

1974

(THIRD BILL TO HICOM)

SAIPAN, FEB. 23 (MNS)---THE THIRD BILL TO COMPLETE LEGISLATIVE ACTION DURING THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA IS ON ITS WAY TO HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON AS THE RESULT OF ACTION TAKEN TUESDAY AFTERNOON (FEB. 19) IN THE SENATE. THE SENATORS WERE HOLDING THEIR SECOND SESSION OF THE DAY, THE FIRST TIME DURING THIS SESSION THAT EITHER HOUSE HAS MET TWICE IN A SINGLE DAY.

PASSED ON FINAL READING WAS A MEASURE PROVIDING THAT FINES IMPOSED BY A COURT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF DISTRICT OR MUNICIPAL LAW SHALL BE PAID INTO THE TREASURY OF THE JURISDICTION WHICH ENACTED THE LAW (HB 13). PRESENTLY SUCH FINES ARE TRANSMITTED TO THE TREASURY OF THE TRUST TERRITORY. IT IS EXPECTED THAT A TOTAL OF SOME \$25,000 TO \$30,000 WORTH OF FINES WILL BE AFFECTED BY THIS LAW IN ANY GIVEN YEAR.

IF THE BILL IS OFFICIALLY TRANSMITTED TO THE HICOM ON OR BEFORE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, HE WILL HAVE TEN DAYS IN WHICH TO TAKE ACTION ON IT. ANY LEGISLATION RECEIVED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE AFTER FRIDAY MUST BE ACTED UPON WITHIN THIRTY DAYS

IN ADDITION TO THE HOUSE BILL PASSED AND SENT TO THE HICOM, THE SENATORS ALSO PASSED FOUR OTHER BILLS ON SECOND READING, SENDING THEM TO THE HOUSE FOR FURTHER ACTION. THEY ARE: A BILL DESIGNED TO FOSTER UNITY IN MICRONESIA BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ESTABLISHING INTER-DISTRICT STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS (SB 226); A BILL TO ESTABLISH A MICRONESIAN SPORTS COUNCIL AND MAKE PLANS FOR MICRONESIA'S ENTRY IN THE 1975 SOUTH PACIFIC GAMES (SB299); A BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE MERIT SYSTEM ACT RELATING TO OVERTIME COMPENSATION AND HOLIDAY PAY (HB 138); AND A BILL TO EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF "DANGEROUS DEVICE" UNDER THE WEAPONS CONTROL ACT, AND PRESCRIBE ADDITIONAL RULES REGARDING POSSESSION OF FIREARMS AND OTHER DANGEROUS DEVICES ABOARD VEHICLES AND VESSELS (HB 174). THE TWO HOUSE BILLS WERE AMENDED BY THE SENATE, AND THUS MUST RECEIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THE SENATORS ALSO VOTED TO FILE A BILL THAT WOULD HAVE BROADENED THE SCOPE OF NATURALIZATION PROCEDURES IN THE TRUST TERRITORY TO MAKE THE SPOUSES OF CITIZENS WHO HAVE BEEN RESIDENTS OF MICRONESIA FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS, AND ADOPTED CHILDREN WHOSE ADOPTIVE PARENTS ARE CITIZENS, ELIGIBLE FOR NATURALIZATION (SB 254). THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS, WHICH CONSIDERED THE BILL, SAID, "WE REGARD CITIZENSHIP OF MICRONESIA TO BE A RIGHT WHICH SHOULD BE JEALOUSLY GUARDED, AND ARE CONSEQUENTLY OPPOSED TO ANY MEASURE WHICH ATTEMPTS TO BROADEN THE SCOPE OF LAW TO MAKE ADDITIONAL CLASSES OF PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR NATURALIZATION AS CITIZENS."

ON THE RESOLUTION CALENDAR TUESDAY AFTERNOON, THE SENATE ADOPTED THREE MEASURES. ONE OF THEM ENDORSES THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE CONGRESS' JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA WITH REGARD TO THE UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LAW OF THE SEA (SJR 93). ANOTHER THANKS THE DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, ALVIN J. ARNETT, FOR REINSTATING THE MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FUNDING GRANT WHICH HAD BEEN DISAPPROVED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER LAST YEAR (SJR 94). THE THIRD MEASURE, A HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION WHICH HAS NOW COMPLETED LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND HAS BECOME THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, ASSERTS THE MARSHALLESE AND MICRONESIAN TRADITIONAL CLAIM TO ENEK-KIO ATOLL, IN THE NORTHERN MARSHALLS. (SJR 5). KNOWN GENERALLY AS WAKE ISLAND, THE TINY ATOLL IS OCCUPIED BY THE UNITED STATES, WHICH MAINTAINS WEATHER AND NAVIGATIONAL FACILITIES AND AN AIRFIELD THERE.

