

Week in Review

12/10/73

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

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ENERGY CRISIS IN MARIANAS

The energy crisis has hit Micronesia. It was announced last week that Mobil Oil Micronesia has imposed a 12 percent cutback on fuel distribution in Micronesia in connection with the world-wide energy crisis. Although the fuel cutback is not expected to be of severe or crippling level on Saipan, residents are being asked to practice conservation measures in power consumption by turning off unnecessary lights and restricting the use of air conditioners, water heaters, and dryers. The District Administrator also urged the community to reduce excessive vehicle usage. He also stated that the Marianas district will suffer more than the other districts if the energy crisis reaches a critical level because there are more than 3,000 cars on Saipan alone.

Earlier this month, strict conservation measures were imposed by Truk District Administration. Government offices were ordered to turn off unnecessary lights, reduce use of government vehicles, and restrict further installation of electrical hook ups to private homes.

Headquarters officials are analyzing the fuel situation to determine its impact on all six districts. It is expected that territory wide conservation measures may be announced soon.

PRICE OF COPRA INCREASES

According to Trust Territory Copra Stabilization Board Chairman Eusebio Rechucher, the Board has voted a \$60 per ton increase in the price paid for copra. The increase is due to a substantial improvement in the price paid for copra on the world market over the last few months. Rechucher stated that "this increase in price, bringing grade one copra to nine cents a pound, promises our copra producers a nice Christmas."

Effective December 3, the district center price per ton for grade one copra became \$182.50; for grade two, \$172.50; and for grade three, \$162.50. This is the highest price paid for copra in Micronesia since the beginning of the U.S. Administration. The previous high came in 1961 when the district center price reached \$150.00.

In other actions last week, the Board authorized its agent to explore the possibility of locating new copra markets for the Trust Territory in Taiwan and Fiji. Previous copra sales have been made almost exclusively in Japan. Funds were also allocated to each district to build copra warehouses with construction on the Ponape and Majuro warehouses to begin immediately.

MARINE RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FUND

According to a report from Acting Director of Resources and Development Eusebio Rechucher more than \$400,000 remains in the Marine Resources Development Fund (MRDF). The sum represents part of the Congress of Micronesia appropriation of \$400,000 to be utilized for the development of marine resources on a commercial basis.

Loans may be granted on the following basis: No more than \$25,000 shall be loaned to any individual as a direct loan, or no more than \$50,000 as a MRDF-guaranteed bank loan. No more than \$50,000 shall be loaned to any Trust Territory corporations, cooperatives or association as a direct loan, or no more than \$100,000 as a MRDF-guaranteed bank loan.

The loans may be utilized to finance projects for the commercial development of marine resources which may include, but are not limited to the following: aquaculture, mariculture, off-shore and/or inshore fishing, commercial sports fishing and diving, purchase of boats and motors for inshore fishing, purchase of fishing supplies and equipment, purchase of vessels for off-shore fishing, and storage, distribution and marketing of marine products.

ADB APPROVES TT MEMBERSHIP

Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman announced last week that the U.S. National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies has recommended that the Trust Territory become an associate member of the Asia Development Bank (ADB). Coleman stated, however, that certain requirements must be met before the TT could become an associate member.

First, the Congress of Micronesia must provide enabling legislation authorizing the TT to be an associate member of ADB. Second, plans for guarantee of capital subscription and eventual loan repayments need to be submitted to the Asia Development Bank for approval.

The Deputy HiCom, who is also Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Micronesia, travelled to the Far East earlier this month to make preliminary arrangements for the TT to become an associate member of ADB. The Bank's Board of Directors has also enlisted the support of both the State and Interior Departments to take the necessary steps on the TT's application to the ADB. Thus, members of the Congress of Micronesia and the Executive Branch are coordinating efforts with Washington officials in order to effectuate the TT's membership in the Asia Development Bank.

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

A 42-year old fisherman from Kusaie Island, Ponape District, reported missing September 27, was found last week by a Japanese fishing boat 45 miles from Moen, Truk District. According to preliminary reports from Truk, the 13 year old boy, Hosia Otis, who accompanied Joseph Tulena on his fishing trip is missing and is presumed lost at sea.

The Marianas Status Commission will conduct public meetings on Saipan, Tinian and Rota this week to inform the general public on what the commission has been doing and what has been accomplished so far in the negotiations. Senator Edward Dlg. Pangelinan, Chairman of the Commission, also announced that the Third Round of negotiations between the Marianas group and the U.S. delegation will begin Dec. 6 on Saipan.

In Palau, Acting District Administrator Haruo I. Remeliik signed into law thirteen of the fourteen bills passed by the Fifth Palau Legislature. Also in Palau, a special session of the Palau District Legislature was held last week to review and consider the report of the Palau delegation on the results of the Seventh Round of status negotiations recently concluded in Washington.

A large Japanese passenger ship, the SS Oriental President, and a Pan American World Airways 707 jet brought a total of 637 Japanese tourists to Saipan last week. The passenger ship brought 458 members of the Young Roots Association whose main purpose is the promotion of friendship between the young people of Japan and other countries. The Pan Am jet carrying 179 passengers was the largest commercial aircraft ever to land anywhere in the Trust Territory.

Chief of Broadcast Division Elias Thomas and Special Assistant to the Director of Public Affairs George Callison are scheduled to attend the Asian Broadcasting Union's meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia this week.

The Trust Territory's six district Directors of Education met in Truk last week to discuss legislative measures for the upcoming Congress of Micronesia session; goals, programs and studies at the Community College of Micronesia; the status of the Micronesian Occupational Center in Palau; policies of selecting teachers; research and planning needs; the impact of budget reduction; and district school board questions.

According to an announcement from the Economic Development Division of Resources and Development, foreign business permits were granted to Fabriclean of Micronesia to engage in commercial laundry and dry cleaning business in the Marianas and to Turtle Tours of Micronesia Incorporated for hotel development in the Marianas.

Acting Director of Resources and Development Eusebio Rechucher announced the resignation of William E. Mooney, employment services officer and Acting Chief of Labor. Mooney joined the Attorney General's Office in 1967 and served as Registrar of Corporation and as Immigration Officer. He was appointed Acting Chief of Labor Division in 1970.