

# Week in Review

## SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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Saipan, Mariana Islands

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### HICOM NOMINATES SIX

The names of six individuals to fill top positions in the Executive Branch were sent to the Congress of Micronesia for advice and consent last week. Five of the six are Micronesians, including the fifth Micronesian named to head one of the eight cabinet level departments at Trust Territory headquarters.

The nominations are expected to be taken up by the six-member Joint Committee on Administrative Appointments of the Congress, headed by Senator Andon Amaraich (Truk).

Nominated were: Juan A. Sablan, presently Truk District Administrator, for the position of Executive Officer on the staff of the High Commissioner;

Mitaro S. Danis, now Deputy DistAd in Truk, to replace Sablan as DistAd;

Podis Pedrus, presently Deputy Director of Personnel, to become director of that department upon the retirement of Arthur Akina on December 22 of this year;

Bermin Weilbacher, now Chief of the Agriculture Division, to become Deputy District Administrator of Ponape District;

Elias Okamura, now assistant to the director, to become deputy director of the Department of Transportation and Communications; and

William H. Stewart, an industrial economist, to become Deputy Director of the Resources and Development Department.

The nomination of Okamura is being made for the second time. It was received by the Congress two years ago, but since then Okamura has received additional training and experience which the administration feels should offset the previous objections which the Congress had to the appointment. All other nominations are new, being considered by the Congress for the first time. The joint committee has 45 days in which to render a decision on the nominees. By week's end, no time had been set for hearings.

### BUDGET HEARINGS, SPC, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROMPT TRAVEL

Officials of the Congress of Micronesia and the Executive Branch will be travelling extensively during the next several weeks to widely separated areas of the world.

A delegation of fiscal experts is currently in Washington, D.C. for hearings before the U.S. Congress on legislation to raise the amount of money permitted for the TT -- the so-called "ceiling" on grant funding--to 75 million dollars for Fiscal Year 1975 and 80 million dollars for Fiscal Year 1976. Presently this "ceiling" is 60 million dollars.

The chairman and co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Program and Budget Planning, Representative Raymond Setik (Truk) and Senator Bailey Olter (Ponape), and House Speaker Bethwel Henry (Ponape) are representing the Congress at the hearings. TT budget office officials and Marshall Islands DistAd Oscar DeBrum complete the delegation.

The Trust Territory will be represented at the annual South Pacific Commission conference in Rarotonga, the Cook Islands by an official delegation headed by Senator Amata Kabua (Marshalls) and Special Consultant Dwight Heine. The Conference begins September 25 and will run through October 7. Also attending from Micronesia will be Yap DistAd Leonard Aguigui, Congressman Masao Nakayama (Truk), and several staff assistants.

Some members of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on future status and resources and development are off to Japan, Korea and the Philippines this week, seeking to study the possibilities of economic and developmental assistance from nations of the Pacific Basin. They are accompanied by two businessmen and various representatives from the Executive Branch, on a trip that is expected to last until October 10.

And the presiding officers of the Congress of Micronesia, Speaker Henry and Senate President Tosiwo Nakayama (Truk), have been invited to represent the Trust Territory at the centenary and independence day celebrations of Fiji, set for October 9.

#### HOTEL IS DEDICATED AS LEGAL BATTLE CONTINUES

The plush, expensive Saipan Continental Hotel was formally dedicated last week, only a few hours after Trust Territory Chief Justice Harold W. Burnett acted to dismiss latest legal moves against the establishment brought by the Micronesian Legal Corporation. The MLSC, acting on behalf of ten Saipanese plaintiffs who have been fighting the location of the hotel for more than two years, sought to have a temporary restraining order served on the hotel to prevent it from opening any additional rooms or making other additions or changes on the site, and to enjoin the hotel from any further use of Saipan municipal utilities, primarily water.

Judge Burnett denied the motions, finding no legal basis for them. He suggested instead that the so-called Continental Hotel Case, which is still pending following a decision by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that threw the matter back into the TT court system, proceed "on its merits" without further attempts at restraining orders or injunctions. He pointed out that it is too late for such moves anyway, since the hotel is already finished and has been substantially complete since June of this year.

The formal dedication did not involve opening any further rooms. The hotel, with its 184 rooms, two restaurants, bar, swimming pool, pitch and putt golf course, and other amenities, is now officially open.

A huge party, with nearly 400 invited guests, followed the dedication, Roman Catholic and Shinto blessings, and a ribbon-cutting. The guests saw a fireworks display, Micronesian dancing on a torch-lighted raft in the lagoon, and were treated to a massive banquet--quite possibly the most lavish celebration ever held in the TT. It was appropriate, for the hotel cost Continental Airlines eight and a half million dollars to build, and at 34 dollars per night for a single room--75 dollars a night for the suites--it is the most expensive hotel in the territory. Travel writers and editors from a number of big U.S. publications were brought in to cover the event, and insure that the hotel, and Saipan, will receive wide publicity during the next several months.

#### COPRA PRICES DROPPING

The price of copra on world markets, which had been climbing steadily for nearly two years as a result of the oil crisis and increasing demand, has fallen off sharply in recent months. The Chairman of the Trust Territory Copra Stabilization Board, Eusebio Rechucher, said a recent review of world prices indicates that a drop of about 240 dollars per ton has been experienced. Rechucher added, however, that the current high prices to Micronesian producers will remain the same for the time being, supplemented if necessary by money from the copra stabilization fund. Producers in the TT are now receiving a top price of 400 dollars per ton, the highest ever. Copra is the principle export commodity in the TT.

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

Trust Territory health services were praised in a letter from an official of the American Medical Association. The President of the AMA, Dr. Malcolm Todd, toured the territory recently, and was "very impressed" with what he saw of the health care delivery system and health training programs in Micronesia.

A new district director of education has been appointed in Yap District. He is Alfonso Fanechigi, who replaces John Perkins. All six district directors of education are now Micronesians.

Three members of the Marianas Land Committee are in Washington for continuing discussions with American officials of U.S. land requirements in the Marianas. The committee is a sub-division of the district's political status commission, which is negotiating with the United States on a future status for the Marianas.

A workshop for district civic affairs officers was held last week on Saipan. The men who are responsible for carrying out the Education for Self Government program heard a talk by Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman praising them for their work.

A Japanese fishing boat was captured at Pingelap Atoll, in Ponape District, last week and charged with illegal entry. The captain was fined 250 dollars in a Ponape court.

Some members of the Japan-Hawaii Economic Council visited Koror last weekend, following a one-day meeting on Saipan to discuss the possibilities of foreign investment in Micronesia.

The TT School of Nursing has finally opened its fall freshmen class, after a three-week delay caused by a salary dispute with teachers. The 65-student school is located on Saipan.

The U.S. Navy airdropped a box of medical supplies on remote Kapingamarangi Atoll in Ponape District last week, to aid a diabetic patient there.

Two new district attorneys have taken up their duties for the government in Truk and the Marshalls districts. Jack D. Layne is assigned to Truk District, while the new district attorney in the Marshalls is Harley J. Earwicher.

Finally, a baby boy was born last week on board an Air Micronesia flight between the Marshalls and Ponape--a "first" for the airline. The two hostesses, Candy Borja and Teri Lindsey, were assisted by Dr. Isaac Lanwi of the Marshalls, who happened to be on board, in bringing young "Micro" Friendly into the world. He is the son of Mrs. Louisa Friendly of Kusaie, who was on her way to her home to have her first child. The boy and mother are healthy, and Air Mike officials are almost as proud as the real parents, especially since the mother decided to name her baby "Micro" in honor of his unorthodox place of birth.