

FIFTEENTH DAY

Monday, January 27, 1975

The House of Representatives of the Sixth Congress of Micronesia, First Regular Session, 1975, was called to order at 10:05 a.m., Monday, January 27, 1975.

Vice Speaker Ekpap Silk presided.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Chief Clerk called the roll. Nineteen members were present. Representative Balos and Speaker Henry were excused.

Floor Leader Tman moved to suspend the reading of the Journal; Representative Sigrah seconded, and the motion carried by voice vote.

COMMUNICATIONS

No High Commissioner Communications were reported.

No Departmental Communications were reported.

No Senate Communications were reported.

No Miscellaneous Communications were reported.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee Report No. 6-4, submitted by the Committee on Appropriations, re H.B. No. 6-7, "To appropriate the sum of \$45,900 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the purpose of defraying the operation and contingent expenses of the administration of the Trust Territory Personnel Board and for other purposes."

Chairman Setik moved for adoption of the report; Floor Leader Tman seconded, and the motion carried by voice vote.

ASSIGNMENT OF MEASURES

The Clerk called attention to Referral Sheet No. 8 attached to the Order of the Day for the assignment of measures introduced on Friday, January 24, 1975.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

BILL CALENDAR

H.B. No. 6-7, HD1:

To appropriate the sum of ~~\$45,900~~ \$31,000 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the purpose of defraying the operation and contingent expenses of the administration of the Trust Territory Personnel Board; amending Section 2 of P.L. No. 5-62 relating to the reversion of funds appropriated to the Personnel Board by that law, and for other purposes.

Representative Setik moved for passage of H.B. No. 6-7, HD1, on First Reading; Floor

Leader Tman seconded, and the Chief Clerk read the title. The motion carried by voice vote.

H.B. No. 6-1: To increase Social Security benefits; to amend Subsections (1) and (2) of Section 105 of Title 73 of the Trust Territory Code as amended by Public Law No. 5-7, and for other purposes.

Representative Basilius moved for passage of H.B. No. 6-1 on Second Reading; Floor Leader Tman seconded, and the Chief Clerk read the title.

Rep. Haruo: Mr. Speaker, the other day I raised some points relating to the Social Security Program. It was my understanding from testimony that the Social Security Administrator will have a consolidated bill, which is about to be submitted to this Congress for enactment. I believe it is appropriate that perhaps an interim measure should be enacted in order to provide a little more of the pension presently allowable to the beneficiaries. One argument of the Administration in recommending passage of this measure was because of inflation. The bill in front of us now proposes an increase of benefits for beneficiaries from \$12.00 to \$24.00 per month. Identifying some of this possible movement in the future, one would be the possibility of merging the Social Security funds into the Development Bank of Micronesia, where perhaps the interest rate would be affected. None of us knows what the interest rate will be. Currently the interest rates that are being accrued from outside institutions where the money is being invested run between eight and 9 per cent. Now if the money was merged and deposited in the Development Bank of Micronesia, the interest rate may be lower. Therefore, the money may be affected (the Social Security Fund). Mr. Speaker, I feel that this Congress should wait for the other consolidated piece of legislation which the Administration is about to submit to this Congress, and then we can act on that before we pass this measure. Thank you.

Rep. Basilius: I do appreciate the concern of my colleague from Truk in regard to House Bill No. 6-1. However, by looking at the correspondence between the Consultant of the Social Security and the recommendations of the Social Security Administrator, I believe that my colleague is referring to a study that will be presented to the Congress. However, referring to a memorandum from the Social Security Consultant, Robert Meyers, dated November 7, 1974, it states that the actuarial study will be made available by next summer. I don't think the Congress will be able to get legislation for the entire Social Security during this session, but I would like to point out that this increase is only an interim increase. Right now 370 families, based on the Standing Committee Report--inflation has been existing in the Trust Territory--the cost of living is getting higher, and I think we have to be concerned about these families who are receiving less money. Also I would like to indicate that, based on the letter from the Social Security Administrator, it says that they have been assured that the increase will not adversely affect the retirement funds. I think that is the statement that we should be concerned with. I am sure my colleague is worried that the increase will affect the Social Security Fund, but we have received a statement from the Administrator that it doesn't affect it at all. By the way, the increase will be \$2,400 a month if this interest increase goes into effect.

