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Week in Review

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

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HICOM SPEAKS ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Micronesians are going to be "very selective" about the kind of foreign business activity which they permit under new, relaxed policies governing investment in the economy of the Trust Territory by outside interests, according to High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston. The HiCom made his comments during a speech this month to the Japan-Hawaii Economic Council in Honolulu.

Foreign investment in Micronesia by firms and individuals other than from the U.S. became possible April 1 with the lifting of restrictions applied by the U.S. under the "most favored nation" clause of the Trusteeship Agreement. Japan, Korea and the Philippines are among countries which have shown a great interest in such investment.

Johnston warned, however, that each application will be carefully examined by the Micronesian foreign investment boards which must decide on them. "The Micronesians are not just interested in investments which will create a large number of jobs or augment their small tax base," the High Commissioner said. "To date, they have been very insistent that every major business venture have a substantial percentage of Micronesian ownership and participation in management."

Last week officials in the Department of Resources and Development reported receiving the first non-U.S. business permit application to come in under the new policy. It came from John Robinson, a British Citizen from New Zealand who proposes to establish a professional marine claims adjusting and averaging service. Although considerable interest in other types of investments has been shown, particularly by Japanese businessmen, none has so far submitted a formal application.

KILI DELEGATION RETURNS

A delegation of community leaders from the island of Kili in the Marshall Islands returned to Majuro last week from Washington, D.C., where they presented a petition to the U.S. Government for an "ex gratia" payment of three million dollars to the people of Bikini, who have lived on Kili since being removed from their islands to make way for U.S. atomic weapons tests more than twenty years ago.

Congress of Micronesia Representative Ataji Balos accompanied the delegation, and called the mission "most productive." He indicated he is confident that commitments made by Washington officials will be honored as soon as possible. The Director of Territorial Affairs Stanley S. Carpenter, told the Congressman in a letter that his office believes the matter deserves full and sympathetic consideration, assuring that there will be prompt and careful attention to the problem. He said an official answer would be forthcoming within ninety days.

The petition, written in the form of a resolution of the Bikini people, points out that the Bikinians have encountered equal if not more severe hardship as a result of their displacement from their homeland than that suffered by the Eniwetok people, who received a payment of more than one million dollars in 1970 from the Department of Defense. Based on that amount, and calculating differences in population, lost interest, and inflation, the people of Bikini feel that a payment of three million dollars is justified, the petition states.

The delegation from Kili, along with Congressman Balos and Marshall Islands District Administrator Oscar DeBrum, left Majuro at week's end for Kili to report on the trip to the people of Kili. Among the decisions they will then have to make is whether or not to return to their home atoll as tentatively scheduled on May 15. Homes and other facilities built by the government for the repatriation of the Kili islanders to Bikini are now ready, and the people may move back if they choose to do so.

TINIAN RESIDENTS RETAIN COUNSEL

A group of Tinian residents led by former member of the Marianas Political Status Commission Herman Manglona announced last week that they have retained a Guam law firm, Arriola, Cushnie and Stevens, to prepare a position paper opposing the proposed U.S. military plans for Tinian, and to represent them in future status negotiating sessions. The group made it clear that they do not oppose the return of the military to Tinian, only the extent of the land requirements announced by the U.S. Manglona, a member of the Marianas District Legislature who resigned from the status commission a few months ago, said the position paper will be presented to the people of Tinian in a referendum, and should it be approved, the status commission will be asked to go to Tinian where the paper will be presented to them.

Reaction to the Tinian leader's action varied. Senator Edward Pangelinan, Chairman of the Marianas Status Commission, said Tinian is well represented on the commission by two capable members, Bernard Hofsneider and Jose R. Cruz, and that the commission will listen to the views of those two men. Hofsneider himself commented that he will go along with whatever the people of Tinian want. Congressman Felip Q. Atalig, whose representative district includes Tinian, criticized the action, saying it would only "create confusion."

