

U.S. Citizenship Lost In Northern Marianas In a Change of Policy

HONOLULU, March 7 (AP) — The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service has stripped residents of the Northern Marianas Islands of their two-year-old status as United States citizens, the agency's district director confirmed here Friday.

L. H. Dahlin, the district director, said that the service's attorneys in Washington, D.C., ruled this week that a two-year-old policy allowing the islanders status as citizens for immigration purposes was in error.

Gov. Carlos Camacho of the Northern Marianas voiced outrage, saying the action might "prompt re-evaluation of the whole relationship," meaning the pending United States Commonwealth status for the group of islands north of Guam. "I cannot understand it nor see the rationale behind it," Governor Camacho said, adding that if the new policy stood,

the other Micronesian districts should learn from it and nail down all commitments before agreeing to any final compact with the United States.

Governor Camacho and Pedro Tenorio, president of the Northern Marianas Senate, sent telegrams from Saipan, the capital of the Northern Marianas, to their representative in Washington, Edward Pangelinan, asking him to check on the policy change, according to The Pacific Daily News on Guam.

Commonwealth Covenant

The United States Congress and the people of the Northern Marianas have approved a Commonwealth Covenant that takes effect upon the termination of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific, expected next year. At that time, the islanders are to become United States citizens.

But it was understood in negotiations on the commonwealth that until then the islanders would be classified administratively as citizens if they met certain qualifications and were issued an identification card by Governor Camacho's administration.

Since Jan. 9, 1978, when the Northern

Marianas Constitution became effective, islanders who had the identification card were able to travel freely and live and work in the United States.

There have been estimates that close to 2,000 Marianas residents have moved to Guam or the United States, many of them as students.

"That old policy has been rescinded and under the new policy, they will be considered aliens, although they will be exempt from visa and passport requirements," said Mr. Dahlin. "But they will still have to be checked upon entry and be required to obtain the required permits."

Governor Camacho said that it would be a "big mistake for the United States to negate the covenant when the document was negotiated and approved by both sides in good faith and trust.

He said the action would "meet strong action by us."

China Plans to Double Forests

PEKING, March 8 (Reuters) — China is planning almost to double the size of its forests to take in 20 percent of the country's total area by the year 2000, the New China News Agency said today.