

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANADA.

NUMBERED LETTER

UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, OTTAWA, CANADA.

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TO: The Canadian Embassy.....

The Hague.....

Reference:.....

Subject: Political Parties.....

in West New Guinea.....

References

Refer: European
Commonwealth
UN Dir.
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Apl
JMS.
none
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MLO.

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Although political parties supported by the natives in West New Guinea have been active for only a few months, one of them, Parna (National Party) already has inspired a number of questions in the Dutch Parliament and a spate of headlines and editorials in the Dutch press. According to the latter, the executive committee of Parna wrote recently to the Secretary-General of the United Nations asking him to summon a conference on the future of West New Guinea between representatives of the Netherlands, Indonesia and the Papuan political parties. The letter said decisions involving New Guinea without prior consultation with the natives were in conflict with rights of the New Guinea people and human rights in general. Subsequently the press reported that despatch of Parna's letter had provoked a crisis within the infant party with an influential section of the membership demanding withdrawal of the communication.

2. In the First Chamber of the States General on November 8th Mr. Toxopeus, Minister of Home and New Guinea Affairs, who had just returned from a visit to West New Guinea, was questioned about Parna's letter to Mr. Hammarskjöld. The Minister admitted the letter "must have been a surprise for the New Guinea administration". As far as he knew, Parna had no intention of promoting transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesia but the party's executive might have considered that if a conference with the Indonesians were arranged, it would have provided an opportunity to remind the Indonesians of the Papuans' right of self-determination. Little was known of the emerging political parties in New Guinea. More insight into them would be obtained after the elections for the New Guinea Council early next year. Meanwhile, it appeared there was no unanimity within Parna on despatch of the letter to the United Nations.

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3. Jacobus Rookmaaker, who heads the Far Eastern Directorate in the Foreign Ministry, told us the Ministry considered the initiative of Parna "naive and infantile". Undue importance had been attached to it by the Dutch press. It had, however, served a useful purpose by demonstrating that the accelerated programme for self-determination in West New Guinea already was producing results, dubious though the results were.

4. An awakening of political consciousness within the native population of West New Guinea was demonstrated at a press conference in The Hague on November 16th at which eight members of a Papuan delegation paying a two-month "working visit" to the Netherlands presented their views on the future of their homeland. The leader of the group, Mr. Marcus Kasiepo, said the people of Netherlands New Guinea favoured an independent Melanesian federation consisting of Netherlands New Guinea, Australian New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Asked whether natives of West New Guinea would be interested in their area becoming a member of the Netherlands Realm with status similar to that of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles, Mr. Kasiepo said his countrymen would regard achievement of an independent Melanesian federation as their first objective. According to one report, the consensus of newspapermen who attended the press conference was that "members of the delegation generally confirmed that political life in West New Guinea was in its initial stages and subject to many cross-currents of personal interests".


THE EMBASSY