

# Will Seek Rota, Tinian Polls

By Diane Maddex  
Daily News Staff Writer

SAIPAN—Marianas Rep. Felipe Q. Atalig said yesterday he definitely plans to introduce legislation during the current Congress of Micronesia session calling for future status referendums on Rota and Tinian.

"A referendum is the only way to officially determine what the people want," said Atalig, who represents the islands in the Congress.

The referendums would be held in October, in order "to give the people time to think and educate themselves, so that they have at least an elementary

understanding of the concepts" involved in the future status alternatives being considered in the Trust Territory.

Rota's voters would be asked whether they want to support the Marianas status negotiations or separate from the Marianas and align themselves with the rest of Micronesia under the agreement being negotiated by the Congress Joint Committee on Future Status.

The Tinian referendum, said Atalig, would include questions considered under a referendum proposed last July. These are whether residents approve of U.S. military use of Tinian and relocation of their present village.

## Grants Available

The Department of Education is accepting applications for grants for training teachers of handicapped children. Four master's degree fellowships will be awarded the educators who now possess a bachelor's degree—one each in special education of the blind, deaf, learning disability, and speech therapy. Recipients of a one-year master's fellowship will receive a stipend of \$2,200 for living costs and tuition and fees will be paid. DOE will assist recipients in arranging to study in universities which offer specialized training in these areas at master's degree level.

In addition, eight seniors at the University of Guam will be given traineeships to assist them in their preparation to become teachers of handicapped children. Juniors will receive a one-year stipend of \$300 and seniors will receive \$800.

Application forms for master's fellowships may be obtained from Mrs. Julia T. Certeza at DOE. College applicants should contact the UOG College of Education.

Deadlines for both applications are March 15, 1974. However, application should be made as soon as possible. Master's degree applications require University transcripts and letters of recommendation.

Atalig will ask the Congress of Micronesia to provide the funding.

A joint committee report discussing Rota that was presented to the Congress this week "is just a report," said Atalig. "There's no way of assessing its findings until we can have a referendum."

As one of its wide-ranging recommendations on the Micronesian status question, the report suggested that the people of Rota should be able to remain with the rest of Micronesia if they vote not to follow the Marianas majority.

"Personally, I feel Rota should continue with the rest of the Marianas," said Atalig.

"Over the past years they haven't given the congress any official expressions of dissatisfaction and in the last referendum the people of Rota came out very strongly that they wanted an association with the United States."

"But if the Rotanese people want to be separated from the rest of the Marianas, I will go along and endorse their wishes. But there will be a lot of problems. I don't see the

feasibility at this time for Rota to be a separate part from the Marianas."

Atalig said he also plans to introduce a resolution calling for an end to the economic development "moratorium" on Tinian, which has brought to a halt the awarding of homestead permits, foreign business permits and other development.

The joint committee's report this week also expressed "unqualified disapproval" of the moratorium and the Trust Territory and U.S. government's failure to inform Micronesian leaders of its initiation.

## Micro Congress

# Bill Would Ban Import Food Tax

By MNS and COM

SAIPAN — A bill to eliminate taxes on essential imported foodstuffs and raise the tax on alcoholic beverages has been introduced at the current session of the Fifth Congress of Micronesia's session on Saipan.

The bill, which was one of several submitted Wednesday, was introduced by Marshalls Rep. Ekpap Silk.

Floor action continued to be light Wednesday yesterday morning. There are now about 400 active bills awaiting congress action.

In a statement he placed into the house journal before introducing the measure, Silk told the house membership of drastic increases in shipping and fuel costs, which, he said, were imposing an

hour." costs or the energy crisis which has resulted in reduced fuel allocations in the districts. He said the congress should also be blamed, along with the United States, the oil and shipping companies, for not having the foresight to protect the interests of the consumer.

Silk described his bill as "something concrete" the congress can do as a first step to help ease the burden on Micronesia's consumers. He suggested that the congress also take action concerning shipping and energy problems during the current session.

"For the past year or so we have watched the steady rise in the cost of essential food items such as rice, flour, sugar, milk, or coetera, and we have done very little to stop this trend," he said. "Now it appears that, as usual, we will act at the 11th hour."

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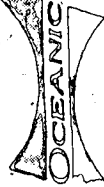
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Floor action continued to be light Wednesday and the congress session recessed Wednesday until yesterday morning. There are now about 400 active bills awaiting congress action.

In a statement he placed into the house journal before introducing the measure, Silk told the house membership of drastic increases in shipping and fuel costs, which he said were imposing an unfair burden on Micronesia's consumers.

"Today the people of Micronesia face an economic crisis that, in my opinion, they have never faced before. I am referring particularly to the incredibly rapid rise in goods costs that—in my district for example—rise almost weekly, or after every visit of TransPacific Lines ship."

He told his colleagues that revisions should be made in the taxing system for imports to make it more equitable and ease the burden for the average consumer in Micronesia.

Silk said in recent weeks the price of rice has risen from \$5.75 to \$8 per 25 pound bag, that prices will most likely continue to rise, and all the while, consumers in the other islands will continue to pay the highest prices for imported goods.

Silk put part of the blame for the situation on the United States as administering authority of Micronesia.

"If the United States had taken seriously its responsibility for Micronesia as a developing nation, then it would have taken steps to insure the steady growth of our economy. Unfortunately, the U.S. has failed to do this; it treats Micronesia as one of its states or possessions on one hand, but differently on the other hand. For example, when it comes to the matter of U.S. security interests, I am sure that Kwajalein will suffer less of a shortage of fuel than the rest of Micronesia."

The house floor leader said it would be "irresponsible" for him to lay the entire responsibility for such price increases on shipping

which states, the shipping companies, for not having the foresight to protect the interests of the consumer.

Silk described his bill as "something concrete" the congress can do as a first step to help ease the burden on Micronesia's consumers. He suggested that the congress also take action concerning shipping and energy problems during the current session.

"For the past year or so we have watched the steady rise in the cost of essential food items such as rice, flour, sugar, milk, or ecetera, and we have done very little to stop this trend," he said. "Now it appears that, as usual, we will act at the 11th hour."

Also introduced during the Wednesday house session was a bill that would create a Micronesian claims group which would "vigorously seek" additional war and post-war and pre-war claims compensation from both the United States and Japan, above what has already been provided under the 1969 agreement on war claims between those two countries.

No final action was taken on any bills or resolutions in either the house or the senate Wednesday. New bills offered for consideration in the senate include: A measure that would create a Trust Territory Port Authority; A bill to provide for the establishment, operation and maintenance of duty free retail concessions in official ports of entry to the TT; A bill relating to advice and consent; and, a bill that would appropriate \$77,000 for the installation of navigational lights in the Marshall Islands for use by air traffic. The latter two measures had been introduced Tuesday and were assigned to committees on Wednesday.

Also receiving committee assignments at the Wednesday session were the following resolutions: A measure urging the appointment of a Micronesian citizen to fill the next vacancy on the High Court; a joint resolution asking Air Micronesia to reduce its freight rate on agricultural produce; and a resolution directing the senate Committee on Education and Social Affairs to conduct an evaluation of the teaching of English as a second language (TFSL) program in the TT.

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