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Urbanization surveys in French Polynesia.

The object of this notice is to give participating members of the Living in Town Seminary at Suva, 1971, a glimpse into the development of survey on urbanization in French Polynesia. After some historical details and an account of the state of advance of research, I shall speak of the Administrative statute of the urban agglomeration of Papeete, and finish by giving a short bibliography with notes.

History of surveys of urbanization in French Polynesia and state of advance of research.

The first combined surveys go back to 1950 with the publication by R. Auzelle of a first guide to the planning of the agglomeration. A second plan was drawn by Cl. Bach under the care of the S.E.T.I.L. (1), coming after a survey made by the same author in 1961.

The first scientific publications concerning Tahiti date from 1959 with the historical research carried out by R. Dauvergne, and from the beginning of the 1960's with the simultaneous presence of Professor D. Oliver's American team (Ben Finney, Kay and Moench participated in the agglomeration survey) (2) and an ORSTOM research-team represented by M. Jullien and L. Kolet.

M. Jullien was the first to tackle a general survey of Papeete from a very personal statistico-spatial view-point, but he contributed some useful information as nothing had preceded it and nothing has yet followed it.

Professor Oliver's team undertook a survey of the urban agglomeration using a more classical anthropological method : the study of various communities (an urban district (3), a suburban district (4), an ethnical group of urban Chinese (5). The results were more fragmentary but at the same time much more detailed ; certain problems begin to appear : those of everyday life in town, the break with the rural background, the preponderant commercial activities of the Chinese.

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- (1).- S.E.T.I.L. = public firm affiliated to a State Company and charged with surveys and realization of projects of urbanism and dwellings.
 - (2).- A. Hooper was a member of D. Oliver's team but did no specific work on the agglomeration.
 - (3).- Manuhoe, near the "Old Papeete".
 - (4).- Aua, in "district" of Paea, village on West Coast.
 - (5).- R. Moench.

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Between this first phase of research and the following one, the remarks made by Professor Fr. Doumenge in his thesis about Papeete and urbanization are not to be neglected (L'Homme dans le Pacifique Sud).

The second phase of research concerned the year 1968-1969, and was conducted by ORSTOM research-workers, G. Ringon and J. Fages. The survey made by Fages dealt with the two Western suburban "districts" of Funaauia and Faaa from a geographical point of view. Moreover, Fages, as a geographer was interested in the growth of the agglomeration and published his results in the form of an article included in the monograph on Papeete in the book "Tahiti and Moorea". Fages' research may be inserted in a wider scheme which, in its first stage, is to cover the whole of the Greater Suburb (West and N.E. coasts) and then in its second stage, by studying the central nucleus of the agglomeration (Papeete, Faaa, Pirae), to spread to the entire urban area.

Similarly, Ringon's survey is, in the sociological field, a first step in general research within the agglomeration. At present, the only materials available consist of a short, neighbourhood monograph dealing with the problems, met by migrants from outlying islands when inserting themselves in the urban way of life (Vaitupa, Faaa). His general research on the community of Faaa forms the subject of a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Sociology which the author is to maintain during the year.

Legal administrative statute of the urban agglomeration.

No municipal authority covers the whole of the agglomeration. Moreover, all those authorities which may be defined as municipal have not the same legal statute. The statute of the agglomeration must therefore be considered from two aspects : 1st the agglomeration has a heterogeneous statute, 2nd several levels of authority must be distinguished in the general statute.

Heterogeneity of statute.

Papeete and its immediate suburbs, Faaa to the West, Pirae to the East, have "commune" (1) (or town) status. The "commune" of Papeete was decreed by the President of the French Republic in 1890, Faaa and Pirae became "communes" in an order issued by the Governor of French Polynesia on 30th January 1965. These three "communes" are placed under the rule of law passed on 5th Ja-

(1).- "commune" : smallest territorial division.

nuary 1884 which organizes municipal administration in France. This means that they are territorial communities administrated through elected bodies and bestowed with legal status and financial autonomy. Mutatis mutandis they are analogous to English boroughs. The elected bodies are the municipal Council, charge with a sort of municipal legislative power, and the Mayor, elected by the Council, who has executive power.

All this can be found in Polynesia where the electors are the citizens, i.e. inhabitants, except those with alien status. Apart from a few Europeans, only the non-naturalized Chinese population is considered as alien. As in France, the Polynesian "communes" have autonomous administrations and budgets which are dependant on the Municipal Council and the Mayor. The main difference between France and Polynesia lies in the system of revenues which, in turn, influences the municipal resources and, finally, changes the tenor of communal autonomy.

In France, the system of revenues is based on direct taxation, which does not exist in Polynesia ; the metropolitan "communes" levy taxes directly (land tax, personal tax, a percentage of the income tax collected by the state, etc) which assures their autonomy. On the contrary, in French Polynesia as there is no system of direct taxation, the "communes" receive a share of the Territory's custom duties in proportion to their population : they depend therefore on the Territorial authorities.

The rest of the agglomeration (Punaauia and Paea on the West Coast, and Arue and Mahina on the North-East Coast) has "district" status. These "districts" derive from former traditional chieftoms which became territorial districts in the middle of the nineteenth (19th) century. Their organization was altered by an order of the Governor on 22nd December 1897 ; they had neither legal status nor financial autonomy but a structure foreshadowing that of the "communes" : elected council, chairman elected by the council. They were to be a step in the constitution of new "communes", but things didnt develop further until a recent law which has just decided upon the formation of "communes" throughout the whole of French Polynesian territory.

The two levels of authority.

In France, associations of "communes" exist within the agglomeration : urban districts are organizations co-ordinated by the State, urban communities

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are public communities grouping the "communes" of the agglomeration, provided with elected councils and presidents, whose powers come from the delegation of municipal powers made by the "communes". Nothing similar exists in French Polynesia, and it is the Territorial Authorities which co-ordinate urban development within the agglomeration : Assembly, Governor, Civil Service.

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3^a Particular surveys and problems.

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