

(ADA VETOES MINIMUM WAGE BILL) 1976

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---MARIANAS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR FRANCISCO C. ADA VETOED A BILL WEDNESDAY, (APRIL 9), TO ESTABLISH A \$2.25 MINIMUM WAGE BILL FOR PRIVATE EMPLOYEES IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT. THE MEASURE WAS APPROVED DURING THE FIFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE FOURTH MARIANA ISLANDS DISTRICT LEGISLATURE LAST MONTH.

IN A LETTER TO LEGISLATURE PRESIDENT VICENTE N. SANTOS, ADA GAVE THE FOLLOWING REASONS FOR DISAPPROVING THE BILL:

- THE BILL WOULD HAVE ADVERSE ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARIANAS;
- IT WOULD WORK A HARDSHIP ON TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. WITH RAISED WAGES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, PRICES WOULD INCREASE. BUYING POWER OF IT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WOULD NOT INCREASE CORRESPONDINGLY TO PRIVATE EMPLOYEES;
- IT WOULD CAUSE MASS LAYOFFS OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR;
- PRICES WOULD BE RAISED AS PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN ATTEMPT TO MEET THE COST OF INCREASED WAGES;
- NEW INDUSTRY MIGHT BE DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THE HIGH COST OF LABOR;
- HIRING OF ALIEN WORKERS WOULD BE ENCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THEIR EXEMPTION FROM COVERAGE UNDER THE ACT.

THE MARIANAS DISTAD EXPLAINED THAT AT PRESENT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE MARIANAS DISTRICT AND THAT NEW BUSINESSES ARE BEING ESTABLISHED FROM FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT. "TO DISCOURAGE BY LAW THE EXISTENCE OF A FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR BUSINESS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROMOTED FOR YEARS, WITHOUT ANY SHOWING THAT THERE IS ALREADY ON HAND A DESIRED GROWTH WOULD BE TO IMPOSE AN UNNECESSARY AND HARMFUL CONDITIONS," ADA STATED.

ACCORDING TO ADA, THE BILL APPEARS TO BE "DEFICIENT." EMPLOYERS WHO ARE AFFECTED BY THE BILL WOULD BE SUBJECT TO PAYING HIGHER WAGES WHEREAS THE TT GOVERNMENT AND ITS AGENCIES "MAY ONLY BE SUBJECT TO AN 80 CENT MINIMUM WAGE." AS A RESULT THE DISTAD POINTED OUT, THERE IS A DENIAL OF EQUAL PROTECTION OF LAW. CERTAIN SECTIONS IN THE BILL ARE IN SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE TT CODE. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE BILL "EXCLUDES ALL NON-RESIDENT WORKERS FROM ENJOYING THE SAME BENEFITS PROVIDED TO RESIDENT WORKERS," ADA SAID IN HIS LETTER.

PRESIDENT SANTOS TOLD THE MICRONESIAN NEWS SERVICE THAT THE BILL WILL BE REFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AT ITS NEXT SPECIAL SESSION. HE SAID THE LEGISLATURE WILL REQUEST A SPECIAL SESSION TO ORGANIZE ITSELF SOMETIME THIS MONTH.

THE LEGISLATURE PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED THAT THE STRONGEST REASON THE LEGISLATURE HAD FOR PASSING THE BILL IS THE EXORBITANT COST OF FOOD COMPARED TO LOW WAGES.

AT THE HEARING CONDUCTED BY THE LEGISLATURE, PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN STRONGLY OPPOSED THE BILL. HE CONTENDED THAT IF THE MINIMUM WAGE IS IMPLEMENTED, PRICES WILL GO UP OR MASS LAYOFF WILL RESULT.

(FISHERY TRAINEES TO RETURN)

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---THREE MICRONESIANS PRESENTLY UNDERGOING FISHERY TRAINING IN SINGAPORE WILL RETURN TO THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS SOON. THEIR TRAINING, WHICH IS SPONSORED BY THE MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION AT A UNITED NATIONS FUNDED FISHERY CENTER, WILL END MAY 31.

