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<p>15. <b>SUMMARY:</b></p> <p>In an interview of 12 March 1971 with the Micronesian News Service, delegates of the Congress of Micronesia from the Mariana Islands District expressed their view that they could productively work with the Congress despite recent events. These events are primarily the enactment of a tax on wages and salaries, which was opposed by the Delegation; the recent fire which destroyed the Chambers of the Congress of Micronesia on Saipan; and the oft repeated desire of the Marianas to secede from the Trust Territory which was again stated in a formal resolution adopted 19 February 1971 by the District Legislature. The delegates do not foresee future violence in opposition to the tax law, but would not be surprised if unpleasantness were to result if their appeals for independence are not heard. The congressmen want a permanent association with the United States and feel that the development of the Mariana Islands is being restricted by the Trusteeship Agreement.</p>					
<p><b>MICRONESIAN NEWS SERVICE RELEASE - 12 MARCH 1971</b></p> <p>The Congress of Micronesia delegation from the Marianas feels that it is still going to be able to work cordially and productively with the Congress in the future, despite recent events on Saipan. This was the feeling expressed by the delegation members during an interview with Micronesian News Service. Participating in the interview were Senators Olymio Borja and Edward Fangelian, and Representatives Felipe Atalg, Herman Q. Guerrero and Carlos Shoda.</p>					
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AS FORM 112, JUL 61, WHICH MAY BE  
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The members were unanimous in their feeling that their working relationship with congressmen from the other Districts will not change because of the oft-repeated desire of the Marianas to "secede" from the Trust Territory, or because of the recent fire which destroyed the Chambers of the Congress of Micronesia on Saipan. At the same time, the members also unanimously feel that the bill imposing a tax on wages and salaries recently signed into law by High Commissioner Edward E. Johnson, is an unfair law and should not have been signed, but they say they do not expect any demonstrations or violence to grow out of the opposition in the Marianas to the law. They said they want to show that the people of Saipan are not hostile to the United States, but rather quite the opposite, they want a closer, permanent association with the U.S.

The wide-ranging interview touched on all aspect of the problems that have recently surfaced in the Marianas. They are problems that have been a long time in building. It has been clear for at least ten years or more that political feeling in the Marianas was considerably different from that in the other Districts of the Trust Territory. The people of the Marianas want to be permanently associated with the United States, said the congressmen, and they feel their development is being slowed by the restrictions of the Trusteeship Agreement.

As for the strong language of some recent resolutions passed by the District Legislature (Reference (b)), Senator Borja said, "One of the reasons the leaders spoke so strongly is because we have been begging and appealing for more than ten or fifteen years, and we've lost our patience now."

The men indicated that the language of the resolution was strong. No violent action was planned by the leadership, but they would not be too surprised if some unpleasantness were to result if their appeals are not heard.

Representative Atalig likened the present situation in the Marianas to a "revolutionary" situation, where in the people cease to believe that the government will hear and respond to their wishes. If a revolutionary situation in fact exists, it is a remarkably peaceful one, but underlying the comments of the congressmen was the belief that the leadership of the Marianas could at some point lose control of the situation.

If there has been any single issue in the past few weeks that has fired emotions, it has been the tax bill. Despite the fact that the High Commissioner, in signing the bill into law indicated his intention to propose certain amendments to the law to a special session of the Congress.

The congressmen said they doubted that the Congress would look with favor on the idea of amending a law which has not even taken effect.

The Marianas legislators said they were receiving many phone calls from constituents angry about the bill, and were doing everything possible to explain the situation and cool aroused feelings.

The congressmen also indicated that they, and other Marianas leaders, intend to follow through on the desire of their District to remove itself from the Trusteeship Agreement. "We are going to follow legal procedures," said Senator Pangelinan, "The next step is a meeting with the U.S. to discuss how to go about terminating our status legally."

What is clear from talking with these leaders of the Marianas is that the long term objective of the Marianas is not to get the tax bill or any other legislation modified, nor is it to get attention through angry resolutions or speeches simply for the sake of publicity, it is to seek a final, permanent change in the present political status of the District, the motive is primarily economic, with the leadership feeling that their District cannot really develop as it would like until it is free of the Trusteeship Agreement.

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