

NORTHERN MARIANAS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
Thursday, November 18, 1976

Summary of Public Hearing

The Saipan Public Hearing was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

The Honorable Francisco T. Palacios chaired the Hearing.

There were 16 members present. Delegates Carlos S. Camacho, Juan DLG. Demapan, Leon I. Taisacan and Joaquin S. Torres were absent.

First witness was Mr. Joaquin I. Pangelinan.

Question No. 1: Article II, Section 3: Composition of the House of Representatives. I recommend that the membership be reduced for both Houses. The allotted membership for both Houses is much too high in comparison to the population of these islands. Reducing the membership for the legislature will also save the public at least \$250,000 for operation alone, not including salaries to be accrued for the members.

Question No. 2: Article II, Section 2 (c), 3 (b) and Article V, Section 3. I recommend that the age requirement for the Mayor, Washington Representative, and the Senate be set at 30 years and for the House of Representatives at 25 years. These two ages would be more appropriate to be declared as the qualifying age for candidacy.

Question No. 3: Article II Section 11, Legislative Compensation. The salary set for both Houses of the Legislature is adequate, but I would recommend that at least the President and Speaker be given an additional \$2,000 for their salary.

Question No. 4: Article II, Section 8. Advice and Consent. I recommend that this provision be vested in the hands of the Senate.

Question No. 5: Article III, Section 2. Qualification of the Governor. I recommend that a candidate for the governorship be of a Marianas descent, at least for this executive position. Let us be more specific with the provision, and not give a foreigner the privilege to run for this position.

Question No. 6: Article III, Section 4. Term of Office. I recommend that a candidate be eligible to run for two terms consecutively, but if he intends to run for a third term, a compromise be reached so that he rests for one term and then seek re-election.

Question No. 7: Article V, Section 2. Term of Office for the Washington Representative. I recommend the term for this office be 4 years, like the Senate. I also recommend that an additional provision be provided that until such time that the U.S. Congress recognizes this person, he is a non-voting delegate, like Mr. A. B. WonPat, the Guam Delegate. He has the authority and seniority in the U.S. Congress. After that, we may cut down his term of office to two years as that of the U.S. Congress.

Question No. 8: Article XI, Section 4 (b). Public Lands. I recommend that the provision state clearly that a Chamorro or Carolinian speaking person be qualified for this position, and to make the Chamorro or Carolinian language as the national language. This would be in the best interest of our people.

The Chair declared a short recess at 10:10 a.m.

The Hearing reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

Second witness was Mr. Fred M. Dela Cruz.

Question No. 1: Article XI - Public Lands. I direct your attention to line 9, beginning with "...promulgated by the United States Secretary of the Interior on March 24, 1976, all of the lands as to which right, title or interest have been or hereafter are transferred to...". I would like to add after the word "to" the following:

Summary of Public Hearing
Thursday, November 17, 1975

"owners of land that were purchased by the foreign government, namely Japan, who lost the war to the United States".

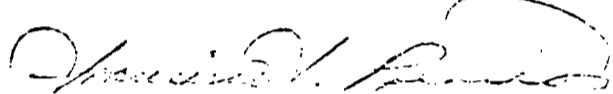
I would like to see that this is added to this provision in order to protect the interests of the people, especially those who were forced to sell their lands to the Japanese.

Third witness was Mr. Vicente S. Sablan.

Mr. Sablan offered comments with regard to the statement made by Mr. Dela Cruz, about the Japanese occupation. He stated that during the Japanese occupation, several people were forced to sell their lands to the Japanese who in turn would sell it to their own firm. They were given a choice, either to sell the land or be killed. He asked the indulgence of the Committee, to work harmoniously and work toward a good Constitution for the Marianas. He compared the experiences of the past to those of the present and said we look forward to a prosperous future.

The Hearing was declared adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Francisco T. Palacios
Chairman, Saipan Public Hearing