INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

EPW-12
The 1968 Elections-I :
Background

P. O. Box 628,
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Papua,
Territory of Papua
& New Guinea

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Dear Mr. Nolte,

The aim of this 'Newsletter' is to provide a brief
outline of the historical background to the 1968 elections for the
House of Assembly. Subsequent 'Newsletters' in this series will be
concerned with the preparations for, and the conduct and results of,
the 1968 elections themselves.

The Traditional and Historical Background, to 1961

The very idea of an election is alien to Papua and New
Guinea. However democratic the structure of traditional leadership may
have been (and anthropologists disagree very widely on this point), it
in no way depended for its survival upon the formalities of modern electoral
practice.

Pre-contact, leadership was acquired rather than inherited
in most areas of the Territory, although modern democratic ideology seems,
in retrospect, to have given a somewhat unreal gloss to the possibilities
for social mobility in the Territory's primitive societies. Certainly
many ritual secrets and magical sanctions were inherited, and a young man's
chance in life was enhanced by the success of his appropriate maternal or
paternal forebears, depending on the kinship system of the particular
society. The comparative ease with which the sons of prominent luluais,
tultuls and village constables now rise to the top would seem to indicate
that the concept of inherited authority was not entirely absent from
pre-contact society.

All of the Territory's traditional societies were stateless.
Indeed, few leaders ever commanded the allegiance of more than a few dozen
people, and certainly never of more than a very few thousand. Perhaps
the best definition of the most prevalent form of social grouping is that
provided by Peter Lawrence in his description of Garia society :
"The organization through which political action is carried
out is a system of interpersonal relationships, which collectively

can be called the security circle. The people who belong to
a man's security circle are neither a distinct social nor a
distinct local group. They are merely those individuals -
close kinsmen, affines, and persons tied to him in other
special ways - with whom he has safe relationships and toward
whom he should observe certain rules of behaviour."

The bamboo strips indicate the
extent of the man's participation,
and, therefore, his status, in
the Moka ceremonial pig exchange
of the Western Highlands. Shells
were also a source of prestige.

Power and influence within
the security circle were acquired
through means that may appear to
us to be largely apolitical in
character. Women almost never,
except in Eastern Papua, acquired
much prestige themselves, indeed
they were a source of prestige for
men - the more wives a man had,
clearly the wealthier he must have been,
and the more pigs could be tended
on his behalf. Skill in fighting,
at sorcery and oratory were important
sources of power, as were skill
at horticulture and in exchange.
A man who could manipulate one of
the Territory's many traditional
trading systems to his advantage so
that he became rich, and able to
give food or shells generously,
became important and influential in
relation to his debtors.

Although leadership was
acquired, and usually acephalous,
that is, it tended to be shared
among a group of elders rather than possessed by just one man, it was
often not very democratically exercised. Strength and aggressiveness
were much admired, especially in the Highlands, and, once decisions had
been made, they tended to be carried out by the group. The violence
with which many a traditionally oriented 'big man' still enforces his
decisions manages to shock even many kiaps.

Australia's colonial administrators, then, were never
confronted with the need to politic or through an established system
of indigenous authorities. Instead, luluais in New Guinea and village
constables in Papua were appointed to carry the writ of the Administration
into every village. In 1950, the first local government council was
set up, and the practice of establishing, and then consulting with,
indigenous leaders began. Even then, the range of problems discussed
was minimal, and the power of the local authorities attenuated.

Australian policy has never been very much concerned
with the problem of political advancement. Political change was to
await the establishment of administrative control, and the attainment
of 'sufficient' standards of social, educational and economic development.

It was hoped that various small local groups would learn to live
together under local village councils, and that, gradually, various
increasingly larger political units could be created, until the local
groups would be able to send representatives to a Territory-wide
legislature. In the fashion of most colonial powers, however, Australia
had miscalculated as to the time at its disposal, and the degree to
which political advancement could or should be controlled, especially
in relation to outside pressures. Thus, the pyramid was inverted,
and the Territory's first national, though not nation-wide, elections
were held among larger groups with fewer common links between them
than was the case with subsequent elections. In addition, the concept
of preparation was largely scrapped in practice, if not yet in the
relevant ministers' pronouncements, and, if anything, politics has
largely established itself over the last few years as the prime
determinant of social change.

The 1961 Elections

            The first few Legislative Councils contained 3 indigen-
ous nominated members, and 3 elected Europeans representing all-European
electorates, in a total house of 29. Under consistent pressure from
the Territory's European settlers for a greater say in the running
of their country, the Minister reformed the Legislative Council in
1960 to accede to some of their demands, but so too as not to sacrifice
the principle that indigenous political development should take
priority over any European interests in this regard.

            The reformed Legislative Council which met in 1961,
therefore, had a non-official majority of 22 to 15, of whom 12 were
indigenes, and 6 Europeans and 6 indigenes were elected.

            The Territory's 6 electorates certainly represented
no apex to a nation-wide political system. The members represented
respectively Eastern Papua, Western Papua, the New Guinea Islands,
except New Britain which was an electorate on its own, the New Guinea
Coast and the Highlands. The European and indigenous members for
each electorate were elected on a separate franchise. A total of
6,460 Europeans were enrolled, although their level of political
interest was so low that only 3 of their electorates were even
contested, and in these only 55% of those enrolled even bothered to
cast a vote. The structure of the indigenous electorates was much
more complex, and participation was more selective, than was the case
in those electorates with a universal adult European franchise.

