

RURAL EXTENSION IN EASTERN PAPUA *

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SUMMARY.

An account is given of the development of a Village Committee Organization, for the purposes of Agricultural Extension in the first instance, and of how the extension programme inevitably becomes broadened into what might more aptly be termed "Rural Extension" (Penders 1956); of how the programme is at first channelled through the men but how inevitably it spreads to the women too. The organization gradually develops through the village level to the area level and finally to the Administrative District level. Meanwhile the Native Local Government Council movement is also progressing and the paper discusses how the non-statutory Committee organization becomes linked with the statutory Council organization and how its activities become co-ordinated and to some extent integrated with those of the Councils. Finally the writer concludes that urgent needs in extension activities of all kinds in the Territory are: The greater and greater emphasis on participation by the village people in the planning and execution of programmes; the stepping up of opportunities for the emergence and training of native leaders, both men and women, at all levels and for their acceptance of real responsibility; and the greater insistence on the fostering of the team spirit between Departments at the District and Subdistrict levels. To assist the reader to visualize the environment in which the work discussed is being done he is taken, during the first half of the paper, on a reconnaissance patrol with the Agricultural Officer.

Introduction.

“TO organize the villages for a happier, fuller and more prosperous life in which the villager will have an opportunity to develop both as an individual and as a member of a well integrated society” . . . “by using local initiative and local resources to the utmost extent possible in the economic, political and social fields of reconstruction on cooperative lines” . . . “to produce a self-reliant, self-dependent and properly organized life.” (Dube 1959.) These were the objectives laid down by the Madras Government for its Rural Welfare Scheme, inspired by Ghandi and later adopted with outstanding results for the whole of India. The Scheme is referred to here because it is based on sound extension philosophy and could well form the model for much of the work which requires to be done in this Territory. It emphasizes self-help, the use of local re-

sources of all kinds, the co-ordination of endeavour in the economic, political and social fields, and the participation of the people in programme planning and implementation. These have been the principles followed in the work here described and discussed.

Reconnaissance.

The writer was posted to the enchanting little island of Samarai on the China Straits in August, 1953. Samarai, on its crowded 57 acres, is the administrative and commercial centre of the region in which the work described is being pursued. As soon as practicable he proceeded to carry out reconnaissance patrols to find out about the people and their resources. This early work was very necessary as no previous Agricultural Officer had worked in the region, which extends from Cloudy Bay and Collingwood Bay to Rossel Island. Now there are seven of us.

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District administration

To put the reader more in the picture he is invited to join the writer in portion of one of these early patrols. We first call on the District Commissioner and the District Officer to discuss our plans and receive many useful suggestions. We also send a telegram to the Assistant District Officer of the Subdistrict which we are to visit so that he will know we are working in the area. We take this action in the interest of co-ordinating inter-Departmental activities because "the Head of the Administration in the widest sense in each District is the District Commissioner. He is the representative of the Administrator in his District Departmental Officers must realize that upon the District Commissioner rests the responsibility for the progress and welfare of the peoples in his District, for the maintenance of law and order and for the general working of the machinery of the Administration in conformity with the policy laid down by the Commonwealth Government." (Cleland 1957 a.) and "Because of the need to facilitate Administration by the establishment of Subdistricts, it is also desirable that there should be the closest possible co-ordination and co-operation within Subdistricts. As the District Commissioner is not in a position personally to achieve detailed co-ordination and co-operation at Subdistrict level, the Assistant District Officer in charge of the Subdistrict is to be regarded for that purpose as the agent of and responsible to the District Commissioner." (Cleland 1957b.) The District Officer is the senior officer of the Department of Native Affairs within the District. The Assistant District Officer with the help of his Patrol Officers is responsible to him in matters relating to that Department which, as its name implies, is largely responsible for the maintenance of law and order and for the general welfare of the native people.

Departure on reconnaissance patrol.

Having received the official blessings we pack our camping gear and provisions into patrol boxes and together with a little band of youthful trainees we board the small ship which will take us from Samarai to a suitable landing place for our patrol—we must not miss this boat because if we do we might be waiting a long time for another opportunity, and we can go nowhere from Samarai without water

transport. We travel first to East Cape where we spend the night on the ship at anchor and also go ashore and call on Reverend R. and Mrs. Grant the Methodist Missionaries there. We will be going into what is largely a Methodist area and they are most helpful in telling us about various customs of that area and giving us the names of some prominent people there.

General observations on terrain.

Early next morning our native skipper rings the engines to start and we leave our sheltered anchorage to thread our way through the brightly coloured coral reefs into open waters. Already one or two canoes are out fishing just inside the reef. It is fairly rough outside as there is a freshening south-west wind but not so bad that we cannot read or look about. We set our course eastward for Normanby Island and after approaching it we skirt the south coast and travel some little distance north up the east coast. As we are only a mile or so out we have a good opportunity of observing the area we are about to visit. The island is a large one—it runs mainly north-west to south-east and is about forty miles in length and about twenty-six at its greatest width, and has a central range of mountains rising from some 3,000 to nearly 4,000 feet. It has a native population of about 8,000 and European of about 30. Along much of the coastline the mountains or their foothills "sweep down to the sea" and there is only a vestige of a coastal plain at most points. In many places we see pale limestone outcrops 100 or 200 feet above sea level; as the limestone is derived from geologically recent coral formations these are indications that severe earth movements must have taken place at some time in the not so distant past. The coast is mostly fringed by coral reef with pretty little golden beaches here and there which are not infrequently backed by hamlets or villages of small lightly built thatched dwellings. The hillsides are mostly covered in rain forest, with here and there a patch of *Imperata* or other grass where maybe the soil is highly laterised. *Imperata*, or "blade grass" or "lalang" as it is variously known can be used for the manufacture of high class paper pulp and is also very good for roof thatching if available in quantity. However it is generally looked upon by tropical agriculturists as an insidious curse which can gradually take over land which is not properly

managed and render it subject to fires and erosion. Much of the local rain forest is secondary to an elevation of about 1,000 feet as can clearly be seen by its paler colour. The upper edge of this old garden pattern is rather like that of an old lace-work table cover with its many projections into darker primary forest. As it is the month of November the gardening season is at its peak and many newly cleared gardens are to be seen; perhaps as much as five per cent. of the secondary forest has been cleared in these patches in some areas. The people over the centuries have worked out a system of shifting cultivation on these steep slopes which has enabled them to maintain themselves under conditions which would be extremely difficult for anyone not brought up to the system. We are careful not to interfere with the system as we have nothing better within existing resources to replace it; likewise the people themselves will not readily depart from it since they have learnt to rely upon it as it stands for their very existence. Each year in these parts they work something of the order of 0.25 acre per person.

Now we are approaching our immediate destination and the skipper takes the ship close inshore to Kasiguleu village where we drop anchor. We remove our gear from the hold and proceed to take it ashore in the dinghy. From the beach we carry it into the "rest house", which is maintained by the people principally for the use of Government patrols such as ours, at the same time frightening away half a dozen nondescript village pigs which are resting below it. Meanwhile the skipper ups anchor and with a cheerful wave of the hand goes on his way while we set up camp. During the next three or four weeks we will slowly work our way to the Subdistrict Headquarters at Esa'ala some fifty miles away where we will discuss our findings with the Assistant District Officer prior to deciding on a definite working plan for the area.

A typical Papuan village.

Kasiguleu is a typical village in this part of the region. About twenty huts or dwellings huddled amongst tall swaying coconut palms and *Casuarinas* and great *Calophyllum* and *Barringtonia* trees with their promise of dark cooling shade and one or two *Terminalia* nut trees; sleepily they watch the days go by on the coral shore of a small protected bay where is

found some respite from the roaring south-east winds during the "winter" months. The dwellings are small—mostly of one room measuring perhaps ten by fifteen feet—because the sago thatch which is used for roofing is difficult to find in this particular area and is mostly imported from a long distance. Most of the dwellings are made entirely of bush materials without nails and without windows or chimneys and with one door only. One or two of these are open and inside we can see the central hearth for a cooking fire. This serves not only for cooking (actually much of the cooking is done outside) but also provides warmth when the cold night air comes down the mountain-side; occasionally a child will be known to roll into the fire while asleep and will carry scars for the rest of its life. The smoke from the fire also has its use in keeping away mosquitoes and, so it is said, in helping to preserve the valuable thatch roof.

