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(MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS TO RESUME NEXT MONTH)
SAIPAN, APRIL 28 (MNS)---SENATOR LAZARUS SALII, CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS, SAID TODAY (APRIL 28) THAT IT IS PLANNED THAT A FORMAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO COMPLETE THE DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION WOULD TAKE PLACE NEXT MONTH.

SENATOR SALII MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN A BRIEFING GIVEN TO TRUST TERRITORY CABINET OFFICERS DURING THE WEEKLY MEETING WITH ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER T. COLEMAN.

"LAST WEEK, AMBASSADOR FRANKLIN HAYDN WILLIAMS HELD THREE MEETINGS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. BOTH SIDES AGREED THEY WOULD SEEK TO HOLD A FORMAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS TO COMPLETE THE DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION. BEFORE THE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN, REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOTH SIDES EXPECT TO HOLD ONE OR TWO MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR THE FORMAL MEETING. BOTH SIDES EXPECT THE DOCUMENT CAN BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR IT TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA THIS COMING JULY," SALII SAID.

SALII FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT IF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA APPROVES THE COMPLETED DRAFT COMPACT IN JULY, IT WILL THEN BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT IN NOVEMBER FOR DECISION BY THE MICRONESIAN ELECTORATE. (GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE AT THE SAME TIME.

"IF THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE APPROVE IT, WE WILL THEN TRY TO GET IT TO THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR CONSIDERATION AND WE HOPE THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS WILL ACT ON IT BEFORE JANUARY OF NEXT YEAR," SALII SAID.

"IF THE PEOPLE REJECT THE DRAFT COMPACT IN NOVEMBER, THEY WILL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE STATUS IN JULY OF 1977 WHEN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION COMES UP FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION," SALII EXPLAINED. HE DID NOT EXPLAIN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA WERE TO REJECT THE DOCUMENT THIS COMING JULY NOR DID HE ELABORATE ON THE "FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICTS" THAT ARE SAID TO EXIST BETWEEN THE DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION AND THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA.

(ADMIRALTY AND MARITIME BILL VETOED)

SAIPAN, APRIL 28 (MNS)---ACTING TRUST TERRITORY HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER T. COLEMAN TUESDAY (APRIL 27) VETOED HOUSE BILL NO. 6-304 AMENDING A CERTAIN SECTION OF THE TRUST TERRITORY CODE ON ADMIRALTY AND MARITIME AFFAIRS.

THE BILL WAS ENACTED BY THE RECENTLY-CONCLUDED SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA. THE ADMIRALTY AND MARITIME MEASURE WAS THE LAST OF THE 57 MEASURES SUBMITTED TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR ACTION BY THE CONGRESS. THE DISAPPROVED BILL IS ONE OF THE TEN BILLS VETOED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER. IN TOTAL, THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DISAPPROVED TEN BILLS, APPROVED 43 OTHERS, AND MADE FOUR BILLS BECOME LAW WITHOUT ANY SIGNATURE. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME A MARITIME AND ADMIRALTY BILL HAS BEEN VETOED BY THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER.

THE VETOED ADMIRALTY AND MARITIME BILL WOULD HAVE MADE "ALL MATTERS AFFECTING THE ECONOMY OF SHIPS UNDER THE TRUST TERRITORY FLAG, INCLUDING LABOR RELATIONS, SHALL BE GOVERN BY THE LAWS OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS, IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION THEREOF, AND UNITED LAWS AND REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE TRUST TERRITORY."

IN HIS VETO MESSAGE TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, BETHWEL HENRY, THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID "THAT IF HOUSE BILL 6-304 WERE TO BECOME LAW", "THE IMPLEMENTATION WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH IMPORTANT AND LONG STANDING INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING POLICIES OF THE UNITED STATES AND WITH RELEVANT UNITED STATES LAWS, AND COULD PLACE THE UNITED STATES IN BREACH OF ITS OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW."

THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER FURTHER SAID IN HIS VETO MESSAGE THAT WHILE HE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF SHIPPING TO MICRONESIA AND APPRECIATES THE SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA IN ALL MATTERS RELATING TO SHIPPING IN THE TRUST TERRITORY, HE HAD TO VETO THE BILL BECAUSE "OPERATION AND REGULATION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL SHIPPING ARE MATTERS OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE ARE SUBJECT TO CERTAIN ESTABLISHED RULES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

"THE REGISTRATION OF SEA-GOING VESSELS INVOLVES SIGNIFICANT OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW. AS THE 1958 GENEVA CONVENTION ON THE HIGH SEAS (WHICH APPLIES TO MICRONESIA) MAKES CLEAR, THE GRANT OF NATIONALITY, THE REGISTRATION OF SHIPS, AND THE CONFERRING OF THE RIGHT TO FLY A FLAG, ARE POWERS WHICH MUST BE EXERCISED BY STATES," THE VETO MESSAGE STATED. "THESE POWERS CANNOT BE EXERCISED INDISCRIMINATELY AND THEY CARRY WITH THEM IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW."

