

P U B L I C   W O R K S

TOWN STUDY PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

During the past years until just recently, Truk District, primarily Moen, was still considered to be in the "dark ages" -- villages were not yet supplied with electricity. Only the government houses were lighted. Furthermore, people were relying heavily on streams and dug-up wells as the main source for their water supply. Some people collected water from the rain for their personal consumption, but that usually lasted for only a short while. There were not any big facilities for collecting rain water. Travelling and conveying materials to the other islands in the lagoon was difficult because of the lack of a more sophisticated means of transportation. At this time, canoes were used for travelling and transporting needed materials to the islands in the Truk lagoon. Roads on Moen were still unpaved and unimproved as the years passed by. It was not until the foreigners began to gain a foothold on Moen, that the "dark ages" began to change.

The Japanese resided on Moen as well as other islands for several years after the departure of the Germans. The Japanese Administration first started in Truk during the year 1914 and continued on until 1945. In February 1944, the Allied

forces attacked Truk which served as the Japanese largest fleet anchorage. One year later, World War II ended and Truk was one of the many areas under the United States flag, administered specifically by the United States Navy. Consequently, naval officers were sent out to the Caroline Islands, which include Moen, to assume the responsibility of reconstructing the ravaged islands. On the 18th of July, 1944, the Caroline Islands, along with the Marshall Islands and Marianas, were recognized as the Trust Territory of the United Nations administered by the United States.

It was during this year that the department of Public Works started out on Moen, formally under the naval administration. It consisted of not more than twenty employees. The department's main purpose at that time was to provide technical training and better understanding of operating the imported equipment. Mostly, the workers constructed houses and stevedored needed materials for the Navy. The salary was not much, only seventeen cents per hour. Public Works was running successfully under the Naval Administration for nearly four years. Eventually, on the 30th of June 1951, the Trust Territory was transferred to the Department of Interior because the United States found Trust Territory as the key to the safety of the outpost of United States territory. Furthermore, the United States Navy, Army and the Joint Chief of Staff had been trying to have the outright annexation and the extension of American sovereignty to Micronesia. Finally, the United Nations agreed to let the Department of Interior administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In April 1947, the security council approved the Trusteeship Agreement.

Following the Agreement, some of the employees were sent out to Hawaii and even to the United States for a short period of training. They were trained to be mechanics, electricians, and carpenters. After completing their training, they came to the District Center and worked at the Department of Public Works.

In the year 1952 to the present time, Public Works has been running under civilian directors from the United States. Later on in the late 1950's, Public Works in the district center of Truk improved significantly. The offices and the responsibilities in the department were divided up into different sections. Each office held specific responsibilities such as carpentry, mechanics, maintenance, automotive and repair, and Road and Ground Maintenance. Power plant which provided electricity to the people of Moen was also introduced along with the whole process of machine power. The employees of Public Works began to have new responsibilities which are mainly installing water lines and tanks, building government houses, and doing the needed services for the citizens of Moen, Truk.

Our group was sent out to conduct some direct interviews about the Public Works in Truk from the workers of the Public Works Department, some of the heads of high offices within the state and the ordinary people in the government. Our group's main purpose was to explore the following: 1) major functions of the department, 2) division of offices and authorities, 3) relations of the Public Works to other private contractors and 4) the problems that the department has encountered.

#### The Present Public Works

Public Works in Moen, Truk is known as the "arms" of the government. In the past years, Public Works existed only on Moen, but it is extended out to Dublom, Fefan, and Tol. Its main purpose is to do services to the people. They include maintaining the unimproved roads on Moen, installing water lines to both private and government houses, and transporting materials and people to the other islands.

"The main purpose of the department also is to carry out the needs of the people and fulfill them," says the governor. Right now, the department is divided up into different sections which are run under a single director. It is running a boat-

pool and a motor pool. It is also taking care of the maintenance of the paved and unpaved roads, solid waste disposal, sewer collection, treatment system, water collection, and power plant. All these responsibilities will be explicated in the body of the paper.