            The base of the electoral pyramid in each electorate
had two components. After nominations for the Legislative Council
had closed, then the selection of the members of the various Electoral
Conferences (who could not themselves be candidates for the Council)
that would finally choose the new M.L.C's began. Firstly, each local
government council in the Territory held a special meeting to elect its

representatives - not necessarily councillors, and varying in number
according to the population administered by the particular council -
to attend the final Electoral Conferences. Then, in areas specially
designated by the Administration, and where the people had not yet
been brought under local government, all adults over 17 years of age
were informed that they too were entitled to attend special gatherings,
designated Electoral Groups, to select their representatives to
attend the electorate-wide Electoral Conferences together with the
councils' representatives. Electoral Groups were designated for 3
basic types of areas : those where the Administration considered
that the people were ready for councils and the people wanted them;
those where a council survey was in progress and the people were
willing; and those areas in which the people had requested the establish-
ment of a council, but no council had yet been elected. These
Electoral Groups constituted the second element in the structure of
the 6 indigenous electorates.

        In all, 33 Electoral Groups, embracing 208,702 people,
were declared throughout the Territory, and 39 councils, responsible
for a further 285,087 people, participated in the elections too.
The final electoral conferences were of roughly equal size (the ratio
between the number of representatives at each Electoral Conference
and the total population represented is shown in brackets) :

Electorate	Number of Voting Representatives
Western Papua	55 (1 : 1500)
Eastern Papua	64 (1 : 1500)
New Guinea Coastal	63 (1 : 2000)
Highlands	73 (1 : 2000)
New Britain	58 (1 : 800)
New Guinea Islands	51 (1 : 1000)

        The election of council delegates to the Electoral
Conferences was straightforward enough, and tended to result in the
election of relatively sophisticated men, such as teachers, whether
or not they were councillors. The elections conducted for the various
Electoral Groups tended to be much more spectacular, particularly as
special procedures had to be devised in view of the electors' almost
complete inexperience with any kind of elections.

        At the meetings of most of the Highlands Electoral
Groups, a secret ballot was impossible, and an open ballotting
procedure was employed instead. The various candidates for the trip
to the Conference lined up at the front of an open space of ground.
Then, their respective supporters were asked to queue behind the
candidate of their choice. The followers of the candidate with the
smallest number of votes were then asked to redistribute themselves
behind the remaining candidates, and so on, in a long, stand-up
imitation of the Australian preferential voting system, until the
required number of candidates (the winners) alone remained. In many
cases, the allocation of preferences was abandoned simply because the
people became bored with the proceedings, or tired of standing up
for so long. The preferential voting system seemed so difficult to

many, and pointless if one's nominee had not won, that many voters went home after the primary count.

The final elections attracted a large number of candidates, although only a relatively small proportion of them received any votes at the various Electoral Conferences :

Electorate	Total Number of Candidates	Candidates Who Gained Votes
Eastern Papua	11	5
Western Papua	13	6
New Guinea Coastal	7	6
Highlands.	40	7
New Britain	12	7
New Guinea Islands	25	10

The Chief Electoral Officer observed in his report after the elections that the large number of candidates who stood in the Highlands and New Guinea Islands electorates "indicated considerable enthusiasm (although at the same time a lack of political awareness)" in those areas.

Any Papuan or New Guinean could nominate for any electorate, provided only that he could find 6 residents of the electorate to sign his nomination form. In consequence, 2 candidates nominated for an electorate, Eastern Papua, in which they did not reside, and one of them, John Guise, was successful - in fact, he was the only candidate to be elected by a clear majority within the Electoral Conference. 2 Papuans, resident in Lae and Rabaul, stood for the New Guinea Coastal and New Britain electorates respectively, although only the latter gained any votes, while a man from Finschhafen, who currently worked at Kainantu, gained a vote in the Highlands electorate. 4 Papuans and New Guineans stood as endorsed candidates for the United Progress Party, but only one of them, Vin To Baining, was successful, and then only despite, rather than because of, his party affiliation.

The 6 Electoral Conferences were convened 3 days before voting began in order to be instructed in ballotting procedure, and to be addressed by the candidates. Thus, the various conference delegates at least earned themselves a trip to either Samarai, Port Moresby, Goroka, Lae, Kavieng or Rabaul - the trip itself constituting a form of political education in many cases. The final ballot was not preferential, and only one of the victors gained a majority of the votes cast. Thus, it was not perhaps surprising that only one of the 364 votes cast, i.e. whispered to a polling official to be recorded by him, was informal.

The 6 victors were :

Electorate	Member
Eastern Papua	John Guise
Western Papua	Simoi Paradi
Highlands	Kondom Agaundo
New Guinea Coastal	Somu Sigob
New Guinea Islands	Nicholas Brokam
New Britain	Vin To Baining

At the final Electoral Conferences, local linguistic and kin ties were too attenuated to be relevant, although in the New Britain electorate, for example, it was clear that the sophisticated Tolai majority were not going to allow an outsider to win. At Goroka, the various Chimbu delegates (who numbered 34 of the 73 Highlands conferees) were quite content to give their votes as a group to a more sophisticated Goroka man. Only when one of the Goroka candidates began to denigrate his comparatively unsophisticated Chimbu neighbours did linguistic and administrative area ties assert themselves as, amid a chatter of Kuman and related languages, the Chimbus decided to back one of their own men, Kondom Agaundo, who won.

