

Gambling, public land issues clear ConCon

GAMBLING will be prohibited in the Northern Marianas except in any senatorial district that approves it in a popular initiative by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the registered voters.

Such a provision will be in the Constitution if Article 15, formerly Article 21, is ratified by the voters as approved by the Third Constitutional Convention.

Delegates on Friday approved

Article 15 on second and final reading by a vote of 20-0, with seven members absent.

Article 11 dealing with Public Land, also cleared the convention on Second Reading.

The gambling issue passed without any debate, as the delegates had already discussed its merit July 22.

The proposed Article 15 does not prohibit gambling activities

to the extent authorized by law as of June 5, 1995, such as raffles, bingo, batu, cockfighting, poker machines and panchinko machines. Legalized casino gambling, now in effect on Tinian will also not be affected.

Also passed on Second and First Reading
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Smashup victim rescued

By Ferdia de la Torre
Variety News Staff

RESPONDING Emergency Medical Technicians from the Department of Public Safety rescued the life of a 29-year-old man who was left unconscious inside a car during a vehicular accident in Susupe Friday.

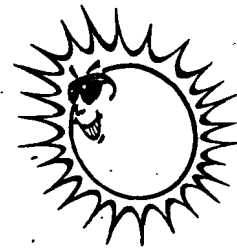
The victim sustained injuries to the facial area. He was taken to the Commonwealth Health Center and was later released.

Witnesses told the Variety that two Japanese tourists crossed Beach Road in front of Saipan Grand Hotel at 1 p.m., prompting the south-bound vehicles to stop.

A south-bound van (with license plate ABF-563) belonging to the Maui Divers of Saipan which was on the outer lane also stopped.

Soomi Shon, a Korean lady
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Weather Outlook



Mostly sunny with
isolated showers

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Gambling...

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nal Reading and will be placed before the voters are the following: Article 7, Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office; Article Eight, governing Elections; Article 10, Taxation and Public Finance; Article 13, Eminent Domain, Article 14, Natural Resources, and Article 16, Corporations.

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Local govt article passes 1st reading

THE LOCAL government subject under Article Six, the source of much controversy in this Convention, finally passed First Reading by 20-2 votes on Saturday (July 29 only after the Delegates agreed to leave this section the way it has been, with relatively minor amendments.

"In light of the differences within the committee (on Executive Branch and Local Government) and the Convention in general on this difficult subject, the Committee believes that staying with the status quo makes the most sense," the report stated. The proposed amendment contained under Section Three and Four have been modified to provide for the appointment by the Saipan Mayor of an executive assistant for the Northern Islands with the advise and consent of the Saipan Municipal Council.

Chairman Felix R. Nogis, in presenting the proposed amendment to the full Convention, said that in an effort to maintain unity in the Commonwealth and move the Convention forward to complete its work, the Executive Branch and Local Government Committee decided to follow the Court decision in the Inos vs. Tenorio case, and leave the rest as it is.

Rota Delegate Victor B. Hocog, the Convention's Floor Leader, said his delegation tried to strengthen the powers of the local government but failed. To avoid prolonging the meeting of the Convention, his delegation had no other recourse but to maintain the status quo, he said.

If the amendment is ratified by the voters, there will be a five-member Municipal Council to be elected for two-year term to serve on a part-time basis on all islands. The Municipal Council will serve as the legislative authority with respect to local matters that affect only the island or islands served by that Council.

Ordinances passed by the Council will be considered by the Mayor who will have veto power. The Council will be given the power to confirm

ernment was addressed under Section 17. Funding from the Legislature for the operations of the local government shall not exceed funding for fiscal year 1996 until January 1, 1998, and thereafter be reduced by 10 percent in each of the five succeeding years.

There is also a provision which passed that would abolish the Office of the Northern Islands Mayor and transfer its employees to the Mayor of Saipan. The transitional provision will be worked out by the Delegates sometime this week to accomplish this and other transitional issues.

During voting on Article Six, only Tinian Delegate Joey P. San Nicolas and Rota Delegate Justo S. Quitugua voted against it.

During Saturday's plenary session, the following Articles passed Second and Final Reading:

*Article 9, Initiative, Referendum and Recall: This article set up procedures for initiative petition, referendum petition, and recall petition.

*Article 17, Ethical Standard: It reminds public officials and employees to adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, respect public trust and rights of all persons, avoid the appearance of impropriety, and not use their position for private gain or advantage.

*Article 18, Constitutional Amendment and Mutual Consent: Provides procedures for constitutional amendment by initiative, which shall be signed by at least 30 percent of qualified voters in the Commonwealth at least 25 percent of persons qualified to vote in each senatorial district. An initiative petition for this purpose may not be used until the year 2021.

*Article 19, Commonwealth Unity: This provision provides minor changes dealing with the Official Seal of the Commonwealth.

On Monday, July 30, the Delegates are expected to discuss Article 12, the land alienation clause that was the subject of much controversy during the past 10 years. The draft analy-