

(ALL USERS OF THE FOLLOWING STORY, PLEASE CREDIT THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)

(R & D COMMITTEES WANT TRANSPAC FRANCHISE ENDED)

SAIPAN JANUARY 18 (CONGRESS RELEASE)--THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA RECOMMENDED TO HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON FRIDAY THAT THE FRANCHISE OF TRANSPACIFIC LINES, INC., THE TRUST TERRITORY'S EXCLUSIVE SHIPPING COMPANY, BE TERMINATED, AND THAT A NEW AND MORE DEPENDABLE SHIPPING ARRANGEMENT BE INSTITUTED.

THE DECISION WAS MADE PUBLIC DURING A SPEECH AS TRUK REPRESENTATIVE, SASAUO HARUO, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, PRESENTED THE REPORT TO THE CONGRESS HARUO SPOKE OF "BLUNT ECONOMIC FACTS" THAT NOW FACE MICRONESIA, AND SAID THE CONGRESS DECISION, ALTHOUGH HARD TO MAKE, TOOK INTO ACCOUNT MANY DOCUMENTED CHARGES AGAINST THE COMPANY. THEY INCLUDE:

- NON-ADHERENCE TO PUBLISHED SHIPPING SCHEDULES;
- 60 DAY SERVICE TO THE EASTERN DISTRICTS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE 30 OR 90 DAY SERVICE, IF THERE WAS SERVICE AT ALL;
- THE 18 DAY SHUTTLE BETWEEN KOROR, YAP, GUAM AND SAIPAN IS NON-EXISTENT;
- DIRECT WEST COAST SERVICE HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED AND MICRONESIA-BOUND CARGO NOW RIDES PIGGY-BACK ON ANOTHER LINE'S SHIPS FOR TRANS-SHIPMENT AT GUAM;
- DIRECT SERVICE FROM THE FAR EAST IS IRREGULAR AND UNPREDICTABLE;
- TRANSPACIFIC'S DEBT IS OVER \$2 MILLION AND CANNOT BE RETIRED IN THE REMAINING 5 YEARS OF THE FRANCHISE;

--THERE IS LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN TRANSPAC BY THE PUBLIC AND ITS CREDITORS;

--AND THAT TOGETHER, WITH ALL THESE REASONS, TRANSPAC CONTINUES TO BE MISMANAGED; BILLS OF LADING ARRIVE WITH NO CARGO, CARGO IS STILL OFF-LOADED AT THE WRONG PORTS, AND THE NONE PAYMENT OF CLAIMS CONTINUE.

"THE LIST IS ENDLESS," SAID HARUO.

IN HIS SPEECH, REPRESENTATIVE HARUO QUOTED HIGH COMMISSIONER, EDWARD E. JOHNSTON'S STATE OF THE TERRITORY ADDRESS GIVEN BARELY ON HOUR EARLIER FRIDAY MORNING IN WHICH THE HICOM PROMISED THE CONGRESS SUPPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN ATTEMPTING TO FIND A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE SHIPPING PROBLEM FOR THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT OF THE CITIZENS OF MICRONESIA.

"THIS CONGRESS ADOPTED A REPORT ON SHIPPING NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO," SAID HARUO. "IF THE RECOMMENDATIONS HAD BEEN FOLLOWED BY THE SHIPPING COMPANY, PERHAPS, WE WOULD HAVE A VIABLE SHIPPING SERVICE TODAY."

REFERRING TO THAT SAME REPORT, REPRESENTATIVE HARUO RECALLED THE TITLE OF ONE OF THE SECTIONS, CALLED: "THE PROMISE AND THE FAILURE."

"THIS DESCRIBES EXACTLY THE HISTORY OF THE SAD STATE OF SHIPPING SERVICES FOR THE PAST 5 YEARS," HE TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES. "WE HAVE BEEN MADE MANY PROMISES, BUT WE HAVE ONLY SEEN FAILURES. THE COMPANY HAS PROMISED AND PROMISED, AND IT HAS FAILED--AND FAILED MISERABLY. WE HAVE HAD MANY PROMISES FROM THE ADMINISTRATION TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM, BUT THEY TOO HAVE FAILED TO DO ANYTHING, OR HAVE FAILED TO BRING SOLUTIONS," HE EMPHASIZED.