All of the successful candidates were widely known throughout their areas, except Simoi Paradi and Nicholas Brokam, whose surprise election the Chief Electoral Officer, therefore, felt constrained to explain. In both cases, the candidate's campaigning at the actual Electoral Conference was thought to be the crucial factor, especially as Simoi seemed to have won on the basis of votes he had garnered from outside his own district, the Western District of Papua.

The 1961 Legislative Council elections, then, indirectly involved roughly one-quarter of the Territory's indigenous population, and then only those who had already had, or were about to have, experience with local government elections. A further 6 Papuans and New Guineans were nominated as non-official members of the Legislative Council - 2 from relatively unsophisticated areas (Wabag in the Western Highlands, and the Angoram area of the Sepik), and 4 from long contacted areas such as Eastern Papua and New Britain. One of the nominees was female, Miss Alice Wedega, and one a member of the educational elite, Dr. Reuben Taureka, a graduate of the Suva Medical College, while a third was a prominent Tolai workers' association leader then resident in Madang. In sum, the 1961 elections involved very few Papuans and New Guineans in the mechanics of electoral procedure, while the electorates were too large, and the final elections too remote, for the experience to affect the level of popular involvement in national politics very much at all.

The 1964 House of Assembly Elections

                    The reformed Legislative council was originally
intended to last through at least two terms of four years each
befôre its reconstitution would be considered. Instead, it lasted
for just under three years, and its reformation was under active
consideration from early in 1962, when the Legislative Council's
Select Committee on Political Development was set up.

                    Before the Select Committee had had an opportunity
to do anything at all, however, the Council's present composition
was under attack from outside the Territory. Although Mr. Hasluck
claimed in 1964, when he was no longer Minister for Territories,
that Papua and New Guinea's development had all along followed exactly
according to his own plans, his reaction to the proposals of the
1962 United Nations Visiting Mission to New Guinea was not exactly
one of delight. Indeed, the mission's leader, Sir Hugh Foot (now
Lord Caradon), later wrote of Mr. Hasluck in the rather restrained,
if nonetheless pointed style of the professional diplomat :

>   "... He has been the District Office (sic) of New Guinea.
>   I at once recognised in him the characteristics which I
>   knew so well in District Officers elsewhere, a passionate
>   devotion to the well-being of the people under his charge,
>   a dedicated determination to serve them well - and an intense
>   suspicion of interference from any outside authority. We
>   were specially grateful to him for the great effort of patience
>   and forbearance which he made in dealing with us."

                    Mr. Hasluck's prevision and forebearance in relation
to things constitutional, and to the Foot Report's recommendations
respectively, are perhaps best captured in the Visiting Mission's
account of its meetings with the Minister :

>   "The Minister explained the attitude of his Government
>   which was based on the principle that the wishes of the
>   people should predominate. He emphasized that the people
>   must have the 'right to choose', and he referred to frequent
>   direct discussions with representatives of the people in
>   New Guinea with the object of ascertaining their wishes
>   and their ideas on the next steps in political advance.
>   He said that these discussions had not indicated a desire
>   for further immediate advance following the establishment
>   of the present Legislative Council last year, and that the
>   view of the Administering Authority was that decisions on
>   future political advance should take place in consultation
>   with the Legislative Council after the next elections due
>   to take place in about two years' time."

                    It seems clear, then, despite subsequent ministerial
denials, that the pace, if not the content, of constitutional change
was significantly altered in the light of the Foot Report's recommendations.

The Visiting Mission recommended the establishment within 2 years
of a 100-member legislature, elected on a universal adult franchise
for single-member constituencies, and containing no more than 5
official members. Instead, the Select Committee on Political Develop-
ment finally recommended the creation of a 64-member parliament,
consisting of 44 Open Electorate, 10 Special Electorate, and 10
Official members, elected on a common roll of all adults of voting
age in the Territory. The Committee's recommendations were accepted
in full by the Australian Government in 1963, and preparations were
immediately commenced for the holding of a general election in 1964.

At the time of the report's acceptance, there was
no administrative machinery available in the Territory equipped to
handle a nation-wide election. Thus, only 9 months before the
actual recording of votes began, a Chief Electoral Officer was
appointed, and instructions on the conduct of the poll began to
issue forth from Port Moresby, before all of the requisite legislation
had even passed through the Territory and Australian parliaments.

The Electoral Boundaries Committee which established
the boundaries of the electorates for the Select Committee had few
guidelines on which to work. It was told simply that the 44 Open
Electorates should be roughly equivalent in population (to within
20% either way of the mathematical mean), although the tribal and
linguistic affiliations of the people were to be taken into account
where possible, as was the ease with which the electors and their
representatives could be made accessible to one another. Even the
indigenous inhabitants of the Territory's few remaining "restricted
areas" were to be allowed to vote, though campaigning there could
be rather hazardous for outsiders. Administrative boundaries could
be crossed by the new electorates, though not local government
boundaries where possible, and Open Electorates could not be cut
by Special Electorate boundaries. In the end, the smallest Open
Electorate, Manus, contained a total voting and non-voting population
of 18,835, with no real possibility of increasing that number
through combination with any other groups, while Bougainville,
with a population of 60,057, was the largest electorate, but not
quite large enough to warrant cutting into two. The median size
for an electorate was a population of 45,603.

