

# Week in Review

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

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Saipan, Mariana Islands

Dec. 2-6, 1974

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## MARIANAS STATUS TALKS OPEN

The fifth round of Marianas status negotiations opened last week on Saipan. The two delegations, headed by Ambassador Haydn Williams for the U.S. and Senator Edward Pangelinan for the Marianas, are expected to meet for about two weeks, and some observers feel that an agreement may be reached during this round that would bring the Marianas into a commonwealth relationship with the United States. Williams and his delegation were greeted at the Saipan airport last Monday by a crowd of about 400 people, waving flags and banners proclaiming "We Want Commonwealth."

Following two days of preliminary talks, the negotiations formally opened Thursday at Saipan's Royal Taga Hotel, with a plenary session during which both Williams and Pangelinan delivered opening remarks.

The Ambassador described the twenty-year history of political evolution in the Marianas, beginning in 1950 when the Marianas legislature forwarded a petition stating that the Mariana Islands District wished to be incorporated into the U.S. as an American territory. The Ambassador mentioned several more petitions and resolutions from the leaders of the Marianas up through 1971, when the legislature advised the United Nations of the desire of the district for immediate separation from the trusteeship and union with the U.S.

The Ambassador said a commonwealth relationship would mean that the Northern Marianas would write and adopt its own constitution, would elect its own governor and legislative bodies, and would have its own court and judges. The Ambassador concluded his remarks by saying: "Here in your islands we are working together in a spirit of cooperation toward the establishment of a new commonwealth which will be based on the same solid principle of government by the consent of the governed (as in the U.S.). Let us steadily continue toward the completion of the task that has been given to us, conscious of its full meaning and importance and dedicated to its fulfillment."

Senator Pangelinan, in his remarks, emphasized that the people of the Marianas do not want the trusteeship to go on indefinitely. He said the people of the Marianas are ready for self-government, and that they place a high value on freedom and the democratic form of government which marks the American political system.

The Senator said there are still important issues to be resolved in the talks. He said one key issue is how the United States will acquire the land it needs. "Land is the most precious resource of the Northern Marianas," he stressed, and proposed an arrangement whereby the U.S. would lease the land it needs for fifty years, with the option to renew that lease for another fifty years. He said another issue remaining to be resolved is the setting of a fair price for the land.

Pangelinan also talked about problems relating to war claims, homesteading on Tinian, and other problem areas. He concluded by saying: " We on the commission are united behind two principles which we believe will help bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion. We deeply believe that a close and enduring relationship with the United States in the form of a commonwealth is what the people want. And we are determined to start the march toward commonwealth status by signing a status agreement as soon as--but not one moment before--all of the issues raised by our negotiations are resolved in a way which fully protects the interests of our people."

#### PUBLIC LANDS MEETING IN HAWAII

A meeting to discuss the proposed secretarial order on the return of Micronesian public land was to be held this week in Honolulu, Hawaii. The meeting was delayed one week in order to allow the various Micronesian representatives to discuss the issue on Saipan. That meeting, called by the leadership of the Congress of Micronesia, resulted in a consensus that the meeting in Hawaii should take place, and that the Congress and the office of the High Commissioner would share in the expenses involved in sending delegates from each of the districts. The participants agreed to meet again in Hawaii prior to the meeting with the U.S. officials to continue their discussions on whether or not the administrative action to return public land is acceptable.

Senator Lazarus Salii, chairman of the Joint Committee on Future Status, remains opposed to the method. He feels the U.S. should give the Congress of Micronesia another chance to pass suitable legislation to enable the return of public lands to take place. However, Senator Salii's position was not upheld during the Saipan meeting, and during the meeting it was also learned that the Palau District Legislature, reversing a position it took in October, has adopted a resolution favoring the administrative method for return of public land. The action came during a special session of the legislature which coincided with the meeting of Micronesian leaders on Saipan.

Director of Territorial Affairs Stanley S. Carpenter will head the U.S. delegation meeting this week in Hawaii.

#### EFFORT TO REMOVE TINIAN REPS FAILS

A move to replace the two Tinian representatives on the Marianas Political Status Commission failed last week in the Tinian Municipal Council. The effort began in November with the introduction of a resolution to replace Jose R. Cruz and Bernard Hofschneider with Vicente Manglona and Henry Hofschneider. Tinian Mayor Felipe C. Merdiola, who favored the move, said

he felt Cruz and Bernard Hofschneider were not adequately representing the best interests of the Tinian people on the Commission.

However, in a parliamentary move during the council meeting last week, the author of the resolution moved to withdraw it, and the withdrawal motion was favored by a vote of four to three. So Tinian remains represented on the Marianas status commission by Jose R. Cruz and Bernard Hofschneider.

#### AIR MIKE ANNOUNCES FARE INCREASE

Faced with continuing increases in fuel and other operating costs, Continental/Air Micronesia announced last week that it will again increase its fares and freight rates, effective January 15, 1975. The last time the airline increased fares was in March of this year. In a brief filed with the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), the airline said the new increases will amount to an average increase of 12.5 percent, plus a two dollar charge on each ticket regardless of cost as a "mileage adjustment" charge. The new fares mean that a one-way ticket from Saipan to Guam, for example, will go up from \$19.50 to \$23.90. A one-way ticket from Guam to Ponape will increase from \$133 to \$151.60.

The airline also said it will increase freight rates by a minimum of ten percent, and cancel many of its specific commodity rates. Detailed information on all of the changes is available from local Air Micronesia offices, or will be as soon as the new rates take effect.

In its brief, Continental said cumulative losses on the Trust Territory service of Air Micronesia in the six and a half years since the service was begun total more than ten million dollars. The airline said it is forced to take action to try and produce at least a small profit on the operation, and it is anticipated that the new fare structure will do that, given a moderate growth and barring any unforeseen developments.

"The tariff changes are substantial," Continental said, "but they are based entirely on inflation experienced in 1974; the new prices will still be low in comparison with other intra-Pacific fares and rates, and they can be expected to produce only a very modest profit if indeed one results at all because of the still very tenuous balance between anticipated revenues and expenses."

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

A meeting of the Trust Territory Environmental Protection Board took place last week in Truk District. Representatives from all six districts and the TT Headquarters attended the three-day meeting.

The TT Health Council recently completed its quarterly meeting, which took place on Ebeye, in the Marshall Islands. It was the council's first opportunity to observe at first-hand the poor sanitation and crowded living conditions on Ebeye. A special committee was appointed to study these conditions.

Seven trainees recently completed a course in the practical approach to broadcasting at the Broadcast Center on Saipan.

The semi-annual conference of Trust Territory district administrators was due to be held this week in Honolulu, Hawaii, in conjunction with the return of public lands meeting.

Two films about the Trust Territory produced by the University of Georgia for public television in the U.S. have won awards in national and international film competition. The films are "The Bikinians," about the people of Bikini, and "The Uncertain Paradise," a general documentary about Micronesia.

And finally, Air Micronesia and the Continental Hotel chain have assembled and trained a group of eight Micronesian dancers to perform at various conferences and functions. The group, trained by Jonna Hickox, wife of Saipan Continental Hotel Manager Hank Hickox, left Saipan last week for their first performing date, in Los Angeles at a meeting of Continental Airlines marketing managers. The dance group is seen as a good promotion for Micronesia's growing tourism trade.