As weather and shipping movements are rather unpredictable we had not notified the village that we were coming and there is hardly anyone about. There are three old women in their old grass skirts and one old man dressed in a somewhat inadequate strip of green leaf; a younger woman sits peeling some sweet potatoes while her baby hangs sleeping under her house in a string bag made of local fibre. Inside one house we see wrapped in a rather thin and dirty "trade" blanket a young man who asks for quinine, which we give him later. There are some naked carefree children laughing and playing by the beach, their wet brown bodies glistening in the sun; they have cleverly contrived miniature toy boats from sticks and coconut midribs each with a leaf for a sail and are having most lively fun. In the deep shade of an over-hanging Kokoila tree (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) are three young men wearing brightly coloured new calicos, sitting chatting and chewing betel nut on the sand; they have recently returned from working in the "Gulf" country with the Australasian Petroleum Company and are obviously curious about us. Everyone else is out in the food gardens or fishing as it is such a fine day. We will have to wait until dusk to meet most of them.

The beach strand.

Immediately behind the village, which is built on the raised part of the beach strand, is a slight depression which is wet in rainy weather and

on which is growing a fascinating plant association. There we find the yellow flowered rose-wood tree (*Pterocarpus indica*) whose valuable timber can be used for making pestles and mortars for hulling rice paddy and for building and other purposes; there are great broad leaved and white flowered *Crinum asiaticum* lillies whose pseudostems provide the native's favourite fish-trolling lure; there are giant eerie-looking *Pandanus* palms with their extraordinary root systems which provide a vascular fibre of great strength and utility, and the Hibiscus tree (*H. tiliaceus*) which provides an equally valuable bast fibre; there are long *Flagellaria* canes which are extensively used in house-building for lashing timbers together and in fencing, and a climbing fern which can be used for binding outriggers on to canoes; there also we find the *Derris* vine, whose crushed roots will stupefy fish in quiet waters, climbing over a monstrous and useless strangling fig (*Ficus* sp.) whose intricate and spooky root crannies must surely house the local gremlins!

The village coconut grove.

Behind this belt is a small gently up-sloping area of a few acres carrying coconut trees. Their bearing is poor because of the presence of the Nutfall Bug, *Amblypelta lutescens papuensis*, whose very close relative sometimes makes big trouble for the coastal papaw-growers of Central Queensland. These coconuts were planted some thirty or forty years ago under the direct supervision of the local Patrol Officer of the day and the copra produced from them now makes a welcome contribution to the village income. It seems to have been quite some time since the grove was cleaned and the undergrowth brought under control. As the grove belongs to everybody, it evidently belongs to nobody—and so it is nobody's business to look after it. Maybe this is not such a bad thing anyway because undergrowth encourages the predatory red tree ant (*Oecophylla*) to establish itself in the area and to build its paper-like tissue nests in the palm tops where it farms relatively harmless scale insects: no Nutfall Bug will dare to linger on an *Oecophylla*-infested palm and that palm will bear well, other conditions being satisfactory. There is also, amongst some of the people, a subconscious suspicion that as the area was planted under Government supervision, maybe it really belongs to the Government! A similar situa-

tion arose many years ago when the Government first tried to get the people to plant rice. It distributed seed in many places and encouraged communities to plant it. But when harvesting time came—if there was any paddy to harvest—no one knew what to do with it or to whom it belonged. The Government Officer of the area soon found great heaps of paddy deposited at his office door because the people figured that it must belong to the Government. Even to this day there persists in some areas the idea that rice is a Government crop!

A family food garden.

Immediately behind the coconut grove are the timbered and stony foothills which lead to the main ranges of the area. As we follow the rough path bordered here and there by bright *Hibiscus* or *Croton* and an occasional breadfruit or *Citrus* tree we notice at first some limestone outcrops and then a prevalence of flat slabs of schistose rock followed by basaltic boulders in a ravine; these augur well for soil fertility. The secondary growth is vigorous and the plant population is very mixed—both conditions being indicative of fertile soils. We continue up the path through dense secondary rain forest and come to the first food garden. These are nearly always some distance away partly because of the bush rotation which is going on; partly also to keep them away from the destructive village pigs, the control of which appears to be an insoluble problem in many communities because of their great prestige value—and this Territory is by no means alone in this respect. This garden which belongs to an "extended family" has an area of about two acres. It has been carved from the jungle and a start has been made in building a rough but solid bush pig fence around it. Some men are working on the fence, others are sitting in a shady spot chatting and chewing betel nut in what seems to be a blissful state of under-employment. The several women are all busy weeding while some children walk about chewing pieces of sugar cane. The native's fondness for his children is proverbial and they generally have a very easy time. A baby hangs in its string bag inside a rough shelter which has been built in the middle of the garden under a shady tree. Half a dozen or so underfed and rather mangy dogs bark piercingly at us. Everyone stops in his tracks and looks at us. Someone calls out "Kagutoki" (a greeting) and a young man dressed in an old pair of khaki shorts

comes across to us from the working group. His name is Lenadi. He can speak a few words of English and knows Police Motu which he learned while away working on plantations. He also speaks fluently in Dobu, the local lingua franca used by the Missions, and, of course his own dialect. He also knows the Tavora language of East Cape where his people engage in barter trade from time to time. He makes himself known and seems pleased to meet us. He has never before met an Agricultural Officer and is interested in what he can understand of our talk. He is bright and intelligent and takes us around the garden explaining as well as the language difficulty will allow, what is going on. In the garden is a mixed culture of taros (*Colocasia*), yams (*Dioscorea*), sweet potatoes, pumpkins, native greens (*Abelmoschus*), a few long beans and tomatoes, papaws and pine-apples. The garden is coming on very nicely and already other perennials—sugar cane, bananas and tapioca (*Manihot*) are being planted in preparation for the second year of the cycle at the conclusion of which the garden will be allowed to revert to forest. The women are weeding and tilling with sharpened and fire-hardened sticks in such a way as to keep each plant on a miniature terrace or depression in the interests of soil conservation. The garden is subdivided into small sections by poles and logs laid on the ground, each section being someone's weeding task. The bigger timbers are placed along the contours as a further measure against soil erosion—but this new bush ground is so rich in humus that rain penetrates immediately and there is little run-off other than during exceptionally heavy rainfall. The only steel tools we have seen so far have been machetes and light axes.

We then meet the whole "extended family" group including Lenadi's wife, a neat young woman looking very attractive and dignified in her grass skirt. As we get to know them we are increasingly impressed with Lenadi and his wife. Later we will be training them and they will become Leaders of their Village Committees and again later they will become Chairman and Women's Leader of their Local Agricultural Association; but we are anticipating as all this will not be for some time to come. As the afternoon is drawing on Lenadi decides to call it a day and we all return along another track which goes past a clear running stream.

We sit on the banks and talk of what we have seen while the group divides into men who go down stream a little way and women and children who go up stream. Each has a secluded spot where we hear them noisily and merrily bathing for a few minutes after which we re-assemble and continue back to the village. The women settle down to preparing the evening meal while the men walk around the village with us.

More observations within the village.

Most of the dwellings are on stumps a few feet off the ground; there are also one or two which are built right on to the ground which, Lenadi explains, are temporary while the owner or the newly wed couple are building a good new one. He takes us inside some of the dwellings. The floors of those on stumps are of split palm lashed to bearers with split *Flagellaria* canes. To prevent the wind blowing up through the floor there are laid mats made of *Pandanus* leaves which have been dried and ribboned and woven the way Tongan and Samoan missionaries have taught the people, or simply sewn whole one to the other with fibre and a needle made from the wing bone of a flying-fox, in accordance with local custom. Some of the dwellings have shelves made of neatly lashed sticks hanging from the mangrove pole rafters for storing various possessions. Some also have a shelf outside and near the door for the accessible storage of ready cut firewood. There also is storage above the rafters under the roof. There, when our eyes have become accustomed to the dim light, we will find many curious things of which a few examples can be given:—A souvenir collection of the jawbones of pigs which have prominently figured in past feasts given by the owner to mark various occasions; a beautifully carved but wicked-looking ebony fighting stick which used to belong to the owner's great-great-grandfather; some large gourds with twisted leaf plugs for carrying drinking and cooking water—there are no tanks or catchment areas in the village; small delicately ornamented gourds for storing the shell lime burnt by the women for use with betel nut; one or two intricately carved lime spatulas used for transferring a little of the lime from the lime pot to the mouth; a couple of bamboo or palm-wood combs whose long prongs, firmly held together at their base to a handle by plaited

Pandanus root fibre, are necessary to penetrate the owner's abundant fuzzy hair; some fish traps made from the mid ribs of coconut leaf-lets; a pig-hunting net made from the strong wild *Hibiscus* fibre; also, maybe, a very good fishing net made from cord teased out from old motor truck tyres obtained from some distant war-time army dump—for weights the shells of a local bivalve mollusc with holes neatly drilled by means of a home-made Archimedian drill serve admirably, and for floats smoothly cut lozenge-shaped pieces of dry *Hibiscus tiliaceus* wood cost nothing and are long-lasting; a couple of gracefully shaped canoe paddles and a digging stick might complete the collection.

