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THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement.

No.1.

Nasinu, Fiji, 23rd April, 1956

Keynote of the addresses at the official opening of the Third South Pacific Conference at Nasinu, Fiji, today was the emphasis placed by the Governor, Sir Ronald Garvey, and other speakers on the value of the Conference in promoting friendship, *progress and understanding among the Pacific islanders.*

It was a colourful ceremony from the moment the Governor drove under an archway of crossed war clubs and a huge representation of a whale's tooth (Tabua), the ancient symbol of Fijian welcome, and inspected a guard of honour of Fijian troops, wearing full ceremonial dress of scarlet jacket and white sulu.

Inside the Conference Hall were seventy delegates from eighteen South Pacific territories, members of the South Pacific Commission, and observers from international scientific, university and missionary organisations.

The Kleig lights of movie and television units made the flag-bedecked hall a blaze of colour. Cameras recorded the scene from all angles and radio-units made a direct broadcast of the event.

The delegations sat at tables facing Sir Ronald Garvey who welcomed them as Governor of Fiji, and also addressed them as Chairman of the Conference.

Many of the delegates wore their traditional dress. Some were big men physically, but the biggest of them was dwarfed by the two sons of Queen Salote of Tonga. Five of the delegates were women.

Sir Ronald Garvey said he felt confident that the delegates' deliberations would add to the effectiveness of the South Pacific Commission, of which the Conference was an auxiliary, as well as promote a greater understanding of our common problems and a greater bond of friendship and common purpose in furthering the welfare of the Pacific peoples as a whole.

Dr. Ralph Clairon Bedeli, Secretary-General of the Commission, said the previous conferences had demonstrated that sense of social responsibility for which the Pacific islander was justly famed, and had enabled a deeper insight into those complex problems of living in the modern world which must be solved if the progress now being made by the islanders was to be continued.

The Commission's effective contribution to regional progress owed much to the counsel and practical assistance of its participating governments, territorial administrations, interested institutions and its two auxiliary bodies, the Research Council and the South Pacific Conference.

Dr. E. M. Ojala, Acting Deputy Chairman of the Research Council, said the value of exports in Pacific territories had risen steadily since 1953. Increases in price as well as

production had contributed to that happy result, but the gain in economic welfare was no less real on that account.

Community development as he had seen it in Asian countries, Dr. Ojala said, was one of the most significant processes for human progress at work today. India had initiated a vigorous and well thought out plan for economic and social progress, and the whole population was participating with great enthusiasm. Yet, it was anticipated that it would take twenty years to double the average income level of the people there.

Dr. Ojala said he believed that the Commission had gained greatly in effectiveness and prestige since the last Conference was held. Major factors were the fine field work of project officers in the various territories, and the fact that notable scientific and international institutions were increasingly using the Commission as a means of making their contribution to the development of the region and its people.

Dr. E. Massal, Executive Officer for Health, said that health education, food and nutrition and mosquito-borne diseases were the three main subjects receiving particular attention of the Commission's health experts. The World Health Organisation was co-operating in the health education programme. The food and nutrition work was mainly concerned with the feeding and growth of infants and young children. Filariasis and malaria were the only two of many mosquito-borne diseases being studied.

None was better aware than the Commission of the diversity and evolution of the problems of the South Pacific, Dr. Massal said. The results obtained by experts were at the disposal of the islanders.

Mons. E.J.E. Lefort, Executive Officer for Economic Development, said that a review of development in the past three years showed a strengthening of the economies of many territories. Exports of cash crops had generally increased, and there was a tendency to greater diversification.

A copra economy in the strict sense of the term had been retained only in the British Solomons, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, French Oceania and Tonga.

Cocoa exports had greatly increased, citrus and mother of pearl were receiving more attention, and fisheries were developing.

The approach in all fields of Pacific activity, Mons. Lefort said, particularly economics should be common programmes for common objectives as a means of enabling the islanders to benefit rapidly from tangible results.

Mr. H. E. Maude, Executive Officer for Social Development, said there had been remarkable extension of governmental activity in the social and welfare aspects of the island territories, particularly in education. But too much reliance on government agencies could do more harm than good to a community. Community self-help programmes, whether based on the village, district or

island were the main hope for progress in the immediate future in all fields.

The Conference elected a general committee of six members and then adjourned until Tuesday at a time to be fixed.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 2

Nasinu, Fiji, 24th April, 1956

The Third South Pacific Conference at its first plenary session at Nasinu today decided to refer the discussion of agenda items to two standing committees. One will deal with economic matters, the other with social and health matters.

Recommendation for these committees came from the general committee of the Conference.

At previous Conferences all agenda items were debated by delegates as a whole. This innovation results from a recommendation of the Second Conference that discussions would be more effectively conducted if the agenda subjects were considered by Committees before being handled in plenary session.

Sir Ronald Garvey, Chairman of the Conference said the committee system was breaking new ground in such a conference. It was experimental, but he felt that it could succeed.

The Conference adopted the recommendation unanimously after brief discussion, the general sense of which was that discussions could be followed much more easily in smaller committees than in a large assembly.

A picturesque feature of today's meeting was the appearance of Tuli Le'iato, leader of the American Samoa delegation in ceremonial dress: bare to the waist excepting for a lei, his lava lava of purple velvet was held by a decorated fibre belt.

