

(HOUSE VOTED TO SEAT ALL THREE) 1975

SAIPAN, JAN. 24 (MNS) ---THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES VOTED FRIDAY (JAN.24) TO SEAT THE THREE MEMBERS-ELECT WHOSE CREDENTIALS HAD BEEN CHALLENGED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION, THUS COMPLETING TWO-WEEKS OF INTENSIVE HEARING BY THE SPECIAL CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.

VOTING IN A SECRET BALLOT, THE HOUSE APPROVED THE SEATING OF CONGRESSMEN-ELECT EDGAR EDWARDS FROM THE 14TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT OF PONAPE WITH AN 11-6 VOTE; CHIRO ALBERT FROM THE 17TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT IN TRUK WITH A 12-5 VOTE; AND LAMBERT AAFIN FROM THE 18TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT IN TRUK WITH A 9-8 MARGIN.

SPEAKER BETHWEL HENRY SWORE IN THE THREE MEMBERS IMMEDIATELY.

DURING A TWO HOUR DEBATE, CREDENTIALS CHAIRMAN JOSE P. MAFNAS MOVED TO HAVE THE REPORTS ON EACH MEMBER ADOPTED.

IN THREE SEPARATE REPORTS PRESENTED BY THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED THE SEATING OF CONGRESSMEN ELECT EDGAR EDWARD FROM PONAPE DISTRICT AND CHIRO ALBERT FROM TRUK. BUT THE COMMITTEE, CITING NUMEROUS IRREGULARITIES, RECOMMENDED THAT CONGRESSMAN -ELECT LAMBERT AAFIN FROM THE 18TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT IN TRUK BE DENIED HIS SEAT AND URGED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CALL A SPECIAL ELECTION IN THAT PRECINCT. THE COMMITTEE FURTHER RECOMMENDED THAT THE HOUSE DIRECT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE TO CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATION FOR POSSIBLE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION OF THOSE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CHARGED TO ENFORCE THE ELECTION LAW.

TRUK CONGRESSMAN RAYMOND SETIK THEN DELIVERED A SPEECH (SEE FOLLOWING STORY) IN WHICH , AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE BROUGHT IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HOUSE THAT YAP REP. JOHN HAGLELGAM'S AGE IS 24 YEARS OLD. THEREFORE, HE IS NOT QUALIFIED TO BE SEATED.

SEVERAL MEMBERS THEN ARGUED ON THE PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING THE REPORTS. FLOOR LEADER LUKE TMAN (YAP) EXPLAINED TO THE MEMBERS THAT ADOPTION OF THE REPORT WOULD MEAN THAT IT WOULD BECOME AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT OF THE HOUSE, BUT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THE SEATING OF MEMBERS ELECT.

OSCAR C. RASA (MARIANAS) SUGGESTED THAT THE HOUSE DO BOTH AT THE SAME TIME, ADOPT THE REPORT AND SEAT THE MEMBER ELECT. HIS COLLEAGUE FROM THE MARIANAS, CONGRESSMAN HERMAN R. GUERRERO AGREED.

SPEAKER HENRY THEN INFORMED THE HOUSE THAT THE RULES OF PROCEDURE ARE SILENT IN THIS CASE AND THAT THE HOUSE SHOULD DECIDE WHAT IT WANTS. FLOOR LEADER TMAN ALSO REMINDED THE HOUSE THAT THEY WOULD BE SETTING A PRECEDENT ON THEIR DECISION ON THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND THE SEATING OF A MEMBER-ELECT.

THE HOUSE THEN VOTED 12-3 TO ADOPT THE REPORT AND VOTE ON THE SEATING OF THE MEMBER-ELECT LATER. REPRESENTATIVE BASILIUS DELIVERED REMARKS URGING THE HOUSE TO SEAT ALL THREE MEMBERS. (SEE FOLLOWING STORY).

TMAN THEN URGED THE HOUSE TO MAKE A GOOD JUDGMENT WHEN VOTING BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEXITY AND SENSITIVITY OF THE ISSUE. "LET YOUR CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE," HE TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES.

THE HOUSE THEN VOTED TO SEAT ALL THREE.

"MR. SPEAKER, I AM ABOARD LAST; PLEASE LET US GO FORWARD."

