

Tinian Audit Begun

SAIPAN - A general audit of the Tinian municipal administration is delving into the legality of a trip to the Far East made in mid-May by the mayor, of Tinian's representative to the Congress of Micronesia and three municipal council members.

The week-long trip to the Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan and Japan was undertaken to study the effect the military might have on Tinian.

The regular audit of Tinian's books is being conducted by the Trust Territory's internal auditors. It is due to be released in about two weeks.

Although requested last fall, field work for the audit did not begin until June 8, two weeks after the Tinian delegation returned.

Defeated Municipal Council Speaker Felipe C. Mendiola made a special plea to the Marianas District Administrator to have the auditors look into the legality of the trip.

Mendiola has charged that the trip illegally diverted \$5,000 from a grant-in-aid from the Congress of Micronesia that was designated for community projects.

He said on Saipan that the council should have passed an ordinance specifically appropriating the funds for the trip.

Mendiola, who lost his seat on the council in the June 10 election, was originally slated to go on the trip, but backed out when he questioned the use of the funds.

With Tinian's Mayor Antonio S. Borja and Rep. Felipe Atalig on the trip were council members Leonardo F. Diaz, Silvestre Cruz and Harry Cruz.

The auditors have completed all the field work for the Tinian audit, which covers a period back to January 1971. Their report will go to the High Commissioner and district administrator before being released.

Challenge On Tinian Election

SAIPAN - The defeated speaker of the Tinian Municipal Council has formally protested the June 10 election in which he lost his seat on the seven-member council.

Felipe C. Mendiola is charging that three candidates were loitering at the entrance of the designated polling place closer than the 100 feet allowed under the Tinian and Trust Territory election laws.

He also cited one of the three, Harry L. Cruz, for using the official municipal government sedan to transport electors to the polling place thereby creating the impression of favoritism to the serious disadvantage of all other candidates.

The other two candidates charged with being too close to the polls are Leonardo F. Diaz and Jose B. King.

Of the three, only King was defeated.

Mendiola has sent a letter of protest and an affidavit to Marianas District Administrator Francisco C. Ada. The Distad is authorized to review alleged election law violations occurring in the district.

Marianas District Attorney William S. Amsbary and Pete Nakasukasa of the Legislative Liaison Office flew to Tinian Monday to meet with local election officials about Mendiola's protest.

They will file a report with the Distad, who could call for a new election if he thinks the evidence warrants it.

TT laws also provide for an appeal to the District Court if Mendiola is not satisfied with the Distad's decision.

Mendiola's ouster as council speaker was interpreted by some observers as a pro-military vote. The ex-speaker headed a recent drive to discourage a takeover of Tinian by the U.S. military.

Mendiola came in a close fifth in the election to fill four vacant seats.

PDN 6/27

PDN 6/27

03-028264