

Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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STATUS TALKS SET FOR NOVEMBER 10

November 10 has been set for the next round of talks on the future political status of the Trust Territory between the United States and the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia. U.S. Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, the President's personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations; and Chairman of the Joint Committee Senator Lazarus Salii; met in Honolulu last week to discuss political education in Micronesia. Also involved in the meetings were several aides and assistants to the men.

The two chairmen decided that the next step would be a meeting held in Washington, D.C. in November between members of the Joint Committee and the U.S. delegation. The question of public land in Micronesia and other items remaining to be completed in the Draft Compact of Free Association will be considered at that time.

Also discussed in Honolulu was a new program of education for self-government in Micronesia, to be undertaken immediately by the Executive Branch of the TT Administration. High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston and Director of Public Affairs Strik Yoma were asked to participate in the status meeting to talk over this program, and it was announced that High Commissioner Johnston would have further information on it shortly after his return to Saipan from Hawaii this week.

TINIAN MAYOR CHARGED WITH EMBEZZLEMENT

Tinian Mayor, Antonio S. Borja, has denied his guilt in the charges of embezzlement, conspiracy and cheating by false pretenses filed against him October 10.

Among the charges against Borja are that he diverted for his own use \$3,000 granted by the Mariana Islands District Legislature, that he was involved in discrepancies in the \$15,000 Tinian Agriculture Revolving Fund, and that of the Congress of Micronesia's \$12,000 grant, \$6,000 was improperly converted to finance a trip to the Orient by some Municipal Council members, and Representative Felipe Q. Atalig.

SAIPAN HOSTS HOUSING COMMISSION

The newly-created Territorial Housing Commission held its first organizational meeting on Saipan last week. The formation of the Commission was initiated in the first Trust Territory Housing Conference held in Ponape in 1971. Legislation created from this Conference was considered by the Congress of Micronesia and passed this year as the Community Housing Act of 1973. The law provides that the

Congress of Micronesia "seeks as its goal a decent home and suitable living environment for every Micronesian family. . ."

The commissioners were welcomed in a brief ceremony Tuesday morning by William Allen, Chief of Community Development Division. They were sworn into office by Chief Justice Harold Burnett. In addition to Allen, who served as temporary chairman of the commission as its member-at-large, the members of the commission are Henry Samuel of the Marshalls, Francis Defngin of Yap, Santiago Joab of Ponape, Wilhelm Rengiil of Palau, Sachuo Buliche of Truk, and Jesus Lizama of the Marianas.

Included in the agenda were plans to adopt a set of by-laws, discussions of the goals and responsibilities of the commission, and a review of the present status of the various district housing programs. At the conclusion of the meeting it was announced that Bill Allen was elected chairman officially.

CONSTRUCTION OF PALAU BRIDGE DELAYED

According to Trust Territory Director of Public Works James R. Wheeler, bids received for the Palau bridge project were considerably higher than anticipated. Following a public opening and reading of the bids in his office last week Wheeler stated that the entire project is presently being reevaluated. Five companies submitted bids, all in excess of 5 million dollars, with the apparent low bidder being Aju Construction Company of Korea and Guam.

The bridge, viewed as a major factor in the future economic development of Palau District, is to connect the islands of Babelthuap and Koror over the Airai Channel. At present passengers and vehicles must cross the Channel by ferry.

Wheeler noted that the Government may have to seek additional funds if the project is to be completed. He emphasized that even though the government has the right to reject any or all of the bids, no decision has yet been made on this. In any event, additional delay in the construction of the bridge is likely to occur.

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

According to Census Coordinator William Stewart, census enumeration documents from Palau and the Marianas District are in the final stages of checking and coding. The first sheets of coded census data will be sent to the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii at the end of this week where key-punching for computer correction and analysis of the information will begin.

A major obstacle restricting the importation of potentially infected animals or meats into the United States or its territories to prevent introduction of contagious diseases was overcome last week when the United States Department of Agriculture recognized the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as free of foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, and swine vesicular disease. Cloven-hooved livestock and their meat may now be shipped to Guam, a United States territory serving as a major market for the Trust Territory.

Nineteen chiefs are participating in the annual outer island chief's Conference held on Ulithi Atoll in the Yap District. District Administrator Leonard Aguigui conveyed a message from High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston in which he stated: "Micronesia needs your encouragement and your input as to the future welfare of the people of your beautiful islands".

The Senate Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations continued its journey through the Districts to study the state of law enforcement and the judiciary in the Trust Territory. Conference are being held with each district attorney, district prosecutor, chief of police, public defender, attorneys of the Micronesian Legal Services, trial assistants, and community court judges. Meetings are also scheduled with the district court judges, clerks of courts, District Legislatures, and municipal magistrates, as well as with the District Administrators.

Air Micronesia has announced that a new regulation, effective October 24, will provide Collect on Delivery, C.O.D., freight shipments service to all points within the Trust Territory serviced by the airline. Presently C.O.D. shipments are only permitted between Saipan and Guam. Full information on the C.O.D. regulations may be obtained from the Air Micronesia headquarters office on Saipan.

In ceremonies held early this month, Ulul in the Namonuito Atoll of the Truk District was officially named a sub-district center. Also included in the ceremonies was the turnover of several facilities to the Government, including a municipal building, a dispensary, a copra warehouse, an elementary school classroom, and a vocational building and four dormitories for Weipat High School. Erhart Aten was named temporary District Administrator's Representative for the sub-district.

Preliminary work on the preparation of an environmental impact statement covering proposed military plans for Tinian is continuing. An eleven-member team of United States Air Force personnel will visit Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas this week to continue their study in connection with an agreement reached between the United States and the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission during negotiations in May and June regarding military base plans for Tinian. A military spokesman emphasized that the study is only a preliminary prerequisite pending final agreement in future negotiations.

According to Air Micronesia General Manager Barrie Duggan, the five-man Civil Aeronautics Board will hear the arguments on the Saipan-Japan case on November 8. The three airlines seeking operating authority between Saipan and Tokyo are Pan American World Airways, Northwest Orient Airlines, and Continental/Air Micronesia.

The arrival on Saipan this week of the Tokai Daigoku Maru Nisei transporting a group of 30 individuals representing the Japanese Government and various memorial societies to islands in Truk, Ponape and the Marshall Islands District, will mark the third phase in an intensive Japanese effort to recover the remains of Japanese soldiers, sailors and airman killed during World War II. A

monument from Japan will be placed at the old Japanese Cemetery in Susupe, Saipan, in memory of those exhumed and in appreciation of the care and preservation given to the grave yard.

Two subcommittees of the House Committee on Health Matters will travel to the outer islands of the Marshalls and Yap Districts to conduct a survey of health problems in those districts. The subcommittees are chaired by Felipe Q. Atalig of the Marianas and Masao Nakayama of the Truk District.

Trust Territory Chief of Tourism, Mike Ashman, will represent the Trust Territory at the Fourth Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) Travel Research Seminar. The four-day seminar, beginning October 16, will be held in Suva, Fiji.

Kapingamarangi, a remote atoll in the southern part of the Ponape District, is faced with a critical shortage of water for drinking and cooking according to District Administrator Leo A. Falcam who visited the atoll several weeks ago and conferred with Chief Magistrate Apinel Mateak. Falcam stated the residents are not suffering undue hardship, but they have almost run out of fresh drinking water and are obtaining most of their drinking liquid from coconuts. The next field trip ship to Kapingamarangi will carry extra containers of water for the atoll.