Hanging to the smoke-grimed walls are some workaday grass skirts made from finely split coconut leaves, and one or two pieces of bright calico. If the home belongs to a person of consequence there will almost certainly also be a simple frock hanging amongst other brightly-coloured grass skirts set aside for use on Sundays and on special occasions. Sometimes we see an old green mosquito net hanging dispiritedly from the base of the wall where it was used last night, or bundled in a corner or folded neatly away—depending maybe on whether the wife has had any domestic training from the Mission. Some dwellings have a hurricane lamp and one even has a pressure lamp. There are half a dozen or so clay cooking pots, bought probably by barter or food, from Ware Island or from East Cape where the potter's clay is excellent and the women have great skill in the age-old craft. In one or two dwellings we also see a big aluminium or iron boiler and all have one or two enamel basins and some mugs and plates and knives and spoons and maybe one or two saucepans. Bush knives, or machetes, appear to be standard equipment, also one or two spears for fish or for bush pigs; maybe sometimes also a hammer and a saw.

Apart from an occasional metal folding chair obtained at the end of the war from the army or from the Coastwatchers, or one or two home-made from rattan (*Calamus*), the dwellings are singularly lacking in furniture of any kind, even in cupboards and tables which seem so essential to us. One or two might boast of a home-made bed with woven rattan cane top, but mostly the bed consists of a mat on the floor. In a corner will most likely be found a "trade box" or a suitcase in which special treasures

are kept away from vermin and moisture—treasures such as the beautiful Bird of Paradise head-dress carefully wrapped in special leaves which has been handed down from father to son for use at special dances; but the Mission is apt to frown on this old traditional entertainment and the head-dress now, alas, is seldom worn. In most dwellings there is suspended from the rafters above the central hearth a platform of tightly lashed sticks on which to dry and smoke fish and other foods, or even to make a shilling or two worth of copra. Hanging to the rafters also above the fire are usually a few corn cobs being preserved for seed or to be eaten some day. They will become weevil infested if stored in a container; they will be eaten by the owner's gaily coloured rooster if stored too low. If any rats succeed in dodging the guard of hungry dogs they will find it extremely awkward to eat those cobs the way they are hung.

In front of one dwelling, slung on a tree is a long cage made of lashed sticks in which is kept a very beautiful ginger-coloured opossum; a valued pet which could maybe provide a meal at a pinch! Running up from the ground into a hole in the wall of some dwellings is a light log with steps notched into the upper side for the owner's dogs to run in and out at will without having to negotiate the more difficult ladder arrangement which constitutes the front entrance. We ask Lenadi why do they not have more windows and back doors and he replies that they cannot afford blankets to keep themselves warm at night. Then why not try to make more copra?—because the trader is not paying what they think is a fair price, or because they do not have adequate means of transporting the copra safely to Samarai where it could be sold for a better price to the Copra Marketing Board, or because the individual only has rights to a few trees and has not yet felt the urge to plant more or does not have suitable land for the purpose, or because the Old Man says "we have been getting along very well as we are so why get involved in these new-fangled notions", or because someone might work sorcery on one if one seems to be progressing beyond the common level, or we suspect, simply because it will require sustained effort on anyone's part to get out of the normal village rut. At the same time it is perhaps as well to remember that the division of labour does not

go far in the village—a man and his family are practically entirely self-sufficient; the husband is his own farmer, carpenter, canoe builder, transport agent, fish supplier, etc. while his wife is her own dress-maker, cook, gardener, carrier, baby-sitter, kindergarten teacher, carpet maker, etc., etc. The people, and more especially the clans, team together for many jobs—but each member, or at least each family unit, still has to be proficient in all of the skills needed for survival at the village level—and these do not yet include the need to be also an expert cash cropper. Also do not let us forget that a large proportion of these people have suffered sporadically from malaria, and often also from unbalanced nutrition, since babyhood.

The Rest House is built according to a recognized plan which has been in use for a long time; it is to be found on a back page of the Village Book given to the Village Constable by the Department of Native Affairs for the recording of instructions and observations by visiting officers. It is partitioned into rooms and has plenty of windows and a roomy verandah and a separate kitchen. We ask Lenadi why other houses in the village have not been built like it. Lenadi says that Papuans are not so tall as Europeans and so do not require so much room; and in any case they cannot afford all that goes with such a big house; and just think of the difficulty of maintaining it, and who is going to obtain or pay for the sago leaf for such a big roof? And all those doors and windows will not only let in cold air but goodness knows what thieves and evil spirits as well!

Now we see the main body of the people coming back in small groups to the village. The women are mostly walking in front and the men in the rear. The women are carrying great string bags, full of foodstuffs from the gardens, slung across their foreheads. They take great pride in being able to carry what seem to us in some cases to be incredible loads. Many of the well laden bags also have on top one or two bundles of the leaves of the "New Guinea Cabbage" (*Gnetum* sp.) picked from trees growing in the older secondary forest. Some of the children also have bundles of *Canarium* nuts wrapped in bush *Caladium* leaves. The people have quite a number of forest sources of additional accessory foods to build up the vitamin and protein content of their diet, though it is often a time-consuming business to harvest

them and sometimes also to prepare them for eating. We may think that this is a matter of inefficiency and that the same food values could be obtained with less effort in other ways. (Gourou 1959.) But we have not yet taught them any such ways, and in any case it is very good fun for a party to go into the bush and pick fruit or leaves from those trees which yielded so well last year! The men are carrying pieces of timber for house repairs or other purposes, or maybe a bunch of bananas slung from a stick, or a couple of spears or an axe, or maybe a small child sits on one shoulder clinging to father's crinkly hair. The small babies are carried by the women in string bags above the vegetables. They all go to their dwellings and put down their loads and chat and call out to each other and sort things out prior to settling down to cooking the evening meal. Some put a proportion of their tubers in neat little yam-storage houses behind the village. Later we will see cooking pots each held up by three stones anchored in the ground and each filled with root vegetables and with greens and coconut cream and covered over with banana leaves boiling merrily. The women make a pretty picture as they sit in their grass skirts on the sand chatting and tending their cooking fires. Now some small out-rigger canoes are returning from the day's fishing and there is great excitement as everybody calls out inquiries about the fishermen's luck. Soon we will see an example of native ingenuity when one or two women stand really big fish on their snouts, in the cooking pots, amongst the vegetables and wrap them with big leaves in such a way that the steam from the cooking vegetables will pass up through the leaves and steam the fish! This also yields a *Bouillabaisse Kasiguleu* of incomparable flavour!

Constituted authority at the village level.

Presently an individual comes forward dressed in a dark navy-blue "rami" and shirt with red trim and wearing a leather belt and carrying his village book in a waterproof jacket and also wearing a big brass medallion inscribed "V.C.". He is Nidoi, the newly-appointed Village Constable, who is responsible to the Assistant District Officer for the maintenance of law and order in his community and for seeing that Government orders as written in the book by Patrol Officers, Medical Officers, etc., are carried out. Now three other older and rather more

primitive looking individuals join Nidoi before us. They are Manisi and Lolobala and Pulitala and each wears a small aluminium disc inscribed "Councillor". These men are voluntary workers appointed by the Government to assist and support the Village Constable. They are usually clan leaders or their deputies. Their reward is prestige and an occasional gift of tobacco from a passing patrol. Their main function seems to be to see that the village is kept reasonably clean and to supervise the supply of carriers to visiting Government patrols and the keeping clear of the so-called "Government Roads", which actually are the main trade and patrol routes and consist of fairly good walking tracks through the jungle or along the coast. These men and their predecessors between them have not been unsuccessful in maintaining the status quo for many years but they hardly seem fitted to deal with modern pressures. We give them a stick of tobacco each and tell them we would like to talk with them and some of the elders and interested persons after all have had their evening meal. They go off with mutual exchanges of compliments and leave us to take it in turns to have our baths from a bucket in a corner of the Rest House partitioned off for the purpose. Meanwhile one or two people shyly approach with vegetables and pineapples to exchange with us for some tobacco. We buy a little and proceed with our evening meal.