DESCRIBING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES AS "NOT AN EASY DECISION," HE NONETHELESS STATED IT REPRESENTED "THE BLUNT ECONOMIC FACTS" OF TODAY'S SHIPPING SITUATION IN THE TRUST TERRITORY.

"IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT TRANSPACIFIC CAN NEVER IN ITS PRESENT FORM AND WITH ITS PRESENT DEBT OPERATE AT A PROFIT WITH REASONABLE RATES FOR OUR PEOPLE--EVEN WITH THE ADVENTAGE OF AN EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISE."

HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD ALLOW FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION TO A MUCH BETTER ONE--INCLUDING A REQUEST THAT THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ATTEMPT TO INSURE THAT MICRONESIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE COMPANY WILL BE PROTECTED AND BE ABLE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT IF TERMINATION OF THE FRANCHISE IS CONSUMATED.

"THE TIME FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION IS PAST," SAID HARUO, "IT IS NOW TIME TO TAKE A DECISIVE ACTION AND MAKE A FRESH START. WE HAVE MADE TOO MANY STUDIES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS. WE CAN NO LONGER DREAM THAT OUR WISHES MIGHT BECOME REALITIES."

IN THIS CONNECTION, REPRESENTATIVE HARUO CONCLUDED HIS SPEECH WITH A THOUGHT TAKEN FROM THE CONGRESS'S 1970 REPORT, A SECTION DEALING WITH THE FORMER COMPANY'S OPERATIONS:

HE SAID: "IF YOU LIE TO ME ONCE, AND I BELIEVE YOU, SHAME ON YOU. BUT IF YOU LIE TO ME AGAIN AND I BELIEVE YOU, SHAME ON ME."

(HICOM DELIVERS MAJOR ADDRESS)

SAIPAN, JAN. 12 (MNS)---TRUST TERRITORY HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON DELIVERED HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE TERRITORY ADDRESS FRIDAY MORNING (JAN. 12) BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, AND SEVERAL DOZEN SPECTATORS. THE OPEN-AIR SESSION WAS HELD, UNDER SUNNY SAIPAN SKIES, ON THE TERRACE OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DURING THE SPEECH THE HICOM CITED THE MAJOR AREAS OF PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT IN MICRONESIA DURING THE YEAR JUST PASSED, AND SET FORTH SEVERAL AREAS IN WHICH HE HOPES THE CONGRESS WILL PASS IMPORTANT LEGISLATION BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT SESSION. HE PLEDGED THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN WORKING FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE MICRONESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, AND SAID LEGISLATION NOW BEING PREPARED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD ACCOMPLISH THE INITIAL STEPS IN THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LAND IN MICRONESIA TO THE DISTRICTS AS SET FORTH IN THE U.S. POLICY STATEMENT OF NOVEMBER, 1973. THE HICOM ALSO NOTED THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE 1973 TERRITORY-WIDE CENSUS, AND SAID DATA FROM THE CENSUS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CONGRESS FOR REAPPORTIONMENT PURPOSES IN EARLY FEBRUARY. THE HICOM ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO SUBMIT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS A REQUEST FOR A SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, SAYING THE CONGRESSMEN WOULD BE HEARING FURTHER ABOUT THIS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

AS HE DID LAST YEAR, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AGAIN PRESENTED A SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENT TO THE CONGRESS THIS YEAR TO ACCOMPANY HIS MESSAGE. THE SUPPLEMENT SETS FORTH IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS OF THE GOVERNMENT DURING 1973, AND IS INTENDED TO SERVE THE LAWMAKERS DURING THE SESSION AS A REFERENCE AS THEY CONSIDER LEGISLATION THAT MAY RELATE TO CERTAIN OF THESE PROGRAM AREAS.

THE CENSUS PROGRAM, SAID THE HICOM, WAS COMPLETED LATE LAST YEAR "WELL AHEAD OF SCHEDULE" THANKS TO THE EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP OF WILLIAM STEWART AND THE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE OF DR. K. GROENEVEGEN OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION. "...WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY CENSUS TEAMS IN EVERY DISTRICT, THE CENSUS COORDINATION OFFICE HAS COMPLETED ITS JOB WELL AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND THE FINAL RESULTS ARE NOW BEING PROCESSED AT THE EAST WEST CENTER POPULATION INSTITUTE IN HONOLULU," HE SAID.

HE ALSO NOTED THE WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE BANK OF MICRONESIA, SAYING A REPORT ON THEIR WORK WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS EARLY IN THIS SESSION.