There were numerous electoral oddities and inequities.
The Moresby Open Electorate coupled the sophisticated, semi-urbanised
Motu with their numerically superior, but much more primitive, Goilala
neighbours, to the mutual disadvantage of both groups with their long
history of mutual hatred and distrust. The Motu, probably the most
sophisticated people in the Territory, remained unrepresented in
the legislature, while their Goilala member missed several meetings
of the House, allegedly because he was afraid to risk encountering
the sorcery of his other constituents in Port Moresby. The Motu
frequently complained at their member's neglect of them, though he,
in turn, had his legitimate complaints, as when, in answer to numerous
requests, he did visit one peri-urban village only to be stoned and
chased away because he had not come before. Many linguistic units,

for example, the Gimi and the Kamano of the Eastern Highlands, were
cut in two by the new electoral boundaries so as to deny them
legislative representation altogether, while one of the Western
Highlands electorates contained such discontinuities that its
member faced a 3-week walk from his area even to visit the first
parts of the smaller half of his electorate, which had only recently
been contacted by the Administration. Instead, he left them rather
severely alone.

            The Special Electorates were even more meaningless
as political entities than the Opens. As it was widely feared,
as against Western Papuan experience, that Papuans and New Guineans
would vote only for their own kind, the Special Electorates were
created specifically to retain European representation and guidance
in the House - only Europeans could stand, although the right to
vote was universal. Thus, the Special Electorates were set out
according to the European population of each area, and varied in size
from the Central and West Gazelle Specials, which embraced only the
Moresby and Rabaul Opens respectively, to the Highlands Special
Electorate which covered a total of 12 Open Electorates spread over
what were 2, and are now 3, Districts. The New Guinea Islands Special,
which spread from Manus through New Ireland and Bougainville, was
as bereft of internal communication as the huge Madang-Sepik
Special was lacking in any sort of common interest between its
principal constituents. The only common link between the Kaindi
and Kainantu segments of the South Markham Special were the semi-
controlled Kukukukus.

            Once the electorates had been drawn up, the Administ-
ration was confronted with two distinct sets of problems - the
actual administration of the election, and the education of the
people in relation to their role in the election.

            The very compilation of the electoral roll was a
daunting task. The only roll in existence was that which contained
the names of the 6,460 Europeans who had been entitled to vote in
1961. Village-books were relatively useless, for they tended to be
ill-kept, inaccurate, and contained no direct references to age.
Local government council registers were of almost equally little
use, for they included the names of everyone over 17, while the
House of Assembly elections involved only adults, i.e. all men
and women over 21.

            Thus, patrols had to be despatched all over the
country to collect the names of everyone whom the kiaps considered
to be over 21. That mistakes over age could be made was demonstrated
in one electorate, where one kiap confessed to me that he doubted
that a candidate whose nomination his predecessor had accepted was
even entitled to vote.

            Certainly, the gathering of names was no simple task.
Some people would not register to vote as they feared that the

electoral lists might be used for tax-collection purposes. Among
the Mekeo of the Central District, it is considered to be dangerous
to call one's name publicly, for it renders one especially liable
to sorcery. At the same time, the Mekeo share such a small number
of names that at one school in the area, 34 of the 36 pupils have
the same name, Aisa, while the remaining 2 also had identical names.
Surnames are almost totally unknown throughout the Territory,
and even when the father's name is used instead, the Mekeo tend to
call their own, their father's and their mission names in almost
any order of their choosing. Kiaps added to their own problems by
alternating between placing the father's or the individual's own
name first in the alphabetical list. Anyway, the one name may sound
quite different to various recorders, and, indeed, in one electorate
I could discover none of the candidates' names entered on the
electoral roll with the same spelling as was used on the actual
ballot-papers, or as they sounded to me.

In the Western District, many people simply do not
have one name, but change their name at different stages of their
lives, or may be known by up to 16 different names, each used by
a different category of kin or trading partners. The attempt to
place urban or plantation workers in their home village was often
futile simply because their people may not have lived in villages
at all, and the names of their particular census-group may be a
quite arbitrary name applied to them by the kiap. At least most
voters recognise where the kiap expects them to gather for census-
patrols, and recognise too the name by which they are called in
the village book, so that normal Australian electoral procedure
had only to be altered to the extent that the kiap called the
voters' names at each polling point rather than searched for each
individual's name as he came up to vote. The appearance of
compulsion was probably quite necessary in the interest of
administrative efficiency.

To complicate matters on polling-day, as well
perhaps as to reinforce the voters' parochialism, voters who had
been resident in a particular area for more than a year were given
the option of voting there or at home. Most of them still chose
to vote at home.

The "whisper ballot", in which illiterate voters
(more than 90% of those who voted) were assisted by a polling official
who recorded their votes for them, did not solve the problem of
those voters, still the majority, who could not understand the
officials' questions in one of the Territory's three linguae francae.
Pictures of the candidates were provided where possible to help
those voters who could not remember the candidates' names. Unfortunately,
many people in the more primitive areas simply could not recognise
a two-dimensional reproduction of a three-dimensional object.

