

Marshall Islands REPORT

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MARSHALL ISLANDS DECLARED DISASTER AREA:

Patrick Vice, Red Cross Representative from the Pacific Division of the American Red Cross, received word Tuesday, February 13, 1979, that those atolls and islands in the Marshall Islands which suffered extensive damage from Typhoon Alice in early January, have been declared disaster areas by U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Vice arrived in Majuro on January 28 to assess the storm damage and to coordinate his findings with the Western Field Office of the American Red Cross in San Francisco. The Western Field Office is responsible for liaison with the Federal Disaster Assistance Agency. The Red Cross tries to meet the immediate needs of disaster victims by supplying necessary food, clothing, temporary shelter and medical care until the situation stabilizes itself or until the Federal agencies take those responsibilities over.

Vice indicated that the food and clothing provision has already been adequately arranged by the Trust Territory headquarters and the District. However, the Red Cross has ordered repair supplies, mats and mattresses. "The problem," he says, "is getting the supplies here; they were ordered too late to get on the February barge."

Vice explained that when the President declares a location to be a disaster area, Federal agencies and bureaus are activated to assist the people in that location affected by the disaster. The Federal Disaster Assistance Agency coordinates the efforts of all participating Federal agencies; such as, the Small Business Administration, HUD, Farm and Home Administration and the Federal Housing Authority, to mention a few. Efforts of the participating Federal agencies will be coordinated through the Federal Coordinating Officer, Norman Steinlauf, who is expected to arrive in Majuro on Friday.

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EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON PROPOSED CONSTITUTION:

The Committee on Convention Procedure and Jurisdiction of the Constitutional Convention, together with the Department of Education, have instituted radio and television programs to help the people of the Marshall Islands understand the Proposed Constitution. Radio programs can be heard on Station WSZO on Mondays and Fridays, between 11 A.M. and 12 Noon; and between 7 P.M. and 8 P.M.

Television programs are pre-taped by the Marshall Islands Instructional Television Language Arts Project for viewing on the Majuro and Ebeye TV stations on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays at 8 o'clock P.M. Each program will be 15 minutes in length, and will consist of interviews with Con-Con delegates, including members of the CP&J Committee.

Questions regarding the Proposed Constitution may be submitted in person or in writing to Kessai Note, Vice-Chairman of the CP&J Committee, Andrew Bilimon, Nathan Karben, Jack Akeang or any other members of the CP&J Committee.

Programs will continue until March 1, 1979, the date of the referendum.

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4TH SPECIAL SESSION BILLS VETOED BY HIGH COMMISSIONER:

Five Bills, passed by the 4th Special Session of the Nitijela, December 4-15, 1978, have been vetoed by High Commissioner, Adrian Winkel.

In his veto message concerning Bill No. 65 - "To reorganize the fiscal and revenue

functions in the Marshall Islands; to create a Department of Finance and to set out the functions and responsibilities of the Department of Finance and the Director of the Department of Finance", the High Commissioner said that the bill, "greatly exceeds the parameters envisioned by the Secretarial Order (3027). As written, the bill, is reasonably subject to interpretation as establishing near-total administrative separation, to the exclusion and non-recognition of my responsibilities towards United States grant funds, as an example."

Bill No. 74 - "To appropriate \$64,000 for operation of the newly organized Marshall Islands Department of Finance for FY 1979," and Bill No. 56 - "To repeal the District Surtax Act of 1975, Sections 5.201 and 5.202 of the Marshall Islands Code; to repeal the Trust Territory income tax law; and levy a tax on income," were both vetoed because they were dependent upon approval of Bill No. 65, which was vetoed.

In vetoing Bill No. 23, which attempted to amend Chapter 1 of the Marshall Islands Code by requiring members of the Nitijela to be full time legislators, Winkel indicated that he "disapproved the Bill to allow the Nitijela the opportunity to reconsider the concept of a "full time legislature" and fully consider the need for change between now and the contemplated constitutional government".