ONLY ONE BILL WAS INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE TUESDAY

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AFTERNOON. IT IS A MEASURE TO FORMALIZE CERTAIN DIVISIONAL CHANGES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PERSONNEL AND HEALTH SERVICES (SP 317.) THE SENATORS ADJOURNED UNTIL 4:30 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, TO GIVE THEIR STAFF TIME DURING THE REGULAR WORKING DAY TO PREPARE ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND LEGISLATION FOR ACTION.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WEDNESDAY MORNING (FEB. 20), FLOOR ACTION WAS LIGHT. ONE BILL WAS FILED. IT WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE RESIDENCE PERIOD REQUIRED FOR DIVORCE IN THE TRUST TERRITORY FROM TWO YEARS TO THREE MONTHS (HB 322). IT WAS FILED AS BEING "WITHOUT MERIT, SINCE IT COULD ONLY ENCOURAGE DIVORCE AMONG TEMPORARY RESIDENTS, TO THE POSSIBLE DETRIMENT OF THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE AND TO THE BENEFIT OF NO ONE."

TWO BILLS AND TWO JOINT RESOLUTIONS WERE INTRODUCED AT WEDNESDAY'S SESSION. ONE OF THE BILLS IS A MAJOR SET OF CHANGES IN THE FOREIGN INVESTORS BUSINESS PERMIT ACT, INTRODUCED IN LIGHT OF INTERIOR SECRETARY MORTON'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF A LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT FROM THIRD COUNTRIES (HB 323). THE OTHER WOULD APPROPRIATE \$115,000 TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN PONAPE DISTRICT (HB 324).

ONE OF THE RESOLUTIONS REQUESTS THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND BUDGET PLANNING TO INCLUDE IN THE FY 1976 BUDGET FUNDS TO CONSTRUCT A LIBRARY AND GYMNASIUM AT SOUTHERN NAMONEAS HIGH SCHOOL IN TRUK DISTRICT (HJR 117). THE OTHER ASKS THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE CONGRESS, AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE TO DECLINE TO INCREASE PER DIEM RATES TO THE LEVEL SPECIFIED IN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MEMORANDUM OF JANUARY 9, 1974 (HJR 113).

THE HOUSE IS IN RECESS UNTIL TEN THURSDAY MORNING.

(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: MNS WILL CONTINUE FOR THE TIME BEING TO FOLLOW THIS PATTERN IN COVERING CONGRESS NEWS, OF INCLUDING ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE LATE AFTERNOON OR EVENING HOURS IN THE NEWS DISPATCH FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY.)

(ALL USERS: PLEASE CREDIT CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)
(REP. ATALIG SPEAKS CONCERNING ROTA)

SAIPAN, FEB. 20 (CONGRESS RELEASE) --- PROBLEMS FACING THE ISLAND OF ROTA WERE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY REPRESENTATIVE FELIPE ATALIG OF THE MARIANAS WEDNESDAY.

IN BRIEF REMARKS INSERTED INTO THE HOUSE JOURNAL, ATALIG SAID A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA FOR CHANNEL BLASTING HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT, BUT THAT IT UNFORTUNATELY HAD NOT IMPROVED THE SITUATION. HE SAID LOOSE CORAL WHICH HAD BEEN BLASTED OUT HAD WASHED BACK INTO PLACE MAKING DECENT SHIPPING SERVICE TO ROTA VERY DIFFICULT.

ATALIG ILLUSTRATED HIS POINT BY SAYING THAT NECESSITIES FOR ROTA'S 2,000 INHABITANTS NOW HAVE TO BE FLOWN IN BY AIR AT INCREASED COST, ADDING THAT GASOLINE NOW SELLS FOR \$.99 PER GALLON.

DESCRIBING IMPROVEMENT OF THE CHANNEL AS A VITAL AND NECESSARY PART OF THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY, ATALIG CALLED UPON THE ADMINISTRATION TO GIVE HIGH PRIORITY TO SEEING THAT A PERMANENT CHANNEL IS CONSTRUCTED ON ROTA.

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