In the end, the oral character of traditional
communication ensured that most people retained the name of at least

one candidate. The 72.3% turnout of voters, however, probably reflected
the people's feeling that the election patrols were just variants
of the regular compulsory census patrols rather than any genuine
sophistication on their part as to the voluntary nature of the
right to vote. Some kiaps at least saw the turnout as a reflection
of their abilities to enthuse or organise the voters, and their
charges tended to turn out accordingly.

The relatively specific electoral, and the more
general political, education of the voters must have taxed the patience,
if not the general educational background, of many a field officer.
Once it had become clear during 1962 that the Territory would have
to produce at least a few potential 'national' leaders during the
next few years, the Administration instituted a series of political
education tours to Australia. On these occasions, a party of
relatively prominent local leaders from throughout the Territory
would be taken to Australia under the careful guidance of a kiap
to be shown (a) where the cargo comes from, and (b) what parliament
and other Australian political institutions look like. These men
were, then, supposed to return to their areas with a secular
outlook on the source of European goods, and convinced of the need
for hard work in development. Parliament as a source of power was
also carefully explained, and cliches such as that concerning the
need to listen to the voice of the people were ingrained in the
students' memories. Whether these tours represented a recognition
of existing influence, or were themselves a source of prestige and
a sign of Administration approval of those selected is unclear,
although some 10 of the 39 Papuans and New Guineans to sit at some
time in the first House of Assembly had been on such tours before
they were elected. At most, these tours had never involved more
than a very few dozen prominent indigenous leaders.

At the time of the 1964 elections only about one-third
of the Territory's indigenous population had even had experience
in local government elections. At the mass level, therefore, the
people had to be told in simple terms that there was a place called
Papua and New Guinea, which was shortly to get a council of its
own. Many people had to be convinced that Papuans and New Guineans
could and should be allowed to have a say in the running of their
country. At the same time, they had to be reassured that the
Australians would not all just pack up and leave immediately after
the elections.

Most of the Territory's electorates had no traditional
political meaning at all. The people had, therefore, to be told
that they existed and that they were important, and then candidates
had to be found. At Kainantu, for example, one kiap attempted
to demonstrate just what was involved by holding a short dramatic
presentation of an election for one language group to show that
they too could put up a candidate. Next day, they came to the kiap
to nominate the man whom the kiap had marked as the candidate in
his play - a man of very little account indeed, who, in effect,
withdrew during the campaign in favour of another candidate who had

a serious chance. In other areas, rather than a shortage of candidates,
there was a profusion of hopefuls, as the nomination of a big man
from one clan spurred rival clans to action. In one Highlands
electorate, therefore - although perhaps the story is apocryphal -
the kiap was at one point confronted with a possible 33 candidates.
Such a large number would render the result of the election almost
absurd, and so an aeroplane was chartered to take the team of
potential candidates to Port Moresby to demonstrate to them just
how complex the task of government really is. The lesson was
certainly convincing, for, in the end, 32 of the 33 hopefuls withdrew
in favour of their much more learned kiap, who went on to win the
election. At Nipa in the Southern Highlands, on the other hand,
several thousand people refused to vote because they had been unable
to raise the $50 nomination deposit for their candidate. At Madang,
a few thousand informal votes were cast because Yali, an alleged
cargo cult leader in the area, was residentially qualified to stand
for an electorate neighbouring that in which most of his supporters
lived.

          Campaigning took many unusual forms by Western standards.
Many indigenous candidates did nothing at all, on the theory that
their wantoks or kinsmen knew them already, and no one else would
vote for them anyway. Others campaigned widely because, as in the
case of cargo cult leaders or other more ideologically oriented
candidates, their appeal was more diffuse. One candidate in the
Sepik, for example, allegedly promised his electors that he would
go to Port Moresby to discover the source of the Europeans' wealth,
and then return home to be crucified by his own people so that they
would receive wealth such as that possessed by the Europeans, and
live like them. He was not elected, although his appeal surmounted
kin and linguistic barriers in his area. Where ideology played a
major role in the local elections, it concerned such questions as
the desirability of preserving the haus tambarans of the Maprik
area against the wishes of some local missionaries, or the future
of the Moka in the light of alleged attempts at its suppression
by missionaries and Administration officers in the Western
Highlands.

          Some candidates campaigned because local Europeans
felt perhaps they should. Sometimes, therefore, they went in a
group, and praised each other, without directly advocating their
own cause at all in order not to appear to be bighets (Pidgin for
swell-headed and boastful men). Others went purely to lend prestige
to a European candidate for a Special Electorate. In some
primitive areas, the very possession of a piece of paper conferred
so much prestige on its owner that the candidate who had sent it
gained most of the votes, whatever the content of its appeal for
votes. By and large, then, it was only important for one's name
to be known, often only to be the first candidate to honor the people
with a visit, and to be seen by the electors. Ideology and
policy were almost totally irrelevant.

There were no political parties, although 6 Papuan
coastal candidates campaigned on a common platform, and a number
of Highlands candidates received the support of the same local
expatriate groups. A group of Sepik ex-policemen who stood certainly
knew each other, and had a great deal in common, specifically their
common allegiance to Simogun Pita, the former M.L.C., and later
the Member for Wewak-Aitape in the House of Assembly, and the Under-
Secretary for Police.

