

EIGHTH DAY

Monday, January 20, 1975

JOINT SESSION

Pursuant to the provisions of H.J.R. No. 6-1, the Sixth Congress of Micronesia, First Regular Session, 1975, met in Joint Session at 10:25 a.m., Monday, January 20, 1975, in the House Chamber.

The Honorable Bethwel Henry, Speaker of the House of Representatives, presided.

At the request of Speaker Henry, the invocation was given by the Reverend Father Jose Villagomez.

Speaker Henry: On behalf of the Senate and House, I wish to welcome our honored guests to this joint session. I regret to say that the weather did not permit us to meet outside. We don't have enough space but I hope you find yourselves comfortable.

At this time I would like to call on our High Commissioner, the Honorable Edward E. Johnston, to address the joint session of the Congress.

High Commissioner Johnston: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, distinguished members of the Congress of Micronesia, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the entire Executive Branch, may I welcome the new members who have been elected to serve for the first time in the Sixth Congress of Micronesia. I look forward to working with you as well as with those of your colleagues who are serving in a holdover capacity or who have been reelected to the Congress.

As you begin this First Session of the Sixth Congress, and the First Session of your tenth anniversary year, I am again hopeful that, despite our inevitable differences from time to time, the Executive and Legislative Branches of the Trust Territory Government can continue to move forward together toward a better life for all the citizens of Micronesia.

It has been my pleasure to serve with four of the six Congresses of Micronesia. Many times in the past I have said, both publicly and to members of the Congress individually, that I thoroughly enjoy this association, and I am sure I will continue to enjoy it, particularly when we work together as a team on matters involving our budget of United States funds. It should be increasingly obvious to all of us that we can accomplish a great deal when we work together.

In fact, it might be well to start this State of the Territory report by reviewing briefly with you just what we have accomplished by working together during the almost six years which I have been privileged to serve as your High Commissioner.

When one looks at the record, it becomes rather apparent that these have been years of tremendous progress in Micronesia, even though we are all constantly aware of the many things still to be accomplished.

Let us take a brief look, then, at Micronesia in 1969 compared with Micronesia in 1975. In fiscal year 1969 our total budget of United States funds was \$30 million, and for fiscal year 1975 it is \$60 million, with a pending request to increase it to \$75 million.

Since the spring of 1969, 34 elementary schools have been built in the Territory and 5 additional public secondary schools have been established. Construction of the new high

school on Jaluit in the Marshalls District is now 75 per cent complete, and the school should open at the beginning of the next school year. Since 1969, the school construction program has seen the building of 451 additional public school classrooms, with 86 more presently under construction.

In the spring of 1969, there was no program of special education for handicapped children in the Trust Territory. Today there are programs in all districts, with 20 trained itinerant teachers, 3 teacher trainers, 27 trained elementary special education teachers working in the districts, and 8 program administrators. Between 400 and 500 children are now receiving direct services from the special education program.

During the school year 1969-1970, there were only 280 secondary students taking vocational education courses under 11 instructors. In the school year just finished, 1973-1974, the number of students in vocational education in the Trust Territory had grown to 5,082, and the number of instructors to 120. In 1969, there was no institution of higher education in the Trust Territory. The Community College of Micronesia, established in 1970, now enrolls about 125 students and offers an Associate of Science degree in elementary education. It is now in its third year of seeking accreditation through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. A master plan has been developed for a new facility to handle up to 400 students.

In 1969 there were 445 Micronesian students pursuing higher education outside the Trust Territory. During the most recent school year, more than twice that number (969) attended outside colleges and universities, and this year the number has grown to over 1,000.

In 1969 the Director of the Department of Education was an American, as were his two Assistant Directors. All of the District Directors of Education were non-Micronesians, and 7 of the 11 high school principals were also. Today, of course, Micronesians occupy the positions of the Director of Education, both Assistant Directors, all six District Directors, as well as the Directors of the Community College of Micronesia and the Micronesian Occupational Center, and 11 of the 16 principalships of junior and senior high schools.

