

(CONGRESS MID-WAY POINT)

SAIPAN, FEB. 7 (MNS)---THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA REACHED THE HALF-WAY POINT OF ITS CURRENT SESSION ON SAIPAN THURSDAY (FEB. 7) BY PASSING AND SENDING TO HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON THE FIRST TWO BILLS TO COME OUT OF THIS SESSION.

FINAL ACTION ON THE TWO MEASURES CAME IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITHOUT OPPOSITION WERE: A MEASURE TO EMPOWER THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO APPOINT SPECIAL CAPTAINS IN AN EMERGENCY, SET A TIMETABLE FOR POLICE CAPTAINS TO SERVE FOR TWO YEARS, WHILE SPECIAL CAPTAINS SHALL SERVE UNTIL RELEASED BY THE OFFICER MAKING THE APPOINTMENT, (SB 171); AND A BILL WHICH WOULD ATTEMPT TO STOP THE PRACTICE OF NONCITIZENS USING A SPOUSE OR ADOPTED CHILD AS A "FRONT" IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DO BUSINESS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY WITHOUT COMPLYING WITH THE FOREIGN INVESTORS BUSINESS PERMIT ACT, (HB 3). THE SENATE MADE ONE MINOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REGARDING THE PENALTY PROVISION OF THE BILL AND THE HOUSE CONCURRED.

ONCE HE RECEIVES THESE BILLS OFFICIALLY FROM THE CONGRESS, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL HAVE THIRTY DAYS IN WHICH TO CONSIDER THEM AND DECIDE AMONG HIS THREE ALTERNATIVES WHAT ACTION HE WILL TAKE. HE MAY DECIDE TO SIGN THE BILLS, IN WHICH CASE THEY BECOME LAW. HE MAY DECIDE TO DISAPPROVE OF THEM, IN WHICH CASE THEY WILL BE RETURNED TO THE CONGRESS. OR HE MAY DECIDE TO TAKE NO ACTION, THEREBY ALLOWING THE BILLS TO BECOME LAW WITHOUT HIS SIGNATURE. IT GENERALLY TAKES A FEW DAYS FROM THE DATE OF FINAL FLOOR ACTION FOR BILLS TO BE OFFICIALLY TRANSMITTED TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER.

PASSED ON SECOND READING AND SENT TO THE SENATE WAS A BILL TO REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ANY USE OF LAND BY A NONCITIZEN IN MICRONESIA, (HB 135). THREE OTHER BILLS PASSED FIRST READING.

MARSHALLS CONGRESSMAN JOHN HEINE SPOKE BEFORE INTRODUCING A BILL WHICH PROVIDES A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MICRONESIA'S FISHERMEN, (HB 284). HE URGED HIS COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT THE INTENTION OF THE BILL SINCE HE PROJECTED THAT MANY FISHING COMPANIES OUTSIDE MICRONESIA WOULD BE COMING IN TO DO BUSINESS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY. THE MARSHALLS' CONGRESSMAN WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GUARANTEE THAT AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF FISHERMEN IN FOREIGN FISHING COMPANIES ARE MICRONESIANS.

SEVEN NEW BILLS IN ADDITION TO HEINE'S BILL WERE INTRODUCED: THEY ARE: THREE NATURALIZATION MEASURES, (HB285, 286, 287); A BILL PERMITTING THE OWNERSHIP OF REAL PROPERTY IN THE TRUST TERRITORY BY CERTAIN NON-CITIZENS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, (HB 288); A MEASURE WHICH WOULD CREATE A CIVIC ACTION CADET CORPS PILOT PROGRAM, AND APPROPRIATE \$150,000 FOR ITS PURPOSES, (HB 289); ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA UNDER A BOARD OF REGENTS, (HB 290); AND TO APPROPRIATE \$280,000 TO PURCHASE CERTAIN HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER PUBLIC WORKS IN PALAU DISTRICT, (HB 291).

THREE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTIONS WERE OFFERED. THEY ARE: A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE HICOM TO CONDUCT A COST OF LIVING INCREASE SURVEY AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND TO HAVE THEIR WAGES ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF SUCH A SURVEY, (HJR 109); REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL TO CONDUCT A STUDY RELATING TO THE JOB DESCRIPTIONS, CLASSIFICATION, AND PAY SCALES OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTORS OF HEALTH SERVICES, (HJR 108) AND A RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO CEASE FUNDING THE OPERATIONS OF THE MICRONESIAN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION IN TRUK DISTRICT, (HJR 107).