In the end, the men who were elected were not, however,
typical villagers. They tended to be members of what may be termed
the local, non-traditional elite, i.e. men with some sort of favourable
association with the post-contact forces of change. All but one
professed to be adherents of one of the Territory's many Christian
missions, and all but one spoke either Pidgin, English or Police
Motu. By the end of the House's life, indeed, Motu was but rarely
used in the House, and almost all of the indigenous members spoke
Pidgin and most of the elected European members followed suit.
The formal papers of the House were still prepared in English, and
English language courses had been organised for the indigenous
members, but Pidgin had virtually become the language of the legislature
in its deliberations. Most of the members had also had experience
in local government, or as luluais or village constables. 8 members
admitted to having served on the Australian side in World War II,
though none admitted to having served with the Japanese, although
a few were probably at least collaborators, insofar as that meant
anything at the time. 6 of the Highlands members were former
Administration interpreters, although one wonders in their case
whether their popularity derives from the accuracy of their trans-
lations, or from the prestige gained through their control of access
to the local kiap. Of the 12 former M.L.C's who stood for the House
of Assembly (5 Europeans and 7 indigenes), only 2 indigenes and
3 expatriates were elected - so much for the preparatory work of
the Legislative Councils. The fact that 19 of the 38 indigenous
members had even been to school set them quite markedly apart from
the majority of their electors.

Two indigenous members   were alien to their
electorates - Gaudi Mirau, a Papuan from the Gulf District, brought
up in Hanuabada near Port Moresby, the member for the Markham Open
Electorate in New Guinea, and Tambu Melo, originally from Ialibu,
who was elected for Kutubu, both in the Southern Highlands District.
The raison d'etre of the Special Electorates, the anticipated
reluctance of Papuans and New Guineans to elect European representatives
in Open Electorates, was decisively undermined by the election of
6 Europeans in Open Electorates.

The final group of M.H.A's, therefore, varied very
widely not only in legislative experience, but in the general
level of political sophistication. Koitaga Mano, the member for
Ialibu in the Southern Highlands, was not unique - except in his
honesty when he introduced himself in the House :

"I am a man from the Ialibu area of the Highlands
area of New Guinea. I never knew before that Port Moresby
was on the mainland of New Guinea and I thought that
Port Moresby was beyond on another island. When I first
saw Port Moresby I thought that it must be like Australia..."

Momei Pangial, the member for Mendi, also in the
Southern Highlands, summed up rather picturesquely the degree
to which political change in his area had been a series of
discontinuous leaps rather than a steady process of development,
as it had been in many of the longer-contacted areas, when he
observed :

"Previously (before I left the village environment) I
thought that government just happened. The village people
still think this..."

Handabe Tiaba who, like some of the older members
of the House had been one of the principal agents of pacification
and change in his area, and an ardent advocate of the Government's
cause once he had seen that his days as a fight-leader were
numbered, was condemned to the life of a legislative mute, until
provision could be made for an interpreter - for which there was
no precedent in Australian parliamentary practice - to sit with
him on the floor of the House. At times, what the member for Tari
finally heard was the end-result of a two-step process of translation,
in which what was said in the House was translated into Pidgin
through the House's simultaneous translation service, and then
from Pidgin into Huli.

The first elections for the House of Assembly, then,
reflected most of the imperfections of Australian electoral procedure
in an exaggerated form in an alien environment. The preferential
voting-system, for example, produced a result that differed
from the first-past-the-post result in only 5 electorates, and the
people who had produced such a result certainly did not seem to
have understood what they had done. Indeed, those areas which
produced the most sophisticated results in terms of the use they
made of the preferential system were all among the least sophisticated
in the Territory. They were, in a sense, those areas where the
people were most likely to number all squares in order to please
the _kiap_ because they would be among the least likely to appreciate
the voluntary nature of the whole voting process. Indeed, very
few of the polling officials I met in 1965 understood how the
system works, so that it would seem rash to attribute too much
significance to the electoral know-how of the voters. After
the election, indeed, it was discovered that Australian electoral
law had so wholly been transferred, that the elections in at
least 27 electorates were illegal. Under Australian law, but not
Territory practice, it is compulsory to number all squares, so that
the winner after preferences have been distributed has a clear
majority of the votes cast. Fortunately, any wouldbe appellants
against the legality of the elections were talked out of taking
legal action, and the Electoral Ordinance was amended to accord with
Territory practice during 1964.

If anything, the elections themselves and the
demand for political change were so much <u>samting bilong gavman</u>
that the candidates who were elected tended to be men who were
acceptable to (not stooges of), or men who could handle, the
Australian Administration, i.e. men like the former interpreters
with a reputation for knowing what the Government wanted, or how
to keep it happy so that it may leave the local villagers alone.
Many younger, sophisticated men with political ambitions, and
some local leaders, hung back in order to see just what the
elections involved. Many of these same men stood in 1968 after
seeing (a) that the House did have a great deal of freedom of
manoeuvre and expression, and some power, which its indigenous
members never fully exploited, and (b) that the institutions of
national rule remained so Australian, and unmodified to suit local
conditions, that the Territory's local, largely illiterate, leaders
could do little by way of taking part in, or influencing, the
detailed work of the legislature.