INCIDENTS AT SEA IN THE NEWS

Accidents and lost boats contributed their share to the week's news events in Micronesia last week. In Truk, a visiting scuba diver from Kwajalein, Bob Riley, died while diving with friends on one of the sunken ships in

the Truk Lagoon. Exact details on how the accident happened were not available at week's end, but Riley was said to have been an experienced diver.

In the Marshall Islands, the ACME Construction Company was engaged in shipping some explosives from Eniwetok to Majuro for use on construction projects when trouble overtook their LCU. The nine-man crew was forced to abandon ship when the LCU began taking water, and eventually she turned over and by the end of the week seemed sure to sink. The crewmen, meanwhile, were rescued by a passing freighter and taken back to Eniwetok in good condition.

Search efforts were still under way at week's end in the Marshalls for another boat with nine people on board, this one a small outboard motor boat missing on a trip from Lib Island to Kwajalein. The boat, owned by the Lib community, carried a little water and some coconuts, but it had already been missing for three days before authorities were notified and the search began.

TT BEGINS PARTICIPATION IN ECAFE/ESCAP

The Trust Territory became a formal part of the international community of nations last month, as it took part for the first time as an associate member of an international conference, the meeting of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Senator Amata Kabua of the Marshall Islands headed the delegation, which also included House Speaker Bethwel Henry of Ponape, Legislative Counsel Kaleb Udui, Special Consultant to the High Commissioner Dwight Heine, and TT Agriculture Chief Bermin Weilbacher. The TT delegation supported a successful attempt to change the name of ECAFE to something that more accurately reflects the fact that a number of Pacific nations are members: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific--ESCAP.

In his address to the conference, Senator Kabua noted that many of the economic problems and social skills faced by larger countries of the commission are similar in nature to problems of island nations in the Pacific such as the Trust Territory. He proposed that ESCAP establish within its organizational structure a division devoted solely to monitor and give surveillance to developmental needs of the Pacific Island countries. It was also announced last week that the Trust Territory will participate in an ESCAP developmental conference this summer in Hawaii and the U.S. State of Washington. Director of Resources and Development Eusebio Rechucher will head the TT delegation.

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

The next round of Marianas status negotiations will be held on Saipan, beginning May 15, according to an announcement from Vicente N. Santos, vice-chairman of the Marianas group. Previously it had been undecided whether this fourth round of talks would take place in Hawaii or on Saipan.

The next round in the larger status talks involving the U.S. and the Joint Committee on Future Status of the Congress of Micronesia will probably be held in June, also on Saipan, according to Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman

of the Micronesian delegation. He said his group was proposing the timing and location to the U.S. side headed by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, but did not yet know if this timing would be acceptable. The Micronesian negotiators have determined, however, that another round of formal talks is justified based on progress made during informal working sessions during the past several months.

Residents of Saipan will be able to subscribe to cable television beginning in early 1975, according to Lee Holmes, who heads the company given a license to start a cable TV operation in the Marianas. Initially it is expected that only residents of populous areas such as Chalan Kanoa would have the service.

Two additional bills were signed into law by the High Commissioner last week. One appropriates funds for continuing vocational education in the field of agriculture under programs previously funded, and is now Public Law 5-83. The other provides certain additional requirements and restrictions on the importation of non-resident workers, and is now Public Law 5-84.

The annual medical survey of the people of Rongelap and Utirik, carried out under the auspices of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, was completed last week, with four additional residents of the two atolls found to have thyroid problems requiring treatment. The people of Rongelap and Utirik were accidentally exposed to radioactive fallout from U.S. atomic testing at nearby Bikini more than twenty years ago.

And finally, meetings with members of the Education for Self Government Task Force from TT Headquarters continued in the districts last week, as members of the team visited Palau and Yap. A similar trip has already been made to Ponape, Truk and the Marshalls, as the ESG people begin preparing residents of the TT to exercise their franchise to vote in the forthcoming election for delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Educating the population on the meaning and importance of this convention is now the major short-term objective of the Education for Self Government program. The delegate election will be held June 4 in all districts.