

Commenting on Mr. Canham's appointment, Secretary Morton noted his long and distinguished record of public service including a period as a United States delegate to the United Nations during its formative years, and expressed appreciation for his willingness to accept the present appointment. Mr. Canham was for many years Editor-in-Chief of the Christian Science Monitor and is presently Editor Emeritus. He has participated in the work of commissions concerned with public affairs and holds honorary degrees or citations from several American universities and from the governments of England, France, Greece, Germany and Austria.

Secretary Morton also issued a Secretarial Order that grants the authority and establishes administrative responsibility for the holding of a plebiscite. The action creates the Plebiscite Commissioner position, outlines the responsibilities of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Administration, establishes a Northern Mariana Islands Plebiscite Advisory Committee, outlines the function of a plebiscite education program, creates a plebiscite voter registration board, establishes voter qualifications, and authorizes a special plebiscite appellate court.

On numerous occasions over more than twenty years the people of the Northern Mariana Islands have sought a close and enduring association with the United States. Secretary Morton's action will provide an opportunity for them to decide, pursuant to their right of self-determination, whether they wish to become a Commonwealth in accordance with the terms of the Covenant. At least 55% of the valid votes cast in the plebiscite must favor Commonwealth Status before the Covenant is presented to the United States Congress for its approval.

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