THE REPORTS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGRESS STATED THAT A PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THE LEGISLATION WOULD BE TO PERMIT FOREIGN SHIPS TO REGISTER IN MICRONESIA TO GAIN A "FLAG OF CONVENIENCE." THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR SUBSTANTIAL LICENSING AND REGISTRATION REVENUE FROM MEASURES SUCH AS HOUSE BILL 6-304 WOULD APPEAR TO DEPEND ON A RELATIVE LACK OF STRINGENCY IN APPLYING INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING REGULATIONS.

THE BILL DOES NOT "ADEQUATELY RECOGNIZE THE INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS WHICH ACCOMPANY REGISTRATION OF VESSELS, OR PROVIDE ADEQUATE MECHANISMS TO INSURE THAT THEY ARE MET", THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID. "THE UNITED STATES' INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MICRONESIA CARRIES WITH IT THE OBLIGATION TO INSURE THAT THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE FLAG STATE WOULD BE MET IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MICRONESIAN SHIPPING LEGISLATION. WE ARE THEREFORE NOT IN A POSITION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION," COLEMAN CONCLUDED IN HIS VETO MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS.

THE VETOED BILL WAS PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON FEBRUARY 23, 1976, AND BY THE SENATE ON MARCH 1, 1976.

(TOP-LEVEL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION)

SAIPAN, APRIL 28 (MNS)---A TOP-LEVEL REVIEW COMMITTEE, WITH REPRESENTATION INVITED FROM ALL COUNTRIES ENTITLED TO ATTEND THE SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, IS TO MEET IN THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU FROM 3 TO 7 MAY TO CONDUCT AN EXHAUSTIVE RE-EVALUATION OF THE FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION, SPECIAL CONSULTANT DWIGHT HEINE WILL REPRESENT THE TRUST TERRITORY GOVERNMENT. HE WILL LEAVE FOR NAURU SATURDAY (MAY 1).

THE PROPOSAL FOR A REVIEW COMMITTEE EMANATED FROM THE FIFTEENTH SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, WHICH MET IN NAURU LAST YEAR. REPRESENTATIVES AT THE CONFERENCE FELT THAT WITH THE PROFOUND CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS SINCE SPC WAS FIRST SET UP IN 1947, THERE IS A NEED FOR A THOROUGH RE-APPRAISAL OF THE ROLE THAT SPC, AS THE ONLY TRULY REGIONAL ORGANISATION IN THE PACIFIC, SHOULD PLAY.

PRESIDENT HAMMER DEROBURT OF NAURU HAS CONSENTED TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, AND AT LEAST SIX PACIFIC COUNTRIES WILL BE SENDING REPRESENTATIVES AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDE PERMANENT HEADS OF MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS, AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE REVIEW COMMITTEE, THE SPC SECRETARY-GENERAL DR. MACU SALATO, WAS INSTRUCTED BY THE FIFTEENTH SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE TO APPOINT A TWO-MAN COMMISSION WHICH WOULD CARRY OUT INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS OF THOSE FUNCTIONS FOR WHICH SPC IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE ORGANISATION. THE COMMISSION BEGAN ITS WORK IN MID-JANUARY, AND VISITED THIRTEEN COUNTRIES WITHIN THE SPC AREA AND TWO CITIES OUTSIDE IT. THE REPORT OF THE TWO-MAN COMMISSION WAS DISTRIBUTED TO PACIFIC ISLANDS GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION, AND TO SPC'S PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS, AT THE END OF MARCH, AND WILL SERVE AS A BASIS FOR THE REVIEW COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSIONS.

AMONG OTHER MATTERS, THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO BE CONSIDERING WHETHER A CHANGE IN THE NAME OF SPC MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE.

IN ADDITION TO HOSTING THE COMMITTEE, THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU HAS ALSO GENEROUSLY PROVIDED FUNDS TO ENABLE IT TO MEET. THE FOURTEENTH SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, HELD IN RAROTONGA IN 1974 SAW THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. THIS GAVE PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNTRIES AND THEIR METROPOLITAN COUNTERPARTS AN EQUAL VOICE AT THE SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, WHICH DECIDES UPON SPC'S ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME. THIS YEAR'S REVIEW COMMITTEE HAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS: IT WILL ENSURE THAT THE SPC OF THE FUTURE - WHATEVER ITS NAME - IS TRULY RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE REGION.

