

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
of the
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

VERBATIM JOURNAL (TRANSCRIPT)

Twenty-Eighth Day
Sunday, November 14, 1976

The Constitutional Convention of the Northern Mariana Islands reconvened in Committee of the Whole at 9:14 a.m.

The Honorable Felipe Q. Atalig, Delegate, presided.

The Convention reconvened in Plenary Session at 10:22 a.m.

The Honorable Lorenzo I. Guerrero, President, presided over the Convention.

Chairman Felipe Atalig: The Committee of the Whole deliberated and adopted the following Committee Recommendations: Committee Recommendation No. 9 from the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters, regarding "Preamble," and Committee Recommendation No. 9 from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources, regarding "Miscellaneous Provisions." Each of these Recommendations were adopted unanimously.

The Committee of the Whole also adopted, as amended, Committee Recommendation No. 4 from the Committee on Governmental Institutions, regarding "The executive Branch of Government."

The amendments are as follows:

Wherever the words "vice governor" now appear in the text, will be changed to read "lieutenant governor," and wherever the words "lieutenant governor" now appear in the text, will be changed to read "mayor."

Committee Recommendation No. 4: The Executive Branch of Government

Section 18: Public Services.

a) The governor may delegate to the mayor responsibility for the execution of Commonwealth laws and the administration of public services in the island or islands in which the mayor has been elected.

b) Public services on Rota and Tinian shall be supervised by a resident assistant director in the departments providing such services appointed by the head of the department with the advice and consent of the representatives and senators in the legislature from the island where the assistant director shall perform his duties.

c) Public services authorized by law shall be provided on a fair and equitable basis to all the citizens of the Commonwealth. The legislature may require that such services be provided through decentralized administrative arrangements. The governor shall make any necessary recommendations to the legislature in order to accomplish these objectives.

Chairman Felipe Atalig: I move that the Convention accept the report of the Committee of the Whole and adopt Committee Recommendation No. 9 from the Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources, Committee Recommendation No. 9 from the Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters, and Committee Recommendation No. 4, as amended, from the Committee on Governmental Institutions.

The motion was seconded and carried.

(13) MISCELLANEOUS

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: Mr. President, I want to express my sentiment on behalf of my Delegation. During the past several weeks, there were times when we were highly emotional and times when statements were made that were uncalled for. But I want to assure this Convention that we all did this in good faith. We don't want to drag into today, yesterday's injustices. But in order for us to justify our position, so that this Convention can understand how much my people have suffered, we have no other alternative but to go on record, Mr. President.

Today I want to thank the members of this Convention, in particular the Chairmen, for their unselfishness and thoughtfulness for making the people of Rota and Tinian their concern. On behalf of my people I want to thank this Convention. Now the Commonwealth is only the next day ahead of us. Thank you.

Delegate Hilario Diaz: On behalf of the Delegation from Tinian I want to assure this Convention that we will cooperate to the maximum extent to assure the conclusion of this Convention, and we will work with full cooperation toward a workable Constitution. Thank you.

Delegate Joaquin Torres: I would like the record to show that Chairman Felipe Q. Atalig chaired the Committee of the Whole during its most turbulent and critical period, and he led discussion with distinction. He should be highly commended.

Delegate Benjamin Manglona: On behalf of my Delegation, I wish to convey our whole-hearted thanks to each Delegate for reaching a workable compromise. I certainly appreciate this opportunity to express this thanks to you.

Delegate Vicente Manglona: On behalf of my Tinian Delegation I would like to thank each and every Delegate for their thoughtfulness and understanding concerning our compromise. Thank you.

Delegate Esteven King: I would like to express my gratitude to all the Delegates who voted for our compromise, but there is still Second and Final Reading. We are happy that we were able to come up with a compromise. We are glad to have cooperation among the Delegates. Thank you.

Delegate David Maratita: I just want to assure the members of the Delegations from Rota and Tinian that, as a Rotanese by birth and as a Delegate by election from Saipan, there was no way in my heart that I could resign myself from the fact that I was a Rotanese. We are discussing issues of concern that will affect the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. Regardless of the fact, Mr. President, that I am now living in Saipan, I still want to call myself a citizen of the Northern Marianas first, and a Rotanese, second. The fact is, we are all here working for the good of the Commonwealth. Thank you.

Delegate Pedro Ogo: On behalf of the people of Rota, we are now feeling the sense of unity in this Convention with the adoption of this proposal on the "Executive Branch of Government," No. 4, as amended. Thank you.

Delegate Pedro Igitol: Let me borrow a quotation from Davy Jones, "Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead." Let's get this thing over with.

Delegate Benigno Fitial: Since we have reached a compromise, I would like to ask that all the Delegates join hands and sing our National Anthem of the Northern Marianas.

President Guerrero: Before we sing, there are still some Delegates who wish to make statements. We will sing our National Anthem before we recess.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: I would like the Convention to recognize the presence of the Honorable Minor Pounds, District Attorney from Ponape.