TWO IMPORTANT VISITS TO MICRONESIA WERE CITED BY JOHNSTON. ONE WAS THE TOUR MADE EARLY IN 1973 BY THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION. THE OTHER WAS THE SERIES OF VISITS TO THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS MADE EARLIER THIS MONTH BY MEMBERS OF THE U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. "WE ARE GRATEFUL TO CHAIRMAN BURTON OF OUR SUBCOMMITTEE; TO CONGRESSMEN WEEDS, FOLEY, KETCHUM; TO DELEGATES WON PAT AND DE LUGO; AND TO MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFF, FOR THE TIME WHICH THEY HAVE SPENT AND THE INTEREST WHICH THEY HAVE SHOWN IN FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS OF THIS VAST AREAS," THE HICOM STATED.

COVERING, BRIEFLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER NOTED THE APPOINTMENT, AND SUBSEQUENT APPROVAL BY THE CONGRESS, OF DAVID RAMARUI AS THE FIRST MICRONESIAN TO HEAD THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND SAID THAT SINCE THAT TIME THE DEPARTMENT "...HAS MADE A DEGREE OF PROGRESS EXCEEDING ANY SIMILAR PERIOD IN MICRONESIA'S RECENT HISTORY." HE NOTED PARTICULARLY THE INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSES AND AT THE MICRONESIAN OCCUPATIONAL CENTER IN KOROR.

HEALTH SERVICES ADVANCES RECORDED DURING 1973 INCLUDED THE NEW, 20-BED SUB-DISTRICT HOSPITAL AT EBEYE IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, AND THE PROGRESS MADE IN CONSTRUCTION OF A HOSPITAL AT KUSAIE. A CONTRACT WAS ALSO AWARDED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF 38 NEW DISPENSARIES FOR OUTER ISLAND AREAS.

"BUT POSSIBLY MOST SIGNIFICANT," THE HICOM CONTINUED, "WAS AN EVENT WHICH I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING ALONG WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS JUST LAST MONTH--THE GRADUATION ON TRUK OF OUR FIRST MEDEX CLASS. THE FOURTEEN GRADUATES HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO A LEVEL OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM JUST BELOW THAT OF A DOCTOR, AND WILL BE EXCEPTIONALLY VALUABLE IN MAINTAINING PROPER HEALTH CARE IN OUR MORE REMOTE AREAS."

CONCERNING PERSONNEL ACTIVITIES, THE HICOM NOTED ANOTHER REDUCTION LAST YEAR IN THE NUMBER OF U.S. CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES IN MICRONESIA, AND THE CONTINUED EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TRAIN MICRONESIANS IN VARIOUS OCCUPATIONAL AREAS. HE ALSO NOTED THE COMMENDABLE MANNER IN WHICH THE CONGRESS' SINGLE PAY PLAN HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MORE THAN \$210,000 DOLLARS IN LOW COST HOUSING FUNDS THROUGH THE SIX DISTRICT HOUSING AUTHORITIES WAS NOTED, AND THE HICOM PAID SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JAMES D. RICHARDSON FOR HIS WORK IN HELPING TO ESTABLISH THE HOUSING PROGRAM IN MICRONESIA. RICHARDSON DIED LATE IN DECEMBER.

AGRICULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS DREW CONSIDERABLE MENTION IN THE HICOM'S ADDRESS. HE NOTED A "HEALTHY INCREASE" IN THE PRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, AND CITED THE WORK OF THE COPRA STABILIZATION BOARD IN MAINTAINING A GOOD PRICE FOR THIS COMMODITY IN THE FACE OF WIDELY FLUCTUATING PRICES ON THE WORLD MARKET. THE HICOM ALSO CALLED ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT SOME 23,000 MICRONESIANS, OR ROUGHLY 20 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION, NOW PARTICIPATE IN SOME WAY IN COOPERATIVES AND CREDIT UNIONS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY.

THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER AND AMOUNT OF LOANS TO TT CITIZENS FROM THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, AND THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WERE ALSO CITED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AS INDICATIONS OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS DURING 1973.

