

the present *de facto* Japanese possession; America's Guam, Wake, and Hawaiian Islands; the Australian-mandated Bismarck group, with two islands of the Solomon chain; the British protectorate covering the rest of the Solomons; the New Hebrides Condominium, which perpetuates the vices of both the British and French colonial systems, and the virtues of neither, and the whole of Polynesia.

The catalogue of the islands' sovereignties is almost endless; in addition to those just mentioned, there are: French possessions; Australian and New Zealand possessions; New Zealand mandate; British mandate; American possessions (Johnston, Howland, Baker, Kingman Reef, Palmyra and Jarvis); Anglo-American joint occupations, such as Christmas Island; and, finally, in the extreme south-eastern angle of the parallelogram, the Chilean Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and Sala-y-Gomez.

At the end of the last war the Marianas, Caroline, and Marshall Islands were handed to Japan on a platter. The undemocratic statesmen of Japan appreciated the value of the gift. Long before Japan withdrew from the League of Nations preparations had been completed for fortifying the islands and preliminary work had begun, in violation of the terms of the mandate.

It was not until the middle 1930's that the democracies recognized the importance of fixed positions in the Pacific's great "land of water." Then, to provide staging points for trans-oceanic flying-boat routes, the United States and Britain entered into competition for islets which they had spurned or neglected for half a century.

The democracies' intentions with regard to these islands were entirely peaceful. True, Oahu was being fortified to protect the growing naval base at Pearl Harbour. But positions which obviously would be of key importance in any Pacific war were neglected: Guam, Manila (outside the parallelogram); Rabaul; Noumea; Suva.

Before war broke out in the Pacific all argument as to the value of Oceania's islands as stepping-stones for aircraft

plying between the Americas on one hand and Asia and Australasia on the other hand had ended. The routes were in operation, with Pan-American way-stations at Manila, Guam, Wake, Midway, and Oahu; at Palmyra, Canton, Samoa, and Fiji.

There can be no argument, after the war, as to whether these and other points are essential to trans-Pacific communication. But there will be plenty of room for argument as to how they shall be administered. And it must be remembered that the number of staging points has greatly increased under the exigencies of war.

Throughout Oceania these facilities have been installed for the most part by American initiative, with American material and American labour. Local administrations have co-operated in varying degrees—not necessarily in proportion to the potentialities. After the war these air routes and their staging facilities will be used not so much by the residents of the islands wherein they are situated, as by the travelling public of the Americas, eastern Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

Ignoring the commercial rivalry between American and British (including Dominion) airways, which probably will be bitter, I believe that sound statesmanship requires the placing of all the key points in Oceania under a trustee form of United Nations government.

Military considerations provide a more compelling reason than the problems of civilian aviation for evolving a United Nations government for Oceania—and for doing it now, while co-operation in the area in question is at its best, and before bickering breaks out around a peace table.

The shop-worn, shoddy answer, "Let's get on with the war and worry about the peace afterwards," has no validity at this juncture. For the first time in history Americans, British, Australians, New-Zealanders, and Fighting Frenchmen, alongside the indigenous populations are working toward a common goal in Oceania: to defeat a common enemy. When that object has been achieved, community of purpose will vanish. And we shall not revert to the *status quo*