A similar pattern of development can be outlined for each one of our major governmental departments. Let me mention just a few more areas.

Since 1969, we have increased our number of hospital beds from under 500 to a total, either in use or in facilities currently under construction, of 642. The new Truk hospital, opened in 1972, will soon be joined by another new modern hospital in Ponape, and the new Kusaie subdistrict hospital, which has almost as many beds as were available in all subdistricts combined in 1969.

As you know, we have made great progress, with the assistance of United States Hill-Burton funds, in upgrading our outer islands' dispensaries, and this program is a continuing one.

Immunization against communicable diseases has increased steadily over the past five years, from 40,764 immunizations to 68,761, a 68 per cent increase in our program of preventive medicine.

The new buildings of the Trust Territory School of Nursing, dedicated in March, 1970, now house a nursing school affiliated with the University of Guam, and since 1973, 38 nurses have been graduated with Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees.

When our MEDEX training program closes in 1975, there will be 54 graduate MEDEX's throughout the Trust Territory, having completed the excellent course of instruction at the Truk Hospital, and available to supplement the work of our doctors in the various districts.

To protect the lives and safety of Micronesian citizens, between 1969 and 1975 we increased our Public Safety personnel from 220 to 364. In January 1972, the Public Safety Academy was established, which since its inception has graduated 254 men from all six districts. New Public Safety buildings have been completed, renovated or are under construction in all

six districts.

Even in the field of economic development, where we are most often criticized, there have been important indications of progress. Our total exports (commodities plus tourism) have increased by 152 per cent in 5 years. The number of hotel rooms has increased by 382 per cent and the number of hotels by 233 per cent.

Even wages in the private sector have increased by 57 per cent, and the assets in savings accounts through our credit unions have increased by 135 per cent.

Outstanding in the field of agriculture has been a 297 per cent increase in domestic egg production during that period of time.

Under the leadership of its new Director and Deputy Director, the Department of Resources and Development has embarked in a new direction on a program of action in cooperation with Districts, as well as the Congress of Micronesia, in planning and implementing specific development projects. This program of action will have top priority among the many programs of our Government. It involves identifying marine resources, agriculture, tourism projects, determining their profit potential, assigning responsibility for implementation, location and procurement of financing, and the monitoring of progress by the Administration, the Congress and District officials.

The cooperation of the various Committee Chairmen of the Congress in inviting members of the Executive Branch to join with them on various fact-finding missions is to be highly commended.

We are most pleased that Representative Sasauo Haruo, in the very first speech of this Sixth Congress, stated:

"The future of Micronesia depends upon our ability to plan for our economic development. I am happy to report that a new philosophy of economic development appears to have been reached with the Congress and the Trust Territory Government, which will result in more effective economic planning. This philosophy envisions a joint effort and total cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of the Trust Territory."

With such cooperation prevailing, I now believe that our objectives of mutual concern in the field of economic development can be achieved.

Prior to 1969, there had been virtually no determination of bona fide land certificates of title in the long history of these islands. Since 1969, our Lands and Surveys Division has completed over 7,278 preliminary inquiries, resulting in 3,601 final certificates of title. Deeds have been issued to 371 village lot homesteads, and 235 agricultural homesteads. Over 6,000 aerial photos of various parts of the Trust Territory have been assembled by contract purchase or by free distribution by the United States Department of the Interior.

Our Public Works Department in the past 5 years has completed many excellent and vitally important projects, such as the new Majuro International Airport complex, the Ponape dock and many others--a total funded ceiling of \$92.7 million of capital improvement projects.

As you know, each of our 6 Districts can now accommodate the landing of jet aircraft, which was certainly not the case in 1969. Since we were successful in having the Trust Territory included in the Airports and Airways Improvement Act, we have developed a Trust Territory-wide airways system, planned in conjunction with the extremely cooperative officials of the Federal Aviation Administration, which will eventually upgrade all our District center airports, including the new airport for the soon-to-become District of Kusaie.

