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From ELOTA

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Material for
UN Mission

Plebiscite Commissioner's Office

The Secretarial Order gave the Pleb. Commissioner authority to appoint an Executive Director who shall be responsible to him for the execution and coordination of all activities in support of the plebiscite.

Mr. Neiman Craley, Special Assistant for Legislative Matters, on the High Commissioner's Staff, was designated with the High Commissioner's concurrence as the Executive Director. It was suggested that the following staff should serve on the Pleb. Commissioner's staff.

1. Secretary,
2. Administrator for Pleb. Education Program
3. Information Specialists in
 - Radio,
 - TV
 - Publications
 - Printing
 - School and Community Relations
4. Translators
 - Chamorro
 - Carolinian
5. Secretary or Typist for Translations
6. Secretary to Pleb. Advisory Committee
7. Executive Officer for Voter Registration Board
8. Secretary for Voter Registration Board

Any TTPI employee chosen by Pleb. Commissioner are on Administrative leave during performance of their duties.

Plebiscite Advisory Committee

Sec. Order established a Northern Mariana Islands Plebiscite Advisory Committee to work with the Plebiscite Commissioner particularly on the Plebiscite Education Program.

Membership was set up to include a member from the following groups:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Marianas District Legislature | Individuals were selected by each specified organization. |
| 2. Marianas Political Status Commission | |
| 3. District Administration | |
| 4. Saipan Municipal Council | |
| 5. Rota Municipal Council | |
| 6. Tinian Municipal Council | |
| 7. United Carolinian Association | |
| 8. Popular Party | |
| 9. Territorial Party | |
| 10. Chamber of Commerce | |

Plebiscite Commissioner enlarged the above groups by adding a nominee of Saipan Women's Association.

During first three weeks of operation, Plebiscite Commissioner had three meetings with the Advisory Committee and discussed all details of the plebiscite arrangements with them.

Committee members

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Carlos Shoda..... | Marianas District Legisl. |
| 2. Benjamine Manglona..... | M.P.L.C. |
| 3. David Maratita..... | District Administration |
| 4. Gonzalo Q. Santos..... | Saipan Municipal Council |
| 5. Alfred Apatang..... | Rota Council |
| 6. Sylvestre Cruz..... | Tinian Council |
| 7. Jose Lifoifoi..... | United Carolinian Assoc. |
| 8. Larry Gaerro..... | Popular Party |
| 9. Sylvania Ada..... | Chamber of Commerce |
- 9. Territorial Party - Laro of Guerrero*

Voter Registration Board

Sec. Order also established a eleven member Plebiscite Voter Registration Board. Eight members were appointed by Pleb. Commissioner at large and three appointed by him from the Municipal Councils of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. These last three serve on the Board only when it acts as a body or sits en banc on matters involving their respective municipalities.

Members of the Board have the authority to carry out following functions;

1. in conjunction with the ex officio members, register all voters qualified to vote in the pleb.

Note: (Ex-officio members..Village Commissioner of district or in the absence of such Village Commissioner by its Mayor)

2. sitting en banc as an appellate review board, hear challenges of decisions granting or denying registration to any person;
3. certify the final voter registration list to the Pleb. Commissioner

Board members

- Chairman, 1. Eddie Dela Cruz
2. Nick T. Palacios
3. Wm. S. Reyes
4. Antonia Guerrero
5. Abel Olopai
6. Alfonso Rasa
7. Ricardo Villagomez
8. Pedro Manglona
9. Misael Ogo
10. Leonardo Diaz
11. Roman Tudela

Voter Registration

A crash drive was instituted by the Plebiscite Commissioner to register as many eligible voters as possible. By the close of registration period (May 16) some 5,324 residents had been registered and it was anticipated that several hundred more would be added when absentee registration forms were received. Deadline for absentee registration was May 31.

In the Congress of Micronesia election in 1964 there were 6211 voters registered with 4,853 voting. There may have been some doubtful registr.

Estimate that 90-95% of the eligible voters of Marianas District will be registered for the Plebiscite.

The full voting lists were made public and the Voter Registration Board examined them.

Special Plebiscite Appellate Court

Sec. Order set up a special Plebiscite Appellate Court. The Chief Justice was to appoint one or more justices of the High Court as a special plebiscite appellate court with exclusive jurisdiction over all appeals from en banc rulings of the Voter Registration Board.

Appeals are to heard before a single judge of the Special Plebiscite Appellate Court.

Decisions must be rendered as expeditiously as feasible and no later than the seventh day preceding the plebiscite.

Special Pleb. Appellate Court shall certify its decisions to the Voter Registration Board and notify the parties thereof.

Rulings of the special court are final and not subject to further review by any authority of the Trust Territory or of the United States, judicial or otherwise.

Overall responsibility for the operation of an impartial and factual
Plebiscite Education Program.

Among the projects of the Plebiscite Education Program are:

Printing of Trilingual texts of covenants and distribution to every family in the North Marianas district.

Publication of text of Proclamation and Secretarial Order in English, Chamorro and Carolinian.

Publication of trilingual Primer of shortened description of Covenant provisions,

Publication of trilingual edition of Technical agreement.

Publication of trilingual question and answer booklet dealing with questions most frequently asked by ordinary people.

Intensive political education on radio and television during last month of campaign.

Role of the Trust Territory Government in the Plebiscite

High Commissioner's Role:

Secretarial Order 2973 specified that the High Commissioner shall provide the Plebiscite Commissioner administrative support as well as to assure the implementation of policies and programs related to the Plebiscite in the manner prescribed by the Plebiscite Commissioner.

Following are amongst items supplied or done by High Commissioner:

1. Provision of logistic support, suitable office space in district, car & driver
2. Making available on "administrative detail" such staff, including the Executive Director, as may be required. Original estimates were for at least eight persons on Pleb. Commissioner's staff.

Pleb. Commissioner should have full and prompt access to such personnel and facilities as he may need, specifically including those associated with the ESG Program. Services of all kinds, official media, including radio, TV, press and distrib. channels, print shop, and translators are to be made available without charge on req. of Pleb. Commissioner

Important is requirement that "an impartial Pleb. Education Program" is conducted. This means that program will be operated impartially and objectively, making available to all voters relevant facts surrounding alternative choices, and will provide equitable access to information through distrib. of materials, media usage, and other facilities for public information.

Program will take no position of either advocacy or opposition but is solely concerned with the dissemination of accurate information on the Covenant and its implications for a prospective Commonwealth relationship.

The High Commissioner and members of his staff will take no position of either advocacy or opposition.

District Administrator's role

Sec. Order specifies that the Mariana Islands District Administrator and staff (as well as TT Headquarters) shall assist the Executive Director in the execution of his duties.

As with High Commissioner and his staff, District Administrator and staff will take no position of either advocacy or opposition.

Congress of Micronesia's role

Congress of Micronesia has no direct role in the Plebiscite.