

Week in Review

4/26/73

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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ACTION ON BILLS NEARS COMPLETION

Only one bill remains to be considered by the Office of the High Commissioner of those bills passed by the Fifth Congress of Micronesia during its 1973 regular session on Saipan. A total of 17 were acted upon last week, of these 10 were signed into law and 7 were vetoed.

Those signed into law included a measure considered to be one of the most important pieces of legislation ever to come out of the Congress of Micronesia-- Public Law 5-51, which establishes a single pay plan for all Trust Territory Government employees.

A requirement that persons entering TT for employment undergo physical examination is now Public Law 5-45, while Public Law 5-48 establishes district economic development boards to be composed of 5 members to be appointed by the district administrator, with the advice and consent of the district legislature.

Bills appropriating \$315,000 for public projects in the Marianas and \$370,000 for public improvement projects in Ponape District were also signed into law. Among those disapproved by the High Commissioner are a bill which would have provided for the consent of the Congress of Micronesia on the seating of justices of the TT High Court, a bill to reduce the time in which the High Commissioner could issue deeds of conveyance for homestead land, and a bill that would have established duty-free stores in official ports of entry in the Trust Territory.

Each of the disapproval actions was accompanied by a letter to the Congress leadership explaining the reason the bill was vetoed. Concerning the issuance of deeds of conveyance for homestead land, the Office of the High Commissioner noted that shortening the time between issuance of the certificate and execution of the deed would not solve the problem. The Office stated that funds and skilled surveyors are needed to solve the problem.

The last bill to be considered is the Trust Territory Admiralty and Maritime law, which is still under review by the Attorney General's Office.

COPRA PRICE

The Trust Territory Copra Stabilization Board has announced that the price for copra was increased by \$30 a ton, effective April 16. The Board said the increase was made possible with the High Commissioner's signing into law of House Bill No. 1, which appropriates \$300,000 to supplement and subsidize

the ailing industry.

The increase will price copra delivered to warehouses in district centers at \$102.50 for grade one, \$92.50 for grade two and \$82.50 for grade three. The board said the new price for copra picked up by field trip vessels in outlying areas will be \$90, \$80, and \$70 for grades one, two and three respectively.

PROFESSOR DAVIDSON DIES

The Congress of Micronesia received word last week of the death of Dr. James W. Davidson, consultant to the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status. According to a Congress of Micronesia spokesman, the 58-year old Davidson died suddenly while in the New Guinea capitol of Port Moresby while doing some consultative work for the people of New Guinea. The cause of death is not known. A senior professor in the Department of Pacific History at Australia National University in Canberra, Australia, Dr. Davidson was retained by the Joint Committee on Future Status as a constitutional advisor in 1969. He last participated in the status talks in Hana, Maui in late 1971. Prior to becoming a consultant to the Congress of Micronesia, he had fulfilled a similar role for the peoples of Western Samoa, Cook Islands, Nauru, and most recently Papua/New Guinea.

ARMY WEATHER TESTS

The United States Army has announced plans to conduct a series of four high altitude wind tests above the Kwajalein Missile Range in the Marshall Islands sometime this summer. The tests will be visible to all residents of the Marshall Islands District, as well as most people in the Ponape District, the Gilbert Islands, and possibly Nauru. In a press release in both English and Marshallese, the Army is explaining that no harm can possibly come from the tests, which are being conducted to measure the winds and magnetic field at very high altitude.

On four evenings, beginning in June, the Army will launch a rocket at sundown which will create a cloud high in the sky. The cloud will be a different color from other clouds, making it easy for radar and cameras in Kwajalein to track and record it. According to the Army press release, such experiments have been conducted off the East Coast of the United States, in Florida, New Mexico, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii, and have not caused poisonous effects.

It further noted that the tests are being conducted in the Marshall Islands, because there are certain types of photographic and tracking equipment at the Kwajalein Missile Range that are not found anywhere else in the world. The exact dates of the launches will be announced at a later date.

PALAU ALSO DRY

Yap is not the only district in the TT suffering from the current severe dry season; residents of the Palau District Center of Koror are on limited water hours--one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Although it has been raining frequently there, it is estimated that it will need to rain

heavily for a month or more before the situation improves in Koror. Meanwhile, a water barge on loan from the Navy on Guam, was scheduled to arrive in Yap's drought stricken district center of Colonia, April 13, carrying a quarter of a million gallons of water.