AMONG THE SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS STARTED OR COMPLETED DURING THE YEAR WERE THE NEW DOCK AT PONAPE, THE NEW AIR TERMINAL BUILDING IN TRUK, THE UPGRADING OF THE PALAU AND YAP RUNWAYS, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE ISLEY FIELD PROJECT ON SAIPAN. "WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE DECISION TO DECENTRALIZE LAND CERTIFICATION FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS TO THE DISTRICTS WILL CONTINUE TO SPEED UP THIS VITALLY IMPORTANT PHASE OF OUR PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM," JOHNSTON SAID.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF BIKINI AND ENIWETOK, THE HICOM SAID, "PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE DURING THE YEAR IN THE REHABILITATION PROGRAMS INVOLVING BIKINI AND ENIWETOK IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS DISTRICT. ALTHOUGH THE ENERGY CRISIS AND OTHER LOGISTICS' PROBLEMS PREVENTED THE ACTUAL RETURN OF BIKINI CITIZENS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THEY HAVE INSPECTED THEIR NEW HOMES AND ARE NOW SCHEDULED TO BEGIN THEIR PERMANENT RETURN IN THE SPRING OF 1974. MUCH DISCUSSION AND PLANNING HAS ALREADY OCCURED TOWARD THE EVENTUAL RESETTLEMENT OF ENIWETOK. THE DOCUMENT FOR RETURN OF THE ATOLL FROM THE U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED NEAR THE END OF 1973, BUT THE SIGNING WAS DELAYED IN ORDER TO BE SURE THAT THE FORMER AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF ENIWETOK ARE ADEQUATELY CONSULTED. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE DOCUMENT WILL BE SIGNED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS."

HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON THEN TURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF SHIPPING, NOTING FIRST OF ALL THAT HE PARTICIPATED LAST MONTH ALONG WITH SPEAKER AND MRS. BETHWEL HENRY IN THE LAUNCHING OF THE M/S MICRONESIA PRINCESS IN KOREA. "I URGE THIS CONGRESS TO GIVE OUR FIELD TRIP VESSEL REPLACEMENT PROGRAM AN EXTREMELY HIGH PRIORITY IN BUDGETARY CONSIDERATION," THE HICOM SAID.

"I AM SURE THAT THE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH OCEAN SHIPPING INTO AND THROUGHOUT THE TRUST TERRITORY WILL BE GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY BY THE CONGRESS DURING THIS SESSION," HE CONTINUED. "LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IS WELL AWARE OF THE SEVERITY OF OUR CURRENT SHIPPING CRISIS AND WILL DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO WORK WITH YOU IN ATTEMPTING TO FIND A PERMANENT SOLUTION EQUITABLE TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED AND, ABOVE ALL, OF MAXIMUM BENEFIT TO THE CITIZENS OF THE SIX DISTRICTS OF MICRONESIA."

THE HICOM TOOK NOTE OF THE ENERGY CRISIS, AND SAID IN ALL THE DISTRICTS EXCEPT THE MARIANAS CONSERVATION MEASURES HAVE ENABLED THE DISTRICTS TO LIVE WITHIN THE CURRENT ALLOCATIONS. MORE MUST BE DONE, HOWEVER, IF THE MARIANAS IS TO AVOID MANDATORY SCHEDULED POWER OUTAGES AND OTHER STRICT CONTROL MEASURES ON FUEL.

"AT THIS POINT," JOHNSTON ADDED, "I MUST EMPHASIZE TO THE CONGRESS THAT A FACTOR EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE 12 PER CENT CUT IN FUEL ALLOCATIONS IS THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF DIESEL FUEL DURING 1973. EVEN WITH A 12 PER CENT CUT IN AMOUNT CONSUMED, THE TOTAL INCREASED COST OF DIESEL FUEL TO RUN OUR GENERATORS AND FIELD TRIP VESSELS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY COULD RUN AS MUCH AS \$900,000 DOLLARS OVER THE AMOUNT BUDGETED FOR FUEL DURING FISCAL YEAR 1974."

HE THEN NOTED THAT AN ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING BILL WILL BE SOUGHT FROM THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR, TO COVER THIS AND OTHER UNEXPECTED INCREASES IN THE COST OF GOVERNMENT.

THE U.S. POLICY ON RETURN OF PUBLIC LAND, THE HICOM SAID, OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESS TO WORK TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK, WHICH WILL NOT BE AN EASY ONE BECAUSE OF INCOMPLETE SURVEYS AND RECORDS, AND DIFFERING LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE PATTERNS AMONG THE DISTRICTS. "WE WILL," HE SAID, "BE SUBMITTING TO THIS CONGRESS PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO ACCOMPLISH THE FIRST STEP IN THE PROCESS. I URGE YOU TO GIVE THIS LEGISLATION YOUR UTMOST CONSIDERATION. I PLEDGE TO YOU THE FULL FACILITIES AND WHOLEHEARTED COOPERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN EXPEDITING THE RETURN OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE DISTRICTS."