THUS FRESHMAN CONGRESSMAN LAMBERT AAFIN OF TRUK, WHO,

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ALONG WITH CHIRO ALBERT OF TRUK AND EDGAR EDWARD OF PONAPE, WAS SWORN IN FRIDAY AFTERNOON (JAN. 24) AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE HOUSE OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA (COM), CALLED FOR AN END TO THE POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES OF THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE COM SESSION. REP. AAFIN OBTAINED HIS SEAT IN A CLOSE 9-8 VOTE DURING TENSE MOMENTS IN THE HOUSE CHAMBER. DESCRIBING HIMSELF AS THE "MOST FRESHMAN MEMBER OF THE HOUSE, SINCE MY VOTE FOR SEATING WAS TAKEN LAST," REP. AAFIN TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES: "I HAVE ALWAYS HELD THE BELIEF THAT THE FREE, OPEN AND OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF THE MIND IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ATTRIBUTE IN ALL GOD'S CREATION."

REP. AAFIN COMMENTED THAT "WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED HERE WITHIN THE HOUSE CHAMBER HAS BEEN JUST THE PRACTICE AND EXERCISE OF THAT BEAUTIFUL ATTRIBUTE."

HE STATED TO THE CONGRESSMEN AND THE PEOPLE OF TRUK AND MICRONESIA "WHETHER OPPOSED TO MY SEATING OR FOR MY SEATING" THAT HE WAS COMING "TO SERVE WITH AN OPEN MIND."

REP. AAFIN LIKENED THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA TO MILITARY GENERALS "WHO STAY AT HOME WHILE THEIR MEN RUSH INTO THE BATTLEFIELD WITH STRATEGIES FROM THEIR GENERALS. "OUR GENERALS AT HOME ARE WAITING FOR GOOD NEWS FROM THE FRONT," HE ASSERTED.

"OUR GENERALS AT HOME ARE WAITING FOR GOOD RESULTS."

IN OTHER FLOOR ACTION, A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE HONORABLE J.B. P. MARAMIS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, FOR HIS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN PROMOTING PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT ESCAP MEMBER DEVELOPING ISLAND STATES IN THE PACIFIC AND INVITING HIM TO VISIT THE TRUST TERRITORY (HJR 6-2) WAS ADOPTED.

SEVEN NEW BILLS WERE OFFERED DURING THE TWO-HOUR SESSION. THEY ARE: A BILL TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF PUBLIC LAW 5-108 RELATING TO CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT, (HB 6-62); TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE IT CODE RELATING TO HISTORIC SITES, ANTIQUITIES AND PARKS, (HB 6-63); EARMARKING \$40,000 TO EQUIP THE SUPER DISPENSARY AT WOTJE ATOLL, MARSHALL ISLANDS DISTRICT, AND TO CONSTRUCT A DWELLING FOR THE RESIDENT MEDIC, (HB 6-64); TO AMEND CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE IT CODE TO PROVIDE FOR ADVICE AND CONSENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD MEMBERS, (HB 6-65); TO APPROPRIATE \$325,000 FOR CHANNEL BLASTING AND IMPROVING PROJECTS IN THE MARSHALLS, PONAPE, TRUK, YAP, PALAU AND MARIANA ISLANDS (HB 6-66); A MEASURE TO PROVIDE CONTROL, ACCOUNTING, LIMITATIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF APPROPRIATE FUNDS OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA, (HB 6-67); AND REPEALING PUBLIC LAWS 3C-46 AND 4C-3 TO AUTHORIZE AN ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, (HB 6-68).

THE JOINT RESOLUTIONS ARE: REQUESTING THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY TO CLEAR AND REHABILITATE PUBLIC LANDS ON WOTJE, MILI, JALUIT AND MALOELAP ATOLLS, IN THE MARSHALLS DISTRICT, (HJR 6-8); REQUESTING THE HICOM AND THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND BUDGET PLANNING OF THE CONGRESS TO SEEK FEDERAL FUNDS TO COVER THE COST OF HOOKING UP WATER AND SEWER LINES TO INDIVIDUAL HOUSES IN EACH OF THE DISTRICT CENTERS OF THE IT (HJR 6-9); REQUESTING THE HICOM TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE AND BALANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE OUTER ISLANDS OF EACH OF THE SIX ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS, PARTICULARLY WAYS AND MEANS TO STRENGTHEN AND TO DEVELOP AGRICULTURAL AND FISHING INDUSTRIES, TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION AND SHIPPING NETWORK BETWEEN THE DISTRICT CENTERS AND THE OUTLYING ISLANDS, AND TO IMPROVE THE COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS BETWEEN

PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC AGENCIES IN BOTH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED AREAS AND INDUSTRIES, (HJR 6-10); AND A RESOLUTION DIRECTION THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PROGRAM AND BUDGET PLANNING TO PREPARE LEGISLATION FOR INTRODUCTION INTO THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA ON A CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX FOR MICRONESIA, (HJR 6-11).