The department is consisted of 166 employeeess. The director is an American, the deputy director is a Trukese, and the superintendent is also a Trukese. Each employee is experienced in a respective field. There are mechanics who are fixing and repairing automotive and heavy duty dumptrucks, bulldozers, forklifters, and loaders for the government. There are also electricians who are basically doing the overhead transmission lines, running the power plant and the sewer plant, and carpentars who are doing the maintenance of the government facilities.

The Public Works on Moen and also the other subdivisions are encountering some problems. These problems are lack of fund for operation. Lack of fund, in other words, the amount of money that the legislature has been appropriating is usually much lesser than the amount actually needed; therefore, the expenditure is more than the receipt. It is shown in the figures on ~~secend~~ to the last page and the graph on the last page. Public Works also lacks people who care for their work and Trukese local people who have the understanding and engineering backgrounds. Delaying of ordered materials is also a problem to the Public Works. Each of the divisions, when it needs materials, has to write a requisition to the director. After the director approves the requisition, he orders the materials from the foreign countries.

#### Power Plant

Power Plant is one of the most important department in the Public Works. It has been giving services to the citizens of Truk State, primarily the citizens of-

Moen. For instance, it provides electricity and distributes power lines to both private and government residences. This department lacks local engineers, so it hires foreign people who have the engineering background to do the operation. There are three different races of people who hold the responsibilities in the department. They are Phillipinos, Americans, and Trukese. There are watch engineers who supervise the employees responsible for different kinds of machinery and equipment. Along with the watch engineers, there are switchboard operators, who control the flow of electricity from the main power plant to the outgoing power-lines. Auxiliary equipment operators are the ones who manage evaporators, compressors, pulverizers, fans, and all the other kinds of machinery equipment. There are responsibilities which are given to the turbine operators who mainly control the operation of the turbine which drives the generators. Lastly, the boiler operators maintain the turbines pressure.

To run the power plant requires an enormous amount of money. Some of the Truk senators and the heads of the executive branch, claim that most of the appropriated money for the Public Works goes to the power plant. But still the appropriated money is not sufficient, since the other divisions also obtain some of the money for operation. For instance, for the month of August 1984, the amount of money spent on fuel is \$115,664.74 but the total spent on materials, labors, and chlorination for the sewer plant is \$10,963.88. This shows that fuel cost only is higher than the total cost of the other needed materials. This also explains why the department needs and uses more money than the other offices.

Boat Pool

Boat Pool is a department in the Public Works which is taking care of the government's sea transportation. Its main purpose is to carry out the government operation to the islands in the Truk lagoon. The department has not more than ten motor boats along with the small ship called LCU. LCU is used for transporting government employees and heavy materials to the other islands. It consists of twenty one employees who are mainly boat operators, mechanics, and small engines repairmen. The workers are usually maintaining and repairing motor boats, and handing out rental sheet for the boats. Government personnel or private workers rent a boat with the amount of \$75.00 and the LCU is chartered with the amount of \$1,350.00.

Motor Pool

Motor Pool is a department that is similar to Boat Pool, except that it takes care of land transportation, "taxies". The taxies are to be used for conveying government materials on land and transporting government personnel to their offices. The office is helping the government because the government taxies are kept safely. For example, before, a lot of government taxies were damaged by drunkards and other people since each of the government employee was keeping his own taxi. However, right now, the taxies are kept at the motor pool. There are ten workers in the office. The employees are divided up into two groups. The first group is working in the motor pool office and the second group is responsible for driving the government "taxies" to where they are needed. The office workers are dispatching taxies to the other government offices. When they receive the requisition, they will call up the taxi drivers and dispatch them to-

the particular place which requests taxies. Motor Pool also safes gasoline for the government because the taxies are dispatched only during certain times. At the present time, the office is undergoing the same problems for the other divisions.

