

Week in Review

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

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FINAL BILLS APPROVED

Action was taken last week on the last of 46 bills that were passed during the January/February, 1974 session of the Congress of Micronesia. High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston signed the final three bills into law. The breakdown for the session thus is 38 bills signed, with 37 becoming new public laws and one becoming a private law, and eight bills disapproved, with seven returned to the Congress and one, which had already been disapproved once before, sent to Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton for final disposition.

Public Law 5-87, signed last week, is a law providing that after June 30, 1975 occupants of houses either owned or leased by the Trust Territory Government for its employees in any district will have to begin paying for all electricity they use in excess of 1,000 kilowatt hours a month. The law states that it will not apply to any such occupant who is "guaranteed free electrical power by virtue of (1) his status as a member of the United States Civil Service, or (2) any contract of employment which was in effect as of the effective date of this act..." No contracts of employment may be entered into from now on which guarantee free electrical power.

Becoming Public Law 5-88, is a bill to provide for the establishment of the Micronesian Development Bank (MDB). This is an outgrowth of more than a year of research into banking done by the Board of Directors of the Bank of Micronesia, which recommended that a development bank, rather than a straight commercial bank, be set up in Micronesia with Micronesian resources. The law appropriates \$140,000 to defray the administrative costs and other contingent expenses of establishing the bank. A development bank will assist worthy economic development enterprises in the Trust Territory, performing all banking functions that will aid in the territory's economic development. The bank will not be a "regular" bank with checking and saving accounts, however, and will not make loans for such consumer items as new cars or appliances. These functions are performed by the commercial banks already in operation in Micronesia.

The final measure signed into law last week was an appropriation bill providing the sum of \$659,000 for Trust Territory scholarships, and to purchase a school bus for the use of Micronesian students on Guam. This bill is now Public Law 5-89.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION APPROVED

Word was received last week that the United States Congress has given its approval for the appropriation of an additional 1.5 million dollars to the Fiscal Year 1974 Trust Territory budget. It is the second supplemental appropriation to be sought for this year's budget, and includes \$750,000 to cover increased costs on the construction of the new Ponape hospital, and an equal amount to cover the sharply increased costs of fuel and petroleum products throughout Micronesia this year.

The bill will go to President Nixon for his signature as soon as difference between the House and Senate versions, involving appropriations for other agencies, can be worked out in a conference committee.

TT MEMBERSHIP IN ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK SOUGHT

Preliminary arrangements are being made for the Trust Territory to become a member of the Asian Development Bank. Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Micronesian Development Bank, returned to Saipan last week after attending a meeting of the ADB in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia along with Senator Amata Kabua of the Congress of Micronesia.

Coleman said that in Washington, D.C. the United States Congress is to be asked to sponsor legislation enabling the Trust Territory to join the ADB. If this legislation passes, it will be possible for Micronesia to become the 41st member of the bank, following admission of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony this year. As a member of ADB, the Trust Territory will be indirectly associated with many of the world's financial institutions with the capital for development programs necessary to building the economic structure of this area. Micronesia would also have access to the technical resources of the ADB. Funds from the ADB could be handled through the Micronesian Development Bank which was established by the Congress of Micronesia this year. The Deputy HiCom said he is hopeful that the U.S. Congress will pass the enabling legislation for TT membership in the ADB. "Only by becoming a member can we take the necessary steps through the Micronesian Development Bank to secure from that source the financial and technical assistance essential for the economic development of the territory," he said.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS MEETS

The Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Administrative Appointments, chaired by Senator Andon Amaraich of Truk, met last week on Saipan to consider several recent nominations made by the High Commissioner. They include the nomination of Philip Chamberlain as Territorial Planner, Ms. Kiyoko Rengiil of Palau as a member of the Trust Territory Personnel Board, and Ms. Carmen Milne Bigler of the Marshalls and Hilary Conrad of Ponape to the TT Board of Education.