Floor Leader Rasa: This is not the first time that have tangled with this problem. I am very much impressed by the persistence of the Delegations from Rota and Tinian. I think we all still remember the time I opposed, and I still oppose, in negotiations that they managed to see that there is a bi-cameral congress, which I fought, and still think is not economical. Now they manage, once again, to get what they want on the executive level.

I am not saying that it is wrong, I am only saying that what I did should not be construed as what I think is right. I should be construed it is done because the desire of the people is paramount. Thank you.

Delegate Manuel Tenorio: I just want the Convention to recognize the outstanding work of the Committee on Governmental Institutions who provided the constitutional language and the Special Committee for providing the compromise. Thank you.

Delegate Pedro Dela Cruz: One way to resolve an issue is to argue intensively. This is one way that we can let things out. Because we should not leave here saying, this is what we should have done and should have argued in there. I would like the Delegates to recognize and respect the opinions of others, because we all have different thoughts and feelings. Thank you.

President Guerrero: The Chair would also like to commend the good work of the Special Committee in providing this Convention with a good compromise. I am sure that with all the good words from the Delegates, we will achieve the goal of this Convention.

Delegate Juan DLG. Demapan: It is not only the Delegates from Rota and Tinian who have suffered; the people of Saipan have also suffered. There are a lot of people in Saipan who still don't have running water. We also have suffered regarding hospital services. You sometimes have to spend all day at the hospital for treatment. We are not totally accommodated with such services. I would like to apologize to the Delegates of Tinian and Rota for being controversial. Thank you.

Delegate Maratita: In regards to singing, I move that we go to Committee of the Whole.

President Guerrero: The Chair will recognize the request made earlier by Chairman Fitial that we sing the National Anthem of the Northern Marianas.

Chairman Benigno Fitial: I would like to ask all the Delegates to please join me in singing the National Anthem. (The words are as follow:)

GI TALO GI HALUM TASI

Gi talo gi halum tasi
'Nai gaigi i tano hu
Malagoho
Mil beses yan mas
Hu saluda hao
Gatbo na Islas Marianas
Hu tuna hao

Ya un dia bai hu hanao
Bai hu fattu ha talo
Tisina hao hu dingngo
O tano ho
Mil beses yan mas
Hu saluda hao
Gatbo na Islas Marianas
Hu tano hao

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: We have just sung our National Anthem of the great Northern Marianas. At this time, I would like to dedicate a song to our future nation, the United States of America. I will sing "God Bless America." If anybody wants to join me, please do so. (The song was sung in unison.)

President Guerrero: This is a very special day and this shows the spirit and harmony present. I hope this will continue and the Convention will proceed with its tasks and that we will finish by our 50th Day.

(14) ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Benigno Fitial: The Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters will meet immediately following this session right here.

Chairman Jose P. Mafnas: Since we have solved our most troublesome problem, the Committee on Governmental Institutions will take a vacation today.

President Guerrero: I would like to announce, the officers of the Convention would like to schedule the public hearings in Rota and Tinian on Wednesday, and if possible we would like to conduct the public hearings in Saipan on Wednesday and Thursday. I urge the Committee Chairmen and each Committee Member to be prepared for these important public hearings.

The Committee on Organization and Procedures will meet immediately following this session in the office of the President. This meeting includes the officers of the Convention.

Delegate Jose R. Cruz: Could the Committee Chairmen please announce which members of their respective Committees will be going to Rota and Tinian and attending the public hearings in Saipan?

Committee on Personal Rights and Natural Resources

Rota: Delegates Manuel Tenorio and Felipe Atalig
Tinian: Delegates Jose Borja and Juan S. Demapan
(Legal Consultant to Rota: Deanne Seimer)

Committee on Governmental Institutions:

Rotá: Delegates Joaquín Torres and Herman Guerrero
Tinian: Delegates Olympio T. Borja and Jose R. Cruz
(Other Committee Members will attend Saipan hearings)

Committee on Finance, Local Government and Other Matters

Rota: Delegates Esteven King and Luis Benavente
Tinian: Delegates Juan Tenorio and Benigno Fitial
Saipan: Delegates Oscar Rasa and Jesus Villagomez
(Other Committee Members will attend Saipan hearings)

Chairman Felipe Atalig: I announced earlier that Delegate Ramon Villagomez would be going to Tinian, but at his request to remain in Saipan. Delegate Jose Borja will be going to Tinian in his place.

Delegate Pedro Dela Cruz: Is it alright if a Delegate from Rota or Tinian wishes to follow the team? Can we go along if we pay our own way?

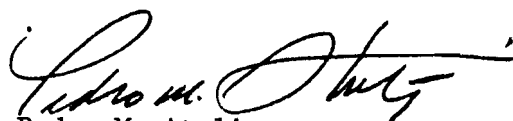
President Guerrero: Yes, any Delegates who wishes to go along, may. But I do suggest that at least one Delegate from Rota and Tinian be present at the Saipan hearings.

Floor Leader Rasa: I move that the Convention recess until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The motion was seconded and carried.

The Convention recessed at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pedro M. Atalig
Convention Secretary