Mr. R. W. Gibson is director of education for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Educational Leadership evidently gets to that remote part of the world; for Mr. Gibson read the October, 1952, issue and was inspired by the article, "Education of the Maori," to tell us about what is happening in the way of education in the more than 2,000 islands of the Northwest Pacific entrusted by the United Nations to the government of the United States.

Carleton W. Washburne

Education of the Micronesians

MICRONESIA is that vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean lying north of the equator and west of the 180th meridian. It is composed of 2130 separate islands in an ocean area the size of the United States. Only a few hundred of these islands, which are now administered as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, are inhabited by some 56,000 people. Many centuries ago, according to the anthropologists, these people came from Southeast Asia by way of the Malaysian Islands.

Three separate island groups make up Micronesia—the Marshalls, the Carolines and the Marianas. Parts of Micronesia have been ruled, over the past 400 years, respectively by the Spanish, Germans and Japanese, thus necessitating considerable adjustment for the islanders.

Spanish Rule

As a result of Magellan's discovery of the Marianas in 1521, and later discoveries by other Spanish voyagers, Spain laid claim to the sovereignty of these islands. Spanish influence did not really begin to assert itself, however, until 1668. Even then for some years there was no effort to assert any other authority than the religious, and it was in the Marianas that this authority was chiefly extended. For the next 200 years the history of the Marianas centered about the church which ruled every phase of native life—educational, economic and social. The Jesuits converted the natives to Christianity, and from 1669 to 1769 they conducted all religious and educational affairs in the Marianas. They built and operated churches and schools and in addition established model farms and introduced new agricultural products and methods. The Augustinian priests replaced the Jesuits in 1769 and thereafter the mission work in the Marianas declined.

The Carolines lay within the Spanish sphere of influence and were regarded as Spanish possessions for three hundred years. It was not until late in the nineteenth century, however, that Spain made any serious effort to administer them. Missionary endeavor formed the chief activity of the Spanish during their short period of administration. What little education existed was carried on by the Capuchin Missions in the Western Carolines. With government support behind them, they were able to enroll 542 children in the church schools on Yap. The attendance was so high because the parents were compelled, under fear of punishment, to send their children to school.

The Boston Mission sent out a number of missionaries to the Marshall Islands and Eastern Carolines in 1852.
Almost immediately, schools were started. The missionaries studied the native language and began translating the Bible into local dialects. Native teachers and evangelists were sent to the smaller islands after training by the Boston Mission. This religious society celebrated its hundredth anniversary on the island of Kusaie in 1952.

**The German Regime**

The Germans assumed a protectorate over the Marshall Islands as early as 1885. Prior to this time these islands had been ruled exclusively by native clan chiefs. In 1899 Germany purchased the Caroline and Marianas Islands from Spain. The nation administered the whole of Micronesia for the next fifteen years. The German administration worked conscientiously to improve the conditions of the Micronesians. It was successful because it did not interfere with native customs.

During the German period church schools, maintained by the Capuchins, offered religious and elementary secular education on Rota and Tinian in the Marianas. In the Western Carolines, the Germans removed the administrative pressure which had been imposed by the Spanish upon church and school attendance with the startling result that, on Yap, only nine children remained in school out of the former enrollment of 512.

The German missionaries did much to improve the church schools. Religious training was supplemented by elementary schooling which included, in some instances, instruction in German and domestic science courses for girls. In 1912-13 there were ten schools in Yap with a total enrollment of 321 boys and 152 girls, and five schools in the Palaus with 213 boys and 152 girls.

The Boston Mission schools were continued in the Eastern Carolines and in the Marshalls during the German regime. On Ponape, in 1909, the Catholics maintained two boarding schools and eight day-schools.

**Japanese Rule**

The shift of these islands of Micronesia to Japanese administration occurred in 1914 when Japan, acting as an ally of Great Britain in the war against Germany, moved in and occupied all German possessions in the Pacific Islands. For the next thirty years, the people of these islands were governed in the most continuous, energetic and organized way they had yet known. The Council of the League of Nations mandated all Micronesia to Japan in 1920 and from then until 1944 that nation developed a thorough administrative system. In accordance with the terms of the mandate there was imposed upon Japan the obligation to promote the material and moral well-being and social progress of the indigenous peoples. Striving to live up to her obligations, at least until 1938, Japan encouraged and helped the development of public education, public health and other governmental services. In every way, however, the administration was largely for the benefit of Japan. While the natives received free and compulsory education, their schools were administered and taught principally by Japanese. The curricula and the methods of teaching were dominated by Japanese educators.

In 1922, Regulations for the South Seas Bureau of Public Schools were promulgated. The following extracts from these are significant:

"The fundamental object of education in a Public School shall be the bestowal on children of moral education as well as of such knowledge and
capabilities as are indispensable to the advancement and improvement of their lives, attention being simultaneously paid to their physical development . . .

"The period of study in a public school is three years . . .

"Attention shall also be paid to the cultivation of moral character and the mastery of the Japanese language . . .

"In teaching morals, the essential aim should be the cultivation of moral character in the children's minds as well as to guide them to practice what they have been taught . . .