A quiet talk with the elders.

That night about 10 or 12 men besides Lenadi come along for a pow-wow. We talk about the local totem clan organization of the community, the inheritance of land, the amount of copra made each month and by whom, relationships with the Mission in the next village and with the trader a couple of bays further on. We talk about land and sea communications and find that there are no roads whatsoever other than tracks like the one we followed to-day, that there are no regular boats calling and that no one knows of any suitable locality in the area where an airstrip could be laid down. To overcome this problem of communications to some extent the village has bought with native "currency" a very fine and beautifully ornamented canoe from distant Woodlark Island which can carry four or five bags of copra or other produce—but the wind and weather must be right and it takes as many men as it can carry bags to handle the craft

safely. None of our visitors can speak more than a few words of English and our conversation is carried on with great difficulty with the help of Lenadi and of our own trainees, one of whom speaks English and has a good knowledge of the local lingua franca. We therefore record our findings with reservations. We gather that the people would like to engage in some form of economic development but have very little idea as to where or how to start. So we tell our visitors that during the night we want them to consider giving us someone to take away with us for training in agriculture and also that we want to look at some of their lands and meet some more of their people the following day. They leave us and make for a clan leader's house from which the low murmur of their continued discussion can be heard. We then retire and go off to sleep to the sound of waves lapping on the beach accompanied by the distant roar of breakers on the reef.

A soil reconnaissance.

Early the next morning two young men present themselves as potential trainees before the Rest House. They are Lenadi, whom we met yesterday, and Mowedi from a neighbouring village to which the talk of our visit had already spread. They have discussed the proposal with their wives and their people and all are agreed so we accept them and they join forces with us at once and we all settle down for some breakfast. We are not yet ready to take Lenadi's wife, too, for training. Soon the Village Constable and a couple of Councillors and three or four younger men join us and we set out with our soil auger and indicator papers and altimeter and other paraphernalia for the rapid reconnaissance we propose making. We follow jungle paths to the principal arable lands of the clans and make borings. We decide that the area seems suitable for coffee and for dry paddy—coffee to bring in more income and rice likewise (since rice imports to the Territory are considerable) but more particularly in this case to provide a storable food to tide over periods of shortage. The only storable garden produce of consequence at present is the yam (*Dioscorea*) which in most places keeps only for about nine months although with care it can be stored for over one year. Always there is the risk of crop failure because of unfavourable weather or of attack by disease or pest

regardless of how provident or painstaking the people may be. Apart from maize which is very subject to attack from weevils and vermin the people have no storable cereal. Rice is of special value in regard to storage as every grain is encased in its own little storage compartment made up of its two tough glumes. An extremely important food reserve for many communities is found in the naturally occurring (and sometimes artificially extended) groves of sago palm (*Metroxylon*). When the palm reaches maturity and flowers it contains within its trunk an astonishing quantity of stored-up starch whose grains can ingeniously be recovered for food by the native people through the use of their own age-old processes and equipment. The "working" of sago is usually an extended family or clan activity which not only helps fill the larder and yields a barterable produce, but also is a pleasant social occasion which affords splendid opportunities for displaying skill and prowess. Rice-growing is of little interest to communities which have a reasonably reliable source of sago. The planting of cassava is another indirect form of food storage. We also see some scope for increased coconut plantings. Other crops could also be tried, including especially such as could improve the protein content of the diet. That night we go to bed early as it has been a long and a tiring day.

The Missionary and the Trader.

The third day we call on the native Missionary in the next village. He is busy teaching in his thatched classroom—in the Dobu language—and has a couple of youthful assistants looking after the very young children. He is keen and seems genuinely anxious to do all he can for the children in his care. He speaks quite good English and is most interested in our visit and gives us a lot of useful information about the people and the local leaders. We then give the senior class a simple talk about economic development and listen to them sing very nicely a parts song and then move on to the little trade store at the next village. Our first impression is of the prominent place occupied on the rather bare shelves by imported canned mackerel! This seems 'curious' in a fishing village but could well be a taste acquired by the men while away on indenture. The store, which belongs to a European living elsewhere, is in the charge of a young Papuan from Taupota in Goodenough Bay. He is taller and fairer skinned and better

educated than the local people and judging by the rude abruptness with which he deals with them makes it quite clear that he considers himself as belonging to a superior race. We question him about the price of copra. He explains that he cannot pay a good price because so much of what the people bring is very bad or requires reconditioning before it can be sent to Samarai. We suggest he should be stricter in insisting on good quality when he buys. He replies that when he adopts that attitude the people become disheartened and neither he nor they get anything from copra whereas the existing system brings everyone a little. We can see his point, especially when we look at some of the copra, but it seems awfully defeatist and wasteful.

Absence of men from community.

We spend the rest of the day going about amongst the people in their gardens and again through the village, finding out all we can about their social and political and economic state. One important thing that we find is that a significant proportion of the adult male population is absent at work on plantations or elsewhere and that they frequently stay away because they feel that the village has nothing worthwhile to offer them. Not infrequently a man will set up his wife and family with a good dwelling and a good garden and then go off to work but will not return for two or more years. Consequently the wife and family become short of food and depend largely on help from relatives, with a consequent general lowering of the living standard of the community. There are some villages where this is a very real and serious problem. The cause of all this, of course, is that employers prefer single men and do not want, or cannot afford, to accept dependants to be housed and provided for. The married village men accept employment with conditions originally designed for single men. Sometimes the families follow their men to the larger towns and there create further problems owing to their inadequate food and housing.

Some people fear land confiscation.

That night we ask the Village Constable to call the people together and we hold a general meeting. We see that the Missionary is amongst the people so we ask him to help us speak to them. We tell them what we have been doing and that we believe they could better their living standard if they had more money with which

to purchase many things they could use to good advantage in and about the village. They could get more money by improving the output and quality of their copra and also by planting up coffee gardens. All this seems rather to go over the heads of many of the people as they find it difficult to visualize a life other than the only one they know. However one of the elders gets up and says that the village would like to try our new ways and will be ready to start when Lenadi and Mowedi return from their training. The Missionary then turns to us and says in a stage whisper that the people are not as keen as they might be because a couple of characters, recently returned from Port Moresby, have been spreading the rumour that our only interest is to try out their lands with new crops and that if these are successful the Government will confiscate both the land and the crops. We ask the Missionary to assure the people that that is all nonsense and also to tell those who are making that kind of talk (and who, it so happens, are not at the meeting) that they are doing a bad thing for their village by holding back their people. We will later come across the same talk in other parts of the region. However the main body of the people seem pleased with our visit. The writer returned some four years later and received a tremendous welcome and found that much had been done in the interim.

Think twice when a farmer says "Come, it is quite close!"

The following morning Lenadi begs us to look at his own land before we leave. We point out that it will take us about two hours to walk to the next Rest House and that we have much to do there. Lenadi throws his hand out towards the heavens in a general westerly direction and most persuasively insists that his land is really quite close. We weaken and agree to go. This was a mistake which newcomers must be careful to avoid, it turns out to be one hour's walk away! However we make a quick inspection of the land and reassure him as to its quality and return to the Rest House where our senior boy, or Patrol Leader, with the help of the Village Constable and Councillors, has got the carriers lined up and ready, with poles tied to the patrol boxes, to swing them on to their shoulders and move on to our next base. Equally important, our cook boy has a billy of tea ready. So after drinking our tea and giving

out a few presents of tobacco to the Constable and others who have helped, and also, as a special courtesy, to the oldest man and woman we can find in the village, our carriers go off in Indian file along the jungle trail singing and gossiping and we follow to a chorus of "Kaione!" (Farewell).

The above account of our visit to an average village is factual but has necessarily been telescoped to some extent with others to bring in many factors without occupying too many pages. Some communities are of course much more sophisticated and others more primitive. Some patrols were in wet and stormy weather or in difficult mountainous country where leeches or bush mites or both can be troublesome, or in low-lying areas where mud and mosquitoes and sand-flies can make life a misery. Patrols of the type described were continued as frequently as was practicable throughout the greater part of the region both along the coast, and inland where some of the communities are really very primitive and are dependant for money entirely on the sale of their labour to recruiters and of Bird of Paradise feathers to coastal natives. It was not long before some conclusions could be drawn on which to base some kind of plan for our extension activities.