Concerning Bill No. 58, which tried to create a retirement fund for persons engaged in copra production, Winkel stated, "The intent of the Nitijela is meritorious; however, a more efficient, workable method of providing retirement proceeds for copra workers should be sought after adequate data has been obtained."

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FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF NITIJELA - 1979:

The First Special Session of the Nitijela in 1979, began on February 1 for 15 consecutive days. Operating under temporary rules, Atlan Anien presided as temporary Speaker. A 6 member credentials committee, headed by Representative James Milne, was appointed to examine the credentials of newly elected Iroij and legislators.

The Credentials Committee determined that all newly elected members and Iroij who presented their credentials, were duly elected. They were sworn into office and seated accordingly. Iroij Watak Kabua did not present his credentials, and the Committee took no action on his seating.

In other business, Atlan Anien was re-elected permanent Speaker; Iroij Namo Hermios was re-elected as Vice-Speaker; and Jina J. Lavin was re-elected as Floor Leader.

Speaker Anien appointed the following legislators to serve on the Nitijela Standing Committees:

APPROPRIATIONS: Atjang Paul, Chairman; Ruben Zackhras, Vice-Chairman; and Bilimon Amram, Tom Kijiner, Henry Samuel, Jina Lavin, Ekpap Silk, Jack Jorban, Ataji Balos and John R. Heine, members.

WAYS AND MEANS: Toke Sawej, Chairman; Langirno Jacob, Vice-Chairman; and Lerok Lebon Zebedy Tarkwon, Chuji Chutaro, James Milne, Botlang Loeak, Wilfred Kendall, Namo Hermios, and Imada Kabua, members.

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS: Tom Kijiner, Chairman; Ataji Balos, Vice-Chairman; and Henry Samuel, Neilan Elaisa, Langirno Jacob, Kunar Abner, Lerok Lebon, Ekpap Silk, Evelyn Konou and Botlang Loeak, members.

RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT: Kunar Abner, Chairman; Ataji Balos, Vice-Chairman; and Isao Kisino, Atjang Paul, Toke Sawej, Carl Heine, Chuji Chutaro, Jina Lavin and Amata Kabua, members.

JUDICIAL & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS: Jeton Anjain, Chairman, Wilfred Kendall, Vice-Chairman and Namo Hermios, Neilan Elaisa, Ruben Zackhras, John Heine, Litokwa Tomeing, Evelyn Konou, Amata Kabua and Imada Kabua, members.

The function of the standing committees is to review the Resolutions and Bills referred to them, hold public hearings, and to report to the Nitijela their findings and recommendations as to how the Nitijela should act on each measure.

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BILLS INTRODUCED TO THE NITIJELA DURING FIRST SPECIAL SESSION:

Thirty-five Bills had been introduced in the Nitijela during its First Special Session, February 1-15, 1979. Twenty-seven bills were passed; one was filed; and seven died in Committee.

Bill No. 1 - To establish a general effective date and termination date for all appropriation acts; to provide for reverter of appropriated funds; to provide for the general administration of appropriated funds; to amend Chapters 1 and 5 of the Marshall

Islands Code and to repeal District Law 23-21, was sponsored by Atjang Paul. The bill was Passed by the Nitijela.

Bill No. 2 - To amend Section 1.124 of Marshall Islands Charter by providing minimum annual pension for Nitijela retirees was sponsored by Jeton Anjain. No action was taken on the bill.

Bill No. 3 - Appropriating \$200,000 for the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission was sponsored by Kunar Abner. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 4 - Appropriating \$20,000 for public education concerning the Constitution of the Marshall Islands was sponsored by Kunar Abner. (Bill No. 4 was actually merged into Bill No. 3 and no action was taken on Bill No. 4).

Bill No. 5 - Appropriating \$277,000 to the Municipal Councils as a form of revenue sharing from the Nitijela was sponsored by Kunar Abner, Jeton Anjain, and Tom Kijiner. No action was taken on the bill. (A similar bill was passed by the 4th Special Session and vetoed by the High Commissioner.)

