

6/7

Week in Review

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

Saipan, Mariana Islands

May 27-31, 1974

U.S.-MARIANAS COMMUNIQUE ISSUED

The fourth round of the U.S.-Marianas Political Status Commission talks concluded on Saipan last week. Land was the primary issue discussed as indicated by the Joint Communique which the negotiators issued.

Among the major issues resolved were the following: the continued use of Farallon de Medinilla as a U.S. target area; the development of almost 200 acres near Tanapag Harbor for an American Memorial Park to be used as a recreation area; the reduction by approximately 1,200 acres of the land area needed for a joint service U.S. military base on Tinian, and the elimination of the requirement that San Jose Village be moved; and, the indicated intent of the U.S. to relinquish its rights on all remaining military retention land in the Northern Marianas not covered by the new agreement.

A new 7-year financial agreement will tentatively provide for \$13.5 million a year to the Marianas. This is \$2 million more than was offered during the last negotiations. Financial grants would be used as follows: \$1.5 million to be used for economic development loans in the Marianas of which \$500 thousand a year would be reserved for small loans to fishermen and farmers; and \$4 million a year for Capital Improvement Projects of which \$500 thousand a year for Rota and a grant in the same amount for Tinian would be reserved to aid the development of those islands.

"The United States," the communique said, "estimates the value of federal services and assistance at \$3 million a year. The total direct annual assistance is thus estimated at \$16.5 million."

The total financial assistance program does not include "potential additional income from military construction and a growing military presence and spending." The communique indicated a new government of the Marianas could be established as early as July, 1976. The next round of negotiations is expected to take place in the early fall.

KABUA CHAIRS MARSHALLS STATUS COMMISSION

Senator Amata Kabua was elected Chairman of the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission last week. Tony Debrum, District Director of Public Affairs, was elected Vice-Chairman of the eight-member commission.

In a letter to High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston, Kabua said that the commission will tour the outer islands in the Marshalls, in addition to conducting meetings in the District Center and Ebeye, to ascertain the views and aspirations of the Marshallese with regard to their future political status.

MICRONESIAN CLAIMS CHAIRMAN REMOVED

Ben M. Greer, Chairman of the Micronesian Claims Commission, has been notified that his services will be terminated effective July 6. The action was taken about two weeks ago by J. Raymond Bell, newly-named Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States.

Greer indicated that he did not know the reasons for his dismissal.

In a letter to Interior Department Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton, Congress of Micronesia Senate President Tosiwo Nakayama and House Speaker Bethel Henry said, "It is our belief that such a move is both unwarranted and unwise." They urged Morton to keep Greer in office "so that this sensitive matter of Micronesian claims settlement can be continued without disturbance and commotion."

TT RESTRAINED FROM REMOVING ST. PIERRE

Trust Territory Chief Justice Harold W. Burnett issued a temporary restraining order last week which prevented the TT government from removing Roger L. St. Pierre from his position as Chief Public Defender. Judge Burnett will meet this week to hear the motion which Assistant Public Defender Benjamin M. Abrams filed on St. Pierre's behalf.

Abrams' brief sought to enjoin High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston from removing St. Pierre from his position, his home, and the TT payroll until this latest appeal was acted upon.

In the complaint, Abrams cited the reasons St. Pierre has advanced in appealing his dismissal. According to the brief, St. Pierre is an employee of the Trust Territory rather than the Department of the Interior or the United States government, and, therefore is not subject to Interior Department regulations.

The complaint cited a December 9, 1969 letter from the Civil Service Commission which determined that St. Pierre was not a civil service employee.

Abrams also attempted to show that the Chief Public Defender's action had not tarnished Micronesian opinion of the TT government. Referring to an "overwhelming flood of support from Micronesians," Abrams also attached two letters to the complaint supporting St. Pierre.

One is from Marianas Representative Herman Q. Guerrero to High Commissioner Johnston. The other is from U.S. Representative Phillip Burton to Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton, his second supporting St. Pierre. He said that "St. Pierre's dismissal, or even the ninety day suspension recommended by the Administrative Judge, flies in the face of the facts and is totally without justification.

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

The U.S. Court of Claims dismissed a \$31 million breach-of-contract suit brought by Transpac shareholders against the U.S. Government. In declining jurisdiction, the court said that the evidence is persuasive that the TT government is not an agency of the United States for contract purposes despite controls exercised by the U.S. Interior Department.

The Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Resources and Development met on Saipan last week to complete its month-long investigation of Trust Territory fisheries and fishing cooperatives. Truk Representative Sasauo Haruo, Chairman of the committee, said that outer islands have been neglected while the bulk of fishery development was concentrated in district centers. Haruo also pointed to the need for outer island reefer facilities and the development of a corps of Micronesians trained in all aspects of the fishing industry.

Trust Territory copra profits are expected to reach over \$4 million for fiscal 1974, according to figures released last week from the Agriculture Division of the Department of Resources and Development. Higher prices on the world market for copra are the primary reason given for the expected record profits.

U.S. Health, Education and Welfare state coordinator Mary Lord met on Saipan last week with Trust Territory personnel to become acquainted with TT education, community development, health services, and territorial planning programs. Ms. Lord, who is also responsible for supervising federal HEW programs in Hawaii, American Samoa, and Guam, was unable to visit other districts during her stay.

Two Federal Housing Administration officials will soon tour the TT. Alvin Pang and Donald Phillips will arrive on Majuro, June 3rd, and will visit each district concluding their mission on Saipan, June 16th.

Father Jose Garrido Villagomez of Saipan became the third Saipanesee to be ordained a priest last week. The ordination was held at Mount Carmel Church.

Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman announced that some \$43,800 will be available to conduct a "Work-Experience Program" from June through October for Micronesian youth.

Three Trust Territory representatives met in Noumea, New Caledonia, last week to attend the fourth meeting of the South Pacific Commission's Planning Conference. They are Eusebio Rechucher, Director of Resources and Development; Clarence Takeuchi, Assistant Special Consultant; and, Asterio Takesy, House Clerk of the Congress of Micronesia.

Jesus P. Mafnas, Chief of the TT Revenue Division, announced last week that all business licenses issued under Section 3, Title 77 of the TT Code for Fiscal 1974 will expire June 30, 1974, and must be renewed.

Nine TT employees received certificates last week after they completed a two year course in basic English. The nine students put in some 450 classroom hours of work apiece.

The Micronesian Occupational Center on Koror, Palau, has applied for accreditation by the Western Association of Junior Colleges.