Action.

Findings of the Reconnaissance Patrols.

In almost all the localities visited there was a conscious desire amongst the people to engage in some form of economic development—even if only as a matter of prestige, or because it appeared to be the accepted thing to do these days! Also in many places, at least along the coast, there were village people who had a reasonable knowledge of English learnt at Mission schools and who could help to some extent as intermediaries in an extension programme. It would be necessary of course to interest them and help them understand the aims of such a programme.

The region is geologically young and is one of great and recent upheavals. Consequently its topography is in general sharply accidented and its soils are immature and patchy. Also it is virtually a "maritime province" and communications are difficult. It offers little opportunity for European development since the cost of the services necessary to make possible the maintenance of a European standard of living, for

the few people likely to benefit from them would be prohibitive. However, the native people are already adapted to their difficult environment; practically every native family has at least usufructuary rights to some good land—even if it be in patches. In this respect land tenure and inheritance pose some difficult problems owing to variations in native customs from place to place; problems which are dealt with little by little by a Native Lands Commission. Economic development would have to be on the basis of small holdings scattered throughout the inhabited portions of the region and not through the development of any specially favoured area, which in any case occur only in the Abau Sub-district and would mainly be the responsibility of the re-settlement authorities.

The most important source of native income was derived from a coastal fringe of coconuts. Many of these were old and bearing was generally poor. Some income was also derived from the failing and fluctuating trochus shell and natural gum markets. A good proportion of the people had little means of obtaining money other than by leaving their families and offering themselves to recruiters as plantation or other labour. The evil lay not in going out to work but in the hardships which resulted for the families left behind. Local sources of cash income must if possible be created.

With few exceptions coconuts in the region do not thrive away from the proximity of the sea border. Many of the native people had little or no land suitable for this crop, which belongs essentially to the waterfront, because of altitude or soils or other reasons, nor did they have any alternative crop which they could plant in its place. Apart from those limited areas where Co-operative Societies administered by the Department of Native Affairs, were in existence, the marketing services provided to the people for the disposal of their copra were in many instances inadequate and in some cases also very unsatisfactory. The desirability of setting up a simple form of co-operative society known as the Rural Progress Society, which is administered by the Department of Agriculture, might need to be considered in these areas in which because of lack of staff or for other reasons the Co-operative Registry was unable to operate.

The only extensive commercial crop other than coconuts was rubber on some European plantations. A start had also been made with

cocoa planting on some of these. Efforts made by the Administration early in the century to introduce and test other likely crops had been abandoned before useful results were obtained—probably because of lack of funds. It would be necessary again to take up this work and to determine as rapidly as possible the most suitable crops for the various communities throughout the region.

The 100,000 or so native people of the region, apart from their undoubted expertise in the traditional subsistence farming, were extremely backward in agricultural education. This had so far been restricted to limited opportunities of learning some very elementary and generally foreign nature study in primary schools or of working in the teacher's kitchen garden. As no suitable institution existed in the Territory a regional Training Centre would need to be set up where boys and young men from the villages could be taught the necessary new techniques for cash cropping at the village level. Where also they could be given a new outlook on life which would help them to break down the barriers of ignorance, superstition and apathy which were so firmly established back in their villages. Such an institution was also necessary to provide a cadre of better informed people on whose sympathy and co-operation we would be able to rely—and with whom we would be able to speak at least a common technical language. We now have over three hundred voluntary helpers scattered throughout the region who have received some training from us at the Extension Centre we set up at Kuiaro, near Samarai.

A Training Centre is started.

So almost the first thing which was done in our extension programme was to find a suitable spot close to Samarai with a permanent stream and sufficient land on which to set up a plant introduction garden. At the same time boys and young men like Lenadi and Mowed were brought in from patrols and became our first trainees. Space does not allow a detailed account of the findings of the reconnaissance patrols but it seemed evident that the principal commercial crops in which we should interest ourselves would be coconuts, coffee, rice, peanuts and cocoa; we would also be interested in re-afforestation in certain areas and also in those condiment and flavouring and nut-bearing plants which can be treated more or less as forest

species since many island communities would always remain difficult as regards supervision. Hence, apart from encouraging in them a new philosophy, it is principally in the culture and processing of these crops that our boys have been trained. We have also considered the sponsoring of rubber planting by the native people but decided that, apart from establishing high quality clonal groves for the later local supply of seed, this would be better postponed owing to the scattered nature of most of the populations—and also because of the need for those engaged in that industry to develop reasonably regular working habits before rubber tapping and processing could be successful.

Village Agricultural Committees are started.

However, agricultural training alone could not meet our extension needs. Not only was the "know how" important, but equally vital was the "know why". A medium of communication between us and the people must be created to carry not only a new technology but also a new philosophy. There were tens of thousands of people who had no cash crop whatever and practically no means, other than by deserting their families and going to work in distant places, of obtaining cash. At the same time these very people and their families simply could not imagine what would constitute progress for their jungle communities and consequently felt no real need for it. Changed attitudes were just as essential to advancement as the availability of cash. Their interest had been aroused by the patrols and quick action was needed while this interest lasted, not only to encourage economic development but also to ensure on the part of the people some appreciation or understanding of aims as well as of methods. Some "grass roots" organization was required through which we could have intimate contact with the village communities. Their representatives could then participate in the formulation and implementation of plans—and at the same time help us to avoid making social or political blunders. Experience on the patrols had indicated that the old Village Constable cum Village Councillor organization had outlived its usefulness and was not geared to modern needs. Something younger and more alive was required. This had already been recognized by the Department of Native Affairs when it introduced the Native Local Government Councils. The latter would not be the answer however because the

limited representation on them is on a population rather than a village or community basis and because they are rigidly controlled by Ordinances which must be closely administered by officers specially trained for the purpose. In any case there were only two small Councils in the region at the time. We needed something flexible and informal which could be put into operation and maintained by the village people themselves with a minimum of supervision. Especially was this so as it was necessary rapidly to get out many pilot plots of rice and of coffee throughout the region before interest waned. There was still only one agricultural officer at the time. Those were the circumstances that originally led to the setting up of our Village Agricultural Committees. One or two Committees were tentatively started by the writer in the Cape Vogel area in January, 1954, for the purpose of establishing rice-growing in that area where food shortages are an annual occurrence and no local sago is available. The idea obviously appealed to the people and so all trainees were thenceforth given instruction in this very simple form of rural organization. On their return to their villages they talked about the new idea and it was not very long before gradually, and usually with the helpful collaboration of the Assistant District Officers and Patrol Officers, the movement went right through the region excepting in those remote island areas where it was not encouraged because of supervision difficulties, and in the Trobriand Islands where a powerful clan organization with hereditary chiefs already existed. It should perhaps be explained that in most areas the old chieftainships have lost their importance and hereditary leaders no longer exist excepting to some extent in the determination of local custom. However the old totem clan framework still forms the basis of the gardening and working organization within village communities to a large degree. Consequently the new Committees are made up of representatives of the several totemic clans in each village (thereby, at least to some small degree, attempting the blending of the new culture with the old so wisely advocated pre-war by Williams, 1935) or of hamlets where population is scattered. Each Committee chooses its own Leader and its meetings, which it is seldom possible for a Government Officer to attend, are very informal, being held, as a rule weekly, under a shady tree or in any convenient place. In fact each Committee might more accurately

be termed a "representative group". To-day there are something of the order of 400 villages with Agricultural Committees. Their zeal depends to a large degree on local leadership and on the frequency of patrols and on the interest of the Assistant District Officer. Their activities range from lip service to the detailed organization and management of economic endeavour.

Councils and Missions support the new Committees.

In those areas where there already existed Native Local Government Councils the latter, and also the Assistant District Officers in charge of Local Government activities, welcomed the Committee movement as providing a useful adjunct and ally in community organization and a further medium for the promotion of their own programmes at the village level. Not a few Local Government Councillors are also members of the Village Committee Organization. In other areas where Local Government Councils do not exist the Committee Organization has contributed to the preparation of the people for the introduction of Councils. In some areas the Co-operative Society movement has also helped in this regard. All of the Missions have expressed support of the new Village Committee movement because it is based on Christian principles and has for its aim the betterment of the people and of their lives. Most of the native Missionaries and some of the Europeans also take an active part in helping the Committees to understand their duties and to carry them out.

