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Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS

Last week, the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status began public hearings in the districts, for the purpose of getting the people's thoughts on the political status question. The meetings are scheduled for all district centers, and for most sub-district centers as well.

The committee has divided itself into two groups for the hearings half of the members going to the western districts of Yap, Palau, and the Marianas, and the other half visiting Truk, Ponape, and the Marshalls. Committee chairman Lazarus Salii (Palau) heads the group visiting the western districts.

The group includes Senators Ambilos Iehsi (Ponape), Andon Amaraich (Truk), John Mangefel (Yap), and Edward Pangelinan (Marianas), and the newest committee member, Representative Ataji Balos (Marshalls), who recently was named to replace Senator Amata Kabua on the committee. Senator Pangelinan was delayed in joining the group.

The other half of the committee is headed by co-chairman Representative Ekpap Silk (Marshalls), and includes Senators Roman Tmetuchl (Palau), Tosiwo Nakayama (Truk), Bailey Olter (Ponape), and Representative Herman Q. Guerrero (Marianas).

In Yap, the sub-committee held discussions not only with elected and traditional chiefs and members of the district legislature, but also with school teachers, leaders of Yapese Women's organizations, members of the Yap Chamber of Commerce, and outer islanders who reside in the district center.

Following four days of public meetings, the committee learned: that the political education program which the Yap Delegation to the Congress of Micronesia, the District Public Affairs staff, and the Catholic Mission in Yap were jointly conducting had been successful, and the majority of the Yapese people understand the basic issues involved in the need for terminating the Trusteeship; and the majority of the Yapese leaders and their people appear to support the concept of free association, but have reservations on the land requirements of the U.S. military as presently stated in the Draft Compact of Free Association.

In Truk District, the group headed by co-chairman Ekpap Silk, spent a week travelling to the upper and lower Mortlocks, to various islands in the Truk Lagoon, and held several meetings on the district center island of Moen. It was expressed through the Truk meetings that the present political education

program needed to be strengthened so that the people would have a better understanding of the political status question.

In Palau, Senator Salii's group explained the purpose of the hearings and briefed the Palauan leaders--traditional chiefs, municipal magistrates, and members of the Palau District Legislature--on the status of the Micronesia-U.S. negotiations.

The first meeting lasted two days; it is significant, since land problems in Palau have been publicly cited as the major reason for the current delay in resumption of the Micronesian status talks.

The consensus of the Palauan leaders, following the first meeting of the committee with the people of Palau, is as follows: "The traditional leaders, elected legislators, and magistrates of Palau District are in agreement that the so-called public lands must be returned to the people at the earliest date and before further negotiations take place; and that the status of free association with the U.S. is the best alternative for Micronesia at this time, provided the land problem can be worked out." Also, "That the Joint Committee on Future Status represents the people of Palau and the Palauan leadership is behind every member of the committee in their efforts to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement."

The western group is to complete its meetings in Koror, after which it is to proceed on to Rota, Tinian, and Saipan for the final leg of their trip. The eastern group left Truk for Ponape July 14, and will visit Kusaie, Kwajalein/Ebeye, and Majuro for more hearings that will end this week.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS ACTS

The nomination of Eusebio Rechucher to become director of the Trust Territory Department of Resources and Development was not confirmed by the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Administrative Appointments, while the nomination of William Allen to be the member-at-large on the newly created Territorial Housing Commission was approved. Rechucher, who would have become the fourth Micronesian head of a Cabinet level department in the Administration, is presently Deputy Director of Resources and Development under Director Wyman X. Zachary. Allen is chief of the Community Development Division.

In acting on both nominations, the committee was exercising the power of advice and consent given it under Public Law 4-48, which authorizes the committee to give its advice and consent on certain nominations made by High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston.

The reason the committee rejected Rechucher's nomination, as stated in their letter to the High Commissioner, is that drastic changes in the leadership of the department are vitally necessary if Micronesia is ever to attain the economic development she needs for economic independence. Rechucher, according to the committee, has been too closely involved with past programs and policies of the department, policies which in the committee's opinion have not worked.

In approving the nomination of William Allen to be member-at-large on the newly created Territorial Housing Commission, the committee stated that it was favorably impressed with Allen's background and experience. Allen will be the first member of the Commission which was created by Public Law 5-37. The function of the Commission will be to coordinate all activities with district housing authorities for a housing program in Micronesia aimed at low-income families.

The committee concluded its work July 6, after three days of hearings on the two nominations.