Tuli is a high chief who has had an interesting career. He served in the United States marines, 1942-1945. He was twice heavyweight boxing champion of the marines in that time. He is a church deacon, served in the police for eight years until 1953, and is now district governor of the eastern district of Tutuila.

Tuli spoke in Samoan, setting a pattern in Pacific languages which other delegates promise to follow, as well as setting a fashion in dress not only national but more suited to the steamy weather of Fiji.

"I only wish" Sir Ronald said, "that we could all be as elegant sensible and cool in attire."

In other ways, Tuli made himself at home. A Samoan thanks his host at the earliest moment after being welcomed. On Monday the welcome to delegates was given by Sir Ronald Garvey as governor of Fiji.

Today the Samoan delegation took the first opportunity of returning thanks, the High Chief being their spokesman. He hoped, he said, that the delegates would speak for all the members of the Pacific family with the dignity and the language of their people. He ended his brief speech with the Samoan greeting Soifue — long life.

If other delegations follow the example of the Samoans, a number of Pacific languages will be used in the discussions, amongst them Indonesian Malay and pidgin. Thus early in the Conference delegates whose major language is not either English or French are feeling that they can express themselves more fluently in their own languages.

A report by the Secretary-General on the work of the South Pacific Commission since the Second Conference was held in Nouméa three years ago, was tabled.

Dr. Bedell, introducing the report, said it showed the work of many hands. In its preparation more than fifty reports, from more than a score of scientists working for the Commission in laboratories in the islands and at Noumea headquarters and in the Sydney Office had been consulted. Only items of major importance had been included in the report.

The report was referred to the two standing committees for detailed consideration.

Ratu Mara, leader of the Fiji delegation, was elected chairman of the Economics standing committee.

Prince T'ungi, leader of the Tonga delegation, was elected chairman of the social development and health standing committee, and Mrs. Lagrimas Untalan, of Guam, deputy chairman.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No.3

Nasinu, Fiji, April 25, 1956

The need for research into tropical livestock and pasture improvement was stressed at the session of the Standing Committee dealing with economic development at Nasinu today.

The Committee was dealing with a statement of the work done on resolutions of the Second Conference held three years ago.

One resolution noted that the South Pacific Commission's work programme included attention to tropical livestock introduction and improvement and recommended that steps be taken to meet the needs of territories where livestock could become an important element in the subsistence of the islanders.

The chairman, Ratu Mara, said that proposition had given hope to the people that improved types of pigs and cattle would become important elements in their subsistence. Up to now little had been done. The people should not give up hope but should realize that the type of work indicated took a long time, because of the large amount of fundamental research that had to be carried out.

Monsieur Lefort, executive officer for economic development, said such an undertaking could founder unless the necessary fundamental research was made, not only about the best breeds of cattle for the tropics, but also the best types of grasses. That was a main reason for the proposal to set up a pasture and livestock research institute in New Guinea.

Some differences of opinion about co-operative societies were expressed by delegates from Netherlands New Guinea and the Cook Islands.

The Netherlands New Guinea opinion was that the greatest care should be taken before co-operatives were formed.

The Cook Islands reply was that the co-operatives were voluntary, and that the islanders were educated about their purpose and operation. They were not forced to join.

The New Guinea delegation said that there were now 198 societies in the territory. They had 54,250 members, with a capital of £285,300, and a turnover last year of £966,603.

The Committee resolved to recommend to the Conference that the Rockefeller foundation be thanked for its grant to the Commission to help in the campaign to eradicate the rhinoceros beetle, that a coconut research station be established in the South Pacific and that a survey be made of the possibility of expanding the production of sugar throughout the region.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 4.

Nasinu, 26th April, 1956

The economic committee of the Third South Pacific Conference today agreed a draft resolution recording its warm appreciation of the efforts made by the South Pacific Commission and its Research Council during the past three years to give effect to the wishes and intention of the Second South Pacific Conference.

The Committee recorded its views on the following :

Tropical livestock introduction and improvement: The hopes expressed had not been fulfilled in some territories owing to the time required for fundamental and applied research and the difficulties in effective extension work.

Control of animal and plant pests and diseases: Gratitude to the Rockefeller Foundation for its grant, and to territorial administrations, especially the governments of Western Samoa and Fiji for assistance contributed to the Commission's rhinoceros beetle research campaign.

Inter-territorial transportation: Special efforts should be made to collect and distribute information on inter-territorial transportation, especially for the more isolated territories.

The draft resolution, which will be dealt with later in plenary session of the Conference, also considered that the establishment of coconut and copra research stations in the Pacific were a matter of urgency, in view of the need to improve the efficiency of production and the quality of the product to enable the South Pacific coconut industry to compete in world markets.

The resolution concluded with the view that the action and the results achieved since the last conference "demonstrate conclusively the sincerity of the member six/governments who established the Commission with a view to promoting the social and economic welfare of the area". .

The social and health committee of the Conference has discussed two papers: economic education and the importance of a sound economic development to the welfare and progress of the people (Netherlands New Guinea delegation), and indigenous arts, customs and cultures, and their encouragement and retention where useful (Fiji delegation).

The Fiji paper, prepared by Livali Volavola, a Fijian teacher, said that the change from the typical Fijian to modern ways of life (European and Asiatic) was rapid. Fijians were now drifting into towns because of money. If they could do away with money, the Fijians, it was felt, would welcome retention of existing crafts and the revival of some already forgotten.