                              Yours sincerely,

                              Edward Wolfers.

Received in New York April 15, 1968.

ELECTORATES FOR THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, 1964

KEY

----- : Special Electorate
Boundaries

——— : Open Electorate
Boundaries
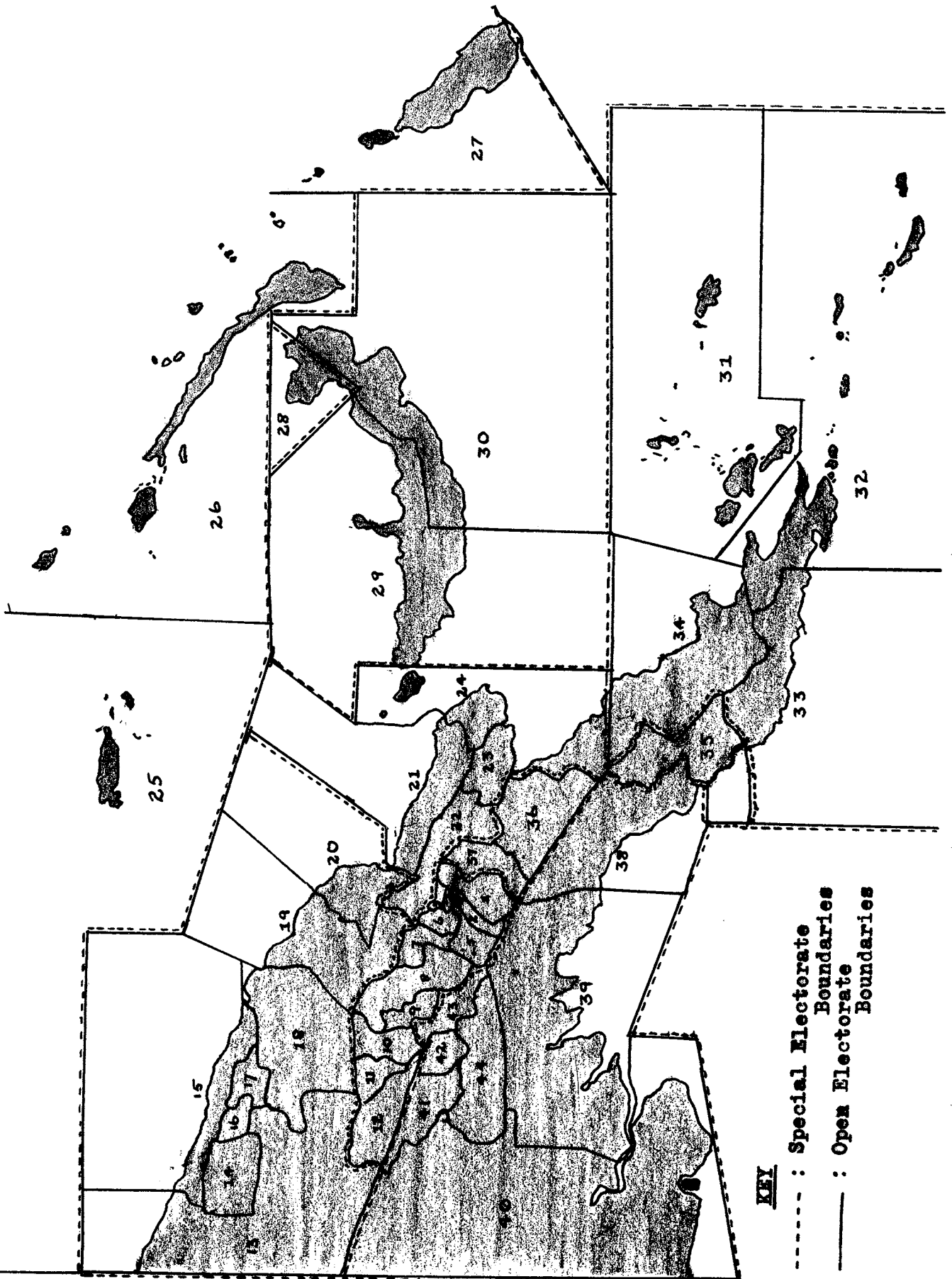
APPENDIX I - Key to Map of Electorates

No. on Map		Special Electorate	Open Electorate	Member
	E	Highlands		I.F.G.Downs
1			Okapa	Muriso Warebu
2			Henganofi	Ugi Biritu (then Bono Azanifa)
3			Goroka	Sinake Giregire
4			Chuave	Yauwi Wauwe
5	E		Gumine	G.H.J.Pople
6			Chimbu	Waiye Siune
7			Kerowagi	Siwi Kurondo
8			Minj	Kaibelt Diria
9	E		Hagen	K.Levy
10			Wapenamanda	Leme Iangalo
11			Wabag	Tei Abal
12			Lagaip	Poio Iuri
	E	Madang-Sepik		F. Martin
13			Upper Sepik	Wegra Kenu
14			Lumi	Makain Mo
15			Wewak-Aitape	Simogen Pita
16			Dreikikir	Pita Lus
17			Maprik	Pita Tamindei
18	E		Angoram	J.Pasquarelli
19			Ramu	James Meanggarum
20			Madang	Suguman Matibri
	E	North Markham		H.L.R.Niall
21			Rai Coast	Stoi Umut
22			Markham	Gaudi Mirau
23			Lae	Singin Pasom
24			Finschhafen	Zure Zurecnuoc
	E	New Guinea Islands		J.Grose
25			Manus	Paliau Maloat
26			New Ireland	Nicholas Brokam
27			Bougainville	Paul Lapun
	E	West Gazelle		D.Barrett
28			Rabaul	Matthias Tutanava To Liman
	E	New Britain		R.Ashton
29			West New Britain	Paul Manlel
30			East New Britain	Koriam Michael Urekit
	E	East Papua		J.Stuntz
31			Esa'Ala-Losuia	Lepani Watson
32			Milne Bay	John Guise
33			Rigo-Abau	Dirona Abe
34			Popondetta	Edric Eupu
	E	Central		P.Chatterton
35			Moresby	Eriko Rarupu