### Engineering

The Engineering Department in the Public Works designs projects for the Public Works and inspects the projects that are completed indirectly by the Public Works. For instance, when the Public Works plans to do a project, it turns the project over to a private contractor which does the work. This department also inspects the Capital Improvement Program projects. The Capital Improvement Program projects include the sea walls, meeting halls, road, water catchments, toilet facilities and water lines. Most of these projects are done by outside contractors conducted through this office. This office is supervised by a Trukese, an Architectural Technician, with two other Trukese helpers.

### Road and Ground

The Road and Ground Division came into operation since 1952 when the whole Public Works was turned over to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. This is one of the divisions in the Public Works that had helped in the improvement of Moen, especially with the roads. In fact, this division is supposed to upkeep the roads of Moen, by maintaining them. The streets and drainages of downtown Moen had been built by the Maeda Construction Company, from Japan.

There are nine workers in this division, including the foreman. The foreman's responsibilities are to inform his workers on what to do and also to write requesition for their needs, especially materials for their work.

The division is funded from the Public Works' budget, which the Legislators appropriate. The money appropriated has never reached the amount needed. Since the whole Public Works is short of fund, this division is unable to maintain the roads that are paved. In fact, this division runs into this situation because it lacks the needed equipment such as dump trucks, forklifts, loaders and others. The present equipment are broken and the department does not have sufficient fund to order spare parts. Because there is not any equipment, the employees in the department are helping out in the other sections in the Public Works. Sometimes, the workers do not have anything to do so they have a general clean up in their shop.

#### Airport Maintenance

In 1979, a paved airport was constructed on Moen, Truk State and partially completed in 1980. In order to maintain this newly paved airport, the Public Works assigned another division from the department to take care of this area. The main purpose of this division is to manage the airport by providing lights, security for the plane and the passengers, cleaning the areas around the airport and the runway. They cut grass, check the burn-up light bulbs and see that there is nothing on the runway before the landing of the plane. The department has its own separated generators which are on stand by. This department used a large amount of money. There are two hundred small lights on the runway. Each of the small light bulbs costs twelve dollars (\$12.00). There are four spot lights which cost two hundred dollars (\$200.00) each. They are located at both ends of the runway. The light boxes cost approximately eight hundred to one thousand dollars. The lights are very important because they help the plane land safely on the runway. This department usually spends about sixty thousand dollars a year.

This division consists of eight workers. The kind of work each of these employees do varried according to their educational backgrounds and experiences. They are divided up into small groups under one supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for advising his fellow men on what to do. The supervisor and one of his men are taking care of the electric system. One of the men is a mechanic who is taking care of the repairment of their equipment; two of them are carpenters, and the other remaining three are laborers. These men do not only work in their assigned parts, instead, they also cooperated in helping their other fellow workers.

#### Facilities

Before, Facilities was a division that was incharge of constructing government houses and other government facilities. However, not long before the early 1970's, Truk State government decided to abolish Facility division because there were private contractors which could take over the job. The heads of the government believed that facility office should be for maintaining the completed government residences and other government buildings, but the private companies should do the actual construction of the buildings. That way, the government would save money and the rest of the appropriated money could be used on other offices. Since then, the division stopped constructing houses and facilities and started to maintain the facilities after they had been built by the private companies.

The office is run by nine Trukese including their foreman. They are maintaining the government facilities and sometimes they are sent out to the outer islands to maintain the school buildings and the dispensaries there.

Water Department

In Truk, particularly Moen, water is sometimes hard to get, especially, during a dry season. Most people had been getting water from streams which were made mostly at the place where water is ten feet or so below, (flat place). Sometimes, water from wells could be dangerous to the life of the people because it is not well protected and secured. There was not any water catchment to keep the water clean or at least protects water from dirt and dust that could consist of bacteria and germs. Furthermore, no one took care of the water and made sure that it was fit for human consumption.

In view of this problem the Public Works made another division, Water Department, that could help out in improving water systems. The department started helping out in Moen on a small scale late in 1950. It carried out its job by installing the water catchment and water lines for collecting water for the government houses. In the 1960's, the water system only served the District Administration, Government housing and harbor areas.

