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TRUST TERRITORY HEADQUARTERS

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TRUST TERRITORY REPORTS ON PUBLIC WORKS LABOR FORCE

SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS (December 30)...Reports from the Trust Territory's districts indicate that there will be fewer temporary lay-offs in two departments than was expected when a recent reorganization went into effect. (On December 10 it was announced that the Department of Public Works had been divided into two parts - Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Engineering and Construction (E&C). On November 20 District Administrators were given their budget figures and advised to adjust their labor forces accordingly.)

The status of labor in each district was made public today by Richard F. Taitano, Deputy High Commissioner. Mr. Taitano commented that there will be no lay-offs in Yap and Mariana Districts.

A summary of the labor situation, based on latest reports, is as follows:

Yap District: According to Maynard Neas, District Administrator, there is now a total of 67 persons on the O&M payroll - 5 U. S. and 62 Micronesian employees. On the WAE (Wages-As-Employed) side,

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which is the temporary corps, there are 25 people, making a total of 92 persons in both categories. A ceiling of 101 O&M employees has been established to keep labor costs in line with budgetary requirements. Therefore, there are 34 vacancies in this group, which will be filled from the WAE (temporary) roster, or from other labor sources wherever possible and feasible. (An example of the WAE type of operation is found on Ulithi Atoll, where a crew of workmen built two dwelling houses for teachers and 6 classrooms, after which they were laid off because there was no more construction work needed on the Atoll at that time.) WAE workers, all of whom are Micronesians, are not figured in a district's employee ceiling. There were no lay-offs in Yap District after November 20. All of those laid off last September who wanted to return have been put back on the payroll.

Marianas District: District Administrator Peter T. Coleman reported that the reorganization and the current budget program would not cause any lay-offs. He pointed out that the bus drivers who formerly operated the Government bus line voluntarily transferred to the new privately-owned bus line last September, which took care of the only potential unemployment problem.

Marianas District has on its current payroll a total of 180 O&M employees (5 U. S., 175 Micronesians) and 17 WAE employees, or a total of 197 in the two categories. The District has a ceiling of 184 O&M jobs with four vacancies at present. Prior to November 20 the District had 180 O&M's and 19 WAE's, or a total of 199.

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Truk District: District Administrator Alan M. MacQuarrie reports that prior to November 20, Truk had 164 O&M's and 27 WAE's for a total of 191. Employees in the two categories were reduced by 62 and 20, respectively, for a total of 82 lay-offs. Currently the District has 102 O&M's (6 U. S. and 97 Micronesians) and seven WAE's for a total of 109. The new ceiling allows 111 O&M's so there are currently nine vacancies.

Palau District: Prior to November 20, there were 169 O&M's and 18 WAE's, totalling 187, on the payroll, according to District Administrator J. Boyd Mackenzie. A proposed cut would reduce these numbers by 38 and 18 respectively, leaving 134 (6 U. S., 128 Micronesians) O&M's and no WAE's to meet the ceiling of 134. The District's lay-off program has not been completed as of this report and the number of lay-offs may be smaller than proposed.

(Complete reports from Ponape and Marshall Districts have not been compiled.)

Background: On December 10 the High Commissioner's office announced that the six districts had been given an opportunity to review their public works operations with respect to new budgetary allocations which would make it necessary to release approximately 250 Micronesians from public works payrolls throughout the Territory. The announcement, however, said that the qualified personnel in this group would be given first consideration for reemployment when a substantial increase of the construction program gets underway.

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The exact timing of the increase cannot be pin-pointed at this time, but there is little doubt, according to Trust Territory officials, that it will occur in the near future.

It was further pointed out that the reorganization might result in temporary reduction-in-force of the Government's construction workers, but that more than \$3 million in construction work is anticipated for the remainder of Fiscal Year 1966, which ends on June 30, 1966, so there seems no cause to fear a labor crisis in the Trust Territory in the foreseeable future.

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