

Voice Of The People

Dear Editor:

Permit me to correct a few misconceptions which were raised in Mr. Pedro A. Tenorio's otherwise thoughtful letter which appeared in the "Voice of the People" on Tuesday, August 21st.

First, while it is true that my wife and I have just returned from a trip through the Orient, it creates a false impression to state that we travelled "first class Pan American." In fact, of the seven flights we took on the itinerary, only two were on Pan American. I bought and paid for economy class tickets for myself and my wife for the entire trip, and Pan American contributed nothing to this cost. It is true that while on a Pan Am flight my wife and I were upgraded to first class, but this is a common courtesy always extended to members of the Congress, as well as other persons whom the airlines consider VIPs. Continental follows this practice on all its flights on which first-class service is offered. Pan Am uniformly extends these privileges even to Continental supporters in the Congress, and Continental extends the same privilege to Pan Am supporters as well as its own.

Second, the author's statement that I support Pan American for "personal reasons" contradicts what he had to say earlier concerning my financial interest in Air Micronesia through UMDA. If I

have a personal interest in Air Micronesia, how does it follow that I support Pan Am, according to the author's logic?

Third, the author assigns great weight to the fact that Trust Territory citizens own stock in Air Micronesia (through UMDA) as justification for the award of the air route in question. It should be made plain, once and for all, that Air Mike stockholders have nothing to gain by the award of the route to Continental-Air Micronesia. Air Micronesia has no function other than to lease airplanes to Continental and to employ personnel to service those airplanes and Continental passengers. Continental operates all routes in Micronesia, and Air Mike receives no revenues from any route.

I was a strong supporter of Air Micronesia in 1970 for the award in the Pacific Islands Local Service case, because I believed that Air Mike could offer the people of Micronesia better service. I support Pan American now for the same reason. I will support Continental if the following fatal flaws are corrected: (1) if Continental agrees to fly a bigger plane, such as a 707 or a DC-10, on the route; (2) if Air Micronesia obtains some operating revenues from the route; (3) if Continental-Air Micronesia agrees to pay all its employees equal wages and benefits for the same type of

work, which it does not now do; and (4) if Continental can show that there will be no decrease in service to the other districts of Micronesia if it is awarded the route.

My decision to support Pan Am was made only after a careful and objective comparison and analysis of both airlines' proposals to the CAB. I suggest that all of us who have some voice in making decisions in Micronesia do the same.

Very truly yours,

/s/Olympio T. Borja
Senator
Mariana Islands District

(Editor's note: Barrie Duggan, general manager of Continental/Air Micronesia on Saipan was asked about Borja's statement about "upgraded" status for VIPs on the airlines. "Absolutely not true," he said. "Continental doesn't even have first class accommodations on flights to Saipan and the TT....No, it is not common to upgrade a passenger if he's a supporter of Continental, Pan American or any other airline. The only way we accommodate passengers in this case is if he has a ticket but no reservations. Whatever the case, we will provide the next seat available on the day he wants...if we can." A Pan American spokesman was not available for comment on this matter.)