The committee held hearings for two days, although at week's end the hearing into Chamberlain's nomination had been postponed and it was not certain when it would be rescheduled. Chamberlain was Chief of the Planning Division

in the Department of Public Works until creation of the Office of the Territorial Planner, a cabinet-level position, by the Congress earlier this year.

SAIPAN HOUSING REPORT

Much of Saipan's housing is said to be inadequate, and would not withstand the next serious typhoon, according to a report last week from the Marianas District Planning Office. The Saipan weekly newspaper "Marianas Variety" carried a complete story on the report in its May 10 edition.

The story said 2,388 housing units were counted on Saipan during a 1973 survey. Of these, 925 are deteriorated wood frame buildings in poor condition, An additional 750 wood frame buildings are said to be in good condition, while the remainder of the houses on the island are of concrete construction.

"In spite of a phenomenal increase in housing construction since the destructive forces of Typhoon Jean in 1968," reported Marianas Variety, "the housing situation for the majority of Saipanese has not greatly improved since the World War Two invasion when some 15,000 to 20,000 permanent residential units on Saipan were totally destroyed."

Prior to Typhoon Jean, there were 1,249 houses on Saipan. Most of these were either totally destroyed or severely damaged by the storm. Afterward, some 450 temporary plywood houses were built with the intention that they would be used for two or three years while more substantial housing was under construction. However in 1973, five years later, over 400 of the ~~plywood structures are still being used as homes, according to the report.~~

The document cites housing as potentially one of Saipan major problems in the next ten years or so, and recommends a thorough examination of all aspects of the problem, including the social and economic factors that are affected by housing. The report is preliminary in nature, and subject to refinement as the comments and views of various officials in the district government are heard, according to district planning officer Tom Sheehan.

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

Typhoon Carla, a relatively mild storm which was just barely of typhoon intensity, struck the Marianas last weekend with winds of 60 to 75 miles an hour. Minor structural damage was reported on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, and the major damage seemed to be to fragile food crops such as bananas.

Officials in Yap District are working on the problem of what to do with about 150 gallons of a deadly agricultural chemical, sodium arsenite, which is presently stored in an agricultural shed. About 35 gallons of the poison leaked out, causing dead fish and birds in the vicinity of a stream into which the chemical poured. The district administration was warning the public last week to avoid fish taken from the area around the outlet of the stream.

Trust Territory High Commissioner Johnston announced the permanent appointment of Manuel T. Sablan to the position of Superintendent of Public

Safety. He has been acting in the position since last summer.

The semi-annual conference of district administrators is taking place this week in Truk District.

Funds for continued support of medical programs in the Trust Territory through the Hawaii Regional Medical Program have been approved. Programs include a cervical cancer detection unit, an ear clinic, and health assistant's training.

Two Micronesians have been selected for East West Center scholarship grants. They are Ms. Elizabeth Rechebei and Anthony Jetnil. Both are with the education department.

Chief of the Land Resources Branch George V. States has been appointed by the HiCom to be the Trust Territory's Historic Preservation Officer. He will coordinate TT participation in programs under the Preservation Act of 1966 of the U.S. Congress.

Deputy Attorney General Mamoru Nakamura left Saipan last week to attend six months of advanced legal training at the National Law Center, George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Tommy Perez of Guam was officially named last week as the TT Liaison Officer on Guam. He has been acting in that capacity since the retirement of Gordon Findley last year.

Dedication ceremonies for the extension of the Truk Legislature Building were held last week on Moen, at which time six trainees also received certificates from the Civic Action Team which has trained them in construction work.

High Commissioner Johnston returned to Saipan last week from a tour of Yap and Palau Districts, his first such visit in about a year. While in Palau he witnessed the swearing into office of two new district judges, Presiding Judges Francisco Morei and Associate Judge Benjamin N. Oiterong.

Finally, Nauru President Hammer DeRoburt was a brief visitor to the TT last week, discussing shipping. He was on Saipan, and stopped briefly in Truk and Majuro.