Miss Hildegarde Naime, Papua, told the Committee that one of the customs of her home, New Britain, was to pay for brides. It was only £8 for a bride.

M. Kalsautu, a chief from a small island in the New Hebrides, replied that it would be a good thing for a few New Britain women to go to his island where it cost £100 for a bride.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 5

Nasinu, 26th April, 1956

Co-operative societies and credit unions were widely discussed by the economic committee of the Third South Pacific Conference today.

The Fiji delegation introduced the subject with a paper on the use of co-operation as a means of promoting the welfare of the South Pacific people.

Mr. K.S. Reddy read the paper, which made a comprehensive survey of co-operation and the various ways it is being introduced and practised throughout the region.

The previous evening a practical demonstration of the credit union system was given to delegates by the people of a village (Caubati) near Nasinu. These unions were introduced in Fiji in 1953.

Rev. Father M. Ganey, a Jesuit priest, who successfully established credit unions in British Honduras is now in Fiji promoting that form of society. He conducted the demonstration.

The Fiji paper said that the greatest value of the credit union in the region was the encouragement to thrift and education in the use of money.

Ratu Mara chairman of the committee said the credit union modified the custom of kerekere. They had seen that in the demonstration, which showed that if you borrowed cash you paid back in cash.

Mr. Reddy said a good start to training in co-operation was in the schools with thrift societies. A more technical economic system was rapidly coming to areas whose people until recently had not even used money in

our sense of the word. Co-operation was the best way to ensure that the islanders were developed and enriched by the changes and not exploited for the enrichment of others.

Boe Kapena, Papua and New Guinea, said co-operation was strong and progressing in the Australian territories. The two main societies were producer and consumer. There were also some building co-operatives.

There was no union of co-operative societies as yet, because it was felt that the movement was not yet strong enough. They hoped eventually to import goods as wholesalers thus saving money.

Co-operatives, Mr. Kapena said, were helping to form the general pattern of life for the betterment of the people. They were unknown before the war, but the soldiers had given them the idea that they should put their money into businesses. When war damage compensation was paid after the war the people had thought of doing that. The Government had advised them not to until some training was given.

When that advice was taken it was a good thing and the co-operatives succeeded. The secret was hard work by everyone. The man who did not work, even the chief, should not share in the results from the co-operatives.

Transport was a difficulty and it almost stopped the co-operatives. Now the societies owned seven motor vessels and nine motor trucks which took their produce to market and brought back trade goods.

The New Caledonia delegation said some agricultural co-operatives had failed because of bad leadership and lack of training. Now they were

starting co-operatives education at the primary school stage. They were also hoping that small village co-operatives would be established without government assistance until the people asked for it.

Mr. Apenera Fera Short, Cook Islands, said it was their firm belief that sound economic and social development of the group would not be possible unless an energetic, practical plan of co-operative education was included. It should be introduced in two correlated and equally important parts: co-operative education of teachers and school pupils and adult education. The two could not be separated if the best result was the aim.

Indebtedness was a major problem of the group; whenever the islander got money he spent it, often foolishly. The trader financed him with cash and goods in tomato and citrus growing. This encouraged indebtedness, and was a cause of little interest being taken in better agriculture and marketing. It was felt that co-operatives were better for the Cook islanders than credit union, in the beginning.

Co-operation was now being taught in the schools, and there were saving societies in four schools. Real progress would be made by teaching the children.

The Gilbert and Ellice delegation said co-operatives were already firmly established in the group as part of its life and trade. There were now several extended activities such as tailoring, running canteens, buying cinematograph equipment and operating a building contracting business. Two multi-purpose societies had a ship which they operated together.

One difficulty was in finding sufficiently educated and capable persons to staff the societies. Thrift and credit societies were not a pressing need except at Tarawa where the food was mainly bought from the stores. Elsewhere, people could live on fish and their own foods, and there was no rural indebtedness.

Training in co-operation and co-operative principles, book-keeping and business organization was vitally necessary for the islanders. It was proposed to ask the Commission to investigate the practicability of establishing a co-operative training school so that co-operative principles and societies could progress rapidly.

Mr. Roembati, Netherlands New Guinea, said the people should be discouraged from adopting a Santa Claus attitude, expecting everything from the government. Co-operation was hard business not a gospel. The people should be stimulated to work for themselves, calling on the government only if help was really needed.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 6

Nasimu, Fiji, 27th April, 1956

A plenary session of the Third South Pacific Conference now meeting at Nasimu, will be held at 9 a.m. on Monday, April 30.

The main business of the session will be to receive reports and suggested recommendations and resolutions from the two Standing Committees — Economic, and Social Development and Health — which have been discussing the Conference agenda in the past few days.

At its meeting today the economics committee completed its discussion of the Fiji delegation's introductory paper on the use of co-operation as a means of promoting the welfare of the South Pacific people.

The Committee agreed to submit for the consideration of the Conference a draft resolution asking the South Pacific Commission -

To investigate the practicability of establishing a Co-operative training school for the Pacific, with methods adapted to the needs and legislation of administrations of the various territories of the South Pacific.

To advise territorial governments to provide legislation and facilities for establishing co-operatives (including loans if necessary) and also information on co-operatives so that if any people wish to begin co-operative enterprises they would be able to do so.