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LORENZO ELUGMAI FROM YAP, STEVEN JOSEPH PATRIS AND PABLO BASILIUS SIANGELDED OF PALAU LEFT LAST YEAR TO THE CHANGI POINT FISHING CENTER IN SINGAPORE FOR A ONE-YEAR TRAINING IN ALL PHASES OF FISHING TECHNIQUES, FISHING GEAR MAINTENANCE, VESSEL OPERATION, NAVIGATION TECHNIQUES, AND USE OF RADAR ECHO SOUNDERS AND OTHER RELATED EQUIPMENT.

MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION CHIEF CHRIS MITCHELL INDICATED THIS WEEK THAT THE TRAINEES WILL PROBABLY ARRIVE AT THEIR DISTRICTS ABOUT THE FIRST WEEK OF JUNE.

MITCHELL SAID APPLICATIONS FOR THIRTEEN INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN FORWARDED TO JAPAN FOR CONSIDERATION FOR MARINE RESOURCES RELATED TRAINING WHICH WILL BEGIN IN JUNE. HE SAID, "WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, WHO IS SPONSORING THE TRAINING, WILL REALIZE OUR NEEDS AND WILL ACCEPT TRAINEES FROM MICRONESIA."

(LAND OWNERSHIP CLARIFICATION)

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MARIANAS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSION EDWARD DLG. FANGELINANA AND A SPOKESMAN FOR AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS HAVE DENIED RECENT REPORTS THAT CAROLINIANS WILL BE DENIED THE RIGHT OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IF THE COVENANT IS APPROVED.

THEY STATED THAT SECTION 805 OF THE COVENANT, WHICH PLACES RESTRICTIONS ON THE OWNERSHIP OF LAND IN THE PROPOSED COMMONWEALTH, IS INTENDED TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FROM EXPLOITATION AND TO PROMOTE THEIR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT.

IT WAS NOTED DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT CAROLINIANS AND CHAMORROS HAVE BEEN RESIDENT IN THE NORTHERN MARIANAS FOR APPROXIMATELY THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME. IT WAS INTENDED AND AGREED BY THE NEGOTIATORS THAT THE TERM "NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS DESCENT" WOULD APPLY EQUALLY TO THE DESCENDENTS OF BOTH.

(WSZC NEWSMEN AWARDED CERTIFICATES)

TRUK, APR. 9 (MNS)---TWO WSZC RADIO NEWS PERSONNEL WERE AWARDED CERTIFICATES IN A BRIEF CEREMONY CONDUCTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE TRUK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR FRIDAY (APR. 4), ACCORDING TO TRUK PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER HONA RUBEN.

WSZC NEWS DIRECTOR LAURA HAUK WAS AWARDED A CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR COMPLETING A FIFTY-DAY TRAINING IN SAIPAN DURING THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. PETER MAIPI, ALSO A WSZC NEWSMAN, RECEIVED A CERTIFICATE FOR EXHIBITING "A SENSE OF CREATIVITY AND WORK ABILITY" DURING A TEN-UNIT CORRESPONDENCE COURSE HELD AT THE TRUST TERRITORY BROADCAST CENTER ON SAIPAN.

TT BROADCAST CHIEF ELIAS THOMAS COMMEDED LAURA HAUK AS "A HIGHLY QUALIFIED NEWS DIRECTOR IN THE MICRONESIAN BROADCAST SYSTEM." MAIPI, CONSIDERED THE TOP CLASS TRAINEE AMONG THE NEWS PERSONNEL IN THE MICRONESIAN BROADCASTING SYSTEM, WAS AWARDED A TRIP TO OBSERVE THE PONAPE WSZD FACILITY, RUBEN REPORTED.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR MITARO DANIS, BEFORE AWARDING CERTIFICATES TO THE TWO RECIPIENTS, TOLD THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF BROADCASTING IN THE DISTRICT. TRUK DISTRICT IS MADE UP OF MANY SCATTERED ISLANDS, AND THE ONLY WAY TO REACH THE PEOPLE ON THOSE ISLANDS IS BY RADIO, HE POINTED OUT. THE TRUK DISTAD ENCOURAGED THE TWO NEWSMEN "TO KEEP UP THE WORK AND MAKE USE OF THEIR TALENTS IN BROADCASTING."

