

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
of the
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

VERBATIM JOURNAL (TRANSCRIPT)

Twenty-Sixth Day
Friday, November 12, 1976

(1) The Constitutional Convention of the Northern Mariana Islands was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

The Honorable Lorenzo I. Guerrero, President, presided.

(2) A moment of silent prayer was observed.

(3) The Convention Secretary called the roll. There were 35 Delegates present. Delegates Olympio T. Borja, Daniel P. Castro, Pedro Q. Dela Cruz and Francisco T. Palacios were excused. No Delegates were absent.

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that those Delegates not in attendance be excused.

The motion was seconded and carried.

(4) ADOPTION OF THE JOURNAL

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that the Summary Journal of the 25th Day be adopted by the Convention.

The motion was seconded and carried.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS - None

(6) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman Benigno Fitial: I am happy to report that your Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters is submitting Committee Recommendation No. 9, regarding "Preamble."

Chairman Felipe Atalig: At this time, your Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources is submitting a written report on the disposition of Delegate Proposals by our Committee. I am also happy to submit to the Convention Committee Recommendation No. 9, regarding "Miscellaneous Provisions." This Report deals with Statute of Limitations, Treatment of Children in Criminal Proceedings, and Search and Seizure.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: The basic formation and requirements, regarding the "Executive Branch," have been reached by your Committee on Governmental Institutions. However, there is one obstacle that did not permit your Committee to submit this report this afternoon. That is the composition regarding the so-called mayor/lieutenant governor portion of the Recommendation. The proponents of the amendment introduced yesterday by Delegate Jose R. Cruz and our Committee are deadlocked on that issue. For the Convention's information, the President had formed a Special Committee to iron out the problems that we are facing on the question of local government and the lieutenant governor's authority and responsibilities. I have yet to hear from the Chairman of that Special Committee. I understand that they met this afternoon and I hope that resolution was reached so that we can proceed with our business.

Delegate Joaquin Torres: Mr. President, could you tell us who the Delegates were that comprised that Special Committee?

President Guerrero: For your information, the Convention Officers met about 5:30 p.m. yesterday evening and we made the selection and appointed the following Delegates:

Delegates Benjamin Manglona, Jose R. Cruz, Pedro Atalig, Juan P. Tenorio, Jesus Villagomez and Francisco T. Palacios. Unfortunately Delegate Palacios was unable to attend and Delegate Ramon Villagomez was appointed to attend in his place.

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: The Special Committee met and vigorously attempted to tackle the problem and it seems to me that a solution has been tentatively reached, although this must be reduced into constitutional language so that everyone can ascertain the gist of the concern. We think with more time this afternoon, or sometime tomorrow, we should be able to come up with some kind of solution.

President Guerrero: I hope that the Special Committee can come up with an alternative that will solve these problems so that we can discuss and complete the Committee's Recommendation.

(7) INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Chairman Benigno Fitial: At this time, I would like to introduce Committee Recommendation No. 9, regarding "Preamble," from the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters for First Reading.

Chairman Felipe Atalig: At this time, I would like to introduce Committee Recommendation No. 9, regarding "Miscellaneous Provisions," from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources for the consideration of the Convention.

(8) SECOND AND FINAL READING OF PROPOSALS - None

(9) INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Chairman Felipe Atalig: I have a resolution to read into the record.

A RESOLUTION THANKING AND COMMENDING THE CONSULTANTS
FOR THE COMMITTEE ON PERSONAL RIGHTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

WHEREAS, the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources has completed its deliberations and has reported its recommendations of constitutional provisions to the Convention and,

WHEREAS, the Committee produced eight (8) constitutional articles and thirty-nine (39) constitutional sections, plus supporting papers amounting to one hundred-sixteen (116) pages and,

WHEREAS, the Committee was faithfully and diligently assisted and provided every necessary professional guidance at every moment of its deliberations by the two legal consultants, Ms. Deanne C. Seimer, Esq. and Mr. Neil S. Solomon, Esq. and,

