July 1, 1951, and both departments are carrying out the action necessary to effect this change.



April, 1950