

(CONGRESS 16TH DAY)

SAIPAN, JAN. 29 (MNS)---MOST OF THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA CONTINUES TO BE DONE BY THE VARIOUS COMMITTEES DURING THIS SECOND REGULAR SESSION. THE HOUSE AND SENATE BOTH MET ONLY BRIEFLY ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE SESSION, HEARING BRIEF REMARKS FROM SOME OF THEIR COLLEAGUES ON ISSUES OF THE DAY AND RECEIVING MORE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

IN THE HOUSE TWO BILLS PASSED SECOND READING AND WENT TO THE SENATE FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THEY ARE: A MEASURE TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE TO SPECIFY CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE IMPORTATION OF NON-RESIDENT WORKERS, (HB 204); AND A BILL TO ESTABLISH A PROCEDURE FOR DISPOSING OF WATERCRAFT ABANDONED WITHIN THE TERRITORIAL WATERS OF MICRONESIA, (HB 197). DURING DISCUSSION ON THIS BILL, THE HOUSE ADOPTED AN AMENDMENT WHICH PROVIDES THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE HALF OF SUCH ABANDONED PROPERTY ARE TO BE PAID TO THE TREASURY OF THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE WATERCRAFT WAS ABANDONED, INSTEAD OF TO THE CONGRESS.

TRUK'S REPRESENTATIVE RAYMOND SETIK DELIVERED A SPEECH ON THE BUDGET REPORT FOR FY 75. (SEE SEPARATE STORY). CONGRESSMAN JOHN KEIHE (MARSHALLS) PRESENTED A PETITION SIGNED BY 207 STUDENTS OF MARSHALL ISLANDS HIGH SCHOOL ASKING TO ENACT LEGISLATION FOR MICRO-OLYMPICS TO BE HELD THIS YEAR. AND MARIANAS REPRESENTATIVE FELIPE O. ATALIG DELIVERED A SHORT STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY HIS PRICE CONTROL BILL. (SEE SEPARATE STORY).

NEW MEASURES OFFERED AT TUESDAY'S HOUSE SESSION INCLUDED SIX BILLS, TWO JOINT RESOLUTIONS AND ONE RESOLUTION. THE BILLS ARE: A BILL PRESCRIBING A MINIMUM WAGE OF ONE DOLLAR FOR LABOR IN MICRONESIA, (HB 242); A MEASURE REGARDING GASOLINE AND FUEL ALLOCATIONS SIMILAR TO ONE INTRODUCED ON THE PREVIOUS DAY IN THE SENATE, (HB 243); A BILL TO APPROPRIATE \$22,000 AS A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE OPERATION AND CONTINGENT EXPENSES OF THE REVENUE DIVISION FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR (HB 244); A REQUEST FOR \$15,000 AS A GRANT-IN-AID FOR RORUL MUNICIPALITY IN YAP DISTRICT TO ASSIST IN THE ORGANIZATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, (HB 245); A MEASURE TO ESTABLISH THE MICRONESIA DEVELOPMENT BANK AND APPROPRIATE \$100,000 TO CARRY OUT ITS FUNCTIONS, (HB 246); AND THE ATALIG BILL TO PROVIDE PRICE CONTROLS WITHIN THE TRUST TERRITORY, (HB 247).

THE TWO JOINT RESOLUTIONS IN THE HOUSE REQUEST THE U.S. CONGRESS TO ENACT LEGISLATION APPROPRIATING ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO COVER CERTAIN DEFICIENCIES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS DURING FISCAL YEAR 1974, (H.J.R. 87), AND DEMAND THAT THE U.S. TERMINATE THE IMPOSED MORATORIUM ON HOMESTEADING AND LEASING OF PUBLIC LAND ON TINIAN ISLAND IN THE MARIANAS, (H.J.R. 88). THE SINGLE RESOLUTION IS REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF THE HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE MARIANAS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR TO EXTEND THE HOURS OF OPERATION AT THE SAN ANTONIO AND SAN ROQUE DISPENSARIES TO 40 HOURS A WEEK, (HR 7).

SENATE ACTIVITIES ON TUESDAY (JANUARY 29) WERE BRIEF, LIMITED MAINLY TO DELIVERY OF A PREPARED STATEMENT BY MARIANAS SENATOR EDWARD DLG. PANGELINAN (SEPARATE STORY) AND THE INTRODUCTION OF ONE BILL AND ONE JOINT RESOLUTION.

THE BILL, SENATE BILL NO. 237, ESTABLISHES A MICRONESIA DEVELOPMENT BANK AND IS IDENTICAL TO HOUSE BILL 246 ALSO INTRODUCED TUESDAY.