Bill No. 6 - To appropriate \$50,000 for expenses to be incurred in re-negotiating of lease agreements on Kwajalein Atoll was sponsored by Imada Kabua. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 7 - Appropriating \$80,000 to the Scholarship Fund for FY 1979 was introduced by Jeton Anjain. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 8 - Appropriating \$150,000 from the general fund of the Marshall Islands Nitijela for the purchase of certain equipment and its parts and for other purposes primarily to clean-up and rehabilitate atolls hit by Typhoon Alice was sponsored by Amata Kabua, Bilimon Amram, Tom Kijiner, Jina Lavin and Atjang Paul. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 9 - To amend Section 11, District Law 23-32-2, as amended, providing for the conduct of the Marshall Islands Constitutional Referendum was sponsored by Ruben Zackhras. The bill was Passed as amended.

Bill No. 10 - To create the position of Nitijela Staff Transition Liaison Officer and to appropriate \$95,700 for operation of the Nitijela Staff Transition Liaison Office in Honolulu was sponsored by Jina J. Lavin and Langinmo Jacob. The bill was Passed, as amended in the second draft.

Bill No. 12 - Appropriating \$47,000 to alleviate effects of Typhoon Alice on Nandrik Atoll was introduced by Bilimon Amram. The bill was passed as amended.

Bill No. 13 - to prohibit gambling on day of an election or referendum and amend Chapter 13 of the Marshall Islands "Code" was sponsored by Amata Kabua and Kunar Abner. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 14 - to prohibit purchase and sale of alcoholic beverages on election day and to amend Chapter 12 of the Marshall Islands Charter was introduced by Kunar Abner and Amata Kabua. No action was taken on the bill.

Bill No. 15 - to prohibit abuse of governmental radio broadcasting media; and to amend Chapter 13 of the Marshall Islands Charter was introduced by Amata Kabua. No action was taken on the bill.

Bill No. 16 - to appropriate \$200,000 to alleviate effects of Typhoon Alice on Kwajalein Atoll was introduced by Imada Kabua, Jeton Anjain and Ataji Balos. The bill was Passed, as amended.

Bill No. 17 - to appropriate \$100,000 for the operation and administrative expenses of the Marshall Islands Nitijela until June 1, 1979, was sponsored by Jina Lavin, Jeton Anjain and Ruben R. Zackhras. The bill was passed, as amended.

Bill No. 18 - To appropriate \$28,000 for health service personnel formerly funded by Congress of Micronesia was sponsored by Tom Kijiner. The bill was Passed as amended.

Bill No. 19 - to appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for a D7 Tractor (Bulldozer) for the repair of damage caused by Typhoon Alice on Jaluit Atoll was sponsored by Evelyn Konou, Ekpap Silk and Carl Heine. No action was taken on the bill.