To prepare studies on co-operatives in schools.

The draft resolution also asked the Conference to agree with the Committee's view that it is convinced of the great value of the various forms of co-operation and would urge the Commission to press on with a programme already outlined for its co-operatives officer.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 7

Nasinu, 27th April 1956

The way in which the attitude of Pacific Islanders has changed to the care of mothers and children was vividly described by two speakers at the meeting today of the Social and Health Committee of the Third South Pacific Conference at Nasinu.

The speakers were Mr. Petero P. Solia, a Delegate from American Samoa, and Dr. E. Massal, the Executive Officer for Health of the South Pacific Commission.

Mr. Solia, a Chief and Speaker of the Samoan Legislature, prepared and presented a paper on the subject of infant and maternal welfare "having regard to social services, community organisations and improving living conditions".

This paper described Samoan traditional customs concerning newborn babies, the way in which those customs are in conflict with present-day public health laws and needs.

Births were not private in traditional Samoa, Chief Solia said, especially when a first child was born to high-class parents.

"Almost all of the village people gathered to witness the newcomer", he said. "After cleaning with traditional oil, the little infant is passed around to all the aunts and nieces who amazingly watch the weeping of the little one.

"All day long until night, they remain seated around the baby's bed, singing and snoking, or snoring after being kept awake too long the night before, nursing both the mother and the baby."

Those customs, he added, had gradually disappeared because they were too costly, and because public health laws had banned them. Now, there were clinics in the villages for mother and child. Mothers had become accustomed to the clinics, and were co-operating with the work of the doctors and nurses.

Dr. Massal told something of the same story about primitive communities. In their early history, he said, mothers and children were not paid much attention. They were the weakest persons in communities, ruled by want, fear and strength; they could merely survive.

Progressively, it was realised that mothers and infants represented an asset, and they received a certain amount of protection. Charitable persons gave some further help, but they were not numerous. The stage now reached was that social welfare services now included mothers and children.

Thus, charity, assistance and welfare had been the successive steps in the protection of mothers and infants. There was need for the people to emphasise the unique worth of each child, and its mother, and to assist by every practical means social services and community organisations which were aimed at protecting them.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 8

Nasinu, 28th April, 1956

A suggestion that family allowances should be paid to regular workers living outside their group of origin was made to the social and health committee of the Third South Pacific Conference today.

The suggestion was made by Madame Guiart of the New Caledonia delegation, who said this would be one of the best methods of ensuring the security of the woman and child in the islands.

The Committee was discussing a paper presented by the delegation from American Samoa on infant and maternal welfare having regard to social services, community organizations and the improving living conditions.

Territorial administrations should be asked to institute the allowances, Madame Guiart said, if the Conference in plenary session adopted the suggestion and decided to pass it to the South Pacific Commission for consideration. She had in mind particularly workers in the mines of New Caledonia, and the women who were deserted by their husbands.

The Cook Islands delegation said infant and maternal welfare work were started twenty years ago in his islands. So far no progress had been made. Before further proposals were suggested, the Commission should be asked to look into the question of follow-up programmes.

Mahe 'Uli'uli, Tonga, suggested that planning and guidance be given. It might not always be possible for island groups with a subsistence economy to pay money allowances. The best they could do was to give education and guidance in family planning.

Madame Guiart said the problem did not exist where there was a subsistence economy.

The Nauru delegation said family allowances should be made for all workers, not only workers who were living away from their homes.

The Committee agreed a draft resolution for consideration of the full conference on the subject of economic education which expressed the opinion that while the learning of technical skills in economic activities was important for the islanders, further consideration should be given to research into ways and means by which they may become aware of the basic conditions of modern economic life.

A plenary session of the Conference will be held on Monday, 30th April, to consider the progress made so far with the agenda business by the two standing committees.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 9

Nasinu, 30th April, 1956.

The South Pacific Commission will open a session -- its fifteenth -- at Nasinu tomorrow (Tuesday, May 1) at 2.30 p.m., then hold a joint meeting with the Third South Pacific Conference, now in the seventh day of its session, for discussions.

This was announced today (Monday) at a plenary session of the Conference, by the Chairman, Sir Ronald Garvey. Dr. H.J. Levelt, Commissioner for the Netherlands will preside over the joint meeting.

Reasons for this item being placed on the agenda have been discussed by the two standing committees of the Conference.

The social and health committee decided there was no need to proceed with the item.

The economics committee at a meeting held on Saturday, April 28, considered the meeting should take place. Commissioners present were asked to say why the item had been placed on the agenda.

Mr. C.G.R. McKay, New Zealand Commissioner, said his personal view was that there were two reasons. The first was that it was a courtesy to delegates, thus enabling them to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Commission. There was much advantage to be derived from a free and informal talk between the Conference and the Commission. The second was that in such an atmosphere it could be explained what the Commission could do and could not do. Those fields were clearly laid down in the agreement that

established the Commission. The Conference should know the Commission's problems, especially those associated with staffs and costs, and how the Commission could take action and obtain results.

M. Phillipe Benoist, adviser to the Commissioner for France, said the main objection to discussion was budgetary. The six governments, he felt, should revise the agreement in order to restrict the Commission's expenditure. Commissioners themselves may agree on a proposal resulting in the expansion of a work programme, but that was no guarantee of approval of the participating governments. Thus he considered it would be difficult to discuss intelligently such questions as might be appropriately raised by delegates.

