

(CONGRESS SESSIONS BEGINS)

SAIPAN, JAN. OR KMNS)---THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE FIFTH CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA BEGAN ON SCHEDULE MONDAY (JAN. 14). SENATE PRESIDENT TOSIWO NAKAYAMA OF TRUK AND HOUSE SPEAKER BETHWEL HENRY OF PONAPE CALLED THEIR RESPECTIVE HOUSES TO ORDER AT ALMOST EXACTLY THE PRESCRIBED HOUR OF TEN A.M., BEFORE PACKED GALLERIES OF WITNESSES. THE SESSIONS WERE BRIEF AND FORMAL, ALTHOUGH IN THE SENATE ONE COMMITTEE WAS READY WITH A REPORT ON A BILL THAT LATER WAS PASSED ON SECOND AND FINAL READING. N

THE HOUSE SESSION SAW TWO CONGRESSMEN DELIVER BRIEF REMARKS FROM THE FLOOR, PERHAPS SETTING THE STAGE FOR DEBATES TO COME ON CURRENTLY SERIOUS PROBLEM AREAS. REPRESENTATIVE SASAUO HARUO (TRUK) VOICED HIS CONCERN OVER THE RECENT FREIGHT RATE INCREASE IMPOSED BY TRANSPACIFIC LINES, INC., SAYING IT WAS PUTTING A PARTICULAR HARDSHIP ON MICRONESIAN CONSUMERS.

"I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THIS SESSION OF THE CONGRESS LOOK INTO THE MATTER SERIOUSLY," HARUO SAID, "AND, IF IT IS NOT OUT OF ORDER FOR ME TO SAY SO THIS MORNING, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE SPEAKER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SEE IF THIS ACTION BY TRANSPAC IS NOT A BREACH OF CONTRACT."

FOLLOWING THE SESSION, ANOTHER CONGRESS MEMBER SAID HE FEELS THE CONGRESS SHOULD PUT ASIDE ALL OTHER BUSINESS FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE SESSION IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSPAC.

ANOTHER TYPE OF SHIPPING PROBLEM WAS THE CONCERN OF REPRESENTATIVE JOHN HEINE (MARSHALLS). HE SAID HE RECENTLY COMPLETED A FIELD TRIP IN HIS DISTRICT, AND "EVERYWHERE WE SENT, WE FOUND OUT THAT THOSE ATOLLS AND ISLANDS HAVE NOT HAD A FIELD TRIP SHIP FOR OVER TEN MONTHS. NOW THAT THE PRICE OF COPRA IS VERY PROMISING," HEINE SAID, "IT IS USELESS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO MAKE COPRA WHEN THERE IS NO SHIP TO PICK IT UP FOR EXPORT."

THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE ON OPENING DAY CONSISTED OF NAMING DELEGATIONS TO INFORM BOTH THE SENATE AND HIGH COMMISSIONER THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS ORGANIZED AND READY TO TRANSACT BUSINESS.

IN THE SENATE, SOME BUSINESS WAS TRANSACTED ON OPENING DAY, AS ONE BILL PASSED SECOND AND FINAL READING AND WAS SENT TO THE HOUSE FOR CONSIDERATION. THE BILL IS ONE WHICH RELATES TO BENEFITS TO NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS (SB 12) AND WOULD REQUIRE THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE REGULAR STIPENDS TO SUCH STUDENTS IF THE MONETARY STIPENDS ARE ALSO PROVIDED TO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SAME DISTRICT. THE BILL, WHICH WAS OPPOSED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PASSED WITHOUT OPPOSITION, FOLLOWING A FAVORABLE COMMITTEE REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS CHAIRED BY SENATOR PETRUS TUN (YAP).

SENATE PRESIDENT TOSIWO NAKAYAMA, IN A BRIEF OPENING COMMENT, SAID THE SESSION WILL BE DISCUSSING MANY IMPORTANT MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH FACE MICRONESIA DURING THE NEXT FIFTY DAYS. "THIS PROMISES TO BE A MOST PRODUCTIVE SESSION WHICH WILL PUT OUR SKILLS AS LAWMAKER TO THE TEST--A TEST IN WHICH I AM SURE WE WILL ALL DO OUR BEST," SAID THE SENATE PRESIDENT.

ONE NEW PIECE OF LEGISLATION WAS OFFERED FOR CONSIDERATION DURING THE SENATE SESSION. INTRODUCED BY SENATOR ANDON AMARAICH (TRUK), IT IS A BILL RELATING TO ADMINISTRATIVE LAW (SB 185). SENATOR AMARAICH ALSO ANNOUNCED A SCHEDULE OF HEARINGS FOR HIS COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, TRADITIONALLY ONE OF THE BUSIEST COMMITTEES AND ONE OF THE FIRST TO BEGIN ITS WORK EACH SESSION.

BOTH HOUSES OF THE CONGRESS ARE IN RECESS UNTIL TEN TUESDAY MORNING.

(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: BECAUSE THE OPENING DAYS ACTIVITIES WERE BRIEF, WE HAVE INCORPORATED THE CONGRESS MNS REPORT INTO THE DA'S REGULAR MNS DISPATCH. SEPARATE DISPATCHES FROM THE CONGRESS WILL BEGIN WHEN THE AMOUNT OF NEWS GENERATED BY THE CONGRESS SESSION WARRANTS THEM.)