Interest in cash cropping is rapidly stimulated.

As trainees returned to their villages and Committees were set up the extension work gathered momentum. Within six years, starting from nothing with a crop completely new to the people and to the region, there were about 3,000 individually-owned coffee gardens of about 50 trees each established with few technical errors throughout the region, including both *Robusta* on the lowlands and *Arabica* in the underprivileged and primitive inland areas at altitudes of 2,000 feet and over. Many gardens are being expanded and coffee exports have begun; in fact through the co-operation of the Anglican Mission a bank agency has been started at Dogura and a number of the primitive inland *Arabica* growers now have savings bank

accounts which will make it easier for them to save shares for setting up a Rural Progress Society to handle their coffee marketing and other needs in the future. Some of their boys are now also receiving special training in preparation for business activities. There were also many trial rice gardens planted and some communities in areas subject to long dry seasons and occasional near-famine conditions have adopted the new cereal in their traditional food garden pattern. Also many thousands of coconuts were planted, with some help from the Department of Native Affairs, and over 150 hot-air copra driers built—though some of these later fell into disuse because of the low price differentiation between hot-air and smoke-dried copra. A small cocoa project has been started and recently chilli-growing has been promoted in some of the most poverty-stricken and least fertile areas. It should perhaps be added that while we do encourage "community development" in the sense of mass or community education, we at the same time encourage individual enterprise and discourage the communal planting of permanent crops because of the ownership problems which would later ensue.

Village Women's Committees are started.

When a Government patrol is expected at a village it is usual for the Village Constable to stand in line with his Village Councillors to greet and receive the Patrol Officer (and, who knows, maybe also to receive a small gift of tobacco if he is a kind man who is happy to be amongst us!). Soon the Village Agricultural Committees were joining the line and being recognized as persons of some little consequence in the village as they proudly displayed their Committee Membership Cards. In a few cases in the more primitive areas where the new agricultural extension work was the biggest thing that had happened within living memory, they became so filled with their own importance that they cheerfully attempted to take over the authority of the Government-appointed Constables and Councillors. However such incidents were merely growing pains and were soon corrected by a few words from the Patrol Officer or the Agricultural Officer or, in some cases by a brief period of re-orientation at our Kuiaro Centre. Of course where Local Government Councils are set up in an area the old Village Constable and Village Councillor organization is disbanded and all of

its authority is passed on to the new Council. At no time has there been any such friction in war by Williams) or of hamlets where population Local Government Council areas.

But, to continue with our story, it was noticed first in one village in southern Normanby and then in others that the wives of the Committeemen too were starting to "line up" with the Constable and his Councillors and the Committeemen. In one place they even told the Patrol Officer that they were the "Women's Committee"! This was reported to the writer by the Patrol Officer (Mr. Hastings).

The writer had been deeply concerned at the time that so much Administration extension work (and particularly agricultural extension) was carried on through and for the men while so comparatively little was being done through or for the women. Our approach to native advancement on the whole seemed singularly one-sided and futile if we were to deal only with the men and overlook the women who are, in point of fact, the principal workers not only in the home but also in the gardens. It seemed essential that our extension plans be reconsidered and action taken to reach not only the men but the whole community. Every effort should be made to ensure that economic development be always accompanied by parallel social and political development in a constant endeavour to broaden the whole lives of the families and of the communities. We should do all we can also for the children to ensure that the next generation will be prepared to take proper advantage of the greater opportunities that to-day's economic development will bring. To achieve these aims it was essential for us to have close contact with the women at the village level. The matter was discussed with the District Commissioner and a radio-telephone call put through to Headquarters at Port Moresby. Both saw the wisdom of this approach and it was not long before an outstanding Papuan woman, Miss Alice Wedega of the Kwato Mission, was loaned to us by the Mission and appointed to our staff to assist with our work in women's interests. And so in July, 1957, the first Village Women's Committees were started in Milne Bay and on the basis of that experience soon spread through the region. Now there are at least 300 villages with Women's Committees, and, in addition a Welfare Officer has recently been appointed to Samarai by the Department of Native Affairs and will be help-

ing a great deal with the Women's Committee work. Miss Wedega, it should be added, has continued with her fine Committee work and made many patrols with the writer and his team or alone with picked girls, and is now also a member of the Legislative Council for the Territory.

Integration of community effort.

The formation of the Women's Committees (by the Papuan people themselves to a very large degree be it noted) helped to unify each village in its efforts towards a common, if somewhat nebulous goal, namely "Progress". For example, the organization of the weeding of coffee gardens has become in many places a responsibility of the Women's Committees, as also the organization of harvesting and processing of coffee, rice and peanuts. But their activities do not stop at agricultural pursuits. They include much in the way of civic and social or welfare activities—including child welfare, village hygiene, handicrafts, getting the children to school each day, etc. In some places they even attempt to operate a pre-school centre for the care of small children while the mothers are busy. One advanced Committee has also taken Committee Women from primitive areas for training; on the other hand there are some who get little further beyond mat-making. The Committees are encouraged to co-operate closely with the Mission Sisters and to participate in Mission organizations for women's welfare where these exist. The Agricultural Committees for their part are encouraged to work closely together with the Women's Committees, and vice versa, so that little by little the movement is becoming a Community Development force rather than one designed purely for agricultural extension as was the case at the beginning. Nevertheless the two Committees are kept as separate entities because although the men and the women have many common interests there are also many which are diverse. A good example of how the Committees co-operate and yet remain separate is to be found in the way they have helped the anti-malarial teams on Fergusson Island and elsewhere. The Agricultural Committees combined with the Village Constables and Councillors to ensure that carriers were available and other men to assist with spraying and in other ways. Women's Committees organized a canteen service so that the

spraying teams had resting points along their route where they and their carriers could have a spell in the shade and where they were given some food and drink.

Agricultural Associations are started.

This integration within the communities was so evident that it led logically to the grouping of Committees into Associations within geographic and linguistic areas. There was no problem in determining which communities should belong to various Associations as this was already pre-determined by natural and traditional affinities. In our Committee work, whilst adhering to a common pattern and policy, we endeavour to leave much flexibility in the organization and so representatives of any village are welcome at meetings regardless of whether or not they belong strictly to the given Association. The latter are called "Agricultural Associations" in recognition of the importance of Agriculture in the lives of the communities. Each Association consists of all the Agricultural Committees and all the Women's Committees of a given linguistic or political (Local Government Council) area. Meetings of each Association are held in a different host village within its area about every six months. There are now fifteen Associations covering about 46,000 people belonging to about 280 communities. New Associations are being formed as the people indicate their desire for this action. The meetings, which generally take up two days, are also valued by the people as social functions apart from the opportunity it gives representatives of the communities to discuss and obtain advice regarding their various technical and other village problems. They are normally attended not only by representatives of the Committees (both men and women) but also by most of the Village Constables and Councillors who are encouraged to take part in the discussions. The opportunity is also taken wherever practicable of including demonstration classes in specific agricultural and homecraft subjects of special local interest. It is also intended to encourage handcraft displays at these meetings. Naturally the Assistant District Officer endeavours to attend as well as the Agricultural Officer. It is an excellent opportunity for the Assistant District Officer to have contact with people from many villages in a capacity divorced from his customary association with law and order. The meetings will now have added value since

our Welfare Officer will also endeavour to attend. The meetings, of course, have as their principal purposes the unification of the people and the encouragement of their participation in programme planning for their area. Each Association has its elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Women's Leaders and Secretary and so gives further opportunities for the emergence and training of native leaders at the village level. Fortunately Agricultural Officers are being appointed to Subdistricts otherwise it would not be possible for us always to arrange Departmental representation at meetings. As opportunities arise the office bearers of Associations are being given tours of other Districts together with Local Government Councillors to broaden their outlook and experience.

Native Local Government Policy.

