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DEATHS OF U.S. PRESIDENTS TRUMAN AND LYNDON B. JOHNSON, AND THEN WILL ADJOURN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY IN OBSERVANCE OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING IN THE U.S. FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON. THE DAY HAS ALSO BEEN DECLARED A HOLIDAY FOR IT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. (STATUS COMMITTEE MEETS)

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SAIPAN JANUARY 25 (MNS) --- THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA'S JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS HELD ITS FIRST MEETING OF THE CURRENT SESSION THURSDAY (JAN 25) ON SAIPAN, RE-ELECTING ITS LEADERSHIP AND FILLING TWO VACANCIES ON THE COMMITTEE.

ELECTED TO CONTINUE SERVING AS CHAIRMAN FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS WAS SENATOR LAZARUS SALII (PALAU), WHO IS ALSO THE SENATE VICE-PRESIDENT. HOUSE FLOOR LEADER EKPAP SILK (MARSHALLS) WAS AGAIN CHOSEN CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE.

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WITH THE RESULTS OF LAST FALL'S ELECTIONS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, FORMER SENATOR LAWMI OF THE MARSHALLS AND FORMER CONGRESSMAN OLTER PAUL OF PONAPE WERE DEFEATED. THUS THE COMMITTEE HAD TWO SEATS TO FILL, AND IN SO DOING THEY REDUCED THE RATIO OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SENATORS ON THE COMMITTEE.

SENATOR AMATA YABUA WAS ELECTED TO THE MARSHALL ISLANDS SEAT THAT WAS VACANT, WHILE SENATOR AMELOS IENSI WON THE PONAPE

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SEAT. WITH THE SWITCH FROM THE HOUSE TO THE SENATE OF YAP'S JOHN MANGFEL, ALSO A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, THERE ARE NOW TEN SENATORS ON THE COMMITTEE AND ONLY TWO REPRESENTATIVES. ONE OF THESE IS MARIANAS CONGRESSMAN HERMAN O GUERRERO WHO, ALONG WITH HIS COLLEAGUE FROM THE MARIANAS, SENATOR EDWARD PANGELINAN, HAVE BY THEIR OWN CHOICE REDUCED THEIR ROLE ON THE COMMITTEE TO ONE OF OBSERVERS.

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DURING ITS MEETING, WHICH WAS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC, THE JOINT COMMITTEE ALSO REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED THE NEXT ROUND OF STATUS NEGOTIATIONS, AND ACCORDING TO CONGRESSMAN SILK A TENTATIVE DECISION WAS REACHED TO HOLD THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS IN WASHINGTON, DC., SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE U.S. DELEGATION. THE TALKS WILL "PROBABLY" BE IN MAY, SAID CHAIRMAN SENATOR SALII.

THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO BEEN MEETING DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS WITH ITS WASHINGTON LEGAL COUNSEL, PAUL WARKKE. WARKKE ARRIVED ON SAIPAN EARLIER THIS WEEK, AND PLANS TO RETURN TO THE U.S. FRIDAY. HE HAS BEEN ASSISTING THE MICRONESIAN COMMITTEE IN MAKING PLANS FOR ITS FUTURE NEGOTIATING SESSIONS WITH THE U.S.

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