JOHNSTON ALSO CALLED ATTENTION TO HIS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAM OF EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT. "ALTHOUGH THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY IS CHANGED WITH PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION IN MICRONESIA," HE STATED, "WE ALL RECOGNIZE THE VITALITY OF INTERESTS IN THIS ENDEAVOR. ONE OBJECTIVE ARE CLEAR--TO EDUCATE THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA FOR THEIR FUTURE GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES SO THAT EACH PERSON HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN AN OBJECTIVE VIEW OF THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW POLITICAL STATUS FOR THESE ISLANDS. A TASK FORCE, CONSISTING PRIMARILY OF

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION HAS ALREADY MADE GREAT PROGRESS TOWARD INSTITUTING THIS ALL-IMPORTANT PROGRAM. SEVERAL OF OUR DISTRICTS HAVE FORMED SIMILAR TASK FORCES AND OUR SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET CONTAINS AN AMOUNT OF \$100,000 DOLLARS TO FUND THE START OF THE PROGRAM. WE ARE PLANNING TO MAKE FULL USE OF RADIO, TELEVISION AND PRINTED MEDIA, AS WELL AS DISCUSSION GROUPS IN CLASSES AND SCHOOLS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL. WE WILL KEEP THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA FULLY ADVISED ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAM AND WILL SEEK YOUR ADVICE AND COUNSEL. ABOVE ALL, LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT ALL PRESENTATIONS CONCERNING THE ALTERNATIVES FOR MICRONESIA'S FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS WILL BE AS FAIR, IMPARTIAL AND ACCURATELY PRESENTED AS IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE."

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO URGED THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, AS HE DID A YEAR AGO, TO PASS LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING A MICRONESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION DURING THE CURRENT SESSION. HE NOTED THE APPROPRIATION OF \$450,000 DOLLARS BY THE U.S. CONGRESS TO ASSIST IN FUNDING THIS CONVENTION, AND SAID, "I WOULD HOPE THIS CONGRESS WOULD PLACE THE PASSAGE OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ACT AT THE TOP OF ITS 'MUST' LIST FOR THIS SESSION. THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR THIS PURPOSE WILL BE PROMPTLY OBLIGATED TO THE CONGRESS AS SOON AS SUCH AN ACT HAS BECOME LAW. AS YOU CONSIDER THIS IMPORTANT PIECE OF HISTORIC LEGISLATION, I URGE YOU, ONCE AGAIN, TO PROVIDE TO THE MAXIMUM DEGREE POSSIBLE WIDESPREAD CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DRAFTING THE FRAMEWORK OF YOUR FUTURE GOVERNMENT. AGAIN," HE CONCLUDED, "I PLEDGE THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE TRUST TERRITORY AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENTS IN ASSISTING YOU IN THE CREATION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION AND IN EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE CONVENTION."

IN CLOSING HIS STATE OF THE TERRITORY ADDRESS, HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON SAID HE LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING AND, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, IMPROVING THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF THE TT GOVERNMENT. "AGAIN, I REMIND YOU THAT THIS COULD WELL BE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AND IMPORTANT SESSION IN THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA," HE SAID. "I URGE THAT ALL OF US WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS PREDICATION COME TRUE."

(CONGRESS 5TH DAY)

SAIPAN, JANUARY 18 (MNS)---FOLLOWING THE STATE OF THE TERRITORY ADDRESS GIVEN BY TRUST TERRITORY HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON FRIDAY, (JAN. 18), THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONDUCTED ITS REGULAR SESSION. FLOOR ACTION WAS LIGHT, BUT SEVEN BILLS AND ONE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION WERE INTRODUCED. AMONG THE BILLS ARE:

A BILL AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE RELATING TO THE ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN ANY DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, (HE 212); AN APPROPRIATION BILL ASKING FOR \$10,000 FROM THE CONGRESS' GENERAL FUND TO CONSTRUCT AND BUILD A DISPENSARY ON EBON ISLAND IN THE MARSHALLS DISTRICT, (HB213); ANOTHER WOULD APPROPRIATE \$41,400 FROM THE CONGRESS' GENERAL FUND TO DEFRAY THE OPERATION AND CONTINGENT EXPENSES OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRUST TERRITORY PERSONNEL BOARD, (HB 215); AND THE OTHER WERE NATURALIZATION MEASURES, (HB 214, 216, 217, AND 281).