AIR FORCE SYSTEMS COMMAND PROJECT

An Air Force Systems Command project, which will include the launching of Athena rockets from Wake Island to Kwajalein's impact area in the Marshall Islands is scheduled to be held sometime in the near future, according to information made available by the Air Force and published in the July 9 edition of Majuro's Micronitor newspaper.

The Athena rockets, according to an official assessment paper on the proposed project, will be launched on a trajectory that will simulate inter-continental ballistic missile conditions for the purpose of evaluating a terminal ballistic missile defense system being developed by the U.S. Army Advanced Ballistics Missile Defense Agency.

It was implied in the assessment paper that eventually payloads including radioactive elements, such as radioactive sensors, may be employed in the future, but the Micronitor reports that such conditions will warrant completely separate assessments.

An environmental impact statement was not prepared on the project, called "Have Mill", because it had been determined that the project would not cause a significant effect on the environment.

The project will begin with the launching of an Athena booster from a 30-foot rail at Wake Island. The missile will be pre-set before launching, which means that wind and missile performance guidelines will be determined before the missile begins its 600-mile trip to Kwajalein. The safety feature is a destruct control which would blow the missile apart if there was a malfunction of equipment or a sudden change in the wind which would radically turn aside the missile from its intended impact area.

Wake Island, just north of the Northern Marshall Islands which lie within the TT, is a U.S. possession now under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Air Force. Kwajalein is a U.S. Army missile range, although several thousand Marshallese live on some islands in the atoll.

BOAT SAFETY

The substantial increase in missing boats and searches in the TT this year is causing serious concern among TT officials, both at the Headquarters and district levels. The search for two Saipan fishermen who left Saipan July 3 for what was to be a day's fishing trip was discontinued after no trace of the men was found, despite several days of search by Guam military planes and by Saipan, Tinian,

and Rota boats.

The High Commissioner is concerned and has stated that the TT Government is going to have to put more emphasis on boating safety in the Trust Territory. Military Liaison Officer Lt. Cdr. Alan Pendleton was reported to be developing a proposal for presentation to the High Commissioner regarding the small boat safety problem.

Mariana Islands District officials are also reported to be formulating proposed legislation for consideration by the District Legislature at its session next month that would require registration of all small boats, and the carrying of certain safety-related equipment.

Meanwhile, a search is underway in the Marshall Islands for a 32-foot diesel cruiser that was enroute from Kwajalein to Eniwetok early last week when she experienced engine trouble. A plane from Kwajalein located the boat on July 10, but the TT Field Trip Vessel which was dispatched to the area, could not locate her.

Business Permit Actions

TT High Commissioner Edward Johnston assigned one business permit and approved another last week, according to the Department of Resources and Development's weekly summary of foreign business permit activity. In the Mariana Islands District, a foreign business permit held by Mrs. Louise Stout was officially transferred to a newly chartered corporation called Micronesia, Incorporated. The permit allows the holder to build and operate a resort village, conduct a travel agency business, operate a retail gift store, operate a poultry and dairy farm, and operate a food processing and catering enterprise.

The application of Thomas J. Davis, Inc. for permission to enter into business in Yap District was also approved last week by the High Commissioner. An architectural and engineering firm, the company already has a branch office on Saipan.

Now, briefly, here are some other items of interest which made news during the week:

A recent trip to Washington and New York on behalf of the Special Joint Committee on Rongelap and Utirik was described as both "encouraging and somewhat disappointing" by the committee's chairman, Senator Olympio T. Borja (Marianas). An encouraging portion of the trip was his meeting with Dr. Robert A. Conard at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, New York, and meetings with members of the U.S. Congress. The disappointing part of the trip was in connection with meetings with representatives of the Atomic Energy Commission, said the Marianas Senator.

TT Director of Education David Ramarui has announced the receipt of a grant from the U.S. Office of Education under the Emergency School Assistance Act. The grant totals \$204,000 and will be used during the coming school year for pilot programs in vernacular and English reading at the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels in five of the six districts. The district of Yap elected not to participate.

Admiral Bernard A. Clarey, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, spent three days visiting Guam and the northern Marianas last week. The Admiral, whose headquarters are in Hawaii, said in announcing the trip that it is his "most extensive visit to date to this major frontier of the United States in the Pacific."

On Saipan, economic development staff and officers from the six districts met to discuss how to improve their service to the public in the areas of tourism, cooperatives, fisheries, business finance, and investment development.

And finally, Micronesians celebrated the beginnings of the Congress of Micronesia July 12, during Micronesian Day observances throughout the Territory. The holiday is observed each year to commemorate the convening of the first Congress of Micronesia on July 12, 1965. In the Marshalls, the ComNavMarianas Navy Band, at the invitation of the Marshalls District Legislature, played for the residents of Majuro.