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2

THE JOINT RESOLUTION INTRODUCED REQUESTS THE POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMISSION CREATED BY LAW BY THE CONGRESS AND THE TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT RECENTLY INSTITUTED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS WITH A SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE PALAU LEGISLATURE IN CARRYING OUT THEIR PROGRAMS IN THE PALAU DISTRICT.

BOTH HOUSES WILL RECONVENE AT 10:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 30.

(ALL USERS PLEASE CREDIT CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)

(PANGELINAN ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT CHALLENGE)

SAIPAN, JAN. 29 (CONGRESS RELEASE)---SENATOR EDWARD PANGELINAN URGED THE CONGRESS AND PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA TUESDAY TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE OF THE RELAXATION OF THE TERRITORY'S FOREIGN INVESTMENT POLICY, ANNOUNCED BY INTERIOR SECRETARY ROGERS C.B. MORTON LAST WEEK.

IN A SPEECH TO THE SENATE, PANGELINAN SAID IN LOOSENING THE SO-CALLED "MOST FAVORED NATION CLAUSE", SCHEDULED TO TAKE EFFECT APRIL 1, THE UNITED STATES IS PRESENTING MICRONESIA WITH A TEST, AND HOW WELL MICRONESIA PERFORMS MAY WELL INFLUENCE ITS GOALS FOR FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS.

"IF WE HANDLE THIS CHALLENGE WELL AND IN A SALUTORY FASHION," SAID PANGELINAN, "THEN I BELIEVE THAT WE WILL HAVE DEMONSTRATED OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND MATURITY AND SIMILAR DECISIONS WILL FOLLOW. IF WE DO NOT ACT WISELY AND IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE, THEN WE MAY FIND THE ROAD TO TERMINATION OF THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT LONGER THAN WE HAD THOUGHT." PANGELINAN PRAISED MORTON'S ACTION INDICATING THAT FOR YEAR THE CONGRESS HAS ASKED THE U.S. TO RELAX ITS RESTRICTIVE FOREIGN INVESTMENT POLICY, WHICH HAD CLOSED THE INVESTMENT DOOR TO ALL NATIONS EXCEPT TO AMERICAN CITIZENS AND COMPANIES, BUT SAID THE MAJORITY OF THE CONGRESS WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE HAD ADVANCE WORD ON THE POLICY CHANGE IN ORDER TO PREPARE LEGISLATION TO ACCOMMODATION SUCH A MOVE.

THE MARIANAS SENATOR BROUGHT INTO FOCUS CERTAIN AREAS WHICH HE SAID MERITED ATTENTION BY THE CONGRESS AND MIGHT REQUIRE SPECIAL LEGISLATION, INCLUDING: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POSSIBLE NEW POLICIES OF THE DISTRICT FOREIGN INVESTMENT BOARDS THAT CAN ENCOURAGE, YET CONTROL INVESTMENT, AND WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OPERATIONS; A REVIEW OF LAND AND LAND USE POLICIES; A REVIEW OF CORPORATE LAWS; WHETHER OR NOT NEW IMMIGRATIONS AND LABOR QUOTAS ARE NEEDED IN LINE WITH TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR MICRONESIANS; MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING TAX LAWS; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMERCE OR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO SCREEN FOREIGN INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATIONS INTERESTED IN DOING BUSINESS IN MICRONESIA.

IN THEIR REGARD, PANGELINAN ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE CONGRESS COMPOSE A LIST OF QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTS OF SUCH INVESTMENT FROM NOT ONLY THE LEGAL STANDPOINT, BUT FROM HEALTH, EDUCATION, REVENUE, DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER ASPECTS AS WELL.

(ALL USERS PLEASE CREDIT CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)

(ATALIG SPEECH)

SAIPAN, JAN. 29 (CONGRESS RELEASE)---AS THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MOVED TO CLOSE ITS 16TH DAY OF DELIBERATIONS, CONGRESSMAN FELIPE Q. ATALIG OF THE MARIANAS INTRODUCED A PRICE CONTROL BILL AND DELIVERED SHORT REMARKS CONCERNING THAT LEGISLATION.

THE BILL IS ENTITLED THE "TRUST TERRITORY PRICE CONTROL ACT OF 1974." IN HIS SPEECH, ATALIG CALLED UPON THE CONGRESS TO ACT ON THE BILL WHICH WOULD "ESTABLISH ALLOWABLE PROFITS AT A FIXED RATE ABOVE BASIC COST TO PROTECT MICRONESIAN CONSUMERS FROM THOSE BUSINESSMEN WHO WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE" OF THEM.

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REPRESENTATIVE ATALIG SAID THAT "MICRONESIA'S ECONOMY IS FRAGILE AND DEPENDENT UPON GRANT FUNDS FOR ITS STRENGTH." HE NOTED THAT AVAILABLE JOBS IN THE TT ARE FEW AND THE PRESENT LEVEL OF WAGES EARNED BY MICRONESIANS ARE GENERALLY LOW COMPARED TO THOSE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

ATALIG NOTED THAT THE BILL WOULD ALLOW A 25 PERCENT MARKUP ON THE PRICE OF LANDED GOODS AND A 10 PERCENT MARKUP ON THE BASIC COST OF SERVICES. HE INDICATED THAT BUSINESSMEN WOULD BE ASKED TO KEEP RECORDS OF THEIR TRANSACTIONS AND TO POST IN THEIR PLACE OF BUSINESS AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT A LIST OF PRICES IS AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO DESIRE THEM.

THE BILL, INTRODUCED BY THE MARIANAS CONGRESSMAN, IF ENACTED, WILL HAVE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADMINISTER ITS PROVISIONS WHICH PROVIDE FOR STRONG CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES, AMONG OTHERS. HE ENDED BY SAYING, "WE HAVE SEEN DAILY THE PRICES OF GOODS CONTINUE TO CLIMB MUCH TO THE DISTRESS AND DISCOMFORT OF OUR PEOPLE. IF WE DO NOT TAKE ACTION ON THIS MEASURE, THE KIND OF WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION OF BY THE CONGRESS FOR TWO YEARS, THEN WE WILL HAVE FAILED OUR TRUST FOR THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA." (ALL USERS PLEASE CREDIT THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA) (SETIK ON PROGRAM AND BUDGET REPORT)

SAIPAN, JANUARY 29 (CONGRESS RELEASE)---TRUK REPRESENTATIVE RAYMOND SETIK PRESENTED THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND BUDGET PLANNING FOR FISCAL YEAR 1975 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TUESDAY, ASKING THE CONGRESS TO HEED SUGGESTIONS OF INTERIOR SECRETARY MORTON TO DEVELOP THE NECESSARY PRIORITIES TO BEGIN BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY.

SETIK TOLD THE HOUSE, IN PRESENTING THE REPORT, THAT THE EMPHASIS IN THE BUDGET REQUEST WHICH WERE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR 1974, ATTEMPTED NOT TO EXCEED 1973 OPERATING COST LEVELS, SO THAT INCREASES IN THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SECTOR OF THE BUDGET, INCLUDING ROADS, SHIPPING FACILITIES, AIRPORTS, WATER, SEWER, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND OTHER PROJECTS COULD BE CARRIED OUT.

"OUR COMMITTEE PLACED EMPHASIS ON FOUR PRIMARY GOALS FOR MICRONESIA," HE SAID: 1) TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES; 2) DEVELOP A VIABLE MONEY ECONOMY WHICH REQUIRES LAND REGISTRATION AND TITLE DETERMINATION AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS; 3) INCREASE THE ABILITY OF MICRONESIANS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD; AND 4) ENABLE MORE MICRONESIANS TO PROGRESSIVELY ASSUME A GREATER ROLE IN GOVERNMENT BY MOVING INTO HIGH RANKING POSITIONS.

HOWEVER, THE TRUK CONGRESSMAN SAID DIFFICULTIES WERE ENCOUNTERED AS BUDGET CUTS WERE ANNOUNCED WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT \$12.9 MILLION IN CARRY-OVER FUNDS STILL REMAINED FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR. AS SETIK EXPLAINED IT: "MOST DISTRICTS WERE EXCEPTIONALLY SLOW IN COMPLETING LAND CERTIFICATES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS."

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS, ACCORDING TO SETIK, WAS NOT THE \$60 MILLION AUTHORIZED ANNUALLY FOR THE TRUST TERRITORY, BUT ONLY \$47.7 MILLION FOR THE WHOLE FISCAL YEAR 1974.

SETIK STATED IT WAS THEN NECESSARY TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON TO SEEK A SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS, SINCE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD FELT THAT PREVIOUSLY APPROPRIATED FUNDS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS SHOULD BE SPENT BEFORE NEW FUNDS BE MADE AVAILABLE.

THE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST WAS FINALLY APPROVED, HE SAID, THROUGH THE JOINT EFFORTS OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, AND THE JOINT COMMITTEE, BRINGING FUNDS TALLING \$57.8 MILLION.

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, AND NOTING UNPRECEDENTED INCREASES IN FUEL AND SHIPPING COSTS, SETIK URGED ACROSS-THE-BOARD, SELF-IMPOSED REDUCTIONS IN CERTAIN AREAS SO THAT PROGRAMS MOST URGENTLY NEEDED FOR FISCAL YEAR 1975 COULD STILL BE CARRIED OUT.

"IN THE END, IT IS THE BOLD AND IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL BE THE DECIDING FACTOR IN THE MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA," HE SAID. "IN THIS CHALLENGE, I AM SURE WE WILL MOST CERTAINLY RISE TO THE OCCASION."

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