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Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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BUDGET CUT LOOMS

Unexpectedly, the Senate of the United States Congress moved earlier this month to cut more than eight million dollars from the proposed Trust Territory budget for fiscal year 1974. The move came during Senate consideration of the nearly 56 million dollar appropriation bill for the budget, and caught most TT officials and political leaders by surprise. The House of Representatives had already passed the bill without making major cuts, and apparently many observers did not look for any major problems in the Senate. The action touched off an intensive effort to get the money restored in conference committee. Letters, telegrams and phone calls went out from Saipan and other TT centers to Washington. Guam's Congressman Antonio Won Pat sent a letter to each member of the conference committee urging restoration. Senate President Tosiwo Nakayama and House Speaker Bethwel Henry of the Congress of Micronesia flew to Washington to join Congress Budget Officer Bob Toothman in lobbying for the full amount in the appropriation bill, although the men also had other budget business in Washington as the Congress continues to press for lump sum appropriation to the Congress.

By week's end officials on Saipan were still awaiting word on the outcome of the conference. It was understood the committee had met, and had reached a compromise on the bill to refer back to the House and Senate for further action, but no word had yet reached Saipan on what that compromise was.

TINIAN MEMBER RESIGNS FROM STATUS COMMISSION

One of the members from Tinian on the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission resigned last week, to be quickly replaced by the former Mayor of Tinian, Jose R. Cruz. The outgoing member was Herman M. Manglona, a critic of the United States proposal to take over most of Tinian for a military base. The Pacific Daily News said last week that Manglona was resigning because he is tired of politics and has too many other things to do.

Cruz, one of Tinian's most colorful and outspoken political figures, has long been a proponent of the return of the U.S. Military to his island. But he now says he has changed his mind on this in the wake of the U.S. proposals, and was described by the newspaper as "anti-military."

The Mariana Islands Political Status Commission has 15 members, and is chaired by Senator Edward Pangelinan.

CENSUS CONTINUES--NO MAJOR PROBLEMS

The 1973 Trust Territory census moved into another phase last week, as Census Day, September 18, passed and workers re-checked all of the data gathered earlier from every single household on the more than 90 populated islands of the territory. It is a major undertaking, but Census Coordinator William Stewart reported last week that so far things are going well, and he anticipates no major problems in completing the massive task.

As the enumerators completed their jobs and prepared to send their accumulated data to Saipan, Stewart and other census supervisors were conducting a training course in the Congress of Micronesia chambers for the more than two dozen people who will work for the next five months on the job of checking and coding all of the census returns. They will be preparing the data to be entered onto computer cards and sent to Hawaii for computerization and fast, easy access by anyone who may wish the information for planning purposes in the future. In addition, the checkers and coders will be compiling one set of population statistics by hand, for presentation to the Congress of Micronesia by late January or early February of next year, so that the Congress can reapportion itself--one of the major reasons for this year's census.

The 1973 census is the largest program of its kind ever undertaken in the Trust Territory. By the time final reports have been submitted to the High Commissioner and to the Congress of Micronesia, it will have involved well over two years of effort on the part of several government departments, and will have employed nearly six hundred people.

CONTINENTAL FRANCHISE INKED

The Trust Territory Government has entered into a new, five-year franchise agreement with Continental Airlines, the parent company of Air Micronesia. The pact will extend for an additional 20 years, subject to notice of intent to discontinue it by either side during a review period every five years. The agreement actually is not completely new, but is an amended form of the agreement in effect during the first five years that Air Micronesia has served the TT. Some of the major changes include: Elimination of Air Mike's tax free status, meaning the company will now begin paying all applicable Trust Territory taxes; deletion of Continental's pledge to build hotels in all six districts, largely because the company has not been successful in negotiating with district officials for the construction of hotels in Yap, Ponape and the Marshalls, and because the company has already constructed hotels in Palau and Truk, and is constructing one on Saipan, which are both larger and more expensive than originally called for; and addition to the agreement of statements by which the government, represented by the signatures of the Deputy High Commissioner and the Attorney General, agrees that Continental has fulfilled all of its obligations to provide air service to the Trust Territory, and has in most cases provided a level of service that exceeds what was required.

Last week it was also learned that Continental has agreed to two additional things not contained in the agreement. The company, said Vice-President

G. Edward Cotter, is undertaking a study of the feasibility of training Micronesians for the cockpit crews of jet aircraft, and it is willing to train Micronesian operators of any Micronesian-owned hotel, regardless of whether Continental has a financial interest in that hotel. Both pledges were made by Cotter, according to TT Government officials.

Following disclosure of the pilot-training study last week, the Continental Office on Saipan began getting calls from people interested in learning to fly planes. A Continental spokesman pointed out that they are studying only the feasibility of training Micronesians to be jet pilots at this time, and that, even should it prove feasible, such training is both long and very expensive. Results of the feasibility study are expected by the end of this year.

BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MADE NEWS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY LAST WEEK:

Word was received from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that the Peacesat satellite communications program in which the Trust Territory participates along with a number of other areas of the Pacific, will continue at least for awhile longer. NASA is still studying the proposal made by the countries and territories in the Pacific regarding usage of the satellite, and has not yet made a final determination on whether to allow the program to continue. There is one satellite ground station in the TT, on Saipan at the Broadcast Center.

Two ships in distress were in the news in Micronesia last week. In Palau, a field trip vessel found eight men on tiny, uninhabited Merir Island, subsisting on coconuts and fish after their fishing boat developed engine trouble and went aground. The men, all from Taiwan, were okay despite the fact that they had been on the island for 40 days. Their boat was declared a total loss. In the Northern Marianas, a Japanese fishing boat went aground briefly at Agrihan Island, north of Pagan, but later was able to free itself without help.

Director of Health Services Dr. Masao Kumangai announced the appointment of Marie I. Baloga, of Pennsylvania, as the new head of the Trust Territory School of Nursing on Saipan.

Assistant Economic Development Chief Manuel A. Sablan has left the TT for Seattle, Washington, where he will pursue a master's degree in Business Administration during the coming year. Another Manny Sablan, Manuel T. Sablan, who is Superintendent of the Public Safety Department in the TT, left for Texas to attend the annual meeting of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Construction began on the terminal building at Palau airport. It will be a traditional building, of the Abai type, and will replace three small, thatched shelters which now provide the only facility for departing or arriving passengers at the Palau field.

The Trust Territory received more than two and a quarter million dollars worth of surplus military equipment through its Liaison Office on Okinawa last fiscal year, according to Liaison Officer Jesse R. Quigley. Most of this equipment came from military units in Okinawa and the Philippines.

A team of officials from the United States Department of Agriculture spent two weeks in the TT this month studying the feasibility of upgrading the elementary school feeding program. They will make their recommendations in Washington to the U.S. Office of Child Nutrition.

And finally, High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston has issued a proclamation declaring October 24 to be United Nations Day, and a legal holiday throughout the Trust Territory.