

(HICOM SIGNED TWO BILLS)

SAIPAN, MARCH 19 (HNS) --- TWO BILLS PASSED BY THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE FIFTH CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA WERE SIGNED INTO LAW BY TRUST TERRITORY HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON MONDAY (MARCH 18). THE BILLS BECAME THE SECOND AND THIRD TO BE SIGNED OUT OF THE TOTAL OF 46 PASSED DURING THE SESSION. 11
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BOTH MEASURES ARE HOUSE BILLS. THEY ARE: A BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE TO PROVIDE 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) NOW PUBLIC LAW 5-54; AND A BILL GRANTING CERTAIN IMMUNITIES TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, THEIR OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES, (HB 219) WHICH BECOMES PUBLIC LAW 5-55.

PUBLIC LAW 5-54 IS EXPECTED TO "INCREASE REVENUES FOR DISTRICTS AND MUNICIPALITIES AND WILL, THEREFORE, ENCOURAGE ENFORCEMENT OF DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL LAWS BY LOCAL OFFICIALS." THE BILL WAS PROPOSED BY MARSHALLS CONGRESSMAN CHARLES DOMNICK.

PUBLIC LAW 5-55 ACCORDS THE SAME STATUS, IMMUNITIES, EXEMPTIONS, AND PRIVILEGES TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN MICRONESIA AS ARE ACCORDED TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. "ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL," THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS REPORTED, "IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THE TRUST TERRITORY ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP), A PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

"FORMS OF ASSISTANCE, TO BE MADE AVAILABLE BY UNDP MAY INCLUDE THE SERVICES OF ADVISORY AND OPERATIONAL EXPERTS, U.N. VOLUNTEERS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES, SEMINARS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS, AND ANY OTHER FORM OF ASSISTANCE AGREED UPON BY THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT.

"IMPLEMENTATION OF UNDP ASSISTANCE IS PREDICATED ON SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND UNDP; THE LAST BARRIER TO THIS AGREEMENT IS THAT UNDP REQUIRES DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT FOR ITSELF AND ITS PERSONNEL IN THE TRUST TERRITORY, WHICH MUST BE GRANTED BY THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA." TRUK CONGRESSMAN SASAU HARUO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS BILL.

(TASK FORCE PROGRESS REPORT)

SAIPAN, MARCH 19 (HNS) --- THE LATEST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT SAW EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FOR MICRONESIA, ACCORDING TO A TASK FORCE SPOKESMAN.

DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND AN OUTLINE OF "THE EDUCATION PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE TASK FORCE ON THE CONVENTION" AS WELL AS PLANS AND APPROACHES THAT THE TASK FORCE SHOULD MAKE IN DEALING WITH THIS MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECT, DRAFTING A CONSTITUTION FOR MICRONESIA.

IN THIS CONNECTION, A SPECIAL SUB-TASK FORCE WAS DESIGNATED TO WORK ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION PROJECT AND TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF ITS WORK TO THE TASK FORCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT WAS THE GENERAL CONCENSUS OF THE TASK FORCE THAT A MAXI TASK FORCE BE ASSIGNED THIS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY SINCE IF THE HICOM APPROVES THE BILL CALLING FOR THE CONVENTION, THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WILL FOLLOW IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR.

TO COPE WITH PROBLEM, THE TASK FORCE HAS AGREED TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND ANY NEW PROJECTS AND MUSTER AS MUCH EFFORT AS POSSIBLE TO LAUNCH A PROGRAM DEALING WITH THE EDUCATION OF

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MICRONESIANS ON THE "MEANING, AND IMPLICATIONS" OF THE PROPOSED CONVENTION. TO THIS END, A SPECIAL RADIO PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IS BEING PLANNED WITH THE IDEA OF HAVING THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE IN DISCUSSING THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

TO FACILITATE MATTERS, IT WAS PROPOSED THAT A "TIME-TABLE OF EVENTS" LEADING TO THE ACTUAL CONVENTION BE DRAWN AS A GUIDING DEVICE FOR THE TASK FORCE.

TO FURTHER INCREASE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK FORCE, A REGULAR INSERT OF ARTICLES AND MATERIAL IN HIGHLIGHTS, A NEWSLETTER FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE, IS NOW BEING PLANNED ON A MONTHLY BASIS.

THE TASK FORCE ALSO HEARD A REPORT FROM ONE OF ITS VICE-CHAIRMAN, GEORGE CALLISON, ON THE RECENT SATELLITE DISCUSSION HELD BY MEANS OF PEACESAT, INVOLVING PARTICIPANTS FROM LAE, PAPUA-NEW GUINEA; SUVA, FIJI; WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND, HONOLULU AND THE TRUST TERRITORY. THE DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND THE EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT PROGRAM. CALLISON SAID, "IT WAS A QUITE PRODUCTIVE SESSION" AND THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE THE TASK FORCE WITH TRANSCRIPTS OF THE PROGRAM.

SAM MCPHETRES, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE TASK FORCE, REPORTED THAT ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO BRIEF THE NEW PEACE CORPS TRAINEES CURRENTLY ON SAIPAN ON THE ESG PROGRAM IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM THE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE \$5,000 ALLOTTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BY THE TASK FORCE WILL BE UTILIZED TO CONDUCT TWO WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS--ONE IN THE EASTERN DISTRICTS, AND OTHER IN THE WESTERN DISTRICTS.