Rep. Haruo: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that we should accept anything from a Consultant who has not made the actual findings about the Social Security Programs. They mentioned that this increase will not adversely affect the fund. The question was raised whether this consultant had looked into the possibility of merging this money into the Development Bank of Micronesia. The answer was no. Therefore, in that particular instance, Mr. Speaker, I feel perhaps the money would be affected as a result of this, because the consultant has not yet thoroughly made the study about this concept of merging the money into the Micronesian Development Bank. Therefore the report is premature, because no study has ever been conducted.

Rep. Basilius: I am quite confused on the statement made by my colleague from Truk. I think the subject matter is the increase of the Social Security benefits. It has nothing to do with the Bank of Micronesia.

Floor Leader Tman moved for a short recess; Representative Domnick seconded, and the motion carried by voice vote. The Vice Speaker declared the House recessed at 10:22 a.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The House reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

Vice Speaker Silk: Is there any more discussion on House Bill No. 6-1?

The Clerk called the roll, and House Bill No. 6-1 passed Second Reading by a vote of nineteen ayes; Representative Balos and Speaker Henry were excused.

H.B. No. 6-13, HD1: To add a new subparagraph (iii) ~~paragraph (c)~~, to paragraph (f), Subsection ~~(b)~~ (1), Section 101, of Title 53 of the Trust Territory Code making Jaluit Anchorage, Jabor Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands District, ~~the~~ an official port of entry and for other purposes.

Representative Haruo moved for passage of H.B. No. 6-13, HD1, on Second Reading; Representative Domnick seconded, and the Chief Clerk read the title.

Rep. Basilius: Mr. Speaker, what about the port in Majuro? Would this change the official port of the Marshalls?

Rep. Haruo: This is an additional official port of entry in the Marshalls.

Rep. Basilius: Why do we have to make an official port, Mr. Speaker? If we permit the ship to come into any islands in the Trust Territory, then that is a port. What is the purpose of making an official port at Jaluit? I believe the ship can go to Kusaie now, but it can be an official port or a nonofficial port.

Rep. Haruo: Mr. Speaker, this is an aspiration of the people in the Marshalls. There is a trend now to establish Jaluit as a subdistrict center, and more of the fishing activities will be developed in that particular area. Therefore the people in the Marshalls wish to establish Jaluit as another official port of entry.

Rep. Basilius: If that is the case, Mr. Speaker (if I have the floor) I wonder if the committee made a study on how much expense will be involved because, as you know, they have to have Immigration staff and Administration representatives--Customs and all that. I wonder if they had an opportunity to discuss how much it will cost if they make this an official port.

Rep. Haruo: The Administration is making those financial studies which will be involved in establishing Jaluit as a subdistrict center. Your Committee on Resources and Development only dealt with establishing Jaluit as another port of entry.

Rep. Basilius: I think the intent would be in order if we changed the bill to declare that Jaluit would be a subdistrict, rather than a port of entry. The question now is that we have to come up with the financial studies before we decide to declare Jaluit as an official port. If the intent of the bill is to make Jaluit a subdistrict, then why don't we come up with a bill to declare that, rather than that it become a port of entry?

Floor Leader Tman moved for the previous question; Representative Domnick seconded.

Rep. Basilius: I just wanted to point out that I think we should consider the cost of making Jaluit an official port of entry.

Vice Speaker Silk: There is a motion on the floor to close debate.

The motion to close debate carried by voice vote.

The Clerk called the roll, and House Bill No. 6-13, HD1, passed Second Reading by a vote of eighteen ayes; Representative Basilius voted no; Representative Balos and Speaker Henry were excused.

RESOLUTION CALENDAR

None

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

H.B. No. 6-70:

Introduced by: Rep. Guerrero (and 10 others)
Assigned to: Education and Social Matters/Appropriations

To appropriate \$22,000 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the purpose of purchasing one mini-bus and two van trucks for use by the Head Start Program of the Marianas Community Action Agency in the Mariana Islands District, and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-71:

Introduced by: Rep. Nakamura (and two others)
Assigned to: Judiciary and Governmental Relations

To amend Section 4 of Title 43 of the Trust Territory Code to conform to Department of Interior Order No. 2918, December 27, 1968, Part III, Section 21, as amended by Order No. 2918, Amendment No. 1, August 13, 1970, Section 8.

