

Won Pat Alters War Claims Bill

WASHINGTON—Rep. Antonio B. Won Pat has introduced a revised version of his bill to authorize the District Court of Guam to reopen compensation claims for Guamanians whose property was taken by the federal government after World War II.

"The bill I introduced" he said, "differs from my legislation introduced last year in several respects. First, the cutoff date for the land transaction has been changed from Aug. 1, 1950 to Aug. 23, 1963.

"Second, a method of prompt payment has been included for those individuals who successfully convince the courts that they are indeed shortchanged in their land transactions with the federal government.

"Under the old bill, it would have been necessary for the successful claimants to enter into a long-term effort to require the federal government to pay all lawful claims. My new bill authorizes the federal government to quickly pay the claimant by either making a cash payment in the amount of the judgment or offering an exchange of surplus federal land of equivalent value."

"The congressman will sponsor a preliminary hearing on his new bill when he returns to Guam in mid-April.

Won Pat's new bill also allows the court to resolve the question of the value of territorial property 20 or 30 years ago by establishing that the fair market value of any land taken on Guam by the federal government be determined as of 1963.

In past proceedings, the U.S. Navy contended that since no formal system of land appraisal was operative in the territory after 1944, prices paid by the Navy at that time were fair.