(DISASTER TEAM EXPECTED)

SAIPAN, APRIL 28 (MNS)---THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE ON SAIPAN WEDNESDAY (APRIL 28) TO COORDINATE DISASTER RELIEF FOR PALAU DISTRICT, RAVAGED RECENTLY BY TYPHOON MARIE.

THE STORM, WHICH HIT THE PALAU ISLANDS APRIL 8 WITH WINDS OF 75 MILES PER HOUR AND GUSTS UP TO 95, DAMAGED HOMES AND DESTROYED CROPS.

ROBERT C. STEVENS, ACCOMPANIED BY ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS JOE LAUX AND T.C. HAMNER, ALL FROM SAN FRANCISCO, WILL BEGIN SURVEY WORK IN COORDINATION WITH TRUST TERRITORY OFFICIALS, IT WAS REPORTED.

LAUX WILL HANDLE INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE AND HAMNER GOVERNMENT REQUESTS.

STEVENS'S DEPUTY FRANK MANDA, IS IN PALAU ASSESSING DAMAGES. THE DISTRICT WAS DECLARED A DISASTER AREA BY PRESIDENT FORD SATURDAY (APRIL 24).

(ADMIRAL CARROLL TO VISIT PALAU)

SAIPAN, APRIL 28 (MNS)---REAR ADMIRAL KENT J. CARROLL AND A PARTY OF 33 WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE DEDICATION OF SHIMIZU BRIDGE BUILT BY THE NAVY CIVIC ACTION TEAM IN PALAU.

SHIMIZU BRIDGE IS LOCATED IN THE FARMING AREA IN NGCHESAR MUNICIPALITY ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF BABELTHUAP ISLANDS. THE PALAU CIVIC ACTION TEAM CARVED OUT OF THE JUNGLE A FOUR-MILE ROAD FROM THE SHORE TO THE FARMING AREA AND CONSTRUCTED THE BRIDGE ACROSS A RIVER AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

SEVEN FAMILIES DECIDED FIVE YEARS AGO TO MOVE INTO THIS FARMING AREA AND STARTED THE FIRST "COMMERCIAL FARM" IN PALAU WITH ASSISTANCE FROM PALAU COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY. THEY REQUESTED THE PALAU CIVIC ACTION TEAM AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM PALAU DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR THOMAS REMENGESAU TO CONSTRUCT THE ROAD AND THE BRIDGE TO THE FARMING AREA. THE PROJECTS BEGAN TWO YEARS AGO.

ADMIRAL CARROLL AND HIS PARTY WILL DEPART GUAM ON MAY 5TH ON MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO ANGAUR. ARRIVING THE DAY ALSO WILL BE A 19-MEMBER NAVY BAND WHICH WILL PLAY CONCERT FOR THE PEOPLE OF ANGAUR AND THE COAST GUARD PERSONNEL THERE. THE ADMIRAL AND HIS PARTY WILL THEN GO TO KOROR WHERE THEY WILL MEET WITH THE LOCAL LEADERS AND THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR. ON MAY 6, THE GROUP WILL TAKE A 45 MINUTE BOAT RIDE TO THE DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE SHIMIZU BRIDGE IN NGCHESAR MUNICIPALITY. RETURNING THE SAME DAY IN THE AFTERNOON, THE PARTY IS EXPECTED TO VISIT THE ROCK ISLANDS. ADMIRAL CARROLL AND HIS PARTY WILL DEPART PALAU TO GUAM ON MAY 7.

(AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS SAYS U.S. SUPPORTS UNITY)

SAIPAN, APRIL 26 (MNS)---THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA AND THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON FUTURE STATUS MET WITH AMBASSADOR F. HAYDN WILLIAMS AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF ON SAIPAN ON APRIL 23 AND 24 FOR USEFUL AND GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS QUESTIONS.

BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM SAIPAN SUNDAY (APRIL 25) THE MICRONESIAN NEWS SERVICE ASKED AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS WHETHER IN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED FROM PALAU AND THE MARSHALLS INDICATING A GROWING INTEREST IN SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND SEPARATE STATUS, THE POSITION OF THE U.S. ON MICRONESIAN UNITY HAD CHANGED. THE AMBASSADOR'S REPLY FOLLOWS:

"WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT MICRONESIAN UNITY -- THE UNITY OF THE MARSHALLS AND THE CAROLINES -- CAN AND SHOULD BE PRESERVED AND THE U.S. INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH THE LEADERS OF MICRONESIA IN ALL OF THE DISTRICTS TOWARD THIS GOAL. WE BELIEVE FURTHER THAT THE DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION CAREFULLY NEGOTIATED OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS IS A SUITABLE INSTRUMENT FOR THAT PURPOSE.

