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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

Nov. 4-8, 1974

ELECTION HELD

Voters throughout Micronesia went to the polls Tuesday, November 5, in the Congress of Micronesia General Election, to choose members of the Sixth Congress, which will convene in January on Saipan.

The election produced some surprises. In all six districts, at least one incumbent member of the Congress was defeated, and in one district, the Marianas, all four incumbent members lost their seats.

In the Marshall Islands, the first woman ever to be elected to the Congress of Micronesia won a seat, while in Truk, a Senator who holds a number of powerful committee chairmanships was defeated. In all districts, there were close races, as voters increasingly demonstrated their independence from traditional patterns of thinking and voting, and their unwillingness to follow any sort of "party line" or "power group" pattern.

Here are the results of the election, according to unofficial returns. In the Marshall Islands: Incumbent Senator Amata Kabua defeated his challenger, Carl Heine; Carmer Milne Bigler defeated incumbent John Heine and a third challenger, Chuji Chutaro; Ataji Balos, Ekpap Silk and Charles Domnick were all re-elected to the House of Representatives.

In Ponape District: Incumbent Senator Ambilos Iehsi held off a strong challenge from Edwel Santos to win re-election; Incumbent Congressmen Resio Moses, Joab Sigrah and Bethwel Henry were all returned to office; Incumbent Sungiwo Hadley lost in his bid for re-election to Edgar Edward.

In Truk District: Returns were still not complete as of late last week, but incumbent Senator Andon Amaraich was running far behind his opponent, Nick Bossy. Amaraich, who has been in the Congress since its beginning, appeared headed for defeat, although with returns from some outer island areas still to come in the final outcome could be very close; Two other incumbents were defeated in House races in Truk, with Endy Dois, the Vice-Speaker of the House, losing to Chiro Albert, and freshman Machine O'Sonis being defeated by Kalisto Refonopei; The ~~third incumbent~~, Masao Nakayama, is engaged in a three-way race with Lambert Aafin and Masachiro Christlib for which most returns are still not in; two Truk incumbents, Sasauo Haruo and Ray Setik, were re-elected without opposition.

In Palau District: A close Senate race saw Senator Roman Tmetuchl barely holding onto his seat against a strong challenge from John Ngiraked; Incumbent Congressman Tarkong Pedro and Timothy Olkeriil were defeated, Pedro by Isidoro Rudimch, and Olkeriil by Kuniwo Nakamura; and incumbent Polycarp Basilius retained his seat in the House by defeating Dr. Nobuo Swei.

In Yap District: There was only one contested race, but it was an upset victory by John Halielgam, a political newcomer, against longtime Yap outer islands Representative John Rugulimar; Senator Petrus Tun and Yap's other Congressman, Luke Tman, were re-elected without opposition.

And in the Marianas: A surprising election turnabout saw all four incumbents thrown out by the voters, including Senator Edward Pangelinan, the chairman of the Marianas future status commission. Senator Pangelinan was defeated by Pedro A. Tenorio; Incumbent Congressman Felipe Q. Atalig, dumped by his party early in the race in favor of another candidate, attempted to split the party and run an independent campaign, only to wind up third in a four-way race won by Jose Mafnas. Regular Popular Party Candidate Herman Palacios was second; Incumbent Herman Q. Guerrero, the other Congress of Micronesia member of the Marianas status commission, was also defeated, by Oscar C. Rasa; and incumbent Pedro P. Tenorio lost a close race to Herman R. Guerrero, a margin of just four votes providing Guerrero with his victory.

All of the returns are still unofficial. In the Trust Territory it frequently takes several days for ships from outer island areas to return to the district centers with ballot boxes. The early returns are received by two-way radio, and cannot be certified or declared as official until the actual ballots have been checked by government officials. But with the exception of two races in Truk District, it appeared that the unofficial returns would be upheld in final checking. Thus the new Sixth Congress of Micronesia will have a number of new faces, including nearly half the members of the House of Representatives.

