

## ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

RELATIONS BETWEEN E.C.A.F.E. AND THE ECONOMIC ORGANISATION  
OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

The Executive Secretary to the Commission visited Singapore on November 10th to 13th and there discussed with the Special Commissioner in Southeast Asia the temporary working relations which may be established in the immediate future between the Commission and the Economic Organisation of the Special Commissioner's Office.

The following note as to these relations is submitted for consideration by the members of the Commission.

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1. The Special Commissioner in South East Asia was appointed by H.M. Government in the United Kingdom during March 1946. The most urgent economic problem to which he had to address his attention was that of food supply in and from South East Asia\*. To begin with meetings convened by the Special Commissioner were attended by representatives of British territories and the Allied Forces only, but since August 1946 non-British territories (namely Siam, Netherlands Indies, and the Indo-Chinese Federation) have been represented at the monthly Liaison Officers' Meetings. The Consuls General of China and the United States and a representative of the Republic of the Philippines attend meetings as unofficial observers.

2. Monthly rice shipping programmes are prepared at meetings of the Special

\* The area which was to be his particular concern in regard to food and related matters comprises Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, the Malayan Union and Singapore, Borneo, the Netherlands East Indies and Hong Kong. He was however, to bear in mind the interests of India in connection with food and India, Australia and to a lesser extent New Zealand in the more general economic problems of the area.

Commissioner's Liaison Officers for subsequent approval by the Singapore Rice Sub-Committee of the International Emergency Food Council. The Sub-Committee may make use of the Special Commissioner's organisation. The Liaison Officers' Meetings also have on their agenda a general review of the food situation, the state of nutrition and the progress of the Food Drive in South East Asia territories, discussion of imported foodstuffs other than rice, the edible oils position, the supply of inducement and consumer goods other than foodstuffs, statistics, and the programming of coal shipments for South East Asia territories. In general, the object of the meetings is to provide material assistance by agreement between the territories represented under the subjects discussed and also to provide a forum for an exchange of views and experience in these subjects.

3. In addition to this the Special Commissioner has convened regional conferences on Food, Nutrition, Fisheries and Social Welfare, and is convening a conference on statistics with special reference to food production and consumption and cost-of-living indices next January.

4. The Special Commissioner's staff has included a number of advisers on food, nutrition and health, agriculture, coal, transport, disinfection, fisheries and food publicity and statistics. When the need for a particular adviser is no longer felt, his mission having been fulfilled, his appointment is terminated.

5. The Special Commissioner's economic organisation arose out of the immediate need, on the termination of the war in South East Asia, for providing for the transition from a military administration under a Supreme Allied Commander to civil administration under the authority of territorial Governments but the organisation has also to a large extent supplied the further need during this period for inter-governmental co-operation towards solving problems of economic reconstruction in South East Asia. That the decisions of the Liaison

Officers' meetings have without exception been arrived at by common consent of the participating Governments is a measure of the success achieved by the organisation.

6. Now that E.C.A.F.E. has been established by the Economic and Social Council it is necessary to consider what principles should govern the relations between it and the Special Commissioner's economic organisation.

7. The matters in the economic field to which the Special Commissioner's economic organization directs its attention are such as come within the terms of reference of E.C.A.F.E. As the area with which the Special Commissioner's economic organisation is concerned is smaller than that of E.C.A.F.E. and is closely integrated economically and as the Special Commissioner has at his disposal technical staff and operational resources, it has been possible for his organisation to deal very effectively with certain economic problems of the area. Since however, the Special Commissioner's economic organisation has some functions in common with those of E.C.A.F.E. and is concerned with an important part of the area covered by E.C.A.F.E., it follows that satisfactory working relations should be established between the two and that with this object the Commission, which is an economic body established by the United Nations for the region as a whole, should be kept informed of the Special Commissioner's activities. In particular it should be open to either organisation to put forward for consideration regional economic problems which could more appropriately be dealt with by the other, whether by the holding of conferences or otherwise. Similarly each organisation should keep the other informed, in advance, of any conferences which it proposes to hold in the economic sphere.

8. It may be desirable that some of the functions at present performed by the Office of the Special Commissioner should eventually be assumed by the Commission. To what extent this

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should be done, and how rapidly, must depend upon a number of factors including the future development of the Special Commissioner's economic organisation and the ability of E.C.A.F.E. to provide the organisation necessary to deal with the problems in question. What appears to be required in the first place is a detailed survey of the work done by the Special Commissioner's economic organisation in order to ensure that duplication between the two organisations is avoided. The possible transfer of any of the Special Commissioner's economic functions must necessarily await the completion and examination of this survey.

9. Pending the examination of this survey, it is recommended that a liaison officer of E.C.A.F.E. be appointed to the Office of the Special Commissioner and vice versa. In any event, the two organisations must exchange the fullest documentation on their respective activities and each should be represented at all important meetings convened by the other.

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