The Conference agreed to the joint meeting being held.

The Conference adopted resolutions from the two standing committees relating to

Social and Health: the South Pacific Commission's literature bureau, vocational training, community development continuation work, linguistics, economic education, the role of custom in the social development or retardment of the islanders, improvement of social conditions by modifying custom, indigenous arts, customs and cultures and their encouragement and retention where useful.

Economics: livestock introduction and development, particularly cattle and pigs, the production export and marketing of fish, control of animal and plant pests and diseases, establishment of coconut and copra research stations in the Pacific, co-operative societies and credit unions, including the practicability of establishing co-operative training schools or courses for the Pacific.

Ratu Mara, Fiji, said pigs were important as protein in islands where fishing conditions were not favourable all the year as they were in the equatorial atolls. Poultry was also important but little had been done, There was a legend that Captain Cook had left some poultry on one small island of the Fiji group; the strain had not been improved since.

Sir Ronald Garvey said the Government of Fiji had imported Santa Gertrudis bulls from Australia to improve the strain of local cattle. Next year twelve heifers of the breed would be imported, so that a pure strain could be bred in Fiji.

The Conference sent birthday greetings to Queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 10

Nasinu, May 1, 1956

The fifteenth session of the South Pacific Commission was opened by its chairman, Dr. H.J. Levelt, Senior Commissioner for the Netherlands, at Nasinu this afternoon.

Delegates to the Third South Pacific Conference were present at the opening.

Later, the Commission and the Conference held a joint meeting which was presided over by Dr. Levelt.

In opening the Commission session Dr. Levelt said the main reason -- he might even say the one reason -- for calling this session was that it was considered to be of the utmost importance that the Commission should devote, as soon as possible, its fullest attention to the recommendations of the Conference. Consideration of the recommendations of the Conference was by far the most important item on the Commission agenda.

The aims of the Commission could not be achieved without the whole-hearted co-operation of the participating governments and territorial administrations on the one side and of the Pacific peoples on the other.

In this part of the world, small fractions of the human race had lived for centuries in isolation on their islands, far away from the main currents of progress. That isolation had received a violent shock during the last war. Since then the pace of contact had immensely quickened. In the Pacific, windows had been opened on to the outside world, and people were awakening from a century-

long dream. There was ample evidence of a desire for betterment and improvement, for raising of living standards, for adequate food, good health, good housing, medical attention and longer life.

The justification of the South Pacific Commission was that it aimed to help the six participating governments and territorial administrations to enrich the lives of three million people living in thousands of islands, large and small. That was the Commission's only objective; an objective on which our fullest attention should always be focussed.

The Commission's aim could only be achieved by maintaining close contact with both the administrations and the islands people. The meetings of the Conference were vitally important, because they actively associated the island peoples with the Commission's work. All the efforts of governments and the Commission would be fruitless if they were not supported by the people themselves, who must be drawn into creative tasks.

Delegates to the Conference were chosen for their knowledge of the needs of the islanders; they voiced the desires and the aspirations of their fellow countrymen. It was of the utmost importance for the Commission to know their wishes, and to give effect to their desires.

On their return home, an important duty of the delegates would be to encourage their people to co-operate by playing an active part in carrying out the projects and measures designed for their welfare and betterment. Collaboration between the islanders and the Commission was the whole purpose of the Conference.

The conclusions reached at the Conference would guide, stimulate and encourage the Commission in its efforts to improve the economic and social

conditions throughout the area. In partnership with governments, and within the limits imposed by its restricted resources, the Commission had striven during the past three years to find practical solutions for the problems which the Second Conference drew to its attention.

The chief concern of that Conference was with economic advancement; prominence was again being given to economic issues at this Conference. That seemed entirely justified, as economic development must underlie health and social progress. But the social and cultural implications must not be forgotten. Mere economic development without social adaptation could rather harm than profit those whose well-being they sought.

The needs of the islanders were manifold, but the Commission had to realize its own limitations. Its financial resources were small. Each government was well endowed, and to the development of its territories was devoting efforts and funds which dwarfed those of the Commission.

"The Commission", Dr. Levelt said, "is not a kind of fairy godmother able to provide for a territory what the territory cannot afford to provide for itself."

Its task was to secure expert advice, to prepare practical schemes and projects for the benefit of a number of territories faced with common problems, to carry out research and to disseminate the results of its research in the territories. The responsibility for acting on that advice, for carrying out those projects and for meeting the necessary expenditure rested not with the Commission, but with the governments concerned.

The establishment of the Commission was justified only if it proved itself successful in rendering practical assistance and in organizing co-operative activities directed to a sound development and betterment of the standards of the South Pacific people.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 11

Nasinu, May 1, 1956.

After the Fifteenth Session of the South Pacific Commission was opened this (Tuesday) afternoon by Dr. Levelt, a plenary session of the Conference was opened by its chairman, Sir Ronald Garvey, who said the idea was for the Conference and the Commission to get together in a friendly, informal way. "Now," he added, "let battle begin."

Dr. Levelt said the Commission welcomed the idea of the meeting. It was not only a courtesy to the delegates, but it was thought a useful purpose would be served. He would point out that the powers and functions of the Commission were limited by the terms of the agreement setting up the Commission.

The joint meeting of Commission and Conference lasted more than an hour. Two written questions were put forward. Both were from the United States Trust Territory.

