

Week in Review

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

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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IMPACT STATEMENT ON ENEWETAK PRESENTED

The people of Enewetak learned last week that they will be allowed to return to their atoll soon, but that some of the islands in the atoll are too heavily contaminated with radioactivity to permit living on them at this time.

The disclosures came during a two-day meeting involving some 50 leaders of the Ujelang community--where the people of Enewetak now live--and an official delegation from Washington, D.C. headed by Lt. Gen. Warren D. Johnson, Director of the Defense Nuclear Agency. Also participating in the meeting were Stanley S. Carpenter, Director of the Department of Interior's Office of Territories, and Peter T. Coleman, Deputy High Commissioner of the Trust Territory.

The Washington delegation presented to the people a draft environmental impact statement, the product of more than two year's work. The statement incorporates the findings of the Atomic Energy Commission, which conducted a detailed radiological survey of Enewetak to determine the remaining levels of radioactivity from nuclear testing that was carried out on the atoll from 1947 to 1958. They concluded that it would be safe for the people to return to establish settlements on the islands of the southern half of the atoll, principally Enewetak itself, Medren and Japtan, but that islands in the northern part of the atoll, where most of the tests occurred, still show sufficiently high levels of radiation that it would not be wise for people to live permanently on them at this time. The statement also showed that one island, Runit, is contaminated with Plutonium, which scientists do not know how to effectively clean up. That island will have to remain quarantined for the foreseeable future while further study is given to the problem of cleaning it up, although the statement also made clear that most of the plutonium contamination will also be removed during the cleanup of the atoll.

Carpenter announced to the people that the Interior Department has decided to permit a group of about 50 people to return to Enewetak very soon--probably before the end of this year--to establish a settlement on the island of Japtan. It is hoped that some of these people would be employed in the cleanup and rehabilitation of the atoll. The Defense Nuclear Agency has responsibility for the cleanup, a multi-million dollar project that could take three years from the time it is approved by the U.S. Congress and a

contract is let. The Interior Department will be responsible for the rehabilitation, including re-planting of food crops and building of houses, which could begin while the cleanup is in progress.

The people of Enewetak, with advice from their legal counsel, the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation, are presently reviewing the draft environmental impact statement. They have 45 days to respond to it.

MARIANAS LEGISLATURE WANTS SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION

The Mariana Islands District Legislature, concluding a regular session last week, voted to adopt a resolution requesting that the Mariana Islands District be administered separately from the other districts of the Trust Territory. The resolution was adopted unanimously, and puts the legislature in opposition to the Congress of Micronesia, which during its special session this summer adopted a resolution opposing separate administration.

The separate administration of the Marianas prior to termination of the Trusteeship Agreement is seen as a possibility because separate status talks with the Marianas are nearing a conclusion that would make the Marianas a commonwealth and a permanent part of the U.S. The district resolution urges the United States "...to take all steps which are appropriate and necessary for the administration of the Mariana Islands District separate and apart from the other districts including: Terminating all of the responsibility and authority of the Congress of Micronesia respecting the affairs of the Mariana Islands District, and granting such responsibility and authority to the Mariana Islands District Legislature; terminating the participation of representatives of the Mariana Islands in the Congress of Micronesia; providing for the retention of locally raised revenues for appropriation by the district legislature; assuring maximum participation by the people of the Marianas in all aspects of local government; and establishing a separate executive authority for the Marianas."

The resolution asks that such separate administration be put into effect as soon as possible after approval of a status agreement by the people of the Marianas.

BILLS SIGNED BY HICOM

Trust Territory High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston signed 16 bills into law last week, all of them measures passed during the special session of the Congress of Micronesia this summer on Saipan. Most of the bills were appropriation measures, and shortly after they were signed it was pointed out by a spokesman for the HiCom's office that the Congress has appropriated more funds than it has available, running a deficit of about 1.7 million dollars.

N. Neiman Craley, Jr., Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs, said that the Congress has been operating with a deficit for several years, but that "each year it seems to get worse." He pointed out that with the passage of revenue sharing, which beginning next fiscal year will return twenty per cent of tax revenue to the district for appropriation, the Congress

will have even less money available for use in funding various projects. He said if the Congress were to continue funding programs that exceed their revenues, there will come a time when either funded programs will have to be discarded, or the Congress will have to do without legislating anything that requires funding because all available revenues will have been obligated by earlier legislation.

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE ON SAIPAN

There was a major economic conference on Saipan last week, involving the top corporate officers of some of the leading companies in Japan and Hawaii. The estimated 50 members of the Japan-Hawaii Economic Council held a one-day meeting at the Saipan Continental Hotel, during which they heard a detailed briefing on the Micronesian economy and opportunities for foreign investment, and indicated that there is a good deal of interest in investing in the Trust Territory, particularly in Japan.

Director of Resources and Development Eusebio Rechucher explained the territory's procedures for foreign investment to the businessmen, and told them that the government's policy is to insure maximum participation in ownership and management to Micronesians in any foreign business enterprise. The businessmen were told that the greatest opportunities for investment exist in the fields of tourism, agriculture and marine resources development.

MICRONESIA PRINCESS ARRIVES

The Micronesia Princess, newest ship to enter the Trust Territory inter-island shipping service, arrived last week, calling first at Saipan. An open house was held on the new ship, and hundreds of local residents, including several groups of school children, made a tour of the Princess, which was named in a special contest among Micronesian school students. The ship, which was built in Korea, was designed especially for the Micronesian service, and is the first of a planned eight ships which would eventually replace the present fleet of TT field trip vessels.

The Micronesia Princess is designed to carry all types of cargo, including containers, as well as up to 100 deck passengers. She was designed so that cargo can be easily off-loaded in areas where there are no dock facilities, and she carries her own lighter for this purpose. The ship will initially serve in Yap and Palau Districts, replacing the James Cook, which is scheduled for drydock work. Eventually, the Micronesia Princess will visit all districts before being permanently assigned.

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

Chief Justice Harold W. Burnett has ruled that the controversial case of Roger St. Pierre should be resolved by the U.S. Civil Service Commission. St. Pierre's removal as Chief Public Defender has been sought by the government for more than a year, and he is fighting the action. A temporary restraining order issued by the High Court, preventing St. Pierre's removal pending final outcome of the case, remains in effect.

Applicants for loans from the Economic Development Loan Fund must comply with provisions of Public Law 5-85 or have their loan applications returned, according to an announcement from the loan board chairman last week. The law requires any Micronesian citizen married to, or adopted by, a non-citizen to comply with provisions of the foreign investment permit act in order to do business in the TT.

One hundred thirty-eight new Peace Corps Volunteers have completed their basic training, and are now serving in all six districts. Most of the new volunteers are teachers.

Finally, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco has rejected an appeal filed on behalf of the plaintiffs in the Saipan Continental Hotel Case. The plaintiffs, ten Saipan residents headed by Congressman Herman Guerrero, had sought a rehearing on the court's ruling that the case must be returned to the Trust Territory High Court for judgement. The hotel, which has been open since March 15, is planning a grand opening celebration on September 20.