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Law Separates Kusaie From Ponape

SAIPAN (MNS) -- The bill to make the island of Kusaie a separate district officially became law Friday when Deputy High Commissioner Peter F. Coleman put his signature to senate bill 298 in a brief ceremony in his office on Saipan. The bill is now public law 5-77, a number which is significant since 1977 is the year when, under the new law, Kusaie will officially attain separate district status.

The bill was one of the most significant measures approved by the Congress of Micronesia during its 1974 regular session on Saipan, marking the culmination of several years of effort by Kusaie's leaders to achieve separate district status. The new public law allows for just over two and a half years of "lead time," to enable Trust Territory headquarters and Ponape district government officials to gradually make the

transition, as well as to allow for construction of additional public facilities in Kusaie to bring the island up to something approaching the standards of other districts. These new facilities include an airport and greatly improved dock facilities, and a new Kusaie hospital, all in the planning stage.

On hand to witness the historic signing in Coleman's office were Strik Yoma, director of public affairs, N. Neiman Craley Jr., special assistant for legislative affairs, and acting Attorney General Mamoru Nakamura.

The bill is one of nine which were signed by the deputy HiCom Friday afternoon. Added to the bills which he signed late Thursday they bring to 31 the measures which have been signed into law thus far, of the 46 which were passed during the recent congressional session. The other new public laws

include: an act to provide for the expiration of nonresident worker's hiring permits for businesses when no nonresident worker has been hired and is present in the TT within sixty days from the date of the agreement; a bill establishing the Trust Territory planning office within the office of the high commissioner; a bill to eliminate the present Trust Territory income tax deduction for anyone earning more than \$5,000 a year; an act making certain amendments to public law 5-52 which provides benefits for the radiation-fallout victims of Rongelap and Utrik in the Marshalls; an act providing for establishment of a foreign service premium for Micronesian government employees whose work required them to live outside the Trust Territory; and finally, a bill to establish a Micronesian sports council, appropriating \$80,000

to fund the organization.

This latter measure is expected to pave the way for some sort of Micronesian participation in the forthcoming South Pacific Games, which are as a citizen of the Trust

territory. This measure becomes private law 5-1, since legislation which applies to only a single individual does not become part of the body of public laws in the TT.

Coleman also signed one private bill into law. It is a measure making Estafania Rios Arce eligible for naturalization as a citizen of the Trust Territory.

Sali Back On Saipan

SAIPAN (MNS) -- The chairman of the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status, Senator Lazarus Sali of Palau, returned to Saipan this week from California, where he and other members of the joint committee met with Ambassador F. Hayden Williams and other American status negotiators.

The senator said the talks were "very productive, and moved very fast." The meetings took place at Carmel, a resort area south of San Francisco, from April 1 to April 5. Joint committee co-chairman Ekpap Slik of the Marshalls and committee member Senator Bailey Oler of Ponape also took part, while on the American side deputy U.S. representative for Micronesian status negotiations James Wilson

joined Ambassador Williams, along with other American officials concerned with certain technical areas of the negotiations.

"We touched upon title four (of the draft compact), which is the title on finance, as well as ranging over the entire list of other issues which still remain to be settled in the negotiations," the senator stated. He declined to be more specific on the talks until he can brief other members of the joint committee later this month.

The twelve member joint committee will travel to Guam April 19 and 20 to meet with members of the Guam political status commission. Senator Sali said he will brief members of the delegation on his talks with Ambassador Williams either just prior to or following that meeting.

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