THE HOUSE WILL MEET MONDAY MORNING AT 10:00.

DURING THE SHORT SENATE MEETING FRIDAY MORNING (JAN. 21), THE SENATORS RETURNED A BILL TO AMEND THE MICRONESIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION LAW (PL 5-60) TO GIVE TRADITIONAL LEADERS WHO ARE DELEGATES THE RIGHT TO VOTE, TO THE JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER WORK.

ONE BILL WAS INTRODUCED. IT WOULD ESTABLISH TAX INCENTIVES FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE IN THE TRUST TERRITORY, (SB 6-56).

THE SENATE WILL CONVENE AT 5:00 SATURDAY AFTERNOON (JAN. 25) TO TAKE UP THE BUSINESS OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT, WHICH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OLYMPIO T. BORJA CLAIMS WILL BE FINISHED SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

(ALL USERS PLEASE CREDIT CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA)
(SETIK REMARKS)

SAIPAN, JAN. 24 (CONGRESS RELEASE)--DURING A LENGTHY DEBATE TODAY (JAN. 24) ON WHETHER TO SEAT THE THREE MEMBERS ELECT FROM THE 14TH, 17TH AND 18TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS, REPRESENTATIVE RAYMOND SETIK OFFERED HIS VIEWS AS TO WHY CONGRESS MUST NOT SEAT THE ONE FROM PONAPE, AND TWO FROM TRUK.

SETIK SAID CONGRESS HAS "SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY"... "THAT RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SEAT ANY PERSON WHO IS QUALIFIED AND HAS BEEN ELECTED FAIRLY" AND CONVERSELY, "...REFUSE TO SEAT ANY PERSON NOT QUALIFIED OR WHO HAS BEEN ELECTED UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE THE WILL OF THE VOTERS WITH CERTAINTY."

THE TRUK CONGRESSMAN POINTED OUT THAT MICRONESIA DOES HAVE "ELECTION LAWS"... "DESIGNED TO PRODUCE A FAIR ELECTION. THE ELECTION LAWS WERE TOTALLY IGNORED IN TRUK." HE ALSO NOTED THAT CONGRESS "CANNOT SUBSTITUTE" ITS JUDGMENT FOR THAT OF THE VOTERS. "IF THE DECISION OF THE VOTERS IS UNCERTAIN, WE MUST INSIST THAT THERE BE A NEW ELECTION TO DECIDE THE ISSUE," HE DECLARED.

DESPITE HIS STRONG ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE SEATING OF THE THREE MEMBERS ELECT, THE HOUSE SIX-MEMBER SPECIAL CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED THAT THEY BE SEATED AND ITS REPORT WAS ADOPTED FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS FROM PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS OF THE ISSUE.

ALSO, DURING HIS SPEECH, SETIK MENTIONED THAT CONGRESS MAY HAVE "MADE A MISTAKE" IN SEATING A MEMBER, REPRESENTATIVE JOHN HAGLELGAM OF YAP WHO "MAY NOT HAVE REACHED THE MINIMUM AGE REQUIRED BY LAW" FOR MEMBERSHIP IN CONGRESS. HE SAID THAT "PRELIMINARY AND UNOFFICIAL" TT RECORDS SHOW THAT HAGLELGAM IS "ONLY 24 YEARS OF AGE, AND THAT HE WAS BORN IN EITHER AUGUST OR OCTOBER OF 1950."

CONGRESSMAN SETIK REQUESTED THAT HAGLELGAM'S CREDENTIALS BE "RE-EXAMINED" AND THAT SHOULD HE BE UNDERAGE THE HOUSE SHOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

SETIK CONCLUDED: "THE ADMINISTRATION MANAGED TO 'BUNGLE' THE ELECTIONS... IN SEVERAL DISTRICTS AND THAT 'THE ADMINISTRATION IS KNOWN FOR ITS INCOMPETENCE, BUT THIS TIME THEY HAVE OUTDONE THEMSELVES.'"

OFFERING A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT, CONGRESSMAN POLYCARP BASILIUS OF PALAU SAID "THE ISSUE ARE CLEAR" AND ARE "MORE POLITICAL IN NATURE THAN THEY ARE LEGAL..."

BASILIUS SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO SEE CONGRESS "SHIRK FROM ITS QUASI-JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN MAKING THIS 'HARD' BUT 'INEVITABLE' DETERMINATION."