One related to bringing about cultural change without affecting the peoples' identity. The other asked about the steps taken by the Commission to investigate the drying and storage of breadfruit, and to develop new strains that would provide all-the-year breadfruit.

The Executive Officer for Social Development, Mr. H.E. Maude, said he did not think there was any regional answer to the problem of acculturation. The question of adapting custom to modern living conditions had been discussed in the social and health committee of the Conference, and a resolution drafted.

The Executive Officer for Economic Development, M. Lefort, said suggestions for drying breadfruit in copra or vegetable driers had been considered. No work had been done on all-the-year breadfruit; that was a long-term job.

Mr. Galu, Western Samoa, said that in his islands a small committee kept the people in touch with the work of the Commission. That was an idea that perhaps other territories might care to consider using.

Mr. J.K. McCarthy, adviser to the Papua and New Guinea delegations, said the Commission had been searching for a substitute for milk. That was important to Papua and New Guinea.

The Executive Officer for Health, Dr. Massal, said there was no substitute for milk. It had been found that the best and cheapest concentrate was dried skim milk powder.

Manea Tamarua, Cook Islands, said the agreement setting up the South Pacific Commission provided that preference of employment with the Commission should be given to people of the territories. There must be a place for typists and clerks on the staff of the Commission.

The Secretary-General, Dr. Bedell, said staff was a matter of major importance and significance. The idea was to give equitable representation to the islanders. If applications came from islanders they would be considered on their merits, with the addition that preference would be given to them.

Mr. K.S. Reddy, Fiji, asked the Commission to name three of its successes, and two of its failures.

The Chairman suggested, amidst laughter, that an outsider could see both better than could a member of the Commission.

The Secretary-General named as successes fisheries development, nutrition and co-operatives.

High Chief Le'iato, American Samoa, thanked the Commission for its work for the islanders. The Conference, he said, was a great experience for the delegates, but he wished that the islanders themselves took more part, rather than the advisers to the delegations.

Many of the subjects talked about, he added, were not clear to them. He would like to know how they could keep the islanders informed of those things. It seemed foolish to ask at the Conference for many things that it was the job of the governments to do. He hoped that they would not let the Commission become only a place for talk and putting things on paper, but would assist it to do good

things for the islanders.

(Note: The Statement by M. Benoist which appears attached to this statement was then read by the Chairman.)

Dr. Levelt thanked the delegates for their questions. The matters that were raised would be seriously considered by the Commission.

Sir Ronald Garvey then adjourned the Conference until 9 a.m. on Wednesday.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 12

Nasinu, May 2, 1956

The increasing importance of Pacific languages has been demonstrated by their use in discussions at the Third South Pacific Conference now nearing the end of its sessions at Nasinu.

This was further demonstrated today (Wednesday) when the Conference adopted a resolution of the Social and Health Committee recommending that a school reader for children 12 to 15 years old be published in the major South Pacific languages, also in English and French.

The recommendation which was explained by M. André Barrès, an adviser to the New Caledonia delegation, suggested that the book should include simple extracts from scientific and literary works, inform the children of the geographical and historical diversity and the varied aspects of the daily life of the people, and emphasize the common features of South Pacific civilizations.

Sir Ronald Garvey, Chairman, said he personally was pleased by the recommendation. Such a book could well become a small foundation stone of a pan-Pacific nation.

The Conference also adopted a recommendation of the Economic committee that booklets in the vernacular be prepared on such subjects as cocoa and coffee production.

An illustrated booklet -- Wealth from the Coconut -- was published some time ago by the South Pacific Commission in ten Pacific languages, in English and in French.

Another subject dealt with by the Conference today was industrial and commercial progress in the region. A resolution on this subject from the economic committee was adopted by the Conference. The resolution recommended that the Commission -

undertake a study of the means for promoting village-centred industries, with particular attention to the possibilities of adapting successful industrial practices, such as the use of machines, electric power and highly trained labor

to the potentialities of the village, and to the problems of adaptation involved;

engage a specialist in the organization of small-scale industries based in villages, to assist territorial administrations with surveys of the local possibilities and problems, and with plans for the development of efficient village-based industries;

undertake a study of the problems arising from the creation of urban populations as a result of industrial and commercial development in areas which have hitherto relied primarily on subsistence agriculture.

The Conference affirmed recognition that some degree of industrialization of the life of the islanders and some consequent changes in traditional village systems were inevitable if commercial and industrial progress are to lead them into more effective participation in the modern world. It considered, however, that balanced industrial development must stress village-centred activities as well as new factories and commercial enterprises.

An echo of recent sea tragedies in the Pacific was evident in a resolution from the economic committee which recommended that in view of those mishaps involving considerable loss of life, administrations should ensure that adequate legislative provision was made for the safety of life at sea.

Conference adopted the resolution, which also expressed concern that in some territories industrial and commercial development was handicapped by inadequate or expensive air and sea transport services. The Conference agreed to draw the attention of the Commission and territorial administrations to the problem, which, the resolution said, limits the welfare of many of the islanders. Resolutions based on the subject of farming systems were adopted by the Conference. These resolutions stressed the need for research directed towards

- the collection, propagation and distribution of the more valuable strains of traditional subsistence crops. On that point, appreciation was expressed of the work begun at the plant introduction and quarantine station at Naduruloulou, Fiji, with South Pacific Commission support.