"WE ALSO HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR THE BASIC IDEALS SO ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED IN THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA AND FOR THE LONG HELD DESIRES OF THE PEOPLES OF MICRONESIA FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITY AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF MICRONESIAN SOCIETY. THE U.S. CONTINUES TO HOPE THAT THE TWIN IDEALS OF UNITY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL OF THE PEOPLES OF THE CAROLINES AND THE MARSHALLS.

"WHILE THERE CLEARLY ARE SOME FUNDAMENTAL INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN THE MICRONESIAN CONSTITUTION AND THE DRAFT COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE -- NO CONFLICT -- BETWEEN THE TWO WITH RESPECT TO THE IDEAL OF A UNITED MICRONESIA AND OF SELF-GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE.

"TO SUMMARIZE -- THE U.S. SUPPORTS, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, THE UNITY OF THE MARSHALLS AND THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CAROLINES AND IT HOPES THAT THEY WILL REMAIN UNITED IN THE FUTURE."

(FORD DECLARES PALAU A MAJOR DISASTER AREA)

WASHINGTON, APRIL 26 (MNS)---U.S. PRESIDENT GERALD FORD PAVED THE WAY SATURDAY (APRIL 24) FOR FEDERAL AID TO HELP PALAU DISTRICT RECOVER FROM THE RAVAGES OF TYPHOON MARIE.

THE PRESIDENT SIGNED A DISASTER DECLARATION PERMITTING THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, REMOVAL OF DEBRIS AND REPAIR OF STREETS, ROADS, BRIDGES AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES DAMAGED EARLY THIS MONTH.

ACCORDING TO A UPI STORY OUT OF WASHINGTON, D.C., THE WHITE HOUSE SAID FEDERAL RELIEF ACTIVITIES WOULD BE COORDINATED BY THE FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (FDAA).

IN A LETTER TO ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER T. COLEMAN, FORD SAID ROBERT C. STEVENS, REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION REGION 9, WILL BE THE FEDERAL COORDINATING OFFICER. HE WILL CONSULT WITH THE TRUST TERRITORY OFFICIALS IN THE EXECUTION OF THE FEDERAL-TERRITORIAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT GOVERNING EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS.

LAST WEEK COLEMAN WROTE TO FORD ASKING FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE BECAUSE HE SAID IT WAS "BEYOND THE CAPABILITIES OF THE TERRITORY AND THE DISTRICT OF PALAU TO EFFECTIVELY ALLEVIATE THE EXISTING SITUATION.

TYPHOON MARIE STRUCK PALAU ON APRIL 8 WITH WINDS IN EXCESS OF 70 MILES PER HOUR AND GUSTS OF 90 M.P.H.

DAMAGES ESTIMATES FROM THE STORM HAVE CLIMBED TO MORE THAN \$4 MILLION IN PALAU. THE FIGURE INCLUDES \$1.37 MILLION IN PRIVATE DAMAGE, \$2 MILLION IN AGRICULTURAL LOSSES, \$594,900 IN DAMAGES TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND \$125,000 NEEDED FOR CLEAN-UP OF DEBRIS.

(PONAPE LEGISLATURE APPROVES SURTAX BILL)

KOLONIA, APRIL 26 (MNS)---THE PONAPE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE, MEETING IN ITS CURRENT 50-DAY REGULAR SESSION, PASSED AND SENT TO THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR A MEASURE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR A ONE PERCENT SURTAX ON WAGES AND SALARIES AND ON BUSINESS GROSS REVENUES, ACCORDING TO HALVERSON JOHNNY, WSZD STATION MANAGER.

CURRENTLY, MICRONESIAN WAGE EARNERS PAY THREE PERCENT TAXES ON WAGES AND SALARIES, WITH TWO PERCENT GOING TO THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA GENERAL FUND AND THE ONE PERCENT GOING TO THE VARIOUS DISTRICT LEGISLATURES FOR APPROPRIATIONS: THE NEW SURTAX BILL, IF SIGNED INTO LAW, WILL PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL ONE PERCENT TO THE LEGISLATURE GENERAL FUND IN PONAPE.

IN LENGTHY AND HEATED DEBATE BEFORE PASSAGE OF THE BILL, PROPONENTS ARGUED THAT IT'S ABOUT TIME THE DISTRICT FINDS SOME MEANS TO RAISE REVENUES SO THAT LOCALLY FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS CAN BE COMPLETED.

