

New TT Talks Set In Capital

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SAIPAN - After much uncertainty, the next round in the continuing U.S.-Micronesian future status talks has now been firmly set to begin Nov. 10 in Washington, D.C. it was learned on Saipan yesterday.

The announcement came in a joint statement issued by the two delegations as a follow-up to informal meetings in Honolulu last Wednesday and Thursday.

"We wanted the talks to start in early November," Sen. Lazarus Saliu, chairman of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status, told The Daily News. "Because half of our committee planned to be in Washington anyway for the CAB hearing on Nov. 8, this will save a lot of money by having the talks then."

Members of the committee as well as other TT representatives will be making presentations to the Civil Aeronautics Board on the Saipan-Japan air route case.

While the Washington negotiations will be open-ended, Saliu indicated they might last about three weeks.

The talks had previously been tentatively set to start later this month or early October in Truk, Majuro or Ponape. Disagreements between the two delegations over return of public lands and political education had threatened to postpone the negotiations.

The statement from Saliu and Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, head of the U.S. delegation, indicated that when the two sides meet in Washington they will first consider the question of public lands in Micronesia and then other items remaining to be completed in the draft compact of free association between the United States and Micronesia. The committee hopes to present

the draft compact to the Congress of Micronesia in January.

For the Honolulu session Saliu was joined by Rep. Ekapap Silk, Joint Committee co-chairman. Also present was James M. Wilson, Jr., deputy U.S. representative. They were later joined by TT High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston and Stanley S. Carpenter, director of territorial affairs for the Interior Department.

The High Commissioner briefed Saliu and Williams on the TT's plans to initiate "an expanded and comprehensive new program of education for self-government in Micronesia." This will be administered by the TT government, the statement said, contrary to recent impressions created over a controversy surrounding what Saliu called "propagandizing" of prepared political education materials.

The High Commissioner had said over the weekend that he would make an important announcement today. It is now expected that this will concern

the political education program. "The United States will stay out of political education, and the Congress of Micronesia will, too," Saliu explained.

The High Commissioner normally does not participate in future status discussions between the two sides, but evidently went to Honolulu to present the TT's revised political education proposals. He was accompanied by Strik Yoma, TT director of Public Affairs, whose department will be responsible for the program.

Saliu yesterday declined to comment on what effect his committee's re-scheduled talks will have on the separate Marianas-U.S. status negotiations. These were to begin on Saipan in mid-to-late November, although chairman Edward D.L.G. Pangelinan of the Marianas delegation recently said he was willing to postpone them until early March 1974.

The Joint Committee's next round of talks has been predicated on U.S. agreement with its condition that public lands in Palau must first be

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Lands Issue: Answer Due?

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returned to the traditional chiefs.

"Williams told us in Honolulu that we would be satisfied with their response to our conditions," said Saliu yesterday. "Because they know what our conditions are and that we feel very strongly about this, I think they have decided to go along with it."

He said he expected the U.S. to announce its decision on the lands question soon.

Among the committee's recommendations for disposition of public lands in Micronesia during and after a

transition to a new government are that all public lands should be returned to the districts through legislation adopted by the Congress of Micronesia. The legislation would be drafted to reflect any differing wishes of the various districts.

Land management, legislative and land cadaster authority also would be transferred to the districts if the committee's proposals are adopted.

Tidal lands, lagoons and other submerged TT lands would be treated in the same manner as land. Public land now used for public purposes should also be returned to the districts.

suggested the committee: with provision made for leaseback easement so that the public use could be continued.

Rather than creating separate land courts for each district, the committee has said the traditional means of adjudicating rival land claims along with the TT courts should be used to settle disputes.

It has also been suggested that the United States, administering authority of the territory, should absorb additional costs involved in the part of the changeover from trusteeship responsibilities.