- the improvement of strains of pigs, poultry and cattle and livestock management in the villages

- the possibilities of introducing improved tools and mechanized equipment into subsistence and commercial agriculture

- distribution of the knowledge gained from research and experience regarding the improvement of subsistence agriculture and cash crop farming as widely and in as simple a form as possible.

A series of resolutions on the subject of infant and maternal welfare came from the social and health committee and was adopted by the Conference.

The Commission was requested to continue its studies of the physical and intellectual development of infants, and to pay special attention to the mother-infant relationship.

The importance of demographic statistics as an essential basis for a more complete understanding of the problems of infant and maternal welfare work was stressed; it was recommended that territories should expedite the compilation of vital statistics relating to infants and mothers.

The Commission was requested to arrange for the continuation of studies of diet and nutrition of women and infants, further research being considered necessary.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 13

Nasinu, May 2, 1956

The importance of collecting information on the means used to fight alcoholism in the South Pacific territories was emphasised in the course of a discussion in the Social and Health Committee of the Third South Pacific Conference today (Wednesday).

M. Jacques Drollet, Tahiti, asked for the views of delegates. He said that in the Leeward Islands of French Oceania, liquor was freely sold. In the Marquesas its sale was prohibited.

Kaobunang Iete, Gilbert Islands, said that in his islands permits were given to natives over 25 years of age, and of good behaviour. The permits committee was mainly composed of natives.

The Rev. S.G.C. Cowled, Fiji, said that the permit system in Fiji was discriminatory. There was traffic in the liquor bought by permit holders.

Mr. M.B. Orken, adviser to the Papua and New Guinea delegation, said that many sophisticated people in the territory of Papua and New Guinea were not permitted to drink, yet in fact they did drink, and did not think it was a sin to drink. Those people included teachers, police and government servants.

Dr. E. Massal, Executive Officer for Health, said the problem was complex yet simple. It was important to teach the people how to use liquor, not to prevent the use of liquor. It had to be remembered that some territories got revenue from liquor.

Mr. John M. Spivey, Adviser to the Trust Territory delegation, said there were both traditional and imported liquors in the territory. The municipalities and other local government bodies had control of the question, and did so in varying ways. Some districts had local option. In one district the value of consumable liquor was fixed at \$15,000 a year. About 70% of the Truk district (population 17,000) was dry.

M. André Barrès, adviser to the New Caledonia delegation, said the results of a referendum had suggested that a better system of control and policing was needed, including an import quota system for spirits, and higher excise in order to make liquor more expensive to buy.

M. J. Guiart, adviser to the New Hebrides delegation, said the New Hebrides natives were not allowed to have liquor, yet everyone drank, and it was practically impossible to control.

Willem Inury (Netherlands New Guinea) said that in urban areas spirits were forbidden to the natives, but beer was allowed. Stores could sell only at certain hours. The few hotels were open for normal hours of trading. Some of the native groups were opposed to drink altogether.

The Conference agreed a recommendation from the Committee that the extreme importance of campaigns against the excessive use of alcohol where such exists be stressed, and asked the Commission to set up an information committee that would centralize information and co-ordinate the activities of the territorial anti-alcoholism committees and other similar bodies.

The resolution said the problem of liquor drinking and alcoholism was the problem not only of the indigenous peoples but also of the other sections of the island communities.

"The best solution," the resolution concluded, "could well be one that applies to all without discrimination."

Mr. McCarthy, adviser to the Papua and New Guinea delegation, said he wanted some information on the question. He was chairman of a select committee on the subject and had studied the subject at first hand, like every good research worker. The only result so far was to postpone a decision on the subject.

Sir Ronald Carvey said that methylated spirits had been increasingly used in Fiji for boosting purposes. He had heard of a new drink with the name Fiji Airways. It was he was told made up of cold tea, methylated spirits and a little chewing gum to give it flavour. When he asked the reason for the name, he was told "after the second one you take off."

The Papua, New Guinea and Western Samoa delegations and Ratu Mara (Fiji) voted against the recommendation.

Amongst items submitted for inclusion in the agenda of the Fourth Conference were :

A study of the role and function of custom and beliefs as a factor handicapping the development of infant and maternal welfare

A study of the behaviour of the pre-school child and an attempt to organize its development.

Native land tenure and the changes brought about by the growing of permanent crops.

Labour working conditions in the South Pacific Territories.

Soil conservation and re-afforestation programmes

Timber resources and the development of markets for timber products.

Suggestions were made that the fourth Conference be held either at Rabaul, in Western Samoa or at Pago Pago, American Samoa.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 14

Nasinu, May 3, 1956

Observers from missionary, international and scientific organizations spoke to delegates to the Third South Pacific Conference today (Thursday) about their work, and the growth of the Conference.

Rev. C.F. Gribble, National Missionary Council of Australia, said the Christian church had pioneered many of the fields of endeavour that were now being worked by the territorial administrations. It was right and proper that the governments should take over that work. But Christian missions could still do a great deal to encourage the development of many things being done at the Conference, and by the South Pacific Commission.

Rt. Rev. L.S. Kempthorne, Bishop in Polynesia, and representing the National Missionary Council of New Zealand, said he personally had been especially interested in the establishment of some central cultural institution in the Pacific. He had watched with considerable interest the work that was done in the Harlow report for the establishment of a central vocational training institution in the Pacific. It was with some regret that he found that influences amongst the governments of the region brought that to an end. There seemed to be jealousy between the different governments, and some nervousness about the integration of work along particular lines.