"The teaching of morals should begin with simple and direct matters and with instruction in the essential points of moral principles. Subsequently responsibilities and duties toward society should be taught in outline . . .

"Girls should specially be taught, so as to cultivate the virtue of chastity and modesty . . .

"In teaching morals children should be instructed on the basis of maxims, exemplary acts and proverbs and induced to keep them in mind."

Thus, it is obvious that the school program operated by the Japanese laid stress upon the Japanese language and ethics. It was rigid, authoritarian and compartmentalized. While the curriculum emphasized assimilation, the Japanese maintained separate schools for Micronesian children. The period of study in elementary schools for children of their own nationals was six years. For indigenous children it was only three years. Occasionally some of the more advanced Micronesian students were taken to Japan for further education.

Education Under the Trusteeship Agreement

In 1944 American forces invaded and occupied the islands of Micronesia, and
in 1945 naval military government was established. As signatories of the United Nations Charter, the United States was bound to respect the international trusteeship system established in that Charter for "dependent" areas. Article 73 specifically states that the administering authority of such areas shall recognize the principle "that the interests of inhabitants of the territories are paramount and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories."

One of the basic objectives of the trusteeship system is "to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories and their progressive development toward self-government or independence..." More specifically in regard to education, "the administering authority shall... promote the educational advancement of the inhabitants, and to this end shall take steps toward the establishment of a general system of elementary education; facilitate the vocational and cultural advancement of the population; and shall encourage qualified students to pursue higher education, including training on a professional level."

In carrying out these goals, the first American administration, under the Department of the Navy, was faced with many handicaps in establishing an educational system. The ravages of war had disrupted the Japanese program. Many of the school buildings had been destroyed by bombing. Most of the schoolbooks and other instructional materials which the Japanese left behind had been prepared for their own pupils and were largely unsuited for the Micronesian pupils. Few natives had been trained as teachers. Despite all these handicaps the United States Navy instituted almost immediately a program of free public education. After Civil Administration was established, education received a major emphasis.

The administration of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was transferred by presidential proclamation in 1949 from the U. S. Navy to the U. S. Department of the Interior. This transfer was achieved at the end of June 1951. For the past eighteen months, the Department of Education in the new administration has been building on the foundations left by Navy Administration. If there has been any modification of policy, it has been in the direction of greater approximation of the goals of fundamental education as set forth by UNESCO. For example, an elementary school system is a going concern on most inhabited islands where practically all the children can go to school. There are 139 public elementary schools, taught by 266 indigenous teachers, and enrolling 6,171 pupils. In most cases, the school buildings are open-sided, thatched-roof huts. These elementary schools are six-year schools. Children enter at the age of eight.

One of the greatest problems is that of securing well-trained teachers. By American standards, the present teachers are extremely low in skill, training and ability. The majority are little more than the equivalent of eighth grade graduates. Under Navy Administration, prospective teachers were brought from all the islands to the Pacific Islands Teacher Training School at Truk and there given two years of advanced training beyond the Intermediate School level. This training consisted of both general education and teacher education. The new teacher
education program has been decentralized. The Pacific Islands Teacher Training School (PITTS) has been changed to the Pacific Islands Central School (PICS). Its program now is devoted largely to general education. Through a system of counselling and guidance, prospective teachers are selected and sent back to their own districts where, under the supervision of a teacher educator, an integrated program of pre-service and in-service teacher education goes on. In this way, the education of teachers can proceed within a cultural milieu characterized by specific problems and needs.

The six-year curriculum of the elementary school includes such content as the following:

Reading, writing, speaking and calculation. Some change in policy has been made here. Under the Navy rather more emphasis was given to the English language. Now major stress is given to the vernacular, especially in the first three grades.

Such vocational skills as simple agriculture, weaving and other useful arts and crafts.

Health education stressing personal and community hygiene.

Simple and practical science.

Knowledge and understanding of their own environment.

Knowledge of other parts of the world and of its people.

An extension of aspects of general education goes on in the Intermediate School for three more years. One Intermediate School has been established in each of the six districts making up Micronesia. To these come selected graduates of the elementary schools. English receives greater emphasis in these schools which are taught by American and indigenous teachers. More stress is placed upon vocational, simple technical and commercial skills necessary for economic progress.

These Intermediate Schools are financed and maintained by government funds. There are at present 789 attending the six Intermediate Schools. They are taught by 57 teachers, of whom 22 are Americans. There is increasing demand for Intermediate School training. It is difficult to meet these demands because of lack of funds, inadequate facilities for boarding school students and limited opportunities for more students to utilize their training in their home communities. Selected students from the six Intermediate Schools are sent on to PICS for two more years of general education and some vocational training in the way of agriculture, industrial arts and commercial skills.

A considerable number of Trust Territory students complete their high school education in Guam. A few go to Hawaii where they attend high school and then the University of Hawaii.

If we mean what we say about self-government and economic development, then we must work with the village councils helping them to organize literacy campaigns, agricultural and health training and extension services, co-operatives and community groups for various purposes. This concept of education concerns itself with the whole community and should result in helping people to help themselves. It is the present concept of the place of education in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and is consistent with the stated goals of the United Nations—education for self-government and independence, for economic and social development.—R. W. Gibson, director of education for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Honolulu, Hawaii.