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(CONGRESS INTO SIXTH WEEK)

SAIPAN, FEB. 19 (MNS)---THE SENATE BECAME THE FIRST OF THE TWO HOUSES TO HOLD TWO FORMAL SESSIONS IN A SINGLE DAY TUESDAY (FEB. 19), AS THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA MOVED INTO ITS SIXTH WEEK OF THE CURRENT REGULAR SESSION ON SAIPAN. THE WORKLOAD IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE STEADILY BETWEEN NOW AND MONDAY, MARCH 4, AT MIDNIGHT WHEN THE SESSION MUST BY LAW COME TO AN END. DOUBLE SESSIONS ARE INCREASINGLY LIVELY, AS ARE WEEKEND MEETINGS.

SENATORS VOTED TO MEET AGAIN LATE TUESDAY AFTERNOON AFTER VICE-PRESIDENT LAZARUS SALII REPORTED THAT "ABOUT FIFTEEN" COMMITTEE REPORTS WERE IN PREPARATION, AND MOST WOULD BE READY FOR ACTION BY LATER IN THE DAY. DURING THEIR MORNING SESSION THE SENATORS PASSED THREE BILLS ON SECOND AND FINAL READINGS, SENDING ALL THREE TO THE HOUSE FOR FURTHER ACTION. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD ANOTHER LIGHT CALENDAR, WITH NO FINAL FLOOR ACTION. THEY WILL NOT MEET AGAIN UNTIL WEDNESDAY MORNING.

PASSED IN THE SENATE TUESDAY MORNING WERE: A BILL TO CREATE A MICRONESIA DEVELOPMENT PLANNING COUNCIL (SB 111); A BILL CONCERNING OWNERSHIP INTERESTS IN REAL PROPERTY (SB 226); AND A BILL ESTABLISHING A GOVERNMENT COCONUT PROCESSING AUTHORITY (HB 49). THE SENATORS DEFERRED ACTION ON A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR MUNICIPAL CONTROL OF CERTAIN LAWS RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLES (SB 288).

THE COPRA ACT, WHICH WAS AMENDED BY THE SENATE AND THUS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE FOR FURTHER ACTION BEFORE IT CAN BE SENT TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, COULD BE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTS TO COME OUT OF CONGRESS THIS SESSION. THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO ESTABLISH A SUCCESSFUL, PROFIT-MAKING COCONUT PRODUCTS INDUSTRY IN MICRONESIA BY USING A GOVERNMENT "AUTHORITY" TO PROVIDE THE INITIAL CAPITAL.

"THE COCONUT TREE IS PLENTIFUL IN OUR ISLANDS," THE REPORT ON THE BILL FROM THE SENATE RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE STATES, "BUT, TO DATE, WE HAVE MERELY USED IT BY PRODUCING, FROM ITS NUT, COPRA FOR EXPORT TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THERE ARE NUMEROUS PRODUCTS THAT CAN BE MADE FROM ITS WOOD. FRONDS, NUT MEAT, NUT SHELLS AND OIL, AND THIS IS DONE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THERE IS NO REASON WHY A SUCCESSFUL COCONUT PRODUCTS INDUSTRY CANNOT BE ESTABLISHED IN MICRONESIA...."

A HALF MILLION DOLLARS IS APPROPRIATED FROM THE GENERAL FUND OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA TO LAUNCH THE AUTHORITY, OF WHICH NO MORE THAN \$300,000 IS TO BE SPENT FOR CONSTRUCTION AND PRODUCTION, AND \$150,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF RAW MATERIALS. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AUTHORITY WILL DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF ITS PRINCIPAL OFFICE AND THE LOCATION OF PROCESSING PLANTS AND OTHER OPERATIONS.

FOLLOWING UPON LAST YEAR'S LEGISLATION CREATING DISTRICT FISHING AUTHORITIES, THE COCONUT AUTHORITY ACT IS ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT BY THE CONGRESS TO DEVELOP MICRONESIA'S ECONOMY BY UTILIZING PRODUCTS, SUCH AS FISH AND COCONUTS, WHICH ARE ABUNDANT LOCALLY.

SIX NEW BILLS WERE INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE TUESDAY. AMONG THEM IS A MAJOR BILL THAT WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE REAPPORTIONMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, BASED ON FIGURES OBTAINED THROUGH THE 1973 CENSUS (SB 311) (SEE FOLLOWING STORY). THE BILL WOULD DIVIDE THE 21 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AMONG THE SIX DISTRICTS AS FOLLOWS: TRUK, SIX, MARSHALLS, FIVE; PONAPE, FOUR, AND YAP, PALAU AND MARIANAS, TWO EACH. THIS WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN REPRESENTATION OF ONE CONGRESSMAN EACH FOR PALAU AND THE MARIANAS, AND ADDITIONS TO THE DELEGATIONS FROM TRUK AND THE MARSHALLS OF ONE EACH.

