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JUN 16 1975

(PLEBISCITE ON TUESDAY)

SAIPAN, JUNE 16 (MNS)---TUESDAY, JUNE 17, THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS WILL CAST THEIR HISTORIC VOTES TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WILL SEPARATE FROM THE REST OF MICRONESIA AND BECOME A COMMONWEALTH OF THE UNITED STATES. SOME 5,379 PEOPLE HAVE REGISTERED TO VOTE.

UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES ARE PRESENTLY ON SAIPAN OBSERVING THE CAMPAIGN AND THE VOTE, AND HAVE HELD MEETINGS WITH PRO AND ANTI COVENANT GROUPS AS WELL AS WITH THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF; THE PLEBISCITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE VOTER REGISTRATION BOARD.

POLITICAL OBSERVERS PREDICT THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE WILL VOTE IN FAVOR DESPITE ORGANIZED MOVEMENTS OPPOSING COMMONWEALTH.

IN A MEETING WITH THE UNITED CAROLINIAN ASSOCIATION (UCA), FRIDAY (JUNE 14), UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES TOLD THE UCA THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE TO POSTPONE THE NORTHERN MARIANAS PLEBISCITE.

CHAIRMAN JAMES MURRAY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TOLD A CROWD OF ABOUT 150 AT THE MEETING HALL IN GARAPAN VILLAGE THAT THE MISSION CANNOT ASK THAT THE ELECTION BE POSTPONED BECAUSE THEIR (UN) ONE WEEK VISIT IS "TO OBSERVE" AND "NOT INTERFERE WITH" THE PLEBISCITE.

UCA MEMBERS CHARGED THAT THE "LACK OF POLITICAL EDUCATION" REQUIRED THE POSTPONING THE PLEBISCITE.

SUNDAY (JUNE 15) ABOUT 250 CARS PARADED THROUGH THE ROADS OF SAIPAN URGING SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. COMMONWEALTH COVENANT PROPOSAL. THE MOTORCADE, ORGANIZED BY FRIENDS OF COMMONWEALTH GROUP, PARADED THROUGH SAIPAN VILLAGES FOR MORE THAN FOUR HOURS.

ABOUT 300 YARDS FROM WHERE THE PROCOVENANT GROUP WERE ASSEMBLING THEIR CARS FOR THE MOTORCADE, THE "FRIENDS FOR BETTER COMMONWEALTH" GROUP HELD THEIR RALLY. ANTICOVENANT SPEAKERS CONGRESSMAN OSCAR C. RASA AND COUNCILMAN DINO JONES SPOKE AT THE RALLY MAINTAINING THEIR POSITION TO VOTE AGAINST THE COVENANT.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT SEVERAL PRO AND ANTICOVENANT GROUPS WILL APPEAR ON TELEVISION AND RADIO MONDAY NIGHT, ONE DAY BEFORE THE PLEBISCITE IN A LAST DITCH EFFORT TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THEIR POSITIONS. THE POLLS WILL BE OPEN TUESDAY MORNING AT SEVEN AND WILL BE CLOSED AT SEVEN P.M.

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