Nowadays, not only the District Administration receives water from this department but also some other private houses. However, these private houses can only get water in the morning from 6:30 to 7:30 and in the evening from 5:30 to 6:30, whereas the District Administration gets water for twenty four hours.

Sewer Department

Sewer Plant started in Moen, Truk in the recent years to help out the Water Department. The whole process of this department is to collect the polluted water from government houses and some private residences. After, the polluted water is being taken, it is stored in one main big tank for chemical process. The Department has to change the polluted water into an unpolluted water before draining it out into the ocean so it will not kill the fish.

The department has its own generators which are there for use when the island main power is out. The Sewer Plant runs for twenty four hours so the government and private bathrooms will not be blocked up. Sewer Plant is one of the important division of offices in the Public Works because it helps the protection of the environment of Truk State. This department has many sophisticated equipment that requires an expert engineer for operation. The ten Trukese who work in the department lack that skill. Therefore, private sectors who have the engineers do some of the jobs. For instance, when this department cannot do a specific job such as fixing a broken sewer line, the Office Incharge of Construction (O.I.C.C.), comes in to do the job. However, the Truk State Government has to pay the private offices for the work that they have accomplished on the Sewer Plant.

#### Heavy Duty and Automotive Repair Shop

Heavy Duty and Automotive Repair Shop is a division which is responsible for fixing heavy duty trucks, bulldozers, forklifters, and loaders. After this office finishes repairing the land vehicles, it turns them over to the Road and Ground department and Motor Pool for operation.

The office has eight employees who are experienced mechanics. The supervisor of the department is a Trukese local man who is given a limited power by the director. He is only authorized to assign works. He is also responsible to keep the workers doing their jobs during working hours. Sometimes, when the employees finish their assigned jobs, they do a general clean up in their office and start preparing for the next day.

Control Maintenance

Control Maintenance is an office in the Public Works from which people get the permits for renting the Public Works' boats, the LCU, and also the permits for the land vehicles (taxies) that the Motor Pool department dispatches for the government offices. The office is responsible for writing the monthly reports on the Public Works expenditure and reimbursement. After the Control Maintenance supervisor finishes writing the monthly reports on how much money is spent and collected, he submits it to the governor. The governor submits them to the legislature so they will estimate how much money will be appropriated for the Public Works later on. All the requisitions from all the other offices within the Public Works go to this office and this office will submit them to the Administrative office: the office of the Director, Deputy director and the superintendent of the Public Works. This office has two employees.

Administrative Office

Administrative Office is the main office of the Public Works. It is mainly incharge of keeping all the personell files, and expelling workers indirectly. The personell office is the one that expells workers directly. It is also incharge of the Public Works budget and all the financial matters. Under the main office of the Public Works there are two divisions of offices. The first office is incharge of all the operation and maintainance of the government facilities. This office is called Facilities. The other office is incharge of collecting bills for water, electricity, and rental transportation. Each month, the office collects \$20.00 to \$30.00 for water and electric bills. The collected money is submitted to the Finance Office for the Public Works budget. The office consists of seventeen workers including the director, and deputy director, and the superintendent. All of them are doing paper work.

Private Contractors

We find it necessary to include in this report some of the private contractor companies whose works are closely related to the Department of Public Works. The companies are Office Incharge of Construction Company, MD. Chrisistomo Incorporation, and MAEDA. Basically, these contractors are the ones that actually do the Public Works' projects since they have the engineers and the skillful technicians. These private contractors are hired by the United States government to do the Capital Improvement Projects; therefore, they are funded federally.

Office Incharge of Construction Company

Office Incharge of Construction Company (O.I.C.C.) first started in Moen, Truk in 1979. It is sent directly from the United States Government to administer the Capital Improvement Program (C.I.P.). This office is specifically assigned to design the C.I.P. projects and have a private construction company build them. After the projects are done, the office inspects them and turns them over to the Public Works to operate and maintain them. This office will be through with its contract by the end of this summer of 1985. It will be replaced by either a company or some engineers and inspectors that the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) will hire.

