

Manglona urges unity, cooperation

"IN THIS diversity, there is strength. There is power in these differences. Let our unique backgrounds and viewpoints not divide and weaken us, they are the cement that brings and holds us together and strengthens our political union."

So says Rota Del. Benjamin T. Manglona during the afternoon session of Monday (June 5) at the House Chamber on Capitol Hill. He said as a member of the Third Constitutional Convention, he seeks friendship, unity, understanding, and cooperation.

"...Let this principle be our guiding light as we begin our difficult task," Manglona said.

Manglona, who is a former Lieutenant Governor, said the diverse group of people representing at the Constitutional Convention various groups of people is a source of strength to "turn away economic and social dangers that threaten us."

And that source of strength will forge solutions for the many internal problems the CNMI government will face in the next century, according to Manglona. "There is a real strength in our diversity," he pointed out. "We must respect our differences or we will weaken and not make stronger our great Commonwealth."

Manglona cautioned the delegates that if they want the CNMI to have energy, ideas, and creativity, they must respect and preserve its different traditions.

"Today, we are called together in a Constitutional Convention in order to build a stronger and more workable government that no matter where you live and what you are, a Saipanese, a Rotanese, or a Tinianese, a Government that will work for the people of our islands in their own simple, unique and most ways of life," Manglona said. "The work we do here today and the days ahead will be aimed at making our Constitution more flexible and more responsive to the changing needs of our people, and more democratic."

He said he hopes the amendments in the convention will make the Commonwealth more flexible under social, economic and political pressures of the coming century. He added that he hopes the amendments will make the CNMI more responsive to the legitimate demands and needs of a growing number of minority groups.

He further said he hopes the amendments will make the government more democratic by balancing political power into the hands of the many and not a few.

"There is strength in a shared democracy," the former lieutenant governor said. "We must spread political power, not concentrate it, or we will weaken, not make stronger, our Commonwealth. We must respect our differences or we will weaken, not make stronger, the government we need for the future."

Con-Con finishes panel composition

THE THIRD Constitutional Convention completed its set of officers and organized four committees to work on proposed amendments to the Constitution Wednesday.

During the opening session Monday the 27 delegates elected Herman T. Guerrero Jr. as convention president. Guerrero was also the president of the Second Constitutional Convention in 1985.

On Tuesday the delegates submitted about 300 proposed amendments.

On their third day at the House of Representatives chamber the convention named other officers, namely: Justo S. Quitugua of Rota, first vice president; David Q. Maratita, second vice president; Frances LG. Borja, third vice president; Victor B. Hocog, floor leader; and John Oliver DLR. Gonzales, secretary.

Jose R. Lifofoi was named chairman of the Committee on Land and Personal Rights, with Marian Aldan-Pierce as vice chairman and Carlos S. Camacho, Donald B. Mendiola, John Oliver Gonzales, Henry U. Hofschneider, David L. Igitol, Benjamin T. Manglona, David Q. Maratita, Justo S. Quitugua, Joey P. San Nicolas and Lillian A. Tenorio as members.

Felix R. Nogis chairs the Committee on Executive Branch and Local Government, with James M. Mendiola as vice chairman and Tomas B. Aldan, Frances Borja, Victor Hocog, Benjamin Manglona, David Maratita, Marylou A. Sirok, Dr. Helen Taro-Atalig, Juan S. Tenorio and Joaquin P. Villagomez as members.

Former Retirement Fund Administrator Tomas B. Aldan chairs the Committee on Legislative Branch and Public Finance with Juan Tenorio as vice chairman. Committee members are: Dr. Vicente R. Aldan, Marian Aldan-Pierce, Frances Borja, John Oliver Gonzales, Victor Hocog, David Igitol, Jose Lifofoi, Bernadita T. Seman, Marylou Sirok and Joaquin Villagomez.

Henry U. Hofschneider was named chairman of the Committee on Judiciary and Other Elected Offices while Donald B. Mendiola was appointed vice chairman. Committee members are: Esther S. Fleming, James Mendiola, Felix Nogis, Justo Quitugua, Teresita A. Santos, Bernadita Seman and Mariano Taitano.

Guerrero canceled the sessions starting Wednesday afternoon and up to early next week to give time to the committees to organize their respective tasks.