OPPONENTS OF THE MEASURE ARGUED THAT THE PROPOSED ONE PERCENT IS "TOO HIGH" AND THAT IT SHOULD BE REDUCED BY AT LEAST 50 PERCENT. OTHERS CONTENDED THAT THE AVERAGE WAGE EARNERS CANNOT MEET THE HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING AND PASSING OF SUCH A BILL WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON THEM.

FIRST TO SPEAK FOR THE BILL WAS ITS AUTHOR, BERNARD HELGENBERGER OF METALANIM MUNICIPALITY, WHO HEADS THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE. HE TOLD THE MEMBERS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD TESTIFIED IN FAVOR OF THE BILL. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY KASIANO JOSEPH WHO SAID: "THIS IS ABOUT THE RIGHT TIME TO IMPOSE SUCH A TAX SINCE WE CAN NO LONGER DEPEND ON ANY MORE FEDERAL FUNDS COMING FROM THE U. S. CONGRESS." PASSAGE OF THE BILL, HE SAID, WILL PROVIDE MORE FUNDS FOR THE LEGISLATURE TO FUND PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS BADLY NEEDED IN PONAPE.

HILARY CONRAD REMINDED THE LEGISLATORS THAT TAXES IMPOSED IN MICRONESIA ARE THE LOWEST IN THE WORLD. HE SAID THE BILL, IF PASSED, WILL BENEFIT ALL PONAPEANS INCLUDING THOSE NOT EMPLOYED. SPEAKER ITOR HARRIS TOLD THE MEMBERS THAT DURING THE REFERENDUM ON POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES, IT WAS INDICATED TO THE LEGISLATURE THAT PONAPE WANTED TO GO INDEPENDENT. WITH THIS MESSAGE, THE SPEAKER SAID, "WE MUST BE PREPARE TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT AND SELF-SUPPORTING."

THE OTHER SUPPORTER OF THE MEASURE WAS ALTER PAUL WHO IS A BUSINESSMAN HIMSELF. "ALTHOUGH I WILL SUFFER UNDER THE PROPOSED SURTAX, I WOULD LIKE TO PRAISE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FOR WORK WELL DONE WHILE CONSIDERING THE BILL. I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THE MEASURE WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO PONAPE DISTRICT IN TERMS OF MORE FUNDING."

LEADING THOSE WHO SPOKE AGAINST THE PROPOSED BILL WAS PETER CHRISTIAN, WHO IS ONE OF THE LEADING BUSINESSMAN IN PONAPE. HE SAID, "I WOULD RATHER SEE FIRST THE IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDED PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS AND THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS NEEDED BEFORE WE GET AROUND AND START COLLECTING TAXES INTO OUR TREASURY." THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PRACTICE TODAY, CHRISTIAN INDICATED.

LEGISLATORS EDWEL SANTOS OF KITTI AND JOANES EDMUND OF NITT SPOKE DURING THE DEBATE. THEY INDICATED THAT THE PROPOSED SURTAX IS TOO HIGH CONSIDERING THE LIVING STANDARD OF TAX PAYERS AND SMALL BUSINESSES WHO MAY NOT ADEQUATELY PAY MORE TAX DUE TO THEIR SMALL GROSS REVENUES COLLECTED ANNUALLY.

ACCORDING TO THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE, IF THE SURTAX BILL BECOMES LAW, IT WOULD GENERATE AN ADDITIONAL \$450,000 FOR THE GENERAL FUND OF THE PONAPE DISTRICT LEGISLATURE GENERAL FUND FOR FISCAL YEAR 1977, JOHNNY REPORTED.

THE BILL PASSED BY A VOTE OF 17-5 WITH TWO ABSTAINING.

(CABRERA COMPLETES WATER TREATMENT COURSE)

SAIPAN, APRIL 26 (MNS)---THE FIRST MICRONESIAN STUDENT SPONSORED BY THE TRUST TERRITORY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BOARD TO COMPLETE A NINE MONTH TRAINING COURSE IN WATER AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT TECHNICAL SCHOOL AT NEOSHO, MISSOURI RETURNED TO SAIPAN LAST WEEK.

EPIPHANO CABRERA OF SAIPAN RECEIVED A DIPLOMA AND A CERTIFICATE FOR LABORATORY PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES FROM THE NATIONAL POLLUTION DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM. HE IS ALSO CERTIFIED BY THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA AS A CLASS "B" OPERATOR. CLASS B IS THE SECOND HIGHEST CLASS OF OPERATORS IN THE STATE.