WHEREAS, the consultants did not in anyway impose any idea or opinion upon the Committee but did give comprehensive and objective analyses of all the committee's recommendations and,

WHEREAS, the Committee is greatly appreciative of every assistance and guidance received from its consultants,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention that its Delegates express and extend their appreciation and congratulate them for their successful assistance, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Convention be requested to send a copy of the text of this Resolution to the two consultants mentioned above and to the law firm of:

WILMER, CUTLER AND PICKERING
1666 K Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

(10) UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

(11) SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY - None

(12) GENERAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

President Guerrero: For today's discussion is Committee Recommendation No.8, regarding "Restrictions of Land Alienation," from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources.

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that the Convention resolve itself in the Committee of the Whole.

The motion was seconded and carried.

President Guerrero: At this time, the Chair would like to call on Delegate Luis Limes from Saipan to preside over the Committee of the Whole for today.

The Convention resolved into the Committee of the Whole at 2:27 p.m.

The Convention reconvened in Plenary Session at 3:35 p.m.

(During Committee of the Whole, Delegate Felipe Atalig asked the House to recognize the presence of Senator-Elect Jesus Mafnas.)

Chairman Luis Limes: Your Committee of the Whole adopted Committee Recommendation No. 8 from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources, regarding "Restrictions On Land Alienations."

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that the Convention adopt Committee Recommendation No. 8 from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources for First Reading.

The motion was seconded and carried.

President Guerrero: The Chair would like to recognize the presence of all the interested citizens of the Northern Marianas who are in the gallery.

(13) MISCELLANEOUS

Delegate Juan S. Demapan: Good afternoon, Mr. President and fellow Delegates:

Today, we begin the last half of our Convention days, and our tasks still remain abound. With so little time remaining and much to do, it seems that we won't ever accomplish the task of formulating a Constitution that is representative of our people's needs and wants. Such a task is not easy, but in God we ask a miracle to show us the way to understand that only through a unity of purpose can we accomplish such a task that, at present, is seemingly impossible.

As a member of this honorable body, I have a moral and public responsibility to promote understanding and trust -- unity of purpose -- amongst ourselves. In fact, this is the best place to start it.

The major obstacle facing this body is that some of us are fearful of abandonment and inattention of the basic material needs and wants of our people in our other municipalities. That fear, unquestionably, stems from past repetitive experiences. But if we are really going to think about it, the fear is basically rooted in inadequate monetary support to these islands in order to establish adequate basic facilities such as hospitals, schools, airports, docks, roads, etc., necessary for the well-being and convenience of our people in these outer islands. This, in short, is fundamentally the injustices of the past.

But let's be practical and realistic: On its own, Saipan may never be able to support our neighboring islands for material conveniences. In fact, it has never been. The Trust Territory Administration, the administering authority, if anything, is the direct source for such injustices of the past.

To be sure, our problems here are no different from the other districts in the Trust Territory. My experience in the other districts has been one of great sorrow. For it seems that only the major island centers are where everything seems to be. The outer islands of Truk, Marshalls, Ponape, Yap, and Palau are probably more mistreated and forgotten than us here in the Marianas.

I have seen islands out there without running water, electricity, roads, airports, hospitals, and ports. In medicare, these islands sometimes get it once in every forty-five days. So if injustices we want to say, that is where injustices exist. We are much luckier and fortunate, in fact, by far. But with \$8.5 million for governmental operations, and some \$4 million for capital improvements, as provided by the Covenant, we can safely say that our often shouted "injustices" are more than eliminated.

Thus, my fellow Delegates, I wish to close with a warning: continuance of concentrating our efforts and time on material injustices of the past, could very well lead us to forget the heart of our task, namely, protecting the interests, rights and desires of our people, and protecting ourselves from the expected and unexpected evils of government and amongst ourselves. Only history will tell what we do in this Convention to protect our cherished people and lands and heritages on a planet filled with customs, cultures and beliefs of peoples and nations far different and outnumbering our kind. In final, I wish to ask that we all join hands and work for the good of all our people and islands and the generations to come, which is the task we here face.