H.B. No. 6-72:

Introduced by: Rep. Nakamura (and two others)
Assigned to: Education and Social Matters/Appropriations

To appropriate the sum of \$12,500 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia to repair, renovate, extend and otherwise improve elementary school buildings in the islands of Sonsorol, Pulo Anna and Tobi in Palau District, and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-73:

Introduced by: Rep. Setik
Assigned to: Judiciary and Governmental Relations

To establish a Government Contract Review Board, to specify its powers, duties and functions, to appropriate money therefor and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-74:

Introduced by: Rep. Bigler and Rep. Moses
Assigned to: Resources and Development/Appropriations

To appropriate \$20,000 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia in aid of an agriculture project on Arno Atoll, Marshall Islands District, and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-75:

Introduced by: Rep. Aafin (and nine others)
Assigned to: Education and Social Matters/Appropriations

To appropriate \$88,000 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the purchase of four school buses for Moen Island, Truk District, and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-76:

Introduced by: Rep. Aafin (and eight others)
Assigned to: Health Matters/Appropriations

To appropriate the sum of \$15,600 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the purpose of providing outer island residents per diem while waiting for transportation to their homes after being referred to Truk District Hospital for medical attention, and for other purposes.

H.B. No. 6-77:

Introduced by: Rep. Mafnas
Assigned to: Education and Social Matters/Appropriations

To appropriate the sum of \$15,000 from the General Fund of the Congress of Micronesia for the Municipal Scholarship Fund of Tinian to enable worthy students to obtain postsecondary educational and vocational training.

H.B. No. 6-78:

Introduced by: Rep. Rasa
Assigned to: Education and Social Matters/Appropriations

Appropriating \$45,000 for purposes consistent with Public Law No. 5-82 relating to the Micronesian Sports Council and District Sports Associations; and providing for the administration of the sums appropriated by this act and by Public Law No. 5-82.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

H.J.R. No. 6-12:

Introduced by: Rep. Aafin
Assigned to: Resources and Development

Requesting the High Commissioner and the Director of the Department of Resources and Development to render assistance to the people of the outer islands of Truk District enabling them to improve agricultural production.

H.J.R. No. 6-13:

Introduced by: Rep. Basilius
Assigned to: Appropriations

Recommending that Mr. Thomas B. Crossan, Jr., be appointed as Program and Budget Officer of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

H.J.R. No. 6-14:

Introduced by: Rep. Domnick
Assigned to: Health Matters

Requesting the High Commissioner to undertake a study of diabetes within the Trust Territory, and to implement the resulting recommendations.

H.J.R. No. 6-15:

Introduced by: Rep. Bigler
Assigned to: Appropriations

Requesting the United States Department of Defense to locate and remove unexploded World War II bombs and shells, to fill in bomb craters, and to otherwise restore Mili Island, Mili Atoll in the Marshall Islands District to its pre-war condition; and requesting the High Commissioner to provide funding for an accelerated development program for Mili Island and to arrange for the use of the USDA feeding program needed to sustain the people on Mili Atoll until the replantation program is completed and people there could harvest their own crops.

H.J.R. No. 6-16:

Introduced by: Rep. Mafnas (and six others)
Assigned to: Judiciary and Governmental Relations

Directing the Attorney General to conduct a thorough investigation of the voting irregularities that occurred during the 1974 Congressional elections in Truk District for possible

criminal violations of the election laws, and to report his findings to the Congress of Micronesia by February 14, 1975.

H.R. No. 6-4:

Introduced by: Rep. Rasa (and two others)
Assigned to: Judiciary and Governmental Relations

Directing the House Judiciary and Governmental Relations Committee to investigate the activities of the Public Safety Office for the Mariana Islands District.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Rep. Dornick: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the House Mr. Ongra Hanec, Treasurer of the Marshall Islands Fishing Authority.

Also, I would like to introduce Ms. Lelain Lakaburg, Secretary for the Marshall Islands Delegation to the Congress of Micronesia.

Rep. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I have short remarks to make.

REMARKS BY REPRESENTATIVE EDWARDS

Rep. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, distinguished members of the House:

After finally resolving the matter of credentials, which has dominated most of the actions of this Sixth Congress to date, I wish to offer a few thoughts before we go on to other matters. The first is that I want to offer my sincere thanks and congratulations to all the members of our Credentials Committees for a job well done. Such a task, we all realize, can sometimes be unpleasant, but it is also a necessary part of organizing the Congress. In view of this fact, let me say that I have no hard feelings towards any member of this House. I will say, however, that I believe a very thorough and professional job was done, a job all Micronesians can be proud of, because without this kind of close investigation and evaluation, the very reputation and existence of this Congress would be at stake.

