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242 Guamanians One Step Closer To Land Claims Compensation

After nearly three years of effort both here and in Washington, 242 Guamanians whose lands were taken by the United States Government between the years 1944 and 1963, will take an important first step in what may result in their gaining just compensation for their ancestral land—considered by many to be Guam's most precious commodity.

With the announcement by Delegate A. B. Won Pat that he plans to hold a preliminary hearing tentatively set for April 15, the Twelfth Guam Legislature's Select Committee on Federal Land Takings, chaired by Senator Edward Terlaje, is preparing to bring to light what the members feel were questionable procedures and inadequate compensation provided to these people by the U.S. Government in its land acquisition since the island was recaptured in 1944.

Fundamentally, the Won Pat Bill (H.R. 12760) would give the District Court of Guam sole jurisdiction to hear and determine any claim against the U.S. Government filed one year after enactment of this measure. If judgement is made in favor of the claimant, the Secretary of the Interior would be authorized to make a cash

payment to the claimant, or grant land of equivalent value which is owned by the U.S. and has been determined to be surplus.

Senator Terlaje said that hearings held before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs on September 14, 1972 in Washington opened the way for redress of these grievances, patiently but firmly held by the 242 families.

Terlaje said that his Subcommittee conducted an investigation into the conditions surrounding the condemnation and taking of nearly two-thirds of the total land area of Guam by the U.S. Government. Interviews were conducted with the former land owners or their lineal descendants and the results documented in two detailed reports now in the hands of the Committee. The files of the District Court of Guam relating to condemnation were also reviewed, revealing a similarity in the pattern of statements made by land owners

during the interviews.

Terlaje said their testimony lends ample and dramatic proof that grave inequities had been visited upon large numbers of Guamanians because of the inadequate and arbitrary legal procedures and valuation practices of the Federal Government.

The Supplemental Report on Federal Land Takings prepared by the Committee is composed of four parts:

1. A summary to date of efforts to achieve just compensation for Guamanians whose land was taken by the United States Government in the period 1944 to 1963 (summarized above);
2. A statement and analysis of the critical issues of the controversy;
3. Additional data gathered and analyzed since the last report (1972);
4. Recommendations for future action together with proposed modifications of H.R. 5440 (reintroduced as H.R. 12760 last month).

Young Kennedy Readmitted

BOSTON (UPI) - The 12-year-old son of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy entered Boston Children's Hospital late Friday for anti-cancer drug treatments in hopes of insuring that the bone cancer which caused amputation of his right leg will not recur.

Senator Kennedy brought his son to the hospital early Friday.