HE SAID THAT IN END IT SHOULD BE CONGRESS' "CONSCIENCE" THAT SHOULD SERVE AS A "GUIDE." HE POINTED OUT THAT THE "PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA IN THE DISTRICTS CONCERNED, HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED THEIR POSITION BY SENDING THESE THREE MEMBERS ELECT TO JOIN US HERE."

"THE DECISION WE MUST MAKE IS CLEAR, AND THUS I URGE US TO MAKE IT NOW, FIRMLY AND DECISIVELY," BASILIUS CONCLUDED.

(CHICOM JOHNSTON CLARIFY MILITARY RETENTION AREAS)

SAIPAN, JAN. 24 (CNNS)---HIGH COMMISSIONER EDWARD E. JOHNSTON, IN A MEMORANDUM ISSUED TO THE SIX DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS ON JANUARY 21, CLARIFIED CERTAIN MISUNDERSTOOD POINTS IN THE SECRETARIAL ORDER RETURNING PUBLIC LANDS TO DISTRICT CONTROLS.

HIGH COMMISSIONER JOHNSTON WROTE: "AS YOU PROCEED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER OF PUBLIC LANDS WITH YOUR DISTRICT LEGISLATURE AND OTHER LEADERS WITHIN YOUR DISTRICT, PERHAPS WE SHOULD CLARIFY A POINT WHICH SEEMS TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD CONCERNING SO-CALLED "MILITARY RETENTION AREAS." AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE NO "MILITARY RETENTION" LANDS IN PALAU, YAP, TRUK, PONAPE OR THE MARSHALLS. PURSUANT TO AGREEMENTS ALREADY REACHED BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION THIS PAST DECEMBER, ALL THE REMAINING "MILITARY RETENTION" AREAS IN THE MARIANA ISLANDS WILL BE RETURNED TO THE MARIANAS DISTRICT. THIS TRANSFER WILL COMPLETE THE RETURN OF ALL "MILITARY RETENTION" LANDS THROUGHOUT MICRONESIA HELD BY THE UNITED STATES UNDER THE LAND AGREEMENTS EXECUTED ALMOST THIRTY YEARS AGO. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR, THEN, THAT THERE IS EFFECTIVELY NO "MILITARY RETENTION" LAND IN THE TRUST TERRITORY. ALL SUCH LAND HAS BEEN, OR WILL SOON BE, RETURNED TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN."

"AS FOR THE SITUATION REGARDING MILITARY LAND OPTIONS IN THE PALAU DISTRICT, THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY IS NOW PREPARED TO TRANSFER PUBLIC LANDS IN PALAU TO LOCAL CONTROL AND OWNERSHIP AS SOON AS THE PALAU DISTRICT LEGISLATURE HAS ESTABLISHED A LOCAL ENTITY LEGALLY CAPABLE OF RECEIVING TITLE TO THE PUBLIC LANDS AND HAS REQUESTED THE TRANSFER. FOLLOWING THE TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE PALAU DISTRICT, IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE MILITARY USE FOR SOME OF THE LAND TO BE RETURNED WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT DELAY."

(HOME ECONOMICS COURSE)

SAIPAN, JAN. 24 (MNS)---THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT SIX WOMEN WILL DEPART FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY, JANUARY 24, 1975, TO ATTEND THE 1975 COURSE IN HOME ECONOMICS FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRAINING CENTRE, SUVA, FIJI.

THE COURSE WILL BE OF TEN MONTHS DURATION, WHICH WILL BEGIN ON 27 JANUARY, 1975 AND END NOVEMBER 28, 1975. TRAINING

WILL FOCUS ON VILLAGE AND HOME LIVING AND PRACTICAL METHODS OF IMPROVING HEALTH, FOOD, NUTRITION, CLOTHING, HOMES AND VILLAGES.

THE TRAINESSE ARE AS FOLLOWS: MS. ELLEN HOCOG, ROTA, MARIANAS; MS. ROSINA JEMNOR, MAJURO, MARSHALLS; MS. HELENA SORIMLE, MAJURO, MARSHALLS; MS. ARSENIA RECHIREI, KOROR, PALAU; MS. NAOMI UCHERRENGOS, KOROR, PALAU; AND MS. ROSALIA YBELMAL, ULITHI, YAP.

(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: THE SENATE WILL MEET SATURDAY AFTERNOON (JAN. 25) AT 5:00. MNS WILL PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THAT SESSION. PLEASE CHECK YOUR COMSTATIONS FOR THE MNS RELEASE SUNDAY (JAN. 26)