Delegate David Maratita: I would like the Convention to recognize in the gallery, the presence of Francisco Ulodong, the new descent of the Marianas, and two members of the Pacific Daily News staff who are 100% American citizens.

Chairman Felipe Atalig: I have a letter that has been prepared to our pageboy for his outstanding work for our Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources. This is a very special occasion and I would like to present this letter to the Sergeant-at-Arms to be presented to the President so that it can be inserted in the record. I would like the Convention Secretary to read the letter to the Convention.

November 12, 1976

Mr. Ramon R. Seman
Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Mr. Seman:

On behalf of the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources, I wish to express our sincere appreciation and commendation for your sincere and most generous services provided the Committee during the past 26 days of our deliberation in our Committee's work.

We are pleased to present to you a small gift as a token of our appreciation for your kind services provided which we all cherished.

The Committee recognizes the importance of your work with respect to providing a comfortable atmosphere in our daily work and we hope you continue to extend your excellent spirit for the remaining 24 days of the Committee's work.

Thank you yan si Yuss maasi. Ha dahi na unmalefa nai chairman yan i mangachong na gi sakan 1977.

Sincerely,

Felipe Q. Atalig
Chairman, Personal Rights and
Natural Resources

President Guerrero: Today marks the 26th day of session of our Constitutional Convention. The progress achieved by the backbone of this august body is par-excellent, and, therefore, worth honoring every effort contributed to this effect. As President of this Constitutional Convention, it is my pleasure, and I am proud to mention, that the Committee on Governmental Institutions has made it possible to undo complexities and difficulties relative to governmental structure which were undoubtedly necessary to accommodate demands and to relieve grievances of the past.

The Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters with its unique and significant role in the making of this Convention, will assure that every endeavor promoted will find space within the relativeness of this Convention to a documented constitution.

The outstanding disposition of this Committee in distinguishing between constitutional and legislative issues, and to further refer matters to their appropriate position, is apparent in the diligent and expedient way the proper recommendations were concluded and sent to the Committee of the Whole for adoption. This Committee will further guarantee that the capability and competency of our government to serve its constituents will not fail.

The Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources must bear the fact that the scale of limitations must be carefully measured to avoid one or the other to take advantage, likewise. In addition, the effort of this Committee is obviously courageous. To establish compromise between the law and the private individual is a task very rewarding. To establish laws for the taking, and laws for giving, is a task undertaken by those competent to render justification.

My fellow Delegates, let us continue to work together cooperatively and harmoniously. Our responsibilities and obligations in this Convention are absolutely demanding. We are all here not only to try to accomplish an immense task in so little time, but we have accepted this formidable task to undertake.

Let us remind ourselves that the confidence vested in us shall be returned at the conclusion of this Constitutional Convention.

Let us continue to do our assignment with caution and diligence, but let us not forget that we have to be expedient, or time will bypass us.

Indeed, our deliberations and arguments sometimes give way to insistent and aggravated tempers. But let us try to excuse ourselves in these circumstances because our human frailty is inevitable.

The bitterness of yesterday must be forgotten. Let our gathering today in this Convention sublime the frustrations of the past and return friendship among us. Thank you.

Chairman Benigno Fitial: Mr. President. Over the past weeks your Committees on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters and on Governmental Institutions have spent hours discussing ways to guarantee that all of the people of our new Commonwealth will receive the services to which they are entitled. Just yesterday, this Convention, sitting as a Committee of the Whole, gave tentative approval to a plan that I and members of your Committees, especially the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters, are convinced will accomplish this very objective.