CABRERA RETURNED TO HIS FORMER ASSIGNMENT AT THE MARIANAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS. HE WAS ONE OF THE TWO STUDENTS SENT TO THE MAINLAND FOR TRAINING. THE OTHER IS WILLIAM B. TELLEI OF PALAU WHO IS EXPECTED TO GRADUATE IN JUNE.

(ZEDER COMMENTS ON MICRONESIA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS)

GUAM, APRIL 23 (MNS)---DIRECTOR OF TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS FRED M. ZEDER TOLD A LUNCHEON MEETING HOSTED BY THE ROTARY CLUB AND THE GUAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE THAT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN ON NUMEROUS FRONTS TO EASE THE SEVERE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FACING MICRONESIA AND GUAM.

ZEDER REPEATED HIS STATEMENTS MADE AT A CONGRESSIONAL HEARING EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT "ON ITS OWN MICRONESIA IS BANKRUPT," ACCORDING TO A FRONT PAGE STORY ON FRIDAY'S PACIFIC DAILY NEWS (APRIL 23).

"THE BRIGHTEST SPOT I SEE ON THE HORIZON" FOR MICRONESIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS THE PALAU SUPERPORT PROJECT, ZEDER WAS QUOTED AS SAYING. HE ALSO NOTED THAT OIL EXPLORATION POSSIBILITIES EXIST THROUGHOUT THE MARIANAS TRENCH AREA AND HE SAID HE HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH MAJOR OIL COMPANY OFFICIALS, ACCORDING TO PDN. THE MARIANAS TRENCH CLAIMS THE WORLD'S GREATEST OCEAN DEPTH AT 36,198.

ZEDER SAID MICRONESIA WILL BE FACING ITS BIGGEST PROBLEMS "WITHIN FIVE YEARS --- 1981 IS THE DATE WE'VE SET --- WHEN THE U.S. PRESENCE WON'T BE WHAT IT IS TODAY."

THE 100,000 PEOPLE OF THE TRUST TERRITORY ARE FAR FROM ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENT, ZEDER SAID, ADDING: "WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET A STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GOING."

ZEDER SAID IN A FEW WEEKS HE HOPES TO "BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PROJECT DIVISION OF THE TRUST TERRITORY THAT WILL BE CONCERNED WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT."

"THIS IS GOING TO BE A FULL-FORCE OPERATION," HE SAID. "IT'S GOING TO BE A MAJOR THRUST OF MY OPERATIONS IN THE FUTURE."

ZEDER PRAISED THE PORT PACIFIC PLAN FOR A PALAU SUPERPORT AND SAID, "WITH SOMETHING OF THAT MAGNITUDE WE CAN HAVE A VERY SOUND ECONOMY IN MICRONESIA." HE ADDED THAT A MAJOR STEP TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPERPORT HAS BEEN TAKEN BY PALAU DISTRICT LEGISLATORS, THE PDN STORY SAID.

WHILE ON SAIPAN WEDNESDAY (APRIL 21) FOR THE COVENANT CELEBRATION ZEDER SAID HE WAS PRESENTED WITH A LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD FROM SIX PALAU LEGISLATORS ASKING THAT THE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR PORT PACIFIC BE EXPEDITED.

THE PALAUANS ARE "PROBABLY THE MOST BUSINESS ORIENTED OF ALL THE ISLANDERS," ZEDER WAS QUOTED BY THE PDN. HE INDICATED OIL MAY BE AN ECONOMIC SAVIOR TO AREAS OTHER THAN PALAU, WHERE THE SUPERPORT PROJECT WOULD INCLUDE OIL-STORAGE FACILITIES FOR TRANSSHIPPING AND POSSIBLY THE EVENTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF REFINERY FACILITIES.

"THERE'S A POSSIBILITY OF SOME REAL OIL FUNDS IN THE AREA OF THE MARIANAS TRENCH," HE SAID. HE NOTED THAT GEOLOGISTS IN WASHINGTON CONCUR IN THIS BELIEF AND SAID HE HAS CONTACTED OFFICIALS FROM SHELL, TEXACO AND HUNT OIL COMPANY ABOUT POSSIBLE EXPLORATION. HE TOLD ROTARY CLUB AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERS ON GUAM.

THE TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR IS SCHEDULED TO GO TO AMERICAN SAMOA THIS WEEKEND BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON.

(23 TO ATTEND DEAF-BLIND WORKSHOP IN HONOLULU)

SAIPAN, APRIL 23 (MNS)---A DELEGATION OF 23 MICRONESIAN EDUCATORS ARE SCHEDULED TO LEAVE FOR HONOLULU EARLY NEXT WEEK TO ATTEND A THREE-DAY WORKSHOP OF THE DEAF/BLIND PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION DEAF-BLIND CENTER WHOSE MAIN OFFICE IS AT SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA.