ON HAND TO WITNESS THE BRIEF CEREMONY WERE WSZC STATION MANAGER KASPER PETER AND TRUK DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MANUEL SOUND.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: THE FOLLOWING STORY SHOULD BE TREATED AS AN ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TWO WEEKS)

(SUBMISSION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PLAN FOR TT)

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PLAN FOR THE TRUST TERRITORY HAS BEEN REVISED AND UPDATED. THE PLAN OUTLINES THE APPROACH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES WILL TAKE DURING FISCAL YEAR '75 AND '76 IN PROVIDING PREVENTIVE AND TREATMENT SERVICES RELATED TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE.

COPIES OF THE ROUGH DRAFT OF THE PLAN HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES IN EACH DISTRICT. THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION. COMMENTS REGARDING THE PLAN ARE ENCOURAGED UNTIL APRIL 23. THE FINAL COPY OF THE PLAN WILL BE FORMALLY SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE ON MAY 1.

(NOTE TO EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: PLEASE HAVE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT AIRED FOR 2 WEEKS).

(1974 INCOME TAX REFUNDS)

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---THE REVENUE DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE TRUST TERRITORY INCOME TAX REFUND CHECKS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1974 SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE EMPLOYEES ON OR ABOUT MAY 2, 1975. THIS WILL GIVE THE TAX BRANCH AND OTHER GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN THE REFUND MORE TIME TO REVIEW AND PROCESS AS MANY CLAIMS AS POSSIBLE. TO DATE, APPROXIMATELY 30,000 EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO HAVE WORKED IN THE TRUST TERRITORY DURING CALENDAR YEAR 1974.

ALSO, THE REVENUE DIVISION STILL HAS UNCLAIMED REFUND CHECKS FROM PREVIOUS REFUNDS. EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE WORKED DURING THE PAST YEARS AND DID NOT RECEIVE A REFUND SHOULD CONTACT THE DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICE OR WRITE TO REVENUE DIVISION, HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950. DO IT NOW. YOUR CHECK MAY BE WAITING FOR YOU.

(TAX ASSISTANCE BY U.S. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE)

SAIPAN, APR. 9 (MNS)---TAX ASSISTOR FOR THE OVERSEAS TAXPAYER COMPLIANCE PROGRAM OF THE U.S. INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, MICHAEL ROTHSCHILD, WILL ARRIVE SAIPAN NEXT WEEK ON MONDAY, (APRIL 14). THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WILL BE TO PRESENT A SPECIAL U.S. TAX ASSISTANCE SEMINAR TO ASSIST U.S. TAXPAYERS IN FILING THEIR FEDERAL INCOME TAX RETURNS.

A SEMINAR FOR U.S. BUSINESSMEN INCLUDING U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND PERSONS PRIVATELY EMPLOYED WILL BE HELD AT THE HOUSE CHAMBER OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA ON MONDAY AFTERNOON (APRIL 14) AT 2:30.

AS THE U.S. TAX ASSISTOR WILL BE ON SAIPAN FOR ONLY A BRIEF PERIOD, ALL U.S. CITIZENS IN THE AREA NEEDING ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR U.S. TAX RETURNS ARE URGED TO CONTACT EULOGIO INOS OF THE REVENUE DIVISION ON SAIPAN BY CALLING TELEPHONE NUMBERS 9716 OR 9717.