

Press Release No. 14  
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Trust Territory Headquarters, Saipan  
Information Office -- Phone No. 2148

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan, Mariana Islands. March 13, 1963--High Commissioner M. W. Goding officially opened a Territory-wide education conference in Saipan, Tuesday night, March 12. In daily attendance are the district educational administrators, one additional district educational staff member, Headquarters education department staff, and members of the High Commissioner's Coordinating Committee for the Accelerated Elementary School Construction Program. Members of the conference are: from Palau, David Ramarui, Educational Administrator; Joshua Marino, Supervisor of Adult Education; from Marshalls, Dwight Heine, Educational Administrator; from Yap, Harry Uyehara, Educational Administrator, and his assistant, Joseph Marnifen; from Ponape, Dr. Paul McNutt, Educational Administrator; John Barry, Principal at PICS; and Clement Materne, Superintendent of Elementary Schools; from Truk, Peter Hill, Educational Administrator; Andon Amaraich, President of Truk Board of Education; from Marianas, Heinz Meyer, Educational Administrator; William Reyes, Superintendent of Elementary Schools; and Beth Matthews, Teacher Supervisor. Other staff members of the High Commissioner's staff also will be attending selected sessions of the conference.

In his opening address Tuesday night to the delegates, the High Commissioner stressed the following items: the importance of attacking the problem of accelerated education program with a "positive" approach; stressing the principle that the education program must be a joint one--and utilizing to the fullest the cooperation of the local communities; turnover of administrative direction of education to Micronesian educators with American staff serving as technical advisors and assistants; an all out effort to implement the policy of the use of the English language as the medium of instruction in the elementary schools; importance of secondary education keeping pace with the accelerated education program; expansion of the scholarship program; and the need for expansion and development of an adult education program.

The Conference, presided by Director of Education, Robert E. Gibson, expects to hold both day and night sessions during its one week meeting.

A complete text of High Commissioner M. W. Goding's address to the Education Conference follows:

I wish I could open this conference by announcing that we have received our Supplemental Funds for the 1963 Accelerated Education Program. Much of the agenda of this Educational Conference will center around our proposed accelerated program and I realize that it is going to be difficult to plan and program without the funds in hand. We have lived with this situation for the last 12 months and must now wait for the 88th Congress to act on our supplemental budget.

The success of our program demands that we make our plans as though we have the money in hand and we must be ready to launch our program the minute the green light is given.

This Conference is going to be an important one. I shall look forward to receiving your recommendations. Thus, tonight I wish only to set forth a few basic principles and ideas which I feel must be followed.

First, let me say that I feel strongly that we can succeed in carrying our proposed program into action. I do not accept the attitude expressed by some that it is too late in the year to start our accelerated program. I realize that we face many handicaps. I feel that these handicaps can be overcome. But, they will not be overcome nor can we succeed if we go into our program with a "negative approach". We can only succeed if our philosophy is: "It can be done! It will be done!" I have confidence in the district staffs where the backbreaking work is going to have to be done. Every indication I have received is that the people are with us; that they are waiting for us to act. It is going to be up to us to demonstrate that we can carry through with our promises.

I do not feel that I can stress too strongly the principle that our program must be a joint one. We must make certain that we utilize the cooperation of the local inhabitants to the maximum. It is there to be tapped, and part of your job will be to channel this cooperation into our projects. We must take our local legislatures into account; we must work with the local leaders and local teachers. Additionally, I feel we must turn over more and more major responsibility to the local educators. I am proud that two of the District Educational Administrators here tonight are Micronesians as are other delegates. I look forward to the time, which I hope is in the near future, when the entire direction of the Trust Territory educational system will be in the hands of the local educators. I assure the Micronesian members here tonight that we will be here for sometime to come as technical assistants and advisors. You will be given all the assistance and advice we can muster. I feel though, that you are ready to assume more responsibility for administrative control of the educational system. It is here where I feel we can demonstrate to the people of Micronesia that we have confidence in the Micronesian educators and that we are trying to strengthen their educational system.

One of our big handicaps has been the lack of a common language. This must be overcome. The overwhelming demand for English on the part of students, teachers, and parents no longer can be ignored. I am happy to have with us Dr. Byron Bender who will be devoting full time to our English language program. As all of you know, well over a year ago last January, a major policy change was instituted establishing English as the language of instruction for our elementary schools. English will be used as the medium of instruction wherever teachers are capable and ready to use it. Our big handicap has been our poorly prepared teachers. Yet in spite of this handicap, we have this past year put this policy into effect in some schools. In selected schools in Ponape, in Koror, in Saipan and in other areas, it has been demonstrated that teaching can be done in English in our beginning grades. Dr. Bender is with us to make this goal a reality in all districts and eventually in all schools. I ask each of you to give him all the support he needs in carrying out our English instruction program.

While our major emphasis this year and next will be in the accelerated elementary educational program, secondary and advanced education will not be neglected. A start of a high school program for each district was launched this past year with the opening of the tenth grade of high schools. I hope we can appreciably accelerate our secondary program in the next few years. Each district should have its own public high school. A few districts are almost at the point of being able to successfully launch a full high school program with relatively minimum expansion of buildings and staff. Every encouragement and aid will be given to this important phase of our overall educational program.

Our scholarship program is being expanded this coming year-- five district scholarships for each district rather than three per district as formerly. The Headquarters Degree Scholarship program has been expanded. Additionally, we have set in motion the first steps of what we hope will be a major scholarship program financed by private foundations and American universities. Our college program at the College of Guam will be greatly accelerated, both for our scholarship students, those on scholarship from private sources and those on their own, by the establishment of a dormitory at the College of Guam site. It is a major disappointment to me that we will not be able to open a new dormitory complex as we had hoped. Rising construction costs due to Typhoon Karen appears to have knocked that plan out for the time being. Yet I feel we will get maximum value from the investment we are making in rehabilitating an available building into a suitable dormitory which will be able to accommodate not only our Trust Territory scholars but others attending college under private auspices.

While I shall not be able to attend all of your meetings, members of the Accelerated Education Program Committee, such as Mr. Flakne and Mr. Mculton, will be here to represent me. Other members of my staff involved, directly or indirectly, in our educational program, will also be available and are looking forward to participating with you this coming

week. I feel we must not lose sight of the fact that "education" overlaps into all our programs. Our program for development will not be worth much if economic development, if political and social development does not keep pace with our school development. It is only by working as a team that we will provide the means for raising standards of living and providing opportunities for growth and development in all phases of life of the people of Micronesia. The vastly important field of adult education reaches into every aspect of our administration's activity. Our eyes are on the youth of Micronesia. But we must not forget that, while this youth holds the key to the future, we can only succeed in the present by bringing the adults fully into a better life as well.

I look forward to reviewing the recommendations that will come from the deliberations of this body. You may be assured that they will be given careful and thoughtful consideration. I know your recommendations will be immensely valuable to me in setting educational policy for the Territory.

I wish you every success during this important week of meetings.