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TRUST TERRITORY HEADQUARTERS

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A PRIVATE FIRM TAKES OVER SAIPAN BUS SERVICE

SAIPAN, M.I. (September 22) ... With the arrival September 19 of six Japanese-made diesel buses on the M/V PACIFIC ISLANDER, the Saipan Bus Company today assumed operation of this island's bus system under a franchise agreement granted the Company last June 30, according to Acting Marianas District Administrator Alan A. MacQuarrie.

Hundreds of government employees, maids, and schoolchildren were transported early this morning "with smooth efficiency," reported Pedro P. Tenorio, President of the Company. Tenorio said each bus can accommodate a total of 64 passengers - 44 sitting and 20 standing.

"I observed this morning that school children, especially, were thrilled to ride the new buses," he said.

High Commissioner M. W. Goding said today that he was "pleased to see a private Micronesian firm take over the bus operation, thus relieving the Government from such function." He added that the granting of the bus operation franchise agreement to the Saipan Bus Company was in keeping with the Administration's policy of promoting private enterprises in the Territory. Trust Territory Transportation Officer James M. Cook explained that the taking over of bus service by a private firm will result in monetary savings to the Government, especially in terms of maintenance and purchases of spare parts.

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Bus fares, said the Company's Manager, Santiago C. Tenorio, have been established at the following rates: 10¢ one way for all government employees; 10¢ for the general public traveling within one zone, or 20¢ when traveling from one zone to the other. He said two zones have been established in Saipan: Zone One includes the area from Kobler Airport to Micro Beach road; Zone Two is from Micro Beach road to San Roque village. Under the franchise agreement, the Company has also agreed to transport all school children, for which service the Government has agreed to reimburse the Company \$3,600 per month.

A number of former Government bus drivers have been hired by the Company to operate the six buses now running. The yellow government buses will be turned in to the Headquarters Central Repair Shop for overhaul and repair. However, no definite decision has been reached as to their use or disposal, according to Headquarters officials.

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