As my fellow Delegates on the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters know, this plan would create the office of mayor on Saipan, Rota, Tinian, and the Northern Islands. Each mayor would have broad and important powers. A mayor would have the right to submit budget requests on his constituents' behalf to the governor. After receiving the mayor's recommendations, the governor would be obligated to consult with him in preparing the budget to be submitted to the legislature. Each island would, therefore, play a significant role in the formulation of the Commonwealth budget, a role denied by the present system of Trust Territory and district administration. The mayor would be able to fight if necessary to secure an adequate and fair level of services for his people.

No politically astute governor would ignore the recommendations of a mayor for three reasons. First, a mayor's budgetary proposal may be rejected only for a "good cause."

Second, the Northern Marianas will elect its chief executive. As a political figure, the governor will be responsive to the advice of each mayor, because a mayor will speak for the voters. The governor will need the support of most of the voters to win re-election. And it is unlikely that any politician will command the support of all of the voters of Saipan. This means that the votes of the people of the outer islands will often determine the result of gubernatorial elections.

Third, even if a governor should be so unwise as to reject all or most of the reasonable recommendations of a mayor, the legislature could reject the budget. Remember that Rota and Tinian will control the senate. If the senators from those islands believe that the governor's budget is unfair to their constituents, they will have the power to disapprove the entire budget. Will a governor attempt to deny adequate services to the outer islands if the cost is the rejection of his entire program? I think not. Remember, also, that the senate will exercise the power to confirm or reject the governor's principal appointees.

Despite the ample protections of this Committee Recommendation, some Delegates continue to demand complete autonomy for the outer islands. The words of these Delegates are disturbing for two reasons. First, a governmental system, and we are addressing only one system, that serves only 15,000 -- or even 150,000 people -- is not workable if it is splintered into three autonomous parts, each duplicating the functions of the others. The governor would be little more than a figurehead if three so-called "lieutenant governors" are given responsibility for administering the government and hiring and firing its employees on their islands. We are told that the governor and his department heads will "set policy." But what does that mean if the people who will implement the policy are not selected and cannot be supervised or removed by the policy-makers? Policy will soon degenerate. If the governor and a lieutenant governor are of different political parties, conflict between the two is inevitable. Soon the lieutenant governor will seek out ways to repudiate the policies of the chief executive.

Furthermore, Mr. President, the experience of the United States suggests that the needs of Rota and Tinian can be met without this lieutenant governor proposal. The state of Hawaii is also a community of islands -- separated by many more miles of ocean than is true in the Northern Marianas. The individual islands of Hawaii do not begin to have the kind of powers and local autonomy that our colleagues want for Rota and Tinian, even though the islands in Hawaii are much richer in terms of people and money. In fact, the State of Hawaii provides most of the significant public services -- education and welfare, for example.

Mr. President, what some of my colleagues are demanding is a system in which the lieutenant governors will be more powerful than the governor. This is a system appropriate for a federation of loosely joined sovereign states, not for a Commonwealth where the interests of all of the people are paramount. If the governor has the authority to supervise governmental services, the Commonwealth will receive the benefits of a comprehensive civil service system. Employees will be hired and promoted according to objective standards based upon merit. It is clear that qualified public servants will be more effective than the political cronies of a lieutenant governor.

The proposal for local autonomy would be more than inefficient. It would be costly. A different set of supervisors would be required for each island. These administrators will strain the limited resources of the Commonwealth. This can only result in the reduction of the services actually available to the people of the Northern Marianas. Mr. President, is our concern elaborate organizational charts whose only beneficiaries are those who fill positions listed on those charts? Or is our goal to ensure services sufficient to their needs?

The words of Delegates supporting local autonomy are disturbing for a second reason. Some of my colleagues have suggested that if their views do not prevail they will block ratification of any Constitution. Some even threaten to walk away from our responsibilities before our fifty days have ended. Mr. President, now is not the time for threats. My fellow Delegates, let us try to reach consensus. Let us not be alarmed or dismayed if we cannot agree today or tomorrow or even two weeks from now. Let us use all of the time remaining to us to resolve this troubling issue if that is necessary. But let us also not lose sight of why we were sent here by our people -- to draft a Constitution for them. So while we continue to discuss the issue of local government, let us continue also to reach agreement on other questions. In twenty-four days, let us have a Constitution. I thank you.

