

PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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Marianas

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CONTINUES DEBATE ON PACIFIC ISLANDS TERRITORY

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, June 29 . . . The Trusteeship Council on the afternoon of June 13 continued its general debate on conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, administered by the United States, and heard a statement by the Representative of France. (From UN Press Release TR 1913)

Truk

Ponape

Earlier, the President, Miss Angie Brooks (Liberia), reopened the question period, and the Special Representative of the United States and members of the Congress of Micronesia answered questions put to them by the Representative of New Zealand.

Marshalls

Members of Congress of Micronesia questioned

David Keith McDowell (New Zealand) explained that he had asked to reopen the question period so that the members might be able to ask questions of Lazarus Salii, Special Representative and member of the Congress of Micronesia, who was absent from the past few meetings.

Yap

Palau

In response to Mr. McDowell's first question, Mr. Salii said that the determination of the future of Micronesia rested not only with the Micronesian people but also with the Administering Authority and the Trusteeship Council. It was for this reason that the Congress of Micronesia had voted to set up a commission, with Representatives of those three bodies, to study the various possibilities open to his country.

MORE

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CONTINUES ON PACIFIC
ISLANDS TERRITORY - Page 2

Amata Kabua, Special Representative and member of the Congress of Micronesia, also answering Mr. McDowell, agreed with the United Nations Visiting Mission's statement that the Micronesians believed the Trusteeship Council was rushing them toward self-determination. This attitude was commonly held, he stated, because most Micronesians were not aware of what political status they should seek.

Mr. Salii agreed with Mr. Kabua on this point.

The belief of the Micronesians that they were being rushed towards self-determination justified the decision of the Congress of Micronesia on the establishment of the commission, the Representative of New Zealand said.

Mr. Salii, in response to another question, said that the Congress of Micronesia had to consider its budget two years in advance, so that the 1968 budget was considered during the 1966 session of the Congress. His Government had suggested that the Trusteeship Council authorize the Congress of Micronesia to hold two regular sessions, he went on--one to deal with general legislative matters and one to discuss budgetary items.

Mr. Salii said that despite a review of the Nathan Associates Report by the Congress of Micronesia's interim committees, the Congress did not have time to discuss and evaluate it fully. However, many of the Committee members felt that a number of the report's recommendations were not explained adequately. The Congress would study it at next month's regular session, Mr. Salii added.

MORE

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CONTINUES DEBATE ON PACIFIC
ISLANDS TERRITORY - Page 3

Statement by France

Continuing the general debate on the Pacific Islands Trust Territory, which was begun yesterday, Paul Gaschignard (France) said that William Norwood, Special Representative of the United States, had answered with candor the questions and criticisms regarding the Administering Authority's handling of the needs of the Trust Territory.

He said his government believed that the people of Micronesia should participate in the implementation of the suggestions of the Nathan Report, and that their views should be considered.

He complimented the Administering Authority for responding to earlier criticisms by the Visiting Mission by working to improve transportation, the fishing industry, and credit for small businesses. However, while the education and the credit systems were better than before, they were both still in need of improvement, the Representative of France went on.

Because of the influence of Peace Corps Volunteers on the people of the Trust Territory, Mr. Gaschignard said, his government believed that the importance of the volunteers' training--both technical and sociological--must be stressed.

While it was encouraging to note the influx of foreign capital, the Representative of France said, the local population should have a greater voice in the distribution of these funds. Since the Congress of Micronesia could allocate only locally raised funds, he suggested possible tax reforms, including an income tax.

MORE

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CONTINUES DEBATE ON PACIFIC
ISLANDS TERRITORY - Page 4

The Congress of Micronesia should try to exercise some of the governmental powers now being exercised by the Administering Authority, Mr. Gaschignard said. His government was happy to see that Micronesians had been asked to sit in on Cabinet and other policy-making meetings, and regarded this as a first step towards self-determination.

While the Administering Authority seemed eager to lead the Micronesians to self-determination, the members of the Congress of Micronesia had just said that many of the people were hesitant about moving too quickly in that direction, he concluded.

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