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OTHER NEW BILLS ARE: A MEASURE PROVIDING FOR THE LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC DEFENDER (SB 312); A BILL TO PROHIBIT PEOPLE FROM TAKING LIVE CORAL FROM THE WATERS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY EXCEPT FOR LOCAL USE (SB 313); A \$23,000 APPROPRIATION FOR EXPENSES OF THE MARIANAS DISTRICT FAMILY FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM (SB 314); A BILL CREATING A COMMITTEE ON MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGRESS (SB 315); AND A BILL TO CREATE A CIVIC ACTION CADET CORPS AND APPROPRIATE \$150,000 FOR IT (SB 316). THIS BILL WAS ALSO INTRODUCED TUESDAY IN THE HOUSE (HB 319).

HOUSE MEMBERS ALSO INTRODUCED THE FOLLOWING NEW BILLS: A MEASURE TO PUT IT AIRPORTS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS (HE 317); A BILL TO PROVIDE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION FOR LOBSTERS (HB 318); SIMILAR LEGISLATION FOR CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF COCONUT CRABS (HE 321); A BILL TO FORMALIZE CERTAIN DIVISION CHANGES IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PERSONNEL AND HEALTH SERVICES (HB 322); AND A NATURALIZATION MEASURE (HE 323).

TWO JOINT RESOLUTIONS AND TWO RESOLUTIONS WERE ALSO INTRODUCED. ONE OF THE JOINT MEASURES ASKS THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE KWAJALEIN MISSILE RANGE TO END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MICRONESIANS IN THE STORES OF KWAJALEIN (HJR 115); WHILE THE OTHER REQUESTS THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR TO POSTPONE THE REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN MICRONESIA UNTIL APRIL 1, 1975 (HJR 116).

ONE OF THE HOUSE RESOLUTIONS WOULD EXPRESS THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE WITH REGARD TO THE UTILIZATION OF LABOR IN MICRONESIA (HR 11). THE OTHER WOULD PROVIDE THAT, AFTER THE 39TH CALENDAR DAY OF THE CURRENT SESSION, NO LEGISLATIVE MEASURE MAY BE INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXCEPT BY AGREEMENT OF A MAJORITY OF ALL MEMBERS TO WHICH THE HOUSE IS ENTITLED (HR 10).

TUESDAY WAS THE 37TH DAY OF THE SESSION.
(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: THIS MNS DISPATCH COVERS ACTIVITY AT THE MORNING SESSIONS TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19. THE SENATE SESSION SCHEDULED FOR LATE TUESDAY AFTERNOON WILL BE COVERED AS PART OF THE WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 MNS DISPATCH FROM THE CONGRESS.)

(CALL USERS: PLEASE CREDIT THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)
(AMARAICH URGES REAPPORTIONMENT)

SAIPAN, FEB. 19 (CONGRESS RELEASE)--SENATOR ANDON AMARAICH OF TRUK SUBMITTED A STATEMENT TUESDAY (FEBRUARY 19) CONCERNING A BILL HE INTRODUCED THE SAME DAY PROPOSING A PLAN FOR THE REAPPORTIONMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

IN HIS STATEMENT, AMARAICH SAID THAT IF CONGRESS DOES NOT REAPPORTION ITSELF THIS SESSION, IT WILL HAVE TO HAVE A SPECIAL SESSION WHICH WILL COST A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF MONEY. HE POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF CONGRESS WOULD SPEND THAT MONEY ON SOMETHING MORE MEANINGFUL TO THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA AND WHICH WILL PRODUCE MORE "TANGIBLE" RESULTS.

THE STATEMENT ALSO NOTED THAT UNDER HIS BILL TWO DISTRICTS, THE MARIANAS AND PALAU, WILL HAVE ONE LESS SEAT IN THE SIXTH CONGRESS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAN THEY HAD IN THE FIFTH, AND TRUK AND THE MARSHALLS WILL HAVE ONE MORE. THE SENATOR'S STATEMENT SAID THAT THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID WHAT HE CALLS AN "UNFORTUNATE" CONSEQUENCE IS TO DELAY REAPPORTIONMENT ONCE AGAIN, AND PETITION THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR FOR A CHANGE IN THE SECRETARIAL ORDER WHICH WOULD RAISE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSE TO 25.

"WE CAN ATTACK THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY," ACCORDING TO AMARAICH'S STATEMENT, "LETTING THE NUMBERS FALL WHERE THEY HAVE FALLEN."

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SENATOR AMARAICH NOTED IN HIS STATEMENT THAT HE DOES NOT ADVOCATE EITHER COURSE AND URGED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS NOT TO DELAY A DECISION ON REAPPORTIONING ITSELF, SAYING THAT IT MUST DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE NOW.

THE SENATOR'S STATEMENT CONCLUDED THAT THERE ARE MANY WAYS IN WHICH EACH DISTRICT COULD ALLOCATE SUCH SEATS AND THE BILL HE INTRODUCED WITH RESPECT TO REAPPORTIONMENT "REPRESENTS ONLY A WORKING DOCUMENT, A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH EACH DISTRICT DELEGATION AND A SUBJECT FOR FUTURE HEARINGS."

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