

Trust Isle Housing Aid

By Helen Altonn
Star-Bulletin Writer

Top federal housing officials met recently with Trust Territory leaders in Honolulu to discuss problems of extending federal aid for housing to the remote Pacific Islands.

The high-level conference last week was not publicized, although it was known that a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) team was in Hawaii.

Reports about the officials, from the regional office in San Francisco, centered on meetings which they had in Hilo to discuss federal funding of State and County projects there.

LOCAL PARTICIPANTS in the Trust Territory housing meetings in Honolulu couldn't explain the secrecy unless, they observed, it had something to do with the talks at Hana, Maui, a few weeks earlier.

Those were discussions between the United States and

Micronesia aimed at terminating the United Nations trusteeship under which the United States has controlled Micronesia since World War II.

In any event, a federal official who attended the housing meetings noted that the Housing Act of 1970 authorized federal aid to the Pacific Trust Territory.

And he said HUD "is taking a very positive view... even though we know we have some real problems with conformance to policies and procedures."

He said HUD has indicated it will help the Trust Territory districts, even if it means bending some policies.

"IT'S A SITUATION that doesn't lend itself to housing authorities as we know them," the official said.

"They have some problems we can envision in getting into our program. One is income."

The Trust Territory district leaders pointed out, for instance, that income for many people in the Islands

consists of bags of copra.

Also, the official said, "We're going to be giving consideration to everything from standard housing to shelters such as coconut poles with thatched roofs and cooking and toilet facilities on the outside."

AVAILABLE MATERIALS for construction is another problem, he said, explaining that much of the building in the Trust Territory is a "mutual self help type operation."

He said the HUD officials were impressed by the technical competence of the

Trust Territory people.

For example, he mentioned water. "We take this for granted, but they will design an airfield so it will catch water the population can use."

However, they have some serious problems with sewage and any development would require extensive sewer facilities, he said.

HE SAID THE program most likely would begin on Saipan "which is a little more sophisticated than the other Islands," and then taper down to islands containing only a few huts.

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Micronesia leader says U.S. 'lying'

A Micronesian political leader has accused the United States of "lying" about its future military needs in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Congressman Hans Williander, who was a member of the Micronesian delegation to the talks on the political future of Micronesia at Hana, Maui, issued a news release in reaction to a story printed Thursday in the Star-Bulletin.

That story quoted David Packard, deputy Secretary of Defense, as saying no specific decisions have been made when asked if the U.S. planned an "H-bomb storage area" at Babelthuap, the largest island in Micronesia.

PACKARD IS also reported as saying the U.S. could place forces or installations on any of the islands of Micronesia by virtue of their status as a United Nations Trust Territory.

"Packard's testimony makes clear that... the U.S. delegation was lying to our representatives," Williander said.

He said Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams promised the Micronesian delegation the use of land for military purposes would be requested "only on specified locations, and for specified purposes."

AS FOR Babelthuap, Williander said his delegation was asked only for an "option to build structures and store materials" for which the U.S. does "not have any immediate use."

Williander is a member of the "Independence Coalition" of the Congress of Micronesia which opposes any use of Micronesia lands for U.S. military needs without complete prior approval by the Micronesians themselves.

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Trust in Micronesia

SIR: Regarding your editorial Oct. 18, I would like to make a short reply.

It sounds as though you feel we no longer need these islands of the Trust Territory!

Let us not forget the thousands of lives the American people in the military service gave to gain these islands in our past war with Japan! In case someone needs his mind refreshed he should spend several hours in the Punchbowl, otherwise known as the War Memorial of the Pacific.

We owe it to ourselves as well as to the people of Micronesia to make every effort possible for an equal and just agreement concerning these beautiful islands based upon mutual trust, found only by laying our cards upon the table.

Micronesia is very close to Hawaii and therefore deserves every possible consideration by not only our State and Defense Department but by our President and Hawaii's delegation, Fong, Mink, Matsunaga and Inouye in Washington.

Hana was an excellent setting for this past meeting and your reporters did well but we must make every effort possible to assure the leaders of Micronesia we are dealing with them honestly and above board and, above all, show them aloha, or surely they will turn their backs upon us in disgust, as much of the world has.

CHARLES FORWARD JR.

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