These are a few of the accomplishments of the past 6 years, of which you and I and all the employees of the Government can be justifiably proud.

This is not to say that we do not have many serious problems still confronting us. One example is a growing problem of total unavailability of water-landing aircraft, so important to medical air evacuations. We are engaged in continuing discussions with Rear Admiral Morrison and his staff, and the problem is now being given considerable attention by the Secretaries of Defense and Interior. Somehow a solution must be found to protect the health and lives of our outer islands' citizens.

I am extremely gratified that the Pre-Convention Committee has decided to convene Micronesia's first Constitutional Convention on July 12, 1975, the exact Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the Congress of Micronesia. Again, let me assure you that the Executive Branch of your Government will assist in every way possible to make this Convention successful. We have already assigned several members of the Executive staff to work virtually full-time in a research and information capacity for the Constitutional Convention.

I am also pleased that a man of the stature and experience of Dr. Norman Meller has agreed to make his expertise available to assist in the work of the Convention.

With regard to the Micronesian political status negotiations between the United States and the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status, 1974 was a year of significant achievement. As a result of several meetings between the principal negotiators, followed by a full Joint Committee on Future Status review of the tentative understanding reached, the long exacting task of drafting the Compact of Free Association was finished. Further work included sub-negotiations for land arrangements in accordance with the terms of the Compact. Final agreement on a transition timetable and funding will have to be completed before the negotiations can be finally concluded. Then the Compact will be submitted to the Congress of Micronesia and the people of Micronesia for approval as an expression of their right of self-determination.

In an intensive and highly productive session lasting from December 5 to 19, 1974, the Marianas Political Status Commission and Ambassador F. Haydn Williams reached provisional agreement on a Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States upon termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.

A final technical review of the Covenant is now underway and a separate technical agreement regarding land arrangements is being prepared for signature at the same time as the Covenant. The Covenant will then be presented to the Marianas District Legislature and later this year to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands for their approval. Might I add it is my most sincere hope that both sets of status negotiations can be satisfactorily concluded within the very near future.

The Education for Self-Government Program, under the direction of our Department of Public Affairs, gained significant momentum during the year. A great volume of printed material has been either published by the ESG Task Force or duplicated from other sources, including the Congress of Micronesia. This material has been distributed to all six Districts.

Two radio program series have been broadcast and a third is on-going. The first explained the various future status options, the second discussed the Constitutional Convention and generated voter interest in the June 4, 1974, Constitutional Convention delegate election. The current series, "Dialogue for Micronesia," was initiated to provide the people of Micronesia with discussion material based on comments made by leading public figures.

Late in the year, the Task Force's first major audio visual project was ready for distribution. As the first of a planned series of automated film strip recording presentations under the general heading, "Building a Micronesian Nation," this program, entitled "The Micronesian Constitution," was presented just 10 days ago in Trukese to some 100 residents of Sapuk Village by members of the Truk District Task Force. The great bulk of all ESG material--printed, radio, or audio visual--is translated into the nine major languages of Micronesia.

A number of workshops, training sessions and District visitations during the year resulted in raising the level of initiative and competence of the various District Task Forces

to the point where the Education for Self-Government Program can now proceed vigorously at the District community level, where it will have the maximum impact.

As a pre-transition measure toward your change in future status, we have continued to place more and more Micronesians in key positions of our Government. The addition of Juan Sablan to our staff as our new Executive Officer has already proved to be of tremendous benefit to the efficient operation of the Trust Territory Government. Podis Pedrus, who has done an outstanding job of taking over the Directorship of the Department of Personnel upon Mr. Akina's departure in December, is now preparing a very specific program to implement this training and replacement acceleration at every level of our Government.