Bill No. 20 - to create a Marshall Islands Flag Selection Committee; to provide for a flag design contest; and to appropriate \$11,600 was sponsored by Amata Kabua. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 21 - to appropriate \$6,350 for the expenses of re-negotiation of indefinite Uliga land use agreements during the transition to Constitutional Government was sponsored by Jack Jorban. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 22 - to amend the Trust Territory Salary Act of 1975, as it applies to the Marshall Islands, by deleting the termination dates provided in Sections 6, 7 and 12 of the act was sponsored by Jina J. Lavin. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 23 - to appropriate \$200,000 for compensation of teachers during summer months of 1979 was sponsored by Tom Kijiner. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 24 - to appropriate \$64,000 for operation of the newly organized Marshall Islands Department of Finance for FY 79, was sponsored by Neilan Elaisa, Lerok Lebon, Tom Kijiner, Jack Jorban, Zebedy Tarkwon, Henry Samuel and Ataji Balos. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 25 - to reorganize the fiscal and revenue functions in the Marshall Islands to create a Department of Finance; and to set out the functions and responsibilities of the Department of Finance and the District Director of the Department of Finance was sponsored by Lerok Lebon, Tom Kijiner, Jack Jorban, Zebedy Tarkwon, Neilan Elaisa; Henry Samuel and Ataji Balos. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 26 - to repeal the District Surtax Act of 1975, Section 5.201 and 5.202 of the Marshall Islands Code; to repeal the Trust Territory Income Tax Law; and to levy a tax on income was sponsored by Neilan Elaisa, Ataji Balos, Henry Samuel, Ruben Zackhras, Jack Jorban, Zebedy Tarkwon and Lerok Lebon. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 27 - enabling the Nitijela and the Cabinet constituted under the Constitution of the Marshall Islands to function as from the effective date of the Constitution and appropriating \$50,000 for election expenses was sponsored by Ruben Zackhras, Ataji Balos, Tom Kijiner, Henry Samuel, Neilan Elaisa and Imada Kabua. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 28 - to except legislators from accrual of personnel leave benefits; and amending Section 1.121 of the Marshall Islands Code was sponsored by Imada Kabua. The bill Passed.

Bill No. 29 - To amend Section 1.103 and 1.105 of the Marshall Island Code to create full time membership in the Nitijela; to repeal Section 1.106 of the Marshall Islands Code and to appropriate \$100,000 for legislator salaries to May 1, 1979 was sponsored by Imada Kabua. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 30 - to create the Marshall Islands Public Service Commission was sponsored by Ruben R. Zackhras. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 31 - to permit full-time Nitijela members to be employed by the administration; and amending Section 107 of Title 2 of the Trust Territory Code as it may apply to the Marshall Islands was sponsored by Imada Kabua. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 32 - to amend Public Law 5-37 of the Congress of Micronesia, as it applies to the Marshall Islands by creating a Marshall Islands Housing Commission in lieu of the Territorial Housing Commission and appropriating \$5,000 was sponsored by Evelyn Konou and Jina J. Lavin. The bill was Passed.

Bill No. 33 - to appropriate \$10,000 to alleviate the affects of Typhoon Alice on Ailinglaplap Atoll was sponsored by Botlang Loek. No action was taken on the Bill.

Bill No. 34 - to appropriate \$25,000 to alleviate the affects of Typhoon Alice in Laura Municipality on Majuro Atoll was sponsored by Henry Samuel. The bill was Passed as amended.

Bill No. 35 - to limit the appointment of a Nitijela Staff Transition Liaison Officer. was sponsored by James Milne, Carl Heine, Chuji Chutaro, John R. Heine and Ekpap Silk. No action was taken on the bill.

Bills passed by the Nitijela during the First Special Session of 1979 will not become effective until approved by High Commissioner Adrian Winkel.

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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE NITIJELA DURING SPECIAL SESSION:

Among the 11 Resolutions adopted by the Nitijela were resolutions requesting the High Commissioner to negotiate a change in the Zip Codes of the Marshall Islands to place the Marshall Islands Post Offices under the jurisdiction of the Honolulu General Postal System; directing the Political Status Commission to investigate the seriousness of the problems and intent of the minorities on Jaluit and Ebon Atolls to politically separate themselves from the Marshall Islands and report its findings to the Nitijela; to authorize the sum of \$204,855 be taken from the Trust Territory Social Security Retirement Fund to defray the operational and contingent expenses of the Trust Territory Social Security Administration for FY 1980; that the government of the Marshall Islands establish the Justice Improvement Commission of the T.T.P.I. as the Criminal Justice Planning Agency for the Marshall Islands; requesting the District Administrator to order installation of a single side-band radio transmitter-receiver on Narmij Island, Jaluit Atoll; requesting the High Commissioner to assign Trust Territory vessels M.V. Fentress and M.V. Robert deBrum to the Marshall Islands; requesting the High Commissioner to arrange for funding and to provide funds for construction of a capitol in the Marshall Islands; requesting the High Commissioner to reconsider his termination of the Phase II Hill-Burton Dispensary project in the Marshall Islands; requesting the Chief of Police of the Marshalls to assign a police patrol to insure the safety of children using school buses; requesting the High Commissioner to act to extend the U.S. Title VII Old Age Nutritional Assistance Program in the Marshall Islands; and, expressing the Nitijela's commendation and appreciation to Mr. Steve Aiken and the members of his Demolition Team for their courage, dedication and for the outstanding performance of their extremely delicate and difficult job.