Back in 1979, the first project that the O.I.C.C. worked on was the airport. It was completed in 1980. That same year the second project, the docks in Moen and the one in Dublon, started. These two docks were completed in 1981. Shortly thereafter, the O.I.C.C. started working on the third set of projects: water, sewer, and road. In 1982, water and sewer systems were still continually built. The water system was completed by the middle of 1983 before the fifth project, water wells, started. Early in 1984, this project, water wells, was thoroughly completed. At the present time, the O.I.C.C. is paving the road from Mwan, a -

village in Moen, to the Continental Hotel. It is attempting to pave the road from Tunnuk up to Xavier High School. It is also installing sewer lines from Mwan to the Continental Hotel.

#### MD. Chrisistmo Incorporation

MD. Chrisistmo Incorporation (M.D.C.I.) is doing some of the projects for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of Truk State. The contractor is administered by O.I.C.C., and it is the sub-contractor of MAEDA. The company repairs private and government automotives, improves the road on Moen, constructs houses, and installs water lines and electrical wires. The company consists of approximately one hundred employees, mostly mechanics and electricians. The workers are mostly Phillipinos, Trukese, and Palauans.

#### MAEDA

MAEDA is a company from Japan which is hired by the O.I.C.C. to do the CIP's in Truk. It does the paving of the roads on Moen and all the other responsibilities that MD.C.I. does. Most of the physical improvement in Truk is completed by the company. These completed projects are handed over to the Public Works for maintenance. This company consists mostly of Japanese workers and a few Trukese workers.

#### Conclusion

The governor of Truk State said this about the Department of Public Works, "It is the 'arm' of the government". We could not find a more proper description than that, for what is a body without its arms to do the work? The Department of Public Works has played a major role in the day to day operations of the government here in Truk. Its responsibilities are vast and numerous. They cover just

about all, if not all, areas of work from land to water. What started out as a training institution has become an essential part of the government. Just recently, in the last four or five years, many of the department's responsibilities have been shared, if not completely taken-over, by private contractor companies. This has diminished the responsibilities of the department on Moen. As a consequence, the "arm" of the government has been extended to three of the neighboring islands in the lagoon.

The Public Works Department is lacking in a number of things. As we gathered from our many interviews with the department's employees, one of these things is the shortage of equipment. This shortage has been compounded by the extension of the department to the other islands. The main division on Moen has to share their equipment with the three sub-divisions. With this problem comes the problem voiced by some of the divisions' supervisors, "The employees sometimes have nothing to do; therefore, they are sent to other divisions to help or they have a general cleanup in their shops". One solution could be to get more equipment and give these people something to do. However, that would mean money. As evident by records made available to us, the Public Works Department spends more than what it is allocated. (See page 16). Perhaps, another solution would be to lay off some of the workers. The money saved could be used for other purposes. The problem with money could also be helped to some degree if the water and electric bills were collected. A collection of \$20 to \$30 a month is ridiculous.

Beside the problems of insufficient work and funds, other problems have brought tremendous attention to the department in recent years. Over the last two or three years, some employees of the department has been layed off and then rehired only after suing the governor. A director was released before his contract was completed. And now, a case involving the dismissal of a former supervisor of the Power Plant Division is waiting the decision of the judge at the Truk State

Courthouse. He was immediately replaced by an American and four Phillipinos, a move totally against the idea of turning responsibilities in the government into the hands of local people.

Financial Status of Public Works Budget VS Expenditures

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
FY '82	\$2,568,000	\$2,692,412
FY '83	\$2,944,000	\$4,278,041
FY '84	\$2,377,000	\$3,165,485
FY '85	\$2,390,507	*****

\*\*\*\*\* The budget officers are projecting that the Public Works will spend in FY 1985 about the same amount spent in FY 1984\*\*\*\*\*