Bishop Kempthorne said he felt that to a great extent the Research Council of the Commission was doing a work which could very well develop into an institution of the kind he was interested in. If the Council could be established as a permanent body and collect to itself students from all over the Pacific, that would go very much towards the creation of a university. In effect, the Council already constituted the central part of a university.

Dr. F.C. Kamma, the Missionary Board of the Netherlands Reformed Church, said that an independent church would be established later this year

in Netherlands New Guinea. It would be very largely controlled by the people themselves.

M. J. Guiart, representing the French Institute of Oceania, said the institute and the Commission had always worked in close association. Continuation of that co-operation was desired by the institute for their mutual benefit. The problems had increased in importance since the first Conference six years ago, and the work done was proving of greater value. They should become aware that more and more the islanders would want action taken on the requests they made. Much still remained to be done to publicise what the Commission was, and to distribute its results.

Dr. George P. Murdock, Tri-Institutional Pacific Programme, said the experience of observing the Conference had been pleasant, profitable and educational. His organization was engaged in research on cultural change; social and cultural anthropology. Research workers were already in the field and it was hoped to send a team to central New Hebrides later this year, a project that he regarded as being of the greatest interest. He hoped it would prove of equal interest to the Commission, and of benefit to the people.

Dr. Murdock said he was personally interested in seeing some similar work being done by an islander in some small American community. The man he had in mind should be educated, and have an inquiring mind. He could be from Samoa, Tonga, Nauru or any other part of the Pacific. If there was such a man, he thought that funds could be found for him to do a year's research into the social organization of a section of the American people.

Mr. Colin D. Ewers, Unesco, Paris, said his organization, the Commission, and the people at the Conference had common interests in many fields. Unesco was fully informed of the work that was being done by the Commission. It believed that the Literature Bureau of the Commission was outstanding in the world; it had asked for a survey of the bureau's work so that it could be helped in its particular fields. He was sure that if a request was made to Unesco for assistance in some form of educational, scientific or social project, it would be very favourably received.

Dr. E.M. Ojala, representing the Food and Agriculture Organization, said his organization and the Commission were old friends; they had joined in several important projects — rice, fisheries and nutrition amongst them. FAO was particularly interested in rural industries, co-operatives, farming systems, and it was happy to be co-operating in the development of those and other projects.

Mr. Harold J. Coolidge, representing the Pacific Science Board of the United States National Research Council, said that organization had aided 393 American scientists to work in the Pacific, most of the research being in the Trust Territory. The results were of value to the whole region. That was so with regard to the work being done on the rhinoceros beetle. Predatory wasps had been brought into the Palaus, being given VIP — Very Important Parasites — treatment, but unlike other VIP they had not been fumigated. They seemed to have become established now after four years of doubt.

There was also the Gonaxis snail, which had been placed on a small island to eat out the giant African snail — Actatina — imported to several parts of the Pacific by the Japanese. Gonaxis, a small snail, was carnivorous and a cannibal. It was a battle of David against Goliath. And it was more than that, because when Gonaxis ate up all the giant snails, it would turn cannibal. The time could come when there was only one survivor of Gonaxis, and he could be dealt with by being trodden on.

Three hundred Gonaxis snails were placed on a small island originally. In three years the number had grown to an estimated 30,000. It was a hazardous island to land on, but soon a helicopter would take in people who would remove 5,000 of the snails to other places. The work was of interest, but the scientists who introduced Gonaxis were now named Travelling Snailsmen.

Dr. Murdock also briefly reviewed the work being done in solar energy. He described it as the poor man's atomic energy. There was little doubt of its eventual practical value. Nauru, he said, would be a splendid place for a pilot project.

THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Press Statement

No. 15

Nasimu, May 3, 1956

Traditional Fijian dancing and singing brought to a close the Third South Pacific Conference at Nasimu this (Thursday) afternoon.

The closing session of the Conference which preceded the Meke was brief.

The report of the Conference to the South Pacific Commission was adopted. The report contained the resolutions of the Conference, totalling thirty-three.

It said that the items on the agenda were discussed in two standing committees, whose draft resolutions were considered by the whole Conference in plenary session.

"We are convinced", the report said, "of the success of this working procedure and have strongly recommended its adoption for the Fourth Conference."

The adoption of the report was moved by Ratu Mara, Fiji, who was chairman of the economics standing committee, and seconded by Mrs. Lagrimas Untalan, Guam, who presided over the social and health committee after the chairman, Prince Tungi, Tonga, left Fiji a few days ago.

The Conference adopted the report unanimously.

High Chief Tuli Le'iato, American Samoa, moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman of the Conference, Sir Ronald Garvey.

Replying, Sir Ronald Garvey said he felt that the standing committees system had been an important advance. The South Pacific Conference was now well established as an institution. All appreciated its real value in bringing the islanders together.

To the delegates he would say that the Commission needed their co-operation in the continuance of the work. On their return to their islands homes, he hoped that they would do what they could to tell their people of the aims of the Commission and to further its work. He firmly believed that the Conference had been well worthwhile. He would in closing the Conference, say to them

Happy have we met,
Happy do we part,