Delegate Juan DLG. Demapan: Mr. President and fellow Delegates. We are all

aware that this Constitution that we are in the process of drafting is a matter of utmost seriousness. Not only will our own people be passing judgement on our work, but it must also stand up under the scrutiny of the United States Congress and the President of the United States. Unless we relish the idea of being branded as incompetents, it is important that we apply ourselves to doing thoughtful first-class work.

We have been provided with excellent briefing papers, which if read and studied, should make our work relatively easy.

It is true that there are unique local problems that have not been anticipated in the briefing papers, but as to them, the question is: Are they really matters that can only be resolved by Constitutional provisions? It seems to me that many of the proposals submitted reflect local concerns based upon past experience.

It may well be true that under a series of incompetent Trust Territory Administrations, the municipalities of Rota and Tinian were treated as step-children, but does not the fault lie partly with our equally incompetent District Administrators who were more concerned with pleasing Headquarters than tending to the needs of our friends in the municipalities. Now that we look forward to a District Administrator (governor) who will answer rather than to a High Commissioner, is it not reasonable to expect more responsive consideration? Surely the allegiance of a governor who need not look to a High Commissioner for job security will lie with the people; all of the people. Therefore, should not the Delegates from Tinian and Rota make an effort to forget past injustices and refrain from trying to guard against past neglects that will not be repeated by introducing proposals which do not belong in a constitution. These disputes only consume precious time and lead to nothing constructive.

With the advent of a new form of government, in which the three branches draw their respective authority from a written law, and which at the same time, places clear cut limitations on the exercise of that authority; it is my firm belief that no one need fear a repetition of the excesses or neglects of the past. We should look to our Constitution as a unifying force rather than a divisive one.

Should we persist in the attempt to guard against past wrongs -- real or imagined -- by inserting all sorts of ill-advised and distorting provisions in our Constitution, it is clear that we will wind up with a document, yes, but will it be a Constitution? I think not. It will be a joke, the laughing stock of all thinking men everywhere; and what is of prime importance, it will not pass muster neither with our people nor the U. S. Congress.

Let us have faith that all assembled here are men of good will, that we all seek the common good. Let sectionalism be set aside and let us get on with the work appointed in a spirit of unity.

For myself, I pledge that my concern embodies the welfare of the people of Rota and Tinian, to as great a degree as those of Saipan. We are a unit, let us behave as one. Thank you.

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: Mr. President, I don't have a prepared speech, but I would like to make a comment. I would like to assure this Convention that the Delegation from Tinian, and perhaps I can speak for the Delegation from Rota, has no intention of trying to bring what took place in the past. We are willing to forget what happened in the past, but certainly we refuse to continue the practices of the past. So as I stated, we the minority from Tinian joined in forces with the other minority from Rota, came up with a proposal because we firmly believe that that's the only way we can have a workable government. We are not being selfish. We are only bringing to the attention of this Convention that we want to be treated equal. We believe in the American proverb, "What is good for the goose is good for gander." We are minorities, and unfortunately as a result of this minority, we have had problems in the past, but we don't intend to keep dragging that up in this Convention. But in order for the Delegation from Tinian to be assured that it is understood fully by the Convention, the injustices and the inequity we have suffered in the past, we have to explain this to the Convention so that the members will understand our problems.