THE WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD AT THE ALA MOANA HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM, ACCORDING TO IRA AKAPITO, ASSISTANT SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR AT HEADQUARTERS ON SAIPAN.

THE THREE-DAY CONFERENCE WILL FEATURE OPENING REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM, DR. WILLIAM BLEA. IT WILL INCLUDE A PANEL PRESENTATION ON THE NEEDS OF EACH MEMBER REGION AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. THERE WILL ALSO BE A SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ON VARIOUS TOPICS AT THE END OF EACH DAY.

ACCORDING TO AKAPITO, THE PARTICIPANTS FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY INCLUDE ALL DISTRICT DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION, A TEACHER FROM EACH DISTRICT AND SOME HEADQUARTERS SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL. PARENTS FROM SOME OF THE DISTRICTS WILL ALSO ATTEND BUT ARE LIMITED TO FOUR PARTICIPANTS BECAUSE OF THE LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY.

AT THE END OF THE THREE-DAY CONFERENCE, THE SIX TEACHERS SELECTED TO ATTEND WILL STAY FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS FOR OBSERVATION AND TRAINING IN THE DEAF-BLIND PROGRAM. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TWO-WEEK TRAINING, AKAPITO SAID THE TEACHERS WILL RETURN TO THE TRUST TERRITORY WITH SEVERAL CONSULTANTS FOR AN ADDITIONAL SIX-WEEKS OF TRAINING TO BE HELD POSSIBLY AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA IN PONAPE.

PARTICIPANTS AT THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION WORKSHOP HONOLULU WILL COME FROM HAWAII, GUAM, AMERICAN SAMOA, CALIFORNIA, NEVADA AND THE TRUST TERRITORY.

(COLEMAN REQUESTS FORD TO DECLARE PALAU A MAJOR DISASTER AREA) SAIPAN, APRIL 23 (MNS)---TRUST TERRITORY ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER PETER T. COLEMAN HAS ASKED PRESIDENT FORD TO DECLARE PALAU DISTRICT A MAJOR DISASTER AREA AS A RESULT OF DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY TYPHOON MARIE WHICH BRUSHED THROUGH THE ISLANDS EARLIER THIS MONTH.

TYPHOON MARIE, WITH MAXIMUM SUSTAINED WINDS OF 70 MILES PER HOUR AND GUSTS UP TO 90 MILES PER HOUR STRUCK PALAU ON THE MORNING OF THURSDAY, APRIL 8, CAUSING EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO PRIVATE HOUSING, PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SUBSISTENCE CROPS.

COLEMAN SAID IN HIS LETTER TO FORD THAT THE TYPHOON DAMAGED A TOTAL OF 928 PRIVATE BUILDINGS OF WHICH 257 SUSTAINED OVER 50 PERCENT DAMAGE. DAMAGE TO FARMS AND CROPS RANGED FROM 50 PERCENT TO 100 PERCENT IN SOME AREAS.

THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THE ESTIMATED DAMAGE TO PUBLIC FACILITIES REQUIRING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES ARE AS FOLLOWS: HARBORS AND CAUSEWAYS, \$62,290; BUILDINGS \$370,120; ROADS, \$20,300; WATER SYSTEMS, \$1,000; POWER AND TELEPHONE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS, \$15,300.

TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATES AS OF THIS WEEK ARE: PUBLIC DAMAGE \$594,000; PRIVATE DAMAGE, \$1,373,000; AGRICULTURE, \$2,000,000. ANOTHER \$125,000 IS REQUIRED FOR DEBRIS CLEANUP FOR CONTROL OF THE RHINOCEROS BEETLE.

COLEMAN SAID TRUST TERRITORY AGENCIES IN PALAU DISTRICT WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES WERE MOBILIZED TO ASSIST THE POPULATION IN EVACUATION, RESCUE, DEBRIS CLEARANCE, TEMPORARY SHELTER, EMERGENCY FEEDING AND DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS TO ALL INHABITED ISLANDS AND MUNICIPALITIES.

"I FIND THAT THE SITUATION IS BEYOND THE CAPABILITIES OF THE TRUST TERRITORY AND THE DISTRICT OF PALAU TO EFFECTIVELY ALLEVIATE THE EXISTING SITUATION," COLEMAN SAID IN HIS LETTER TO FORD.

FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NO "CONTINGENCY FUND" FOR EMERGENCIES IN THE TRUST TERRITORY BUDGET, AND THAT SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDS WILL BE REQUIRED TO REPAIR AND RESTORE DISASTER DAMAGED PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

THE TRUST TERRITORY IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS UNDER THE DISASTER RELIEF ACT OF 1974.

