

# Week in Review

SUMMARY OF NEWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS  
Prepared by Micronesian News Service

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## MARSHALLS LEGISLATURE ADOPTS CONTROVERSIAL MEASURES

The Marshall Islands District Legislature, the Nitijela, ended a lengthy session last week with a one-day special meeting during which final action was taken on two controversial measures, both of which were adopted. One of the resolutions opposes Marshallese participation in the upcoming Micronesian Constitutional Convention, while the other declares the opposition of the Nitijela to any further Marshallese participation in the Congress of Micronesia.

The vote on the resolution expressing opposition to further Congress of Micronesia participation was close, with eleven in favor and ten against. The Constitutional Convention measure passed by a larger margin. Both resolutions refer back to the Nitijela's action in March when it passed and sent to the United Nations a resolution declaring the intention of the Marshall Islands not to participate in any future government of Micronesia with the other districts, and to seek separate status negotiations with the United States. The other two measures were advocated by their supporters because they would show that the Marshallese are "sincere" and are not being inconsistent.

One of the measures declares that it would be: "...unwise and indeed inappropriate for the Marshall Islands District to send delegates, whether elected or appointed, to the constitutional convention for Micronesia." The other states: "...that the Nitijela expresses its unalterable resolve to exercise whatever influence it has in disassociating the people of the Marshalls District from any further participation in the Congress of Micronesia." Reaction to the action was mixed. Several Marshallese living and working on Saipan, as well as several from the Marshalls who were interviewed on Saipan, said the Nitijela actions did not express their views. In Washington, American officials concerned with administration of the Trust Territory and conduct of the future status negotiations said they would have to wait and see what happens in the wake of the expressions of sentiment adopted by the Nitijela, and that in the meantime their policy toward the TT and the Marshalls in particular would not change.

## ST. PIERRE DECISION HANDED DOWN

The long-awaited decision of Administrative Law Judge Robert Snashall in the personnel action case involving Trust Territory Chief Public Defender Roger St. Pierre was made public last week. In it, Judge Snashall said that the government's charge that St. Pierre wrongfully accepted money for services performed as part of his regular duties was upheld, but that it did not warrant dismissing him from his job. Instead, the judge recommended that St. Pierre be suspended for 90 days. A second charge, that St. Pierre had failed to adequately supervise employees in his charge, was not upheld for lack of evidence.

St. Pierre, who has remained on the payroll since the action to remove him was taken one year ago, expressed satisfaction with the judge's ruling in the sense that he was at least not terminated, but St. Pierre added that he feels he should have been "completely exonerated."

The case arose out of an estate case handled by St. Pierre's office for a Marshallese woman several years ago. In 1969, when the case was finally settled, the woman gave St. Pierre \$7,500, which he accepted "as a gift."

Interior Department regulations prohibit employees from accepting fees or gifts for services performed in line with their normal duties.

#### CAB HEARING CONCLUDES

The six-week hearing into the Saipan/Japan airline route finally concluded on Saipan last week, with final witnesses including Senate President Tosiwo Nakayama and House Speaker Bethwel Henry appearing to testify on Phase Two of the proceeding. The first phase of the hearing, an investigation into the conduct of the airlines in attempting to win support in Micronesia for their proposals, lasted four weeks, with Phase Two, to determine where the people of Micronesia stand on the award, taking two weeks.

The CAB ordered the reopened hearings two months ago, after finding that it could not make a decision on the route on the basis of the evidence it had received up to that point. The case dates back to early 1972, and involves a potentially lucrative airline route direct from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan to Saipan, and then on to Guam. Pan American World Airways and Continental Airlines are the major contenders, but Northwest Orient Airlines is also an applicant.

It is expected to be near the end of this year before any decision is made in the case, and several months from now before Administrative Law Judge Greer Murphy, who heard the case on Saipan, can render an opinion based on the evidence he heard. The final decision on the route will be up to the President of the United States.

#### TRADITIONAL LEADERS CONFERENCE CONTINUES

The conference of Micronesian traditional leaders continued into its second and final week on Ponape last week, with the addition of two of the traditional chiefs of Yap District, Andrew Roboman and Alfonso Rangabay. They joined leaders from Truk and Ponape, who had already been meeting for several days to discuss the current vital issues facing Micronesia, including Micronesian unity and future political status.

The chiefs spent a great deal of time last week discussing the forthcoming constitutional convention, and decided that they do not like certain aspects of the law which calls for the convention. They suggested, for one, that the age limit for candidacy for the convention should be raised from its present 18 to 30. They also said they feel traditional leaders who are delegates to the convention should have the right to vote, which they do not now have. And they suggested that the date for the election, now June 4, should be put off until the people of Micronesia have become more educated about the convention so that they can vote intelligently. All of these suggestions,

and several others, were put into the form of motions and passed unanimously by the assembled chiefs.

The meeting was to continue through the end of last week.

#### SETIK RETURNS FROM BUDGET HEARINGS

The Chairman of the Congress' Joint Committee on Program and Budget Planning, Ray Setik of Truk, returned last week from Washington and the latest round of budget hearings before the U.S. Congress. He said the fate of several important TT projects and programs is now in the hands of the Congress. Among these are money for another new inter-island field trip ship, for which he and Senator Bailey Olter, co-chairman of the committee, pressed strongly before congressional committees. Another set of programs that depends on U.S. Congress action is those federal programs in the TT which will be phased out in favor of revenue sharing in the other states. Since the TT does not participate in revenue sharing, these programs, such as community action agencies, school feeding programs, construction of outer island dispensaries, and several others, depend on specific funding for their continuation.

As of the end of last week, there was no word on action taken by either the Senate or the House on these programs.

#### BRIEFLY, HERE ARE SOME OTHER ITEMS THAT MADE NEWS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY LAST WEEK:

Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman has proclaimed May First as Law Day in Micronesia, with the theme: "Young Micronesia: Lead the Way. Help Preserve good laws, change bad laws, and make better laws."

The final bills to be passed by the recent session of the Congress of Micronesia were received last week by the office of the High Commissioner. Ten of the 46 bills remain to be acted upon.

A ship bound from Japan to Saipan, the Daiwa Liner "Ponape Maru", was diverted to tiny Agrihan Island in the Northern Marianas last week to bring a seriously ill patient to Saipan for treatment.

The University of Guam Madrigal Singers and the stage band have toured Truk and Ponape District during the past few weeks, entertaining in schools and public concerts under a grant from the Insular Arts Council of the U.S.

Several people were injured when the second floor ceiling of the MIECO Hotel in Majuro collapsed during a reception last week. The building, the largest in Majuro, was evacuated and a structural inspection begun.

Bids will be let shortly for the construction of a terminal building at Saipan's new Isley Field International Airport, and for the awarding of a franchise for a duty-free shop at the site.

Territorial revenue officers from all districts met on Saipan last week for their annual meeting.

The TT Dental Conference held recently in Yap District has been termed a success by Director of Health Services Dr. Masao Kumangai.

Forfeiture proceedings are contemplated in Palau District against a Taiwan fishing vessel apprehended by the U.S. Navy while taking marine resources from unpopulated Helen Reef in the extreme Southwestern portion of the Trust Territory.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has donated two large whaleboat fishing vessels to the TT, and the Coast Guard and Navy assisted in transporting them to Micronesia. The first has gone into service in Yap District.

The first meeting of the new Trust Territory Licensure Board was concluded last week on Saipan.