We are not asking anything impossible. We want some more voice in our future government. The only reason the people from Tinian supported the Covenant and the new political status is because we want to change the suffering we have had in the past 25 years. If we knew that such safeguard would be turned down by this Convention to protect the interest of the minority, we would have voted down the passage of the Covenant. We would have refused sacrificing the very small island of Tinian to be turned over for future national defense. I would respectfully like to remind this Convention that the people of Tinian sacrificed more than two-thirds of its very small island for the future of the Marianas. We are only asking that we have more voice, more authority, in this new government. If we don't get this, then we refuse to have a new constitution. What is the use for us to join this new political entity if the arrangement will be just like the old days? I have heard so many speeches accusing the outer islands of being selfish. What is the danger, Mr. President, if giving Tinian and Rota a man who is elected locally to administer their local affairs? Why do we have to resort to people from Saipan, like the old days? The governor will sit here all the time, he doesn't spend 24 hours on Rota and Tinian. We want a workable government. We want to be a part of that government. Thank you.

Delegate Benjamin Manglona: I certainly appreciate the remarks made by several of the Delegates and certainly share some of their consensus. However, Mr. President and fellow Delegates, the Rota and Tinian Delegations have been continuously blamed for the action and the work of this Convention. One thing I want to make very clear, we have been making ourselves available in all the Committee work and we have been at this Convention. I assure the Convention that we have no intention of trying to walk out unless we come to the point where we think that there is no where to go to protect the interest of the people of Rota and Tinian. I still think there is hope and room for understanding. We will continue to be in this Convention until that time. I want to assure you that it is the feeling of our Delegation that we still have plenty of room to resolve our differences.

One thing I want to ask you, is to give us the protection that we are asking. It is not the protection for the people of that island. It is the protection for all of the people. We have some people from Saipan who have come to Rota and decided to live there. It is protection for these people, too.

One thing I want to make clear; we are doing our work and hope we can reach an agreement on the proposal we have submitted. Thank you.

Delegate Ramon Villagomez: I think we have reached the point where we cannot come to a further compromise, a further understanding, a further giving away of power. This is it. This is the time to walk out. Let me explain why. There are three municipalities in the Northern Marianas; 12,000 of the people on the island of Saipan, 1,200 or so on Rota and about 750 in Tinian. We found out we couldn't have a Covenant if we didn't have a compromise, so we thought we were giving compromises. But instead of compromise, the people of Saipan have given to these minorities more than they are entitled to. Think about this carefully. What we have given up to this point to the minorities, is more than they are entitled. There is nothing that the people of Saipan can enact in the way of legislation without the permission of the people of Rota and Tinian. Nothing. Nothing can go through that legislature without the people of Rota and Tinian saying "yes." There is nothing that the people of Rota can ask Saipan, that the people of Saipan can refuse. Because if Saipan says we refuse to cut down your trees, the people of Rota and Tinian in the senate will say, we refuse to cut down your trees and nothing happens. Therefore, to ask for more when we have already given more than they are entitled to, the power is not here in Saipan now. The power is in the minority. The minority is asking for more. What more power can we give? We cannot negotiate anymore and we cannot compromise anymore, because we have given more than we can give. We have given more than we can afford. If you are looking for the time in which we cannot go any further, that time has come. We cannot any longer negotiate or compromise.

If you think the only way you can solve this problem is to walk away from it, let me warn you that Saipan will not suffer. If you are not going to have a Commonwealth as we have been seeking to have, all the dreams that we have been dreaming, all the goals we have been expecting, are never going to come. We are not going to give anymore, we have given more than enough. Thank you.