It will be well now to digress for a moment to discuss briefly the Local Government Council movement in the context of our outline of the new Committee Organization. These Councils originated with an Ordinance passed in 1949 known as the "Native Village Councils Ordinance" whose title was changed in 1954 to the "Native Local Government Councils Ordinance". The first Councils were established in 1950. At the time our extension work started in Eastern Papua there were two Councils—the Ealeba Council and the Tavara Council, one on each side of Milne Bay. These have since amalgamated. It was perhaps natural that our first two Agricultural Associations should have been formed of the Committees of these two Council areas since it was there that existed the best likelihood of finding people capable of accepting the responsibilities of office bearers in the new organization. The basic aims of Native Local Government policy have been formulated and are given in a recent Administration Circular on the subject. We quote:—

- "(a) To provide a medium for teaching natives to assume a measure of responsibility for their local affairs in accordance with democratic procedures ;
- (b) To provide area machinery and local funds for extending and co-ordinating social and public services at village level and hence to enlist native support in endeavours to raise native living standards ;

(c) To face the native population squarely with the fact that progress is inseparable from good order and industrious habits and that social services have to be paid for; and

(d) To prepare the way for ultimately fitting the native people in a way they can understand into the Territory's political system."

Each Village Agricultural Committee and each Village Women's Committee, as has already been mentioned, is made up in each case of representatives of each of the totemic clans of each village. This ensures broad representation and prevents the taking over of too much authority by any one family group, and also serves to link the new organization with the old traditional organization of the villages. Hence the Village Committee Organization is essentially democratic and was welcomed by both the officer in charge at the time of Native Local Government and by the two Councils as dovetailing with Council policy. Since then two more Councils have been formed at Misima and in the Cloudy Bay area and both are working very closely with the Agricultural Associations in those areas. In all these cases prominent Councillors are also office bearers in the Associations.

Village Committee principles codified.

In 1956 when the Committee Organization was already well advanced a start was made with the publication of a newsletter every month or few weeks. This has been continued and is called the "V.A.C.". It deals with the many letters and personal reports which we receive from the native people about Committee work and is our official organ for the dissemination of policy decisions, agricultural and women's news, etc. It also gives accounts of the activities of various Committees and advice on what they should be doing. In 1959 much of this material was worked over and a booklet was brought out, with a foreword by the Administrator, called "The Village Committee Book" (Cottrell-Dormer, 1959*b*) which gave guidance in simple English regarding the formation and functions of Committees and Associations and on the duties, etc., of Committee members and Association office bearers. The duties and functions as laid down in the booklet are the result of observing the activities of the Committees over the years since their inception. All of the functions and duties prescribed are such as have in fact been practised of their own volition by

the Committees in the villages in varying degrees according to the state of advancement of their communities. However, there was still a good deal of uncertainty amongst some of the people on the true nature of their duties and, whilst retaining flexibility and informality to a large degree the movement was developing to such magnitude in the region that it became important to codify its principles to some extent and to give all of the Committees not only a common purpose but also a common *modus operandi*. Their purpose is indicated in their slogan: "Our work is for our people and our villages and our country.". The booklet has been widely distributed amongst such Committee members and others who can read and understand sufficient English. It has been printed also in the Dobu language and widely distributed in the D'Entrecasteaux Group, and in the Suau language for distribution in areas using that talk for a lingua franca. Translations are also being prepared in Wedau, Misima and Mailu for later printing and distribution. The effect has been striking particularly in the Dobu language areas where so many people are now able to read it. The booklet has recently been slightly revised to make it of more general usefulness.

The functions of the Village Committees.

In 1959, functions were summarized in the *Agricultural Journal* (Cottrell-Dormer, 1959*a*). Put briefly—

"The functions of the Agricultural Committees are to provide a liaison between the Agricultural Officers and the people, to give leadership to the people in ensuring that sufficient food is grown and that the people participate in an approved manner in programmes for the economic development of the area, to co-operate with constituted authority and with the Women's Committees in improving village life and generally to give an example of good citizenship.

"The functions of the Village Women's Committees are to provide a liaison between the Agricultural Officers and the Welfare Officers and the village women, to give leadership to the women in improving home life and in providing a better environment for the rearing of the village children, to assist in the organization of garden work (both subsistence and economic), to co-operate with

constituted authority and with the Village Agricultural Committees in improving village life and generally to give an example of good citizenship."

Co-ordination of activities of Council and Committee Organizations.

It will have been seen that in some respects there is a close similarity in the ultimate aims of the Councils and of the Committee Organization. This was strongly emphasized at an Extension Conference at Wewak in 1959 by officers of the Department of Native Affairs which administers the Local Government Councils Ordinance. As a result it was decided that there should be some definite co-ordination of the activities of the two organizations and it was proposed that a Council Agricultural Committee should be set up which would be made up of men and women representatives of the Council and of the Agricultural Associations. This Committee was to meet periodically and advise the Council of action or assistance which it considers should be given by the Council in the furtherance of various developmental projects. The first of these Committees has been appointed in Milne Bay and is being observed prior to others being set up. Reports from the Assistant District Officer in charge of the area have so far been very encouraging.

Formation of District Development Committee.

In 1959 there was also an inspection tour of the region by the Administrator and later by a panel of senior Headquarters officers sent by him to study and report to him on the Committee Organization. There followed a directive supporting the movement and setting up, in 1960, an inter-Departmental Committee at Samarai which came to be known as the District Development Committee. It meets about every month under the Chairmanship of the District Commissioner and determines policy and plans at District level on matters concerning the advancement of the native people—both men and women—and does much towards fostering the team spirit amongst Departmental officers.

Educational Conference supports Committee system.

The Village Committee Organization was discussed in detail with special reference to the education of women and girls at the "Second Camilla Wedgwood Seminar" held in Port

Moresby in December, 1960, under the auspices of the Department of Education, and the following recommendation was adopted:—

"The Group recommends that the Committee System operating in the Samarai areas should be extended on a Territory-wide basis. It is the view of this group that it fits the natural mode of village life and is demonstrably successful in revealing and giving training by experience to the natural leaders within the village. Its value is that it is not dependent on an expensive external administrative organization but infiltrates from village to village and can be supervised by ordinary patrolling. It provides a link between all villages in a given area and, eventually, of the whole Territory. It co-ordinates all other clubs or groups such as Parents and Citizens Associations, Guides and Scouts for the teenagers, Church Clubs and Women's Clubs. It links these groups with the men in their gardening and general village improvement. It brings the views of the people in the village eventually to the Local Government Council." (Anon., 1960.)

A Rural Women's Training Centre.

As a result of pressure from the Milne Bay Women's Committees, encouraged by Miss Wedega and supported by their Agricultural Associations and the Local Government Council, the first Rural Training Centre for women in the Territory is now being set up near Ahioma, in Milne Bay, by the Department of Native Affairs. This will make possible the training of women's leaders for Committee and other work and will soon change the whole complexion of our work amongst the village women. It will also provide a "Kuiaro Centre" for girls which is so badly needed.

The District Development Conference.

The figures given earlier for the number of Committees within the region under discussion are only approximate because the movement is still spreading in far inland areas where our coffee work is being carried forward. It is also spreading to other regions. The latest step forward has as its aim the further unification of the people of the region and their encouragement to participate more fully in extension and development programme planning; that is the holding of an annual District Development Conference. It was originally proposed that a

"Council of Agriculture" should in due course be set up. (Cottrell-Dormer, 1959a.) After full discussion by the District Development Committee it was decided to broaden its function and at the same time bring together all the principal native developmental agencies. It was decided also not to use the name "Council" for fear of confusion with Native Local Government Councils, but rather to call together an annual "Conference". It is proposed to hold the first Conference this year at our Kuiaro Centre and that it should be attended by the members of the District Development Committee and all Assistant District Officers, and by the senior office bearers or representatives of the Local Government Councils, the Agricultural Associations and the Co-operative Societies Associations. Such other persons as the Development Committee may consider it desirable should attend will also be invited including representatives from Headquarters. The Conference will be under the overall Chairmanship of the District Commissioner and will be addressed on important matters related to District Development planning and implementation by the senior officers of the Departments concerned. The purpose of the conference, as already indicated, will be not only to inform the people of the Government's views on development but more especially to obtain the people's views and suggestions regarding the development of the various areas they represent and regarding the District as a unified whole. It will be natural to expect that it might be a few years before the people fully realize that they have a vital part to play in planning—but if they are never given the opportunity to participate they never will obtain the realization. It does not require much imagination to visualize District Development Conferences some day sending representatives to Territorial Conferences.

The functions of the Agricultural Associations

To conclude this section of this paper we will quote from the *Village Committee Book*, as recently brought up to date, the work of the Agricultural Associations. This will serve to bring out the cohesion which is being encouraged between different groups and authorities through the medium of the Village Committee Organization:—

- "1. To bring together all the Men's Committees and Women's Committees of the Association area about twice in every year.