(REGIONAL COOPERATION IN EDUCATION RECOMMENDS BY SPC)

SAIPAN, APRIL 23 (MNS)---THE SPC'S EIGHTH REGIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE WHICH MET IN KOROR, PALAU, LATE LAST MONTH MADE A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS DESIGNED TO LEAD TO GREATER REGIONAL COOPERATION IN EDUCATION MATTERS.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNED THE RATIFICATION OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION, WHOSE FORMATION WAS PROPOSED AT A SPECIAL MEETING ON ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE ORGANIZED BY THE SPC LAST YEAR WITH FUNDS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION. THE CONFERENCE URGED ALL PACIFIC ISLANDS GOVERNMENTS TO RATIFY THIS PROPOSAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND TO ENDORSE THE SUGGESTION THAT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT UNIT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC BE EXPANDED SO THAT IT CAN ASSIST PACIFIC COUNTRIES WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES. THE CONFERENCE ALSO ASKED THE SPC TO ACT AS SECRETARIAT FOR THE BOARD ONCE IT IS RATIFIED.

ONE MATTER OF CONCERN TO PACIFIC EDUCATORS IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS SUITED TO THE NATIONAL NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNTRIES. THE CONFERENCE REQUESTED SPC TO GIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO GOVERNMENTS WORKING ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, AND TO SUPPORT EFFORTS BEING MADE IN THIS FIELD BY OTHER INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE CONFERENCE NOTED THAT THE CONTINUATION OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES NOT ONLY PRODUCTION AND EVALUATION OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS, BUT ALSO DISSEMINATION OF THE FINAL PRODUCT AND TRAINING OF LOCAL PERSONNEL. IT SUGGESTED THAT SPC COORDINATE REGIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSIST THE UNIVERSITY WITH FUNDS, PERSONNEL AND OTHER NECESSARY RESOURCES.

THE CONFERENCE ALSO CONSIDERED THE QUESTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION, AND RECOMMENDED THAT COUNTRIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOUTH PACIFIC BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT QUALIFICATIONS CONFERRED ON TEACHERS BY OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS TO FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE AND EXCHANGE OF TEACHERS THROUGHOUT THE REGION. SPC WAS ASKED TO COORDINATE INFORMATION ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGE OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL BETWEEN PACIFIC COUNTRIES, AND TO ASSIST WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH EXCHANGE.

THE CONFERENCE NOTED WITH INTEREST A PROPOSAL BY DR. G. H. CANNON, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, FOR TRAINING OF TUTORS AT TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGES. THE PROPOSAL IS FOR AN INTENSIVE TEN-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM, WHICH WOULD BE ORGANIZED AT A TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY EACH YEAR, FOR INDIGENOUS TEACHER TRAINING PERSONNEL. THE PROGRAM WOULD BE STAFFED BY PERSONNEL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, WITH COUNTERPART STAFF FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE CONFERENCE ENDORSE THE PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE, ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WILL BE FURTHER EXPLORED WITH APPROPRIATE FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS AND WITH INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION.

CHAIRMAN OF THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE WAS DAVID RAMARUII, TRUST TERRITORY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION. THE CONFERENCE WAS DIRECTED BY THE SPC'S PROGRAM DIRECTOR (SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT) DR. FRANK MAHONY. DELEGATES FROM TWELVE PACIFIC COUNTRIES WERE IN ATTENDANCE, TOGETHER WITH A NUMBER OF RESOURCE PEOPLE, AND ALL VERY MUCH ENJOYED THE WARM HOSPITALITY OF THE PALAUAN PEOPLE.

(CANHAM ANNOUNCES TWO MAJOR APPOINTMENTS)

SAIPAN, APRIL 23 (MNS)---THE NEW RESIDENT COMMISSIONER FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, ERWIN D. CANHAM ANNOUNCED FRIDAY (APRIL 23) THE APPOINTMENT OF N. NEIMAN CRALEY JR, AS HIS SPECIAL ASSISTANT AND PERSONNEL REPRESENTATIVE. CRALEY IS THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TRUST TERRITORY.

CANHAM ALSO ANNOUNCED THE APPOINTMENT OF FRANCISCO C. ADA AS ACTING RESIDENT COMMISSIONER UNTIL HIS RETURN TO THE MARIANAS. HE IS LEAVING FRIDAY EVENING FOR THE MAINLAND TO MAKE FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR HIS NEW DUTIES. HE IS EXPECTED TO RETURN THE LATTER PART OF MAY.

CANHAM STATED IN HIS "MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS" THAT HE WILL NEED THEIR ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AS IT PREPARES ITSELF FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT.