

Week in Review

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

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U.S. AGREES TO RETURN PUBLIC LAND TO DISTRICTS

The text of a U.S. policy statement released last week revealed that the United States has agreed to return the public land in the Trust Territory to each district prior to the termination of the present Trusteeship Agreement if the people of the district so desire. The decision was made in response to a Micronesian request to the U.S. Government, endorsed by the Joint Committee on Future Status, that the U.S. return to local control the public land the U.S. has been holding in the districts in trust for the people. The only restriction placed on this transfer will be certain minimum safeguards designed to protect "...those individuals who have acquired property interests in public lands under the Trusteeship and to meet the continuing land needs of the Trust Territory Government for public use." According to the statement, these limitations and safeguards "...will apply until the Trusteeship ends, at which time the new government will be free to modify them as it chooses."

Under the policy, the Congress of Micronesia is asked to provide the enabling legislation to facilitate the transfer of titles to public lands. This will include amending present Trust Territory laws as necessary and providing through charters, or other means, the legal standing that will enable the district legislatures, or whatever other entity is selected by the people of the district to hold title to land. The policy states that each district legislature should formally indicate the wishes of the people on the question of whether the land will revert to traditional leaders, municipalities, district legislatures, or some other entity.

Lands that are being used for schools, airfields, hospitals and the like "...will be retained by the Trust Administration so long as it is needed, and will revert thereafter to the districts..." Title to land "...to be used to meet defense needs under the terms of proposed future status agreements with the United States will pass simultaneously with the prospective titleholder's formal commitment to accommodate those needs in good faith on terms mutually agreed with the United States authorities."

BIKINI INSPECTION

More than three dozen former Bikini residents returned to the atoll last week for the initial house-by-house inspection tour of the first forty buildings completed on the island. Marshalls District Planning Officer Dennis McBreen, as the representative of the District Administrator Oscar DeBrum, conducted the tour. Two of the houses had been fully completed including the concrete structure with large covered porches in front and at the back, a cook house, a wash house, and

an outhouse, along with a large water tank for the roof water catchment system.

At the end of the inspection tour, the heads of households who will occupy the houses indicated acceptance of the homes and suggested several possible changes. They felt that the water catchment system on the houses should be modified so that water is collected from both the front and rear portions of the roof, that identical auxiliary buildings should be furnished for all of the houses, that tiles should be added to cover the cement floor and that walls could possibly be added to enclose some of the porches.

EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

According to TT Director of Public Affairs Strik Yoma, plans for the new program of Education for Self-Government are well under way. The decision to undertake the program was reached in a meeting held in Honolulu last month between Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, President Nixon's personal representative to the status talks; Chairman Lazarus Salii and Co-Chairman Ekpap Silk of the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status; Stanley S. Carpenter, Director of the Office of Territorial Affairs; and High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston.

Yoma stated that several meetings had been held with the TT Director of Education David Ramarui to discuss ways of initiating the program. Discussions were also held with the District Administrators who were meeting on Saipan last week. Yoma emphasized that "the success of the program is vitally dependent upon district inputs not only in the initial planning but also in the delivery of the service when the time comes".

DISTAD APPROVES PRICE CONTROL BILL

According to Halvorsen Johnny of WSZD radio, Ponape District Administrator Leo A. Falcam has signed into law eleven of the fourteen bills passed by the recently concluded session of the Ponape District Legislature. The most significant bill signed establishes a Price Control Commission, provides for civil and criminal penalties and appropriates \$5,000 to carry out the purpose of the bill. The DistAd noted that the law "is a vast and major improvement over the existing price control law."

Other bills that were signed by the DistAd included an act repealing certain sections of the Ponape District Code, authorizing appropriation of a sum from the General Fund of the Ponape District Legislature to be used for translation of public documents from English to district vernacular; an act appropriating \$25,000 from the legislature's General Fund to subsidize the construction of the Ponape Legislature Building; a bill amending certain portions of the Ponape District Code relating to elementary school lunch programs; an act amending the Ponape District Code relating to membership on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board; and a measure requiring all persons importing automobiles for sale to stock spare parts for such automobiles.

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

Chairman of the Congress of Micronesia Subcommittee of the House Committee on Resources and Development Sasauo Haruo and members of the Subcommittee returned

from Guam last week after completing a three-day investigation of the continuing long delays in transshipment of cargo from Guam by TransPacific Lines, Inc. Chairman Haruo stated that he hopes to work with TT and TransPac officials in seeking solutions to the problems.

Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman opened the four-day semi-annual District Administrator's Conference last week on Saipan. A review of future political status negotiations was presented by Miss Mary Vance Trent, Department of State Liaison Officer. Other topics that were discussed included: personnel regulations and the new pay plan, field trip services to the outer islands, activities in promotion of marine resources and development, medical referral and other health problems and territorial education policy.

On November 6, 1973, the United States Department of Agriculture reviewed slaughtering operations and found that the slaughter plant on Tinian was operating below minimum standards acceptable to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As a result, Trust Territory officials have barred future exports to Guam after that date until slaughtering operations have reached acceptable standards.

Twenty-one police officers began training in advanced criminal and traffic investigation last week at the Trust Territory Police Academy on Saipan. According to Trust Territory Superintendent of Public Safety Manuel Sablan, several experts from the Guam Police Department provided instruction in narcotics, criminal investigation and traffic control.

A public hearing will be held on December 1, 1973, at the Yap District Legislature Building for the purpose of considering the economic, social and environmental effects of the development of Yap District Airport.

The sub-regional training course in hospital administration sponsored by the South Pacific Commission concluded last week on Truk. According to Greg Calvo, Hospital Administration Specialist, TT Department of Health Services, "the objective of the training was to provide the participants an enlightened appreciation of hospital administration and their relationships and importance to health services".

Leigh Fischer, an airport management consultant from California, was on Saipan last week meeting with various officials from the Trust Territory Government and American International Contractors concerning the construction of the Saipan International Airport.

According to the weekly report of foreign business activity from the Economic Development Division of the Resources and Development Department, applications from International Shoppers Limited to operate hotel shopping arcades in the Mariana Islands District will be forwarded to the Marianas District Economic Development Board for review and recommendations. The company's principal incorporator is Anthony M. Pilaro who is the chairman and managing director of Duty Free Shoppers Limited.