THE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION WOULD "URGE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CANCEL THE EXCLUSIVE SHIPPING FRANCHISE AGREEMENT EXECUTED ON AUGUST 1, 1955, BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND TRANSPACIFIC LINES, INC., FORMERLY KNOWN AS MICRONESIAN INTEROCEAN LINE INCORPORATED, (MILI), A SUBSIDIARY OF MARINE CHARTERING COMPANY, AND COMMEND TO HIM FOR IMPLEMENTATION THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO A NEW SHIPPING SYSTEM FOR MICRONESIA."

THE ONLY OTHER HOUSE ACTIVITY IN THE HOUSE WAS A SPEECH GIVEN BY TRUK'S CONGRESSMAN SASAUO HARUO DEALING WITH THE CONDITION OF SHIPPING SERVICES IN PRICES IN MICRONESIA. (SEE PREVIOUS STORY) THE HOUSE WILL MEET AGAIN ON MONDAY, JANUARY 10, AT 10:00 A.M.

ALTHOUGH THE SENATE ALSO CONVENED IN A REGULAR SESSION SHORTLY AFTER HEARING FROM HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON, THERE WAS NO BUSINESS ON THEIR CALNDAR AND THE SESSION WAS A BRIEF ONE.

IT DID OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY, HOWEVER, FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEGISLATION, AND 14 BILLS WERE OFFERED, BRINGING THE NUMBER OF SENATE BILLS INTRODUCED DURING THE FIFTH CONGRESS TO MORE THAN 200. ABOUT HALF OF THE BILLS WERE IN THE CATEGORY KNOWN AS PRIVATE LEGISLATION--MAKING CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR NATURALIZATION AS CITIZENS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY (SB 197 THROUGH SSB 203).

AMONG THE OTHER BILLS IS ONE WHICH WOULD AMEND THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE REGARDING PAROLES AND PARDONS TO PROVIDE THAT NO PERSONS SENTENCED TO PRISON SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE UNTIL HE HAS SERVED AT LEAST THREE-FOURTHS OF HIS SENTENCE OR 20 YEARS, WHICHEVER IS SHORTER, AND THAT NO PERSON SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE UNTIL HE HAS SERVED AT LEAST 50 YEARS (SB 190).

TWO OF THE BILLS RELATE TO EMPLOYMENT OF NON-TRUST TERRITORY CITIZENS BY THE GOVERNMENT. ONE WOULD LIMIT THE LENGTH OF TIME DURING WHICH SUCH CITIZENS MAY BE EMPLOYED TO A MAXIMUM OF FOUR YEARS EXCEPT UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (SB 192). THE OTHER PROVIDES THAT SO LONG AS SUCH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW EMPLOYED REMAIN AND RENEW THEIR CONTRACTS THEIR COMPENSATION SHALL NOT BE REDUCED (SB 191).

A BILL THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE POSITION OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENCER AMONG THOSE EXEMPTED FROM PROVISIONS OF THE TT PUBLIC SERVICE SYSTEM WAS OFFERED (SSB 193). ANOTHER BILL WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DUTY-FREE STORES AT OFFICIAL PORTS OF ENTRY IN THE TT, AND IS SIMILAR TO OTHER BILLS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE ALREADY UNDER CONSIDERATION (SB 194).

TWO OF THE BILLS ARE APPROPRIATION MEASURES. ONE WOULD EARMARK \$20,000 FOR THE OPERATION OF THE EXISTING REEFER BARGE IN TRUK DISTRICT (SSB 195). THE OTHER WOULD APPROPRIATE \$250,000 TO CARRY OUT AND EXPEDITE THE HOMESTEADING PROGRAM IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT, (SB 196).

AFTER VOTING TO RECESS UNTIL TEN A.M. MONDAY, JANUARY 21, THE SENATORS WENT INTO A CLOSED, EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PRIORITIES IN LEGISLATION AND THEIR OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SESSION.

FRIDAY WAS THE FIFTH DAY OF THE CURRENT 50-DAY SESSION ON SAIPAN, AND THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY.