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Week In Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
Prepared by Micronesian News Service

Saipan, Mariana Islands

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1974

ST. PIERRE BECOMES GUAM SPECIAL PROSECUTOR

The controversial case of Chief Public Defender Roger St. Pierre came to an abrupt and surprising end last week, when the Chief Judge of the Guam Superior Court, Joaquin C. Perez, swore in St. Pierre as the Guam Special Prosecutor. In order to accept the job, St. Pierre formally resigned from his position as Chief Public Defender for the Trust Territory, thus ending a nearly two-year attempt by the government to remove him.

The announcement came as a surprise to TT Government officials, who had no comment to make on it. It was learned from other sources, however, that St. Pierre's resignation had been worked out with government personnel a few days before his swearing-in as the special prosecutor. The Guam job was created as the result of legislation passed recently by the Legislature of Guam. The one-year appointment of St. Pierre pays \$40,000.

It was also announced that Ben Abrams, until last month assistant public defender on Saipan, will be St. Pierre's assistant prosecutor on Guam.

Trust Territory Chief Justice Harold Burnett recently ruled that a final decision in what has become known as the St. Pierre case is up to the U.S. Civil Service Commission. St. Pierre protested his removal on the grounds that he was a TT Government employee not subject to rules of conduct established for U.S. Civil Service employees of the Interior Department. The Government charged that in accepting a \$7,500 gift from a client in a Marshall Islands estate case several years ago, St. Pierre violated those rules. A lengthy hearing was held last November on Saipan before an administrative law judge of the Interior Department, who ruled that St. Pierre was a Civil Service employee, that he had violated the rules of conduct, but that he should be suspended rather than removed from his job. The recommendation was not followed, and the government pressed ahead with its effort to remove St. Pierre, a move which he continued to fight. The outcome of the case, in light of the change in St. Pierre's employment status last week, is not clear.

Continuing to serve as acting Chief Public Defender in the Trust Territory is Leo McShane, a former Palau District Public Defender.

VICE-CHAIRMAN "OPTIMISTIC" ABOUT CONVENTION

The Vice-Chairman of the Pre-Convention Committee, Ponape District Administrator

Leo A. Falcam, said last week that he is "optimistic" about Marshallese participation in the upcoming Micronesian Constitutional Convention, and feels that a viable, unified Micronesian government can be established despite differences between the districts.

Speaking to members of the Rotary Club of Saipan, Falcam said: "The recognition that there are differences between the districts is not as great as the recognition that similarities exist. If we capitalize on these similarities, I think it is definitely possible that a unified Micronesian Government will result."

The pre-convention committee has now completed its initial tour of all six districts. They have decided that the convention will be held at the Saipan Continental Hotel, but the timing of the convention is still not decided. Many people in the districts recommended that the convention not be held until late 1975, or even later, Falcam said. He indicated the committee will make a decision on the time in about one month.

Asked about the reception the committee had in the Marshalls, where there is considerable opposition to the constitutional convention, Falcam said: "We knew we would run into some opposition in the Marshalls, but that didn't stop us from going there, and I'm glad it didn't." He said the committee had several successful meetings in the district, and, he stated, "I left the Marshalls very optimistic about Marshallese participation in the constitutional convention."

DIALOGUE INTERVIEWS KENDALL, NGIRAKED

The Micronesian Constitutional Convention was the major topic last week for two programs in the education for self government series "Dialogue for Micronesia." Senator Wilfred Kendall of the Marshalls, and John Ngiraked of Palau were the interview subjects. Senator Kendall, interviewed in Majuro, said he feels the convention is in the best interests of the people of Micronesia, but there are some problems with the timing and mechanics of the convention. He said that participation of the Marshall Islands depends upon organization of the district's delegation and resolving certain problems in the district. The Marshalls delegation has still not been officially organized, nor have the traditional delegates or a delegate from the congressional delegation been chosen. The delegation is also not officially represented on the pre-convention committee.

The delegate election in the Marshalls, the Senator said, grouped the islands together into districts that did not follow traditional lines, and this has created some problems. He also mentioned the fact that certain traditional rivalries are beginning to surface in the Marshalls. Senator Kendall also stated that he feels the timing of the convention is being rushed due to outside pressure.

Ngiraked, who is chairman of the Palau convention delegation, laid the blame on the Congress of Micronesia and the administration for the separatist tendencies that are now evident in Micronesia. He said the status negotiations, the constitutional convention, and other events

concerning status have not been properly coordinated between the Congress and the administering authority, resulting in confusion among the people as to just what is taking place. Asked whether he thinks holding the convention next year is too early, Ngiraked replied that most people seem to think the further off the convention is, the better. He said he personally feels the entire year of 1975 should be devoted to an intensive political education program.

CANDIDATES SELECTED IN PALAU

Palau District, which, along with the Marianas, has political parties, has selected its candidates for the 1974 general election to the Congress of Micronesia. The two parties, Progressive and Liberal, have chosen the following slates: For the Senate, incumbent Roman Tmetuchl, Liberal, will seek re-election against John O. Ngiraked, Progressive. In Representative District 8, incumbent Timothy Olkeriil, Liberal, will face Kuniwo Nakamura. In District 9, incumbent Polycarp Basilius, Progressive, will be opposed by Dr. Nobuo Swei. And in District 10, incumbent Tarkong Pedro, Liberal will run against Isidro Rudimch. The third party in the district, the Unity Action Party, is not fielding any candidates.

The deadline for nominations to be filed for the November 5 election was Saturday, October 5, and complete lists of candidates in the other districts are expected to be made public this week.

BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MADE NEWS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY LAST WEEK:

Stanley S. Carpenter, Director of Territorial Affairs, was named the Senior United States Commissioner to the South Pacific Commission. Carpenter is currently attending the SPC annual meeting in Rarontonga, the Cook Islands.

Trust Territory Government employees were reminded last week that they are forbidden by law from using their official positions or government time for the benefit of any political candidate.

The Education for Self Government Task Force at Headquarters has completed a tour of the Eastern Districts, and will travel to Yap and Palau within the next few days. Among other things, the group is tape-recording questions from the people with whom they meet for use on a new radio program series.

Budget ceiling hearings before committees of the U.S. House and Senate have been completed in Washington, D.C. High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston appeared on behalf of the Executive Branch, while the Congress of Micronesia was represented by Ramond Setik and Bailey Olter, chairman and co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Program and Budget Planning.

Foreign business permits for a public accountant and a construction firm were approved for Truk District last week, and applications were received from a Filipino insurance firm and a piano tuner, both proposing to establish their businesses in the Marianas.

The Ponape and Palau District Legislatures convened in special sessions last week.

An American scuba diver, part of a tour group of diving enthusiasts touring Micronesia, was drowned last week in Koror, Palau District. Dr. Robert L. Marshall of Michigan failed to surface from a 180 foot dive. His body was not recovered.

A contract for the purchase of seven new school buses for Saipan has been approved by the Japanese Government as part of the war claims settlement agreement. The Hino buses cost 170,000 dollars.

Broadcasting Chief Elias Thomas and Rudy Sablan, Manager of station KJQR on Saipan, are currently attending the annual meeting of the Asian Broadcasting Union in Tokyo, Japan.

The President of a Danish company that has developed a process for manufacturing building blocks out of volcanic laterite soil--common in Micronesia--visited Saipan last week. The possibility exists that these building materials could be locally produced in several areas of the Trust Territory.

Finally, Victor Uherbelau, a recent law graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, has joined the Attorney General's Office as an attorney, effective September 30. Uherbelau is the sixth Palauan to receive a U.S. law degree.

former
clerk of Senate
very sharp!