Second, I want to offer my view of the reason for existence of this Congress. The purpose of this legislative body is not to see what we can do for our own particular districts, but rather what we, working together, can do for all of the people of Micronesia in all of the districts.

Let us then consider important legislation not on the basis of who is the introducer, or what is his home district, but on the basis of merit - the basis of "will it do the most good for the greater good of all Micronesians."

Connected to this idea is that of Micronesian unity. There has been much discussion in past sessions of the Congress concerning this issue, and for good reason. The time is approaching fast, when as a self-governing nation, our responsibilities will greatly increase. Therefore, I believe this Sixth Congress must be noted not for talking about unity, but for doing something about unity.

One way to accomplish this unity, in my point of view, would be for the Congress to set priorities for Micronesia and to accomplish major advancements for the people in the areas of economic, social and political development. Two areas outstanding in my mind right now are the need to act soon on the upcoming Micronesian Constitutional Convention, and to consider what we should do about the recently-issued Departmental Order No. 2969.

In doing so, we must make our decisions, and form our goals on these common problems to make sure that our unity is maintained and made stronger, and to eliminate those forces which tend to divide us.

Let us strive for the common good, and let us strive for unity.

These are my few, brief comments, Mr. Speaker and members of the House. Thank you.

Rep. Aafin: Mr. Speaker and members of the House. Just last Friday I stated that I was the most junior member of the House, having come in last. But I was surprised this morning during the roll call that I was called first. I wish to apologize to the House and to the Chair for not coming out first on the succeeding roll calls, because I think as the last guy, I have to be the last to be called too.

Rep. Guerrero: Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to recognize the presence of our Municipal Legislator for Saipan, Mr. Joaquin Torres, and Mr. Mike Sablan of the Police Force.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rep. Moses: The Director of the Department of Personnel has requested that the hearing scheduled today on House Bill No. 6-37 relating to government housing rentals be postponed a week. Therefore, your Committee on Ways and Means requests that the Clerk reschedule the public hearing accordingly. Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the members of the Ways and Means Committee to get together at 1:00 today for a brief executive meeting. Thank you.

Rep. Sigrah: The public hearing scheduled for House Bill No. 6-39, which was to have been held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, is to be rescheduled, to be held tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

Rep. Domnick: Mr. Speaker, your Special Committee on Credentials will meet immediately after this session in the Conference Room adjacent to the Chamber.

Rep. Setik: Mr. Speaker, your Committee on Appropriations will have an executive meeting at 1:00 this afternoon in Conference Room No. 2.

Floor Leader Tman: Mr. Speaker, before I make a motion, I would like to explain that the Senate has requested that we might try meeting in the afternoons. This was suggested primarily because of some of us not being able to be here in the morning, so the members of the staff are having difficulty finding us to sign reports. That is why the reports are coming out late. We have tentatively agreed that perhaps if we meet in the afternoon and we come early (and I urge everyone to come earlier--perhaps 9:00 or 10:00 a.m.) so that they will be ready for duplication for the afternoon session.

Therefore, conceding to the Senate's request, I move that the House recess until 3:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Representative Sigrah seconded the motion.

Rep. Setik: Before we act on the motion, I am just wondering about the schedule for hearings tomorrow. The Committee on Resources and Development has hearings scheduled to meet at 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00.

Floor Leader Tman: I am sorry that I forgot to explain--I think Chairman Sasauo Haruo has changed the 3:00 hearing to 4:00 p.m.

Rep. Basilius: Mr. Speaker, if we have the session late in the afternoon, it does affect our public hearing which has already been scheduled for 2:00 tomorrow.

Representative Haruo moved for a short recess; Representative Domnick seconded, and the Vice Speaker declared the House recessed at 10:45 a.m. subject to the call of the Chair.

The House reconvened at 10:47 a.m.

Floor Leader Tman: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my motion to recess until 3:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Representative Basilius seconded the motion, and the motion to withdraw the motion carried by voice vote.

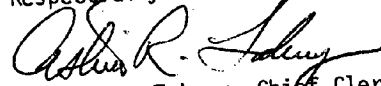
Floor Leader Tman: Mr. Speaker, with the understanding that all standing committee chairmen consider the proposal by the Senate so that on Wednesday the committee meetings can

be scheduled according to what the Senate has requested, I move that for tomorrow the House recess until 10:00 a.m.

Representative Basilius seconded the motion, and the motion carried by voice vote.

The Vice Speaker declared the House recessed at 10:50 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 28, 1975.

Respectfully submitted,



Asterio R. Takesy, Chief Clerk
House of Representatives