(MINK VISIT CANCELLED)

SAIPAN, JAN. 14 (MNS)---HAWAII'S CONGRESSWOMAN PATSY T MINK WAS FORCED TO CANCEL HER PLANNED VISIT TO THE TRUST TERRITORY THIS WEEK BECAUSE OF ILLNESS. MRS. MINK AND CONGRESSMAN LLOYD NEEDS OF WASHINGTON WERE TO HAVE VISITED TRUK, MAJURO AND PONAPE FOR ONE DAY EACH BEGINNING MONDAY (JAN. 14). NEEDS IS MAKING THE TRIP, BUT MRS. MINK WILL NOT, ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED ON SAIPAN FROM WASHINGTON OVER THE WEEKEND.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS N. NEIMAN CRALEY, JR., OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE FLEW TO TRUK ON SUNDAY TO MEET REPRESENTATIVE NEEDS, WHO IS ACCOMPANIED BY TWO STAFF ASSISTANTS. CRALEY WILL ACCOMPANY THE GROUP TO MAJURO AND WILL THEN RETURN TO SAIPAN WHILE THE DELEGATION CONTINUES ON TO PONAPE. NEEDS AND HIS GROUP WILL RETURN TO HAWAII THURSDAY.

THE CONGRESSMAN IS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE INTERIOR SUB-COMMITTEE ON TERRITORIAL AND INSULAR AFFAIRS, WHOSE CHAIRMAN, REPRESENTATIVE PHILLIP BURTON OF CALIFORNIA, AND SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS VISIT THE MARIANA ISLANDS EARLIER THIS MONTH. THE VISITS CONSTITUTE THE FIRST OFFICIAL U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TRIPS TO THE TRUST TERRITORY IN NEARLY SIX YEARS.

(PLANE CRASH INJURIES TWO)

SAIPAN, JAN. 14 (MNS)---THE PILOT AND HIS ONLY PASSENGER WERE INJURED SUNDAY AFTERNOON (JAN. 13) WHEN A LIGHT, SINGLE-ENGINE AIRCRAFT CRASHED WHILE ATTEMPTING A TAKE-OFF FROM UNINHABITED GOAT ISLAND, (AGUIJAN) SOME THREE MILES SOUTH OF TINIAN IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS.

THE PILOT WAS IDENTIFIED AS SERAFIN M. DELA CRUZ OF TINIAN, ONE OF THE FIRST MICRONESIANS EVER TO OBTAIN A PILOT'S LICENSE AND PURCHASE HIS OWN AIRPLANE. DELA CRUZ OBTAINED THE SMALL CESSNA C-150 LATE LAST YEAR ON GUAM, AND BASED IT ON TINIAN. HE HAD MADE NUMEROUS FLIGHTS TO GOAT ISLAND, A POPULAR HUNTING AND FISHING SPOT.

ACCORDING TO U.S. NAVY LIAISON OFFICER ON SAIPAN LT. COMMANDER ALAN R. PENDLETON, THE ACCIDENT WAS PROBABLY CAUSED BY THE HIGH WINDS OF TROPICAL STORM WANDA, WHICH PASSED NEAR GOAT ISLAND AND TINIAN SUNDAY. PENDLETON SAID REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE PILOT VIA THE PLANE'S RADIO, WHICH REMAINED IN OPERATING CONDITION AFTER THE CRASH, INDICATED THAT BOTH HE AND HIS PASSENGER, IDENTIFIED ONLY AS PEDRO CURZ, WERE INJURED. THE PASSENGER'S INJURIES WERE THE MOST SERIOUS.

DELA CRUZ HAD BEEN USING HIS PLANE TO FERRY HUNTERS TO AND FROM GOAT ISLAND, AND APPARENTLY ABOUT NINE PEOPLE WERE ON THE ISLAND AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT. THERE ARE NO IMPROVED LANDING FACILITIES ON GOAT ISLAND, BUT DELA CRUZ HAD CLEARED AN AREA ADEQUATE FOR HIS SMALL PLANE UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS.

RESCUE PLANS, WHICH WERE UNDERWAY MONDAY AFTERNOON, CALLED FOR THE HELICOPTER FROM GUAM BELONGING TO GUAM SENATOR RICARDO BORDALLO TO BE FLOWN TO SAIPAN, WITH A STOP AT ROTA FOR REFUELING, ESCORTED BY A NAVY HU-16 WHICH WOULD PROVIDE NAVIGATIONAL AID SINCE THE HELICOPTER IS NOT EQUIPPED FOR LONG OVER-WATER FLIGHT. FROM SAIPAN, WHERE THE HELICOPTER WOULD AGAIN RE-FUEL, IT WAS TO FLY TO GOAT ISLAND, PICK UP THE INJURED PASSENGER, AND RETURN HIM TO SAIPAN WHERE THE HU-16 WOULD STAND BY TO TRANSPORT HIM TO GUAM FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION IF NEEDED.

THERE WAS NO MILITARY HELICOPTER ON GUAM AVAILABLE TO PERFORM THE RESCUE, AND LANDING THE HU-16 OR ANOTHER LIGHT PLANE ON GOAT ISLAND WAS DEEMED NOT ADVISABLE.

THERE IS NO INDICATION HOW BADLY DAMAGED THE PLANE IS, OR WHETHER DELA DRUZ WILL BE ABLE TO SALVAGE OR REPAIR IT.

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NOTE: Needs + Jackson if the weather can't fly, are close.

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