THE SENATE MARKED THE HALFWAY POINT THURSDAY WITH THE PASSAGE ON SECOND READING OF ONE BILL, AND COMPLETION OF ACTION ON TWO JOINT RESOLUTIONS AND SINGLE SENATE RESOLUTION. THE BILL, WHICH PASSED WITHOUT DISCUSSION OR OPPOSITION, WAS ONE RELATING TO MUNICIPAL CONTROL OVER THE LICENSING OF ALL RETAIL AND SERVICE BUSINESSES (SB 229). IT NOW GOES TO THE HOUSE FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

HOUSE AMENDMENTS WERE ACCEPTED ON TWO SENATE JOINT RESOLUTIONS, ONE TO URGE THAT MICRONESIANS BE PERMITTED TO OBTAIN MULTIPLE ENTRY VISAS FOR JAPAN (SJR 39), AND ONE REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISES IN THE TT (SJR 62). SUCH FRANCHISES WOULD INCLUDE THOSE HELD BY TRANSPAC, MOBIL MICRONESIA, AND CONTINENTAL/AIR MICRONESIA.

MARIANAS SENATOR OLYMPIO T. BORJA INTRODUCED A SINGLE RESOLUTION THURSDAY AND ASKED THAT IT BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR AND IMMEDIATELY ACTED UPON. IT IS A MEASURE DECLARING THE OPPOSITION OF THE SENATE TO THE TWENTY-DOLLAR PER TON RATE INCREASE REQUESTED BY TRANSPAC (SR 9). THE SENATOR SAID IT WAS HIS HOPE TO COMPLETE ACTION ON THE MEASURE QUICKLY AND TRANSMIT A COPY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TT RATE REVIEW BOARD, WHICH MET THIS WEEK ON SAIPAN. THE BOARD, HOWEVER, HAS ALREADY ACTED TO TEMPORARILY PERMIT TRANSPAC TO LEVY THE INCREASED TARIFF, PENDING OUTCOME OF A MEETING PRESENTLY GOING ON IN HAWAII TO FORMULATE THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IN THE TRANSPAC SITUATION. THE SENATE ADOPTED THE RESOLUTION NEVERTHELESS.

IT WAS LEARNED THURSDAY THAT THE CHAIRMEN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES, SENATOR AMATA KABUA (MARSHALLS) AND REPRESENTATIVES SASAHO HARUO (TRUK), FLEW TO HAWAII TO PARTICIPATE IN THAT MEETING, ALONG WITH LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL NALEB UDUI. THE MEETING WAS TO TAKE PLACE THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, HAWAII TIME, IN HONOLULU.

SEVEN NEW BILLS AND A JOINT RESOLUTION WERE INTRODUCED AT THE THURSDAY SESSION, IN ADDITION TO THE SENATE RESOLUTION REGARDING TRANSPAC. THE BILLS INCLUDE: AN APPROPRIATION OF \$50,000 TO DEFRAY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND CONTINGENT EXPENSES OF THE DORY PROJECT IN PONAPE DISTRICT (SB 280); A BILL PROVIDING FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF LABOR IN THE PACIFIC, AND AUTHORIZING AN APPRENTICE TRAINING PROGRAM (SB 281); A BILL TO CREATE THE MICRONESIA BAR, AN ORGANIZATION FOR LAWYERS (SB 282); A BILL REVISING THE ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY JUDICIARY (SB 283); A BILL PROVIDING FOR SAFEGUARDS ON LAND OWNERSHIP AND PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING THEM (SB 284); AN APPROPRIATION OF \$150,000 TO PURCHASE A FISHING VESSEL FOR THE MARSHALLS (SB 285); AND A BILL RELATING TO MUNICIPAL CONTROL OVER THE USE OF TERRITORIAL WATERS AND SUBMERGED LANDS IN THE TT (SB 286).

THE JOINT RESOLUTION REQUESTS THE UNITED STATES TO EXTEND PROGRAMS OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS IN THE TT (SJR 91).

AT THE CLOSE OF THE SENATE SESSION THURSDAY, FLOOR LEADER AMBILOS IEHSI (PONAPE) REMINDED HIS COLLEAGUES THAT THE SESSION IS NOW HALF OVER. "IF WE ARE TO AVOID STOPPING THE CLOCK AT TWELVE MIDNIGHT ON MARCH FOURTH," THE SENATOR SAID, "WE MUST START BRINGING MEASURES OUT OF THE COMMITTEES."

BOTH HOUSE OF CONGRESS ARE IN RECESS UNTIL TEN FRIDAY MORNING, WHICH WILL BE THE 26TH DAY OF THE 50-DAY SESSION.

(ALL USERS: PLEASE CREDIT CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)

(BASILIUS SCORES STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL)

SAIPAN, FEB. 7 (CONGRESS RELEASE)---DURING A RELATIVELY SILENT SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WEDNESDAY (FEB. 6), REPRESENTATIVE POLYCARP BASILIUS DELIVERED A SHARPLY-WARDED STATEMENT ATTACKING THE REMARKS OF A U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL BASED IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

CITING ONE-BY-ONE, CERTAIN INACCURACIES AND MISLEADING INFORMATION, THE PALAU CONGRESSMAN INDICATED THAT HE BROUGHT THE REMARKS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HOUSE "TO REMIND US ALL OF THE PROBLEMS OF LETTING SOMEONE ELSE REPRESENT YOUR INTERESTS, A FACT WHICH SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN AS WE CONTEMPLATE THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP, IF ANY, BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MICRONESIA."

