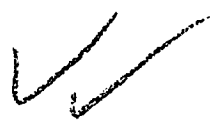


NEW POLICY ON MARIANAS LAND



SAIPAN, (MNS) --- Trust Territory High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston has issued a policy statement on Marianas land, in order to clear up some confusion that has existed

concerning present policy on the leasing of public land as it relates to the current status negotiations.

The three-part statement gives the background, discusses the reasons for exercising care in the leasing of public land while the status talks are in progress, and deals specifically with the homesteading program on the island of Tinian.

Here is the text of the Dec. 14th High Commissioner's statement:

"1) As long ago as December, 1972, the Marianas Political Status Commission (MPSC) requested officially that Ambassador Williams should join with them in requesting the High Commissioner to consult with the MPSC on any and all leases of public lands in the Mariana Islands District before such leases were granted.

"After several discussions involving Ambassador

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Williams, the Director of the Office of Territorial Affairs and the High Commissioner, Ambassador Williams assured the MPSC in April, 1973, that "... the High Commissioner would certainly give full weight to the counsel of the Marianas delegation in any particular transaction."

"Subsequently, the Trust Territory administration, in compliance with a request from both the MPSC and the United States Government, adopted the following policy, which I wish to reaffirm, regarding public land in the Marianas:

"During the active period of negotiations there will be no leases of public lands without consultation with the MPSC."

"2) In view of the expressed desires of the Marianas Political Status Commission and the plain logic of avoiding any speculative land transactions which might work against the best interests of any future government of the Mariana Islands, several months ago I advised the District Administrator of the Marianas that no leases of public land to either citizens or non-citizens of the Marianas should be granted without conferring with Senator Pangelinan as Chairman of the MPSC. To the best of my knowledge this policy has been followed and will continue to be followed.

"3) With regard to the homesteading program on Tinian, the Trust Territo-

ry Government, with the full concurrence of Ambassador Williams, determined that it would not be in the best interests of the future of the Mariana Islands to grant any new homestead permits on the Island of Tinian after May 8, 1973, which was the date on which Ambassador Williams and his delegation revealed publicly the

United States desires for land acquisition on Tinian.

"Two points are of great importance in relation to this matter of Tinian Homesteading: First, that transactions which were in process prior to the cut-off date of May 8, 1973, will continue to be processed; and second, that this is purely a temporary situation to remain in effect while negotiations are actively underway between the United States and the Marianas delegation to resolve the future of the Marianas. This

temporary stand-down on the disposition of public land and issuance of permits for non-Micronesian business ventures does not mean that there is an economic moratorium on Tinian."

In a closing comment accompanying the policy

statement, the High Commissioner said: "I emphasize once again that all (these) policies in relation to the disposition of Mariana Islands public land are designed to be of maximum benefit to the future of the Marianas."