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Week in Review

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

Saipan, Mariana Islands

May 13-17, 1974

ANOTHER ROUND OF MARIANAS TALKS BEGINS

Negotiators for the United States Government and the Mariana Islands Political Status Commission sat down last week on Saipan to begin another round in the so-called separate status talks on the future of the Northern Marianas. Senator Edward Pangelinan again headed the Marianas commission as its chairman, while the twelve-member American delegation was again headed by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, President Nixon's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations.

The Ambassador expressed optimism about the talks, saying he is hopeful that a draft "covenant" of commonwealth status for the Marianas will come out of the current round. The question of the U.S. land needs was the major item on the agenda, he said.

Shortly after the talks began with a working session at the Saipan Continental Hotel, it was announced that the U.S. has made a major change in its requirements for the island of Tinian. "The new American proposal," a prepared press release stated, "in addition to requiring less land, also took into full consideration safety needs and operational and engineering factors. The plan eliminates the necessity for relocating the village of San Jose, and thus will keep the entire southern part of the island (the area south of the projected extension of West Field and east of the harbor area,) open for local community purposes and for other public and private development."

Previously, it had been announced that it would be necessary to move the village, which is Tinian's only town, from its present location near the harbor to a new site nearby as a safety measure, since the harbor would be needed periodically for loading and unloading ammunition. The announcement last week said studies have shown it will be possible to construct a separate facility for ammunition handling away from all populated areas, thus making it possible for the village to remain where it is.

At week's end, members of the two status delegations were making plans to visit Rota and Tinian. The talks are expected to continue through the end of May.

MARSHALLS STATUS COMMISSION NAMED

Names of members of the newly formed Marshall Islands Political Status Commission were announced last week. The Marshalls are the second district in the Trust

Territory to form a commission for the expressed purpose of conducting separate status negotiations with the United States. The Marshall Islands Nitijela, the district legislature, provided for the establishment of the eight-member commission through legislation. Speaker Atlan Anien of the Nitijela made the announcement of the official formation of the commission.

Named by the Speaker to serve on the commission are: Iroij Kabua Kabua, Iroij Namo Hermios, Iroij Albert Loeak and Nitijela Representative Jina Lavin. Named by the District Administrator are: Director of Marshalls District Public Affairs Tony DeBrum and Director of Education Kinja Andrike. Selected from the Congress of Micronesia delegation to participate in the commission are: Senator Amata Kabua and Representative Ataji Balos.

The commission was to have an organizational meeting and select a chairman last week, but by week's end no word on this had reached Saipan.

129 HOPEFULS FILE PAPERS FOR CON CON CANDIDACY

With the passing of the May 14 filing deadline, unofficial reports received by the Legislative Liaison Division from the districts last week indicated a total of 129 candidates had filed their nominating papers to run in the June 4 election of delegates to the Micronesian Constitutional Convention. The most candidates running are in Ponape District, where 39 had filed their papers for a possible nine seats by deadline. Thirty-five are running for the twelve seats from Truk District, while in Palau 19 are seeking five seats, 14 are seeking the three seats from Yap, and 12 are running for the four seats from the Marianas. The least number of candidates was in the Marshalls, where only ten people had filed for the nine available seats. Two of the nine delegate districts there had no candidate officially filing in them at all, and the low level of interest in the election in the Marshalls was attributed to the decision of the Nitijela and many of the political leaders in the Marshalls to advocate a boycott of the convention.

An informal opinion from the TT Attorney General's Office last week indicated that write-in votes will be permitted during the June 4 election, and that in the two districts where no candidates has filed the person receiving the most write-in votes would win.

CONGRESS ASKS FOR SPECIAL SESSION

The Leadership of the Congress of Micronesia formally asked Trust Territory High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston last week to call a special session of the Congress for not more than 15 days beginning July 23, on Saipan. A spokesman for the HiCom indicated the request is under consideration.

Following a leadership meeting on Saipan, the letter that was delivered to the HiCom asked that the following items or areas of legislation be included in the special session call: The return of public lands; reapportionment of the Congress of Micronesia House of Representatives; possible amendments to the constitutional convention law; Congress revenues and pending appropriation bills; legislation concerning future political status, and "any additional items which the High Commissioner may choose."

The last time the Congress of Micronesia met in special session was during the months of August and September, 1972 in Ponape District.

COPRA PRICE RAISED

Meeting last week on Saipan, the Trust Territory Copra Stabilization Board voted to increase the price paid to producers for copra to its highest level since 1950. The new price was made possible by the continuing high prices being paid for copra on world markets, according to Eusebio Rechucher, chairman of the board and director of the Resources and Development Department.

The new prices, which take effect May 26, are as follows: For copra delivered to the district centers, \$252.50 for grade one, \$242.50 for grade two, and \$232.50 for grade three; and for copra picked up by ships at outer island locations, \$240.00 for grade one, \$230.00 for grade two, and \$220.00 for grade three. The copra stabilization fund, from which producers are paid, stands at one and a half million now, according to Rechucher.

The board will meet again in July, at which time it will look into a request from the Marshall Islands, the territory's largest copra producer, to be separated from the board's marketing contract with the United Micronesia Development Association (UMDA).

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

The semi-annual conference of Trust Territory District Administrators took place in Truk District.

The Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Law of the Sea has announced the hiring of a special consultant, Frederick Wyle of San Francisco, who will assist the committee during its participation this summer in the worldwide law of the sea conference in Caracas, Venezuela.

The Bank of Tokyo of California has submitted an application for a permit to establish a commercial bank branch on Saipan, in the Mariana Islands. The weekly report of foreign business activity also indicated that the permit of Palau Broadcasting Corporation to establish a television operation in Palau District has been revoked for failure to comply with terms of the permit. The company failed to commence its operations within the required two years.

The Joint Committee on Administrative Appointments of the Congress of Micronesia has approved the nominations of Ms. Kiyoko Rengiil of Palau to the TT Personnel Board, and of Ms. Carmen Milne Bigler of the Marshalls and Hilary Conrad of Ponape to the Board of Education. Hearings into the nomination of Philip Chamberlain as Chief of Planning were postponed until June.

Sablan Construction Company of Saipan was the apparent low bidder for the construction of the initial building in the terminal complex at the new Saipan International Airport. The Government is presently studying the Sablan bid along with five others which were submitted.

A workshop for new legislators was held in Truk last week, prior to the opening on May 21 of the Truk District Legislature.

A Micronesian student at the University of Guam, Herman P. Semes of Ponape, has been named to the university's honorary scholastic society. Spring graduation exercises at the university were held Saturday, May 18.

Dr. Ulai T. Otobed, Micronesia's first female physician, has left Palau for two years of specialized study in India, leading to a Master's Degree in Medicine and Surgery.

And finally, a new training officer has joined the staff of Peace Corps/Micronesia headquarters on Saipan. He is Howard Takata, who will supervise the training of about 200 new volunteers arriving in Micronesia this summer.