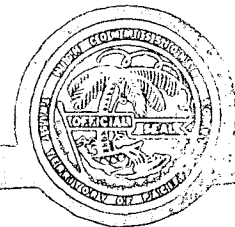


PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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Marianas

SPC LANGUAGE TEACHING SPECIALIST TOURS TERRITORY

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, May 2 George A. Pittman, language teaching specialist from the South Pacific Commission, is touring the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands for five weeks in order to observe and assess the language teaching programs of the area.

Truk

After spending a week in the Truk District, Mr. Pittman returned to Saipan for several days to talk with educators of the Marianas District. He will continue his tour of the territory's districts by going to Palau. He will again return to Saipan for a conference with English Language Supervisors May 8-13 on "Teaching English as a Second Language in the Trust Territory."

Ponape

Marshall's

Yap

Mr. Pittman remarked that he was impressed with the effort of teachers in the Trust Territory's English program. "There is a great deal of interest among the teachers in trying to do their best with their present program, and they are receptive to new ideas or programs which might help them," he said.

Palau

Formerly director of the English Language Institute of Victoria University in New Zealand, Mr. Pittman was asked by the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in Noumea, New Caledonia, to join their staff in 1963 as a "language teaching specialist." The commission hoped to devise an improved and uniform program for teaching English as a second

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language, and to pass this program on to teachers in the Pacific islands. Part of this program included the development of instructional materials more suited to the Pacific regions.

"It was felt that the general need of teachers in the region was for some knowledge of the structure of the major language, together with methods and materials to use that knowledge effectively," said Mr. Pittman.

He explained that traditional techniques of language teaching have been geared to the more gifted students and fail when applied to an entire school population.

"A full grasp of the language of instruction is essential if the pupils are to benefit from their school experience," he said. "Students will miss a large part of the instruction if they do not fully understand the basic features of the language, for example, the uses of articles, plural forms of nouns, tenses, and conditional moods."

Mr. Pittman pointed out that linguists accept the view that high school English is dependent on the thoroughness of elementary English instruction.

"There is the mistaken idea that elementary and secondary English are two different subjects," he said. "Actually, secondary English is a complex extension of the elementary course with more advanced study of the basic elements." Therefore, if students do not learn the most basic elements thoroughly in their elementary years, high school programs have to readjust their courses of study to reach the pupils.

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If high schools are to do a good job, he said, the elementary English program should be stressed in the overall educational plans.

While visiting the Trust Territory's schools and teachers, Mr. Pittman offers demonstrations of various teaching techniques either by actual teaching of a class or through conferences with educational personnel. He also is demonstrating a new oral English syllabus written by Miss G.M. Tate while employed by the New Zealand Department of Education. The Tate syllabus, widely endorsed by the SPC, is being considered for adoption in the Trust Territory as a supplement to the present program.

Mr. Pittman expects to conclude his tour of the territory about May 18 and return to New Caledonia.

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