This is so that all the Committees will know that they belong to one big Committee family and so that they can help each other.

2. To hear and understand the messages or talks of the Agricultural Officer and the Welfare Officer and of other Government Officers and advisers.
3. To hear the reports of each Committee Leader and to talk about these reports and help each Committee to fix up its troubles.
4. To hear about each Committee's target of work for the year or for the next six months and to advise each Committee on how to reach its target.
5. To tell the Agricultural Officer and the Welfare Officer about things that are worrying the Committees.
6. To prepare messages to send to the District Commissioner or to the Assistant District Officer or to the Local Government Council about any big trouble that is worrying the Committees.
7. Each year to elect representatives to the Local Government Council Agricultural Committee.
8. To advise the Local Government Council about how the development work is going on in the area.
9. To make recommendations to the Local Government Council about new works or new laws to help development.
10. To back up the Local Government Council, the Co-operative Societies, the Rural Progress Societies.
11. To make sure that all villages in the area have plenty of good food gardens.
12. To help the Agricultural Officer and the Committees to make good plans for cash cropping.
13. To help the Welfare Officer and the Committees to make good plans for Women's Committee work.
14. To help the Agricultural Officer and the Committees to make good plans for the selling of cash crops.
15. To help with Agricultural Carnivals or Shows when they are held in the District.
16. To make a good feast and dance when an Association meeting is finished."

Among the duties of the Chairmen and Women's Leaders is included the following:—

"To attend all meetings of the District Development Conference."

Discussion and Conclusions

In some respects the villager's life, though apt to be relatively short, is, at least superficially, Utopian. Idle observers sometimes ask why do we not leave the people in peace instead of all the time wanting to "develop" them or "advance" them or lead them to "progress". The answer is, of course, that change is going on and will continue to do so regardless of what we may or may not do. Our job is to guide that change along mutually beneficial lines. As the writer once told a conference of young extension officers . . . "There are some communities which are poverty-stricken, or have low standards of health, or suffer from malnutrition and which obviously need at least technical assistance. But the matter goes deeper than that. Our native people are, like ourselves, living in a changing world. But change for them is not only a matter of progressive scientific and technical advance or of political alternations but in most affected communities change of the whole tenor of their lives—their customs, their social organization, their way of life. This sometimes rapid change is resulting from contact with our own race and is inevitable. Many, if not most, of the communities affected do not have the cultural resources to enable them, without guidance, to adapt themselves to the new influences without harm to themselves. It is our task and our duty to supply that guidance and to prepare them also for those further changes which will occur as a result of our own activities." (Cottrell-Dormer, 1956.)

Our guidance and other forms of help cannot be effective unless a need is felt for them by the people and unless we have their co-operation. Real co-operation is generally difficult to obtain because the people we are dealing with seldom have any real desire for improvement. Apart from the retarding influence of their superstitions, and their secret fear of the jealous sorcerer, their life experience is so limited and circumscribed that it is impossible for them to visualize the ideal modern native society towards which they might strive through the medium of greater effort in the economic field. Native effort in the village is therefore largely directed to meeting immediate needs rather than to

following out some planned programme of development. Similarly it is not possible for a European to form a clear picture in his mind of precisely what should be the nature of the economic, social and political "advancement" we are endeavouring to promote, or precisely what should constitute the "self-reliant, self-dependent and properly organized life" we desire to foster in the villages. It is impossible for the people because they do not have an adequate background on which to build up such thoughts or plans. It is impossible for us because we can never put ourselves in their place to appreciate their sense of values, or duplicate their thought processes or feel the full impact ourselves of the predicament of being obliged to rely upon the meagre resources which are available to them. To a certain degree then, the village man is, relative to ourselves, like Ouspensky's "plane-being", incommunicado.

Our greatest need is perhaps to find increasingly effective means of exchanging with the villager progressive ideas through which to determine desirable and practicable plans of community development which will be enthusiastically followed by the people and supported by the Administration. It is largely as a step towards meeting this need that the Village Committee system is being evolved—to provide a two-way medium of communication from villager to Government authority in rural extension matters. Quite apart from considerations of availability of staff we are unable effectively to deal directly with the ordinary village people; we simply cannot understand each other sufficiently. Our dealings must be through the intermediary of the more progressive and the more influential members of the community. Our organization encourages the emergence at all levels of natural and accepted leaders both men and women. They will have at least some appreciation of the problems and difficulties, of the needs and (where they exist) the aspirations of the communities. However, their ability to assist in the formulation of a programme is limited by their inadequate earlier training and experience. At present there are very few who can give real help in programme-planning. The provision of greatly increased facilities for broad training and preparation for progressive community leadership would seem to the writer to be a vital matter of the greatest urgency on a Territory-wide scale.

The finding and training of leaders is an urgent matter not only to provide help in various extension schemes but also that they may be given and be able to accept real responsibility as early as possible in all walks of their new life. In this way only can initiative be encouraged. Without this initiative native leaders can hardly be expected usefully to participate in formulating plans for the overall advancement of the people of the Territory. Plans formulated entirely in European minds are almost certain eventually to prove unacceptable to the people. At the risk of making some mistakes the handing over of real responsibility to native men and women leaders should be speeded up so that they may make their own plans to suit their own needs. In our own small sphere we have already adopted this policy in our rural extension work with very promising results.

An interesting aspect of our organization is the support it provides for young trainees when they return to their villages after their time spent at our Kuiaro Centre. Many of these boys are quite young and would normally be thrust aside by their elders until they married or at least until they became a good deal more mature. However, with our system, the trainee is welcomed back to the village by the Committees and at once with their help and support can commence practising his new skills and declaiming his new philosophy. A further step is thus taken in encouraging proper participation of the community in the extension programme by this forging of a link between the Committees and the Kuiaro Centre. Our limited experience has shown that these remarks apply also to girl trainees.

To borrow an axiom from the educationists, in any teaching programme one must proceed from the known to the unknown. Similiary in the extension field we must start from what is and advance towards what should be. The use of trained village youths for this communication of new ideas and techniques to the Committees and the people has the advantage of ensuring that by the time they reach the village people they will have been reduced and simplified to terms and propositions which the trainees themselves can understand. This brings them within the comprehension of the village people who consequently are able without great mental effort to take the next step forward. The point the writer wishes to bring forward is that the village

Trainee and Committee system is giving tremendous help in overcoming the communication difficulties which lie between us and the village people. With the advance of scholastic education in the villages the system should become increasingly effective. At the same time it should perhaps be made clear that the greater part of the people we are dealing with have been under Mission influence for many years and that some vernacular primary Mission schooling even if usually of a low standard has been available to many of them in the past. This means to say that they are sufficiently advanced to adopt the system for orthodox rural extension purposes rather than for the furtherance of primitive politico-magical cults.

An outstanding feature of our Village Committee work has been the response of the women. The movement seemed to give them an opportunity of playing a fuller part in village affairs which they have seized upon with some enthusiasm, sometimes after first overcoming reluctance on the part of some men. It has also helped to stimulate the men to greater endeavour in the economic and social aspects of village life. These observations have served to confirm the writer's view that an extension programme should be as full as may be practicable and be aimed at all sections of the community. It should not consist, for example, of economic agricultural extension for men on the one hand and so-called "welfare" activities for women on the other. The two should be welded together as part of a single programme. All Administration extension activities—agricultural, economic, welfare, educational, health, political—should, to the greatest extent possible, be welded into a concerted team effort at the District level (and even more essentially at the Subdistrict level) and preferably under the overall direction of a single executive and co-ordinating body at the Headquarters level. A close liaison should also be maintained with related Mission activities at all levels.

Much has happened since we went on our patrol to Kasiguleu seven years ago. Hundreds of thousands of coffee trees have been planted and tens of thousands of coconut palms, and native primary production is expanding. But of equal importance, or perhaps even of greater importance, a cohesion of the hundreds of isolated village communities is taking place and a feeling of common purpose developing amongst

them. Not only is there satisfying evidence of economic and social advancement, but also of a growing political awareness. Not least amongst the factors which are bringing all this about is the Village Committee Organization which, the writer believes, owes its success very largely to its democratic structure, to its totemic clan representation of the common village people. Whether it will continue to gather strength and play a valuable role will depend upon the support and guidance it receives. After all it is but a broad extension or mass education tool. Like any other tool, it will lose its edge if neglected or abused.

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