As of this date, 65 per cent of all currently filled positions subject to the advice and consent of this Congress are held by Micronesians, and we will ask the Sixth Congress to approve nominations to several more positions. This program has had the active support of the Department of the Interior, and shortly before leaving the Department, the former Director of Territorial Affairs, Mr. Stanley S. Carpenter, wrote us urging us to "continue to put steam behind the accelerated replacement of expatriates" in the Trust Territory.

With our present budgetary restrictions, it is necessary, as you well know, to avoid expansion in the number of Government employees, despite the fact that we are constantly putting in place new capital improvements. It is of significance that during the period between June 30, 1974, and December 31, 1974, the number of United States Civil Service employees in our Government was further reduced from 164 to 146, and the number of expatriate contract employees from 447 to 400, while the number of Trust Territory citizen employees remained virtually constant, with a drop of only 3 positions. In fact, at this point, less than 13 per cent of all employees of our Government are non-Trust Territory citizens.

Following my State of the Territory message to the Second Regular Session of the Fifth Congress, one of the Members of the Congress commented that perhaps the High Commissioner had given the Congress no specific challenges. So, this year, I would like to particularly stress one of the most perplexing challenges facing this and future Congresses--the problems connected with pay scales for Government employees. In the period since 1969, the Congress of Micronesia and the Executive Branch, working together, have successfully consolidated 17 separate pay scales into only 2. Of these two, the United States Civil Service pay scale is rapidly phasing out. It should phase out even more rapidly under the new program recently announced by the Department of the Interior for mandatory employment of Civil Servants who are replaced by Micronesians or are reached by a reduction in force within the Trust Territory.

A Task Force on Salaries and Cost of Living, consisting of representatives of both the Executive Branch and the Congress of Micronesia, was recently established to find mutually agreeable solutions to problems concerned with our Government salaries and the rising cost of living throughout the Trust Territory. It is intended that the work of the Task Force will result in the necessary legislation relating to these concerns. The Task Force has already met twice and has agreed upon the major areas of concern, and has just arranged for the services of a consultant to assist with this most important assignment.

The eventual decisions on Government employees' pay must be made by the Members of the Congress. You must establish a wage scale which is both equitable to the employees and economically possible. This is a challenge of Herculean proportions.

Obviously, the new Government of Micronesia to be set up by your Constitutional Convention will need to avoid building a huge paperwork bureaucracy of United States proportions. But there will still be a great need to have your Government staffed with intelligent, capable, well-trained and equitably paid individuals. And I cannot help but add that I would hope that the same standards of excellence and the same standards of pay would eventually be applied equally to all branches of the future Government of Micronesia.

Despite the complexity of this problem, it is one you are facing and will continue to face. You, and you alone, must decide whether Micronesia should be competitive with the \$2.25 minimum wage on nearby Guam, or whether it is equitable to pay a Trust Territory

citizen employed on Kwajalein the United States established minimum wage of \$2.10 per hour, while the wage for similar work on nearby Ebeye may be as low as 61 cents per hour.

As our Department of Personnel and the heads of other Departments predicted, the present pay scales for local-hire expatriates have begun to work a severe hardship on the Executive Branch, especially in the area of secretarial employees. Alternative solutions to the problems now existing will prove much more expensive in the long run than the payment of more reasonable salaries to local-hires. We, again, strongly urge the Congress to reconsider its position on this subject in the interests of the overall efficiency of our Government.

The Trust Territory Personnel Board and the Headquarters Department of Personnel have provided, and will continue to provide, technical support and administration of our personnel program. But the basic decisions are yours to make.

Our Director of Public Affairs, Strik Yoma, recently reported to me that informal discussions with both Members of the Congress and your staff attorneys have resulted in a very productive and fruitful review of the Trust Territory's election laws. We hope that this joint review of an area which obviously needs improvement will result in corrective legislation being enacted by this Congress.