SALII RETURNS FROM STATUS MEET

Although the election dominated the news in the Trust Territory last week, there were some other stories. Senator Lazarus Salii of Palau, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Future Status, returned from a week of meetings in Honolulu with American Ambassador Haydn Williams, and pronounced the meetings "very successful."

The two men discussed several remaining questions which have yet to be resolved between the U.S. and the Micronesian side in the status negotiations, including the return of public lands. Senator Salii said he informed Ambassador Williams of the Palau District Legislature's recent resolution objecting to the High Commissioner's veto of the land bill, and asking suspension of the status talks until the land question is cleared up. The Senator said he was informed by Williams that the Department of the Interior is in the process of drafting an

executive order for the High Commissioner on the land return. Salii took the position that the Joint Committee should participate in the drafting of any such executive order.

Another formal round of negotiations was not set, pending further discussions on Annex B of the draft compact, which concerns land use and options by the United States. Further preliminary meetings will have to be held on that subject, Salii indicated.

MARIANAS TALKS SET

The Chairman of the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission, Senator Edward Pangelinan, said last week that the next round of negotiations on future status between the U.S. and the Marianas will take place on Saipan beginning December 2. Pangelinan and his vice-chairman Vicente N. Santos, also recently returned from meetings with Ambassador Williams in Honolulu. Pangelinan said the December round is expected to conclude negotiations on all the remaining issues, and hopefully turn the attention of the negotiators to a review of the language of a status agreement and the signing of such an agreement by the two sides.

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

The Truk District Legislature convened in a special session on Moen. The session coincided with a conference of all the local magistrates in the district, and will be followed by a meeting of traditional leaders from throughout the territory.

The general election in Yap District had to be delayed two days by bad weather, and voters in the northern islands of the Marianas District had to wait four days to cast their ballots because inclement weather delayed the ship taking the ballots out, thereby delaying the vote counting until the weekend.

Rear Admiral George Morrison, Commander, Naval Forces Marianas, met with Trust Territory High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston and members of his staff last week on Saipan. They discussed matters involving cooperation and coordination between the U.S. Navy and the TTPI. One major topic was medical evacuations--it was pointed out that the Navy has discontinued use of the HU-16 amphibious airplanes, and there is now serious concern because of the inability of the military to respond to requests for medical evacuation from remote islands without airstrips.

William Stewart, newly named Deputy Director of Resources and Development, has taken over the chairmanship of the Economic Development Loan Fund board and the Copra Stabilization Board. Both positions were held by Eusebio Rechucher, who is now director of the department.

TT Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman completed a ten-day visit to Palau District last week. Included were visits to several of the outlying municipalities in the district, among them Peleliu and several villages on Babelthuap.

A task force on salaries and the rising cost-of-living in the TT was established last week. Six members from the Executive Branch were appointed, with the Congress of Micronesia also to name representatives on the task force, which will study the problem of inflation and seek solutions to the salaries and cost-of-living dilemmas.

A major project to replace old, leaky metal water pipes on Saipan with new pipe was completed last week. The project involved the installation of new pipelines in Chalan Kanoa, Susupe and San Antonio, three of the island's most heavily populated areas. Officials said the contractor completed the work ahead of schedule.

The TT Environmental Protection Board will hold its next meeting in Truk in early December. Territory residents were asked last week to bring their environmental concerns to the attention of the board for consideration at that meeting.

And finally, Trust Territory Broadcast Chief Elias Thomas and Herman Rodas, manager of the radio station in Palau, are currently attending a broadcasting seminar in Singapore. The meeting is co-sponsored by the Asian Broadcasting Union and the Asia Mass Communication Research Institute and Information Center, and will discuss the role played by broadcasting in projecting national aims and goals, and ways in which broadcasting can involve the community in national projects. The two men will return to the TT November 17.