MICRONESIAN CLAIMS AWARDS

The Micronesian Claims Commission on April 11 issued its first decisions on death claims on Saipan and Ponape. A \$1,000 check was paid to Mrs. Estafania T. Ogumoro of Garapan, Saipan, as an initial payment for a \$5,000 award for her loss based on the death of her husband which occurred on Saipan during World War II. In Ponape, Mrs. Ingarnasion John received a \$5,000 award for the death of her father during World War II.

RONGELAP COMMITTEE RETURNS

According to a Congress news release, the Congress of Micronesia's Special Joint Committee on Rongelap and Utirik returned two weeks ago from a trip to Marshall Islands District. During the trip the Committee explained to the Rongelap and Utirik people the Committee's recommendations in its report to the Congress; gathered further information concerning compensation for the people; and again observed the medical examinations carried out by the Brookhaven National Laboratory team from the U.S.

The people of Rongelap and Utirik were exposed to fallout from an atomic explosion on Bikini in 1954. The Congress of Micronesia Special Committee was created in 1972 to insure that the Rongelap and Utirik Marshallese received proper medical treatment and compensation. Senator Olympio T. Borja of the Marianas is chairman.

NOW, BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST WHICH MADE NEWS DURING THE WEEK:

TransPacific Line, which decided to drop two of the three German ships it was chartering due to an increase in the charter rate, has announced plans to go to an entirely containerized cargo shipping operation from the U.S. West Coast under an interchange agreement with another shipping firm. According to a spokesman at TransPac, the new arrangement will involve no rate increase.

Two subcommittees of the Mariana Islands District Political Status Commission were scheduled to visit Rota and Tinian during the week of April 16. The trip is an initial step of a proposed district-wide survey to gather information and recommendations from local leaders and the general public relating to the first round of talks between the U.S. negotiating team and the Marianas Political Status Commission.

The Congress of Micronesia's Special Joint Committee on the Law of the Sea met on Saipan last week. A committee spokesman said the committee worked on formulating a preliminary position for the Congress of Micronesia on the Law of the Sea Conference, which is to be held under the auspices of the United Nations beginning in December of this year.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) is currently meeting in Tokyo and if a proposal by the United States is approved, the Trust Territory may well become an associate member of the organization. ECAFE is one of the regional economic commissions of the United Nations; its purpose is to initiate and participate in programs for facilitating united action to raise the level of economic activity of Asia and the Far East.

Eric Carlson, Chief, Housing Section of the United Nations Center in New York for Housing, Building, and Planning, visited Saipan April 2 and 3. Carlson, author of a report in 1970 on housing developments in the Trust Territory, offered his comments on the TT low-cost housing program to members of the Headquarters Community Development Office.

Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Department for Public Land Management Harrison Loesch, suffered a mild heart attack April 6 in Washington, D.C., but is recovering well at George Washington University Hospital. Loesch's present position is that of Minority Counsel to the U.S. Senate Interior Committee.

The Trust Territory Environmental Protection Board, as its initial start in an over-all campaign against water, land, and air pollution in the Trust Territory, has begun distributing decals with the theme, "Fight Pollution-- the island you save may be your own."

Executive Assistant Jonathan Koshiba of Palau has been appointed acting Disaster Control Officer for the Trust Territory. The position of Disaster Control Officer was formerly held by Lawrence K. Anderson, who died in February.

The Trust Territory Office on Aging completed its 3rd annual conference during the week of March 26. The conference included the Regional Commissioner on Aging, Mel Spear, who indicated that the program will not be affected by budget cutbacks as in many other Federal programs.

The Marianas District Economic Development Board has approved a permit request by a Guam business firm to build hotels on Pagan and Tinian islands in the Marianas. The application is now before High Commissioner Edward Johnston for his approval.

A reduction in the air freight cost of flying seafood from Koror to Guam and Koror to Saipan under a new specific commodity rate has been approved by the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, according to an announcement from Continental/Air Micronesia.

High Commissioner Edward Johnston signed a proclamation designating May 1, as "Law Day Micronesia." This year's Law Day Theme is "Help your Courts - Assure Justice."