

Favours Federation Of Melanesia As New Guinea's Future

Every problem associated with New Guinea should be overcome by the formation of a Federation of Melanesia, declared Mr. J. R. Kerr, Q.C., who was first principal of the Australian School of Pacific Administration and organising secretary of the South Pacific Commission.

Speaking on the political future of New Guinea to the Political Science summer school, Mr. Kerr declared that the Australian Government should "grasp the nettle" now and elect for a federation as a long term aim.

"We should persuade the British and Dutch, bring them together to work out the policy, announce it to the world and set out from now on to help the peoples of New Guinea to bring about the birth of a Melanesian nation and State," he said.

The federation would be composed of Papua, the Mandate of New Guinea, West New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

It was time for both Australia and Holland to work in together for the advancement of the whole island with the view that a single political unit was possible if that was what the New Guinea peoples wanted.

Following the joint Dutch-Australian declaration on policy in New Guinea, it was up to the two Governments to formulate a policy which would bring together the natives on both sides of the boundary.

English

Federating New Guinea and nearby islands would bring it together as a unit with the three territories and the Australian and British Solomon Islands as constituent States.

This would mean that the free, close and permanent partnership forshadowed by

partnership forshadowed by the Minister for Territories, Mr. Hasluck, would be on economic and cultural lines.

Partnership, said Mr. Kerr, could not be based on political lines.

Australia would need to develop the New Guinea economy and provide markets—paying a big price but not as big as any other alternative, Mr. Kerr said.

The alternatives included

control by some other power or bloc, or incorporation in Australia as a State. The latter would involve granting full citizenship rights to natives, and could cause racial upsets when, under those rights, the natives began freely travelling throughout the Commonwealth for work.

However, if federated, New Guinea could co-operate with Australia in many ways, and native labour could be allowed into the Commonwealth in such a way as to neither insult the natives or cause upsets on the White Australia question.

Such a goal would probably find Dutch, British and American co-operation, Mr. Kerr said.

The New Guinea economy would, in the outcome, become auxiliary to that of Australia and depend on it, so a guaranteed market with guaranteed prices was necessary.

Other duties Australia would have to undertake included full unrestricted educational and research opportunities, the possible

educational and research opportunities, the possible adoption of a graduated immigration policy, the formation of "Western" type trade unions, and the possibility of placing all of New Guinea on a similar trade footing.

Holland and Australia could co-operate in making English the common language for the island, ensuring common destinations in public administration, by having recruitments for officers of the Dutch service in Australia, having detailed discussions on policy and development and the creation of machinery to further this.

situation wherein Europeans are welcomed in a country run economically and politically by all inhabitants on an equal basis.

Mr. Kerr warned that eventually the indigenous people of the island, which composed 8 per cent. of the total population, would govern the island.

Annexation was impossible; Australia could not indefinitely keep them in control of the island by financing them, and the European population had to be accepted by the native peoples, not vice versa.

"The non-indigenous population must be told categorically that Australia cannot afford economically or politically to risk a future situation in which calls will be made for money and men to protect local European immigrants from the angered indigenous people," he said.

Every facet of Australian influence in New Guinea should be to bring about a situation wherein Europeans are welcomed in a