THE REMARKS, WHICH HE INSERTED INTO THE HOUSE JOURNAL, WERE MADE BY A MR. CHALNERS B. WOOD, A CHARGE D' AFFAIRS AT THE U.S. EMBASSY IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND. HE ALSO INCLUDED AN EDITORIAL PUBLISHED IN A CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND PAPER BASED ON THE REMARKS.

REPRESENTATIVE BASILIUS CITED SEVERAL STATEMENTS AS INACCURATE OR MISLEADING, INCLUDING:

THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1965 AND IS BEGINNING TO FUNCTION.

OPINIONS CONCERNING POLITICAL STATUS VARY AND THAT MAJORITY OF ITS POPULATION DO NOT SEEM TOO UNDULY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.

THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MICRONESIA FOR 26 YEARS WHICH AS YET HAS NO ONE RESPECTED LEADER.

THE UNITED STATES WOULD RETAIN USE OF THE KWAJALEIN ATOLL AND AN OPTION TO ESTABLISH A BASE IN PALAU IF NECESSARY.

BASILIUS WAS DISGUSTED AND DISTURBED AT THE INACCURACIES AND MIS-INFORMATION INCLUDED IN MR. WOOD'S STATEMENT AND SAID: "THE POINT IS NOT THAT MR. WOOD IS NECESSARILY STUPID, OR THAT HE IS AN ILL-MANNERED PERSON. ON THE CONTRARY, HE MIGHT BE A VERY NICE, WELL INTENTIONED PERSON. MY POINT IS THAT I AM ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTED BY THE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING DEMONSTRATED BY THIS EMPLOYEE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, A PERSON WHO, BECAUSE OF HIS DUTY STATION, SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING MORE THAN INACCURACIES ABOUT MICRONESIA. NOT ONLY WAS THE SPEECH MISLEADING, BUT TO TOP IT ALL OFF, IT WAS POORLY WRITTEN."

CONGRESSMAN BASILIUS ALSO STATED THAT THE BENEFICIAL ASPECT OF THIS INCIDENT WAS THE WELL-MEANT SUGGESTION IN THE EDITORIAL THAT NEW ZEALAND MIGHT BE ABLE TO OFFER ASSISTANCE TO MICRONESIA WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE "DESIRES OF ITS, GENERALLY, PRIMITIVE PEOPLES."

MEANWHILE, CONGRESSMAN TARKONG PEDRO ALSO DELIVERED SHORT REMARKS DURING WEDNESDAY'S SESSION RELATING TO A HOUSE RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE TRUST TERRITORY BOARD OF EDUCATION TO REVIEW THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN MICRONESIA.

IN HIS SPEECH, PEDRO SAID THE HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION HE INTRODUCED PROVIDES THAT A REPORT BE SUBMITTED BY THEM TO CONGRESS NEXT YEAR WITH RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS ONWAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE PRESENT SYSTEM MAKING IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO MICRONESIA'S NEEDS.

PEDRO NOTED THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MATTERS TRAVELED THROUGHOUT MICRONESIA DURING THE PAST YEAR " NOT ONLY TO TEST REACTION TO THE JOINT TASK FORCE REPORT BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE AND THE INTERIOR, BUT ALSO TO SEE IF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE SECTIONS REGARDING EDUCATION WERE STILL RELEVANT."

"OUR CONCLUSION," HE SAID, "IS EXPRESSED IN THE INTENT OF THIS RESOLUTION." HE SAID HIS COMMITTEE FEELS IT IS NOW TIME TO REVIEW THE WHOLE STRUCTURE AND IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

EVALUATION OF CURRICULA INCLUDING SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO BE REACHED BY A CERTAIN DATE, THE AMOUNT OF VACATIONAL EDUCATION THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AND BETTER COORDINATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR SCHOOL GRADUATES.

AVALUCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND TEACHING STAFFS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO BOARDS OF EDUCATION, THE ADMINISTRATION, THE CONGRESS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.

EVALUATION OF HOW TO MAKE OUR PEOPLE MORE EFFECTIVE AS CITIZENS USING THE POTENTIAL MEANS AVAILABLE.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS TO TEST NEW MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

ADOPTION OF RULES AND PROCEDURES TO INSURE A PERIODIC REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE MICRONESIA BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA.

THE PALAU CONGRESSMAN POINTED OUT THAT IT IS TIME FOR CONGRESS TO STOP STUDYING, REPORTING, AND INVESTIGATING. "WE NOW HAV A MICRONESIAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, WE NOW HAVE A TRUST TERRITORY BOARD OF EDUCATION WHICH IS COMPOSED OF MICRONESIAN CITIZENS," HE SAID, "THEREFORE IT IS TIME FOR MICRONESIANS WHO ARE IN CHARGE, AND THE MICRONESIANS WHO HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT REVISING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM " SO IT BECOMES" EFFECTIVE IN PREPARING OUR PEOPLE AND OUR ISLANDS FOR A BETTER FUTURE.