Delegate Esteven King: This is not a speech, just a very short comment I would like to make to the Delegates. Let's look back on the Constitution of the United States and what happened when they gave very strong power to the government. They ended up with a civil war. Bloody. We do not want this same thing to happen here in the Marianas Commonwealth. Even though we are a minority, we are asking for equal treatment. The islands of Tinian and Rota are not separated from Saipan by barbed wire, we are separated by ocean. We are not asking for decentralization of power, we are asking that there is some power in Tinian and Rota. I would like to ask the cooperation of this Convention in listening to the issues we have presented. We are trying to be treated equally with all people of the Commonwealth. So I ask for the cooperation of the Delegates; notice that on certain issues, not only are Rota and Tinian Delegates voting against it, some Saipanese are also voting against it. I'll bet that the Delegates that stand up and say I'll fight for you; why, because they are feeling the pains. I want this Convention to recognize that it is just not the Tinian and Rota Delegates voting against the issue, but some Saipanese, too. Let's be realistic in this Convention on each issue. Certain Delegates from Saipan would like to vote with Rota and Tinian, but they cannot speak because they are residing on this island. Thank you.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: Upon completion of the session, I would like to report back to our constituents that we have formulated a Constitution. When you appointed a special committee to iron out these problems; I wish to advise every Delegate in this Convention to please refrain from jeopardizing the negotiations that are going on in this special committee. As the Chairman of the Committee on Governmental Institutions, who has yet to report to this Convention its report on the "Executive Branch," I find that it will be very difficult, at this time, to reach a consensus because of the speeches that have been made directed against the wishes of the people of Rota and Tinian. I feel that there is still time to reach a consensus and I strongly advise every Delegate to please refrain from making any remarks that might jeopardize the negotiations. Thank you.

Delegate Juan DLG. Demapan: I am full admiration of love and destiny and I do sympathize with the feeling, sentiments and concerns of the people of Tinian and Rota. But, Mr. President, I think they are wrong, as Delegate Ramon Villagomez said. I think there is enough protection for the municipalities of Rota and Tinian. Since the senate is three/ three/ three, let me assure you that no legislation will be approved without the consent of the two municipalities. Thank you.

Delegate Henry Hofschneider: Let's assume, Mr. President, that the Constitution has been ratified. I would be very pleased, as for my fellow Delegates, if we follow what formula is being recommended now. I would like to extend invitations to residents from Saipan to stay on Tinian and share with us our experience.

(14) ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Felipe Atalig: Your Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources will meet tonight at 7:00 p.m. in Room 225. I urge all members to be present.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: There will be a meeting of your Committee on Governmental Institutions immediately after this session. I would like the President to advise the members of the Special Committee to please be present in this meeting so we can hear what transpired in their meeting this afternoon.

President Guerrero: May I respectfully request that members of that Special Committee attend the meeting of the Committee on Governmental Institutions, as Chairman Mafnas has requested, which will be held immediately following this session.

Chairman Benigno Fitial: I would like to announce that the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters will meet jointly with the Committee on Governmental Institutions so we can hear what transpired in the Special Committee's meeting.

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: I do not oppose the joint meeting of the two Committees,

however, we still need to draft the constitutional language and we haven't done that yet. Before the Tinian Delegation accepts the solution we have to have draft language. We want to make sure our concerns are protected. I don't know if we will accomplish that this afternoon.

President Guerrero: I suggest that the Committee on Governmental Institutions should proceed with its meeting, and I also urge the Special Committee to come up with the committee's recommendation and draft concerning the "Executive Branch." If you still have areas in which no solution has been formulated, I suggest that the Chairman please try to expedite that problem within your committee and come up with a committee report. Whether you have a minority or majority report, please expedite.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: Mr. President, am I to understand that you are withdrawing your directive to the Special Committee to attend the meeting this afternoon?

President Guerrero: As suggested by Delegate Cruz, it may not be wise to meet at this time since they have not reached the drafted language of their proposed amendment.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: After hearing the explanation of Delegate Cruz, I was under the impression that the Special Committee had reached a tentative agreement on the problem, but if this is not the case, I withdraw my invitation.

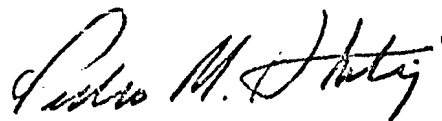
Chairman Benigno Fitial: If that is the case, the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters will meet alone immediately after this session.

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that the Convention recess until 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.

The motion was seconded and carried.

The Convention recessed at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pedro M. Atalig
Convention Secretary