One program recently created by the Congress--the establishment of the fishing authorities in each District--shows every indication of being an outstanding success. A report on their progress and their problems, recently prepared by Francisco T. Uludong, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Managers of the Micronesia Fishing Authorities, is one of the most comprehensive I have ever received. I urge every member of the Congress to read it and to assist us in implementing as many of its recommendations as possible.

Before closing these brief remarks, I would like to touch upon our relationships with various other organizations, which are so important as we move toward a new political status and become a more developed area. The Pacific Islands Development Commission, consisting of the Chief Executives of Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, has made progress during these past 4 years and has succeeded, just a few months ago, in securing almost \$1 million in funding for research and development of tuna fishing in our Pacific area. We have now developed a pattern of holding two meetings each year--one, a general membership meeting of the Commissioners, and the other, in joint sponsorship with the South Pacific Commission, on tourism among our Pacific islands. I am pleased to report to the Congress that both meetings will be held within the Trust Territory this year. The first will be on February 11, 12 and 13 in Truk, and the tourism-related meeting will be held here on Saipan in August. We invite the active participation of the members of Congress in both of these meetings.

I believe we can attach considerable importance to our acceptance during the past year in the Economic and Social Council of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and our inclusion in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Congress has quite wisely supported all such efforts, and I am sure will continue to do so.

Just a few days ago, I had the pleasure of conferring briefly with the new Governor of Guam. Governor Bordallo has assured me of his desire to continue to improve the working relationships between the Government of Guam and the Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. As you know, in his inaugural address, the Governor pledged to support a close working relationship with the people of our Territory, and we plan to meet for an in-depth discussion of our mutual problems in the very near future.

I have also had the opportunity of meeting with Governor Ariyoshi of Hawaii and he, too, indicated a desire to continue the many beneficial programs of cooperation between the Governments of Hawaii and the Trust Territory.

In each of my previous messages to the Congress, I have mentioned our close working relationship with the United States military forces in this area. Toward improving and strengthening this relationship, Rear Admiral Morrison and I, and our staffs, now hold

quarterly meetings, either on Guam or on Saipan, to discuss problems of mutual interest to his Command and to our Government. The first meeting was held on Saipan and the second will be held on Guam within the next few days.

In my State of the Territory message to the Third Regular Session of the Third Congress of Micronesia in July of 1970, I stated as follows:

"While I readily admit that I was not chosen your Chief Executive by the electorate, and that this is basically wrong in a government of free men and women in a free society, I am constantly aware of my duty to be responsive to the wishes of that electorate and to meet with as many of them as possible as often as possible. At a meeting of the Pacific Legislative Conference a few days after I arrived on Saipan as your new High Commissioner, I made the remark that I would try always to conduct my Administration of the Trust Territory as though I had been elected Governor--and hoped to be reelected."

That statement is as true today as it was then, despite the many and varied external pressures which are inevitably brought to bear upon the Office of the High Commissioner.

I have always contended, and still strongly contend, that the individual serving in this difficult and often thankless position can be a completely loyal American citizen and yet be primarily motivated to serve the people of Micronesia in the true spirit of the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement which establishes the United States of America as your administering authority.

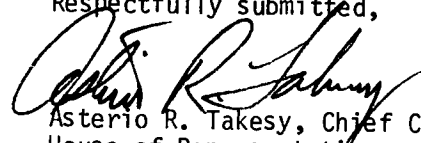
I am truly grateful to the Congress of Micronesia for the support which you have given me these past few years. With your continued support and understanding I am still hopeful that I can successfully complete my mission as your appointed High Commissioner, and be replaced by an elected Micronesian.

I thank you.

Speaker Henry: I wish to thank the High Commissioner for his statement. We are hereby adjourned sine die.

The joint session of the Sixth Congress of Micronesia, First Regular Session, adjourned sine die at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Asterio R. Takesy, Chief Clerk
House of Representatives