No. on Map		Special Electorate	Open Electorate	Member
	E	South Markham		G.Gilmore
36	E		Kaindi	W.Bloomfield
	E			(then A.C.Voutas)
37	E		Kainantu	B.B.Holloway
	E	West Papua		R.T.D.Neville
38			Lakekamu	Gabriel Ehava Karava
39	E		Gulf	K.Tetley
40			Fly River	Robert Tabua
41			Tari	Handabe Tiaba
42			Mendi	Momei Pangial
43			Ialibu	Koitaga Mano
44			Kutubu	Tambu Melo

E : European

298 candidates stood for election - 267 in Open Electorates
The Common Roll for the elections contained 1,028,339 names

APPENDIX II - Background of Indigenous M.H.A's

Name	Age	Religion	Languages	Occupation	Educational Standard	Local Govt. Experience
Muriso Warebu	30	4 Sq. Gspl	2	Admin. Interp.	-	-
Ugi Biritu	27	Lutheran	2	Admin. Interp.	-	-
+Sinake Giregire	27	Lutheran	2	Farmer-trad.	5	Pres.
Yauwi Wauwe	48	C.ofE.	2	Farmer	-	-
Waiye Siune	35	Lutheran	2	Farmer	-	Vice-pres
Siwi Kurondo	43	Catholic	2	Farmer-trad.	-	Pres.
Kaibelt Diria	49	Lutheran	2	Farmer	-	Pres.
Leme Iangalo	33	Lutheran	2	Admin. Interp.	-	-
+Tei Abal	35	Lutheran	2	Med. orderly	-	Member
Poio Iuri	36	Lutheran	2	Admin. Interp.	-	-
Wegra Kenu	31	Catholic	2	Farmer-trad.	Mission	Vice-pres
Makain Mo	44	Lutheran	2	Farmer-trad.	-	-
+Simogen Pita	62	Catholic	2	Pl. owner	-	Pres.
Pita Lus	28	S.S.E.M.	1,2	Mission worker	3	-
Pita Tamindei	46	Catholic	2	Farmer	-	Pres.
James Meanggarum	27	Catholic	1,2	Teacher	6	-
Suguman Matibri	41	Catholic	2	Farmer	-	Vice-pres
Stoi Umut	27	Lutheran	2	Storeowner	3	-
Gaudi Mirau	30	L.M.S.	1,2,3	Admin. clerk	6	-
Singin Pasom	60	Lutheran	2	Farmer-trad.	-	-
+Zure Zurecnuoc	42	Lutheran	1,2	Teacher	Teacher Tr.	-
Paliau Maloat	52	Indep.	2	Farmer	-	Pres.
+Nicholas Brokam	30	Catholic	1,2	Farmer	6	-
+Paul Lapun	41	Catholic	1,2	Farmer	Teacher Tr.	-
+Matthias T. To Liman	39	Catholic	1,2	Teacher	Teacher Tr.	-
Paul Manlel	27	Catholic	2	Farmer	3	-
Koriam Michael Urekit	48	Catholic	2	Farmer	-	-
+Lepani Watson	36	Methodist	1 3	Welf. Asst.	5	-
(+)John Guise	49	C.ofE.	1,2,3	Admin. clerk	5	Vice-pres
+Dirona Abe	39	L.M.S.	1 3	Council clerk	Teacher Tr.	Clerk
+Edric Eupu	36	C.ofE.	1 3	Farmer	6	-
Eriko Rarupu	35	Catholic	1 3	Storekeeper	2	-
Gabriel Ehava Karava	48	Catholic	2,3	Farmer	5	Pres.
+Robert Tabua	46	L.M.S.	1 3	Postmaster	6	-
Handabe Tiaba	45	Methodist	-	Farmer	-	-
Momei Pangial	25	-	2	Farmer	-	Premer
Koitaga Mano	34	Lutheran	2	Admin. Interp.	-	-
Tambu Melo	28	Catholic	2	Admin. Interp.	Primary Schl.	-

+ : Under-Secretary
(+) : Under-Secretary, resigned to become Leader of the Elected Members
1 : Speaks own language + English
2 :   "   "   "   + Pidgin
3 :   "   "   "   + Police Motu

Information set out in <u>Appendix II</u> is derived from <u>The Papua-New</u>
<u>Guinea Elections 1964</u> edited by D.G. Bettison, C.A. Hughes,
and P.W. van der Veur, Canberra, 1965, pages 448-9.