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MARSHALL ISLANDS FLAG CONTEST:

Nitijela Bill No. 20, passed by the Nitijela during the February 1-15, 1979, special session provides for a Marshall Islands Flag Selection Committee to recommend to the Nitijela 3 flag designs from which the Nitijela may adopt one as the official flag of the Marshall Islands. The Flag Selection Committee shall be composed of the Speaker of the Nitijela, as Chairman; the Vice-Speaker; the Chairman of each Standing Committee of the Nitijela; the District Administrator of the Marshall Islands; and the President of the Constitutional Convention.

The primary responsibilities of the Flag Selection Committee will be to conduct a contest by which any resident or citizen of the Marshall Islands may enter proposed designs for an official flag of the Marshall Islands; to assure equitable consideration of all designs submitted; to select 3 flag designs from the entries to the contest to offer to the Nitijela from which the Nitijela will select one as the official flag; to recommend to the Nitijela before April 23, 1979, its order of preference among the 3 flag designs it has chosen; to recommend to the Nitijela before May 1, the official size and other specifications of whatever flag is adopted by the Nitijela as official; to recommend to the Nitijela before May 1, appropriate laws to regulate display and to prevent desecration of the official flag; to award the sum of \$200 to each entrant whose design was one of the 3 selected for submission to the Nitijela for its consideration; to award the sum of an additional \$1000 to the entrant whose design was adopted by the Nitijela as the official flag of the Marshall Islands; to commission the sewing, locally, of at least one official flag to be flown in the Marshall Islands until there is a bulk purchase of sufficient flags to be distributed for display by government agencies; and to contract for the commercial sewing of sufficient flags to be distributed for display by government agencies; and to contract for the commercial sewing of sufficient official flags to be displayed in national and municipal public buildings, schools, and on vessels.

Contest rules are as follows:

1. Each entrant must be a resident or citizen of the Marshall Islands.
2. Each entrant may submit any number of designs, not exceeding 5.
3. Each design must be in color, on paper or cloth at least 11 inches long.
4. Each design must be accompanied by a narrative description of the design and the meaning, symbolism or significance of each color or symbolic design included in the flag.
5. All entries should be submitted to the Secretary of the Marshall Islands Nitijela who shall certify the date, hour and minute on which the designs will be selected on the basis of earliest entry.
6. Designs may be entered between 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. on ordinary work days, Monday through Friday only, beginning 9 A.M., March 1, 1979, and ending 4 P.M., March 30, 1979, addressed to: Legislative Secretary, P. O. Box 24, Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960. The Committee shall not consider any design entered after 4 P.M., March 30, 1979, or postmarked after March 30, 1979.; and
7. Additional rules, not inconsistent with the preceding may be adopted by the Committee; provided they are adopted prior to February 24, 1979 and publicized by all available media. (NOTE: Although Bill No. 20, providing for a flag design contest has been passed by the Nitijela, it will not become effective until it is signed by the High

Commissioner. The contest rules and a summary of other provisions of the bill have been provided here, merely to give those people who are interested in submitting a flag design more time to prepare their entries. These rules are not yet effective. They will be effective when the High Commissioner signs Bill No. 20 into law, if he does.)

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WOMEN'S CONFERENCE OFFICERS:

The results of the Coordinating Committee of the Marshall Islands International Women's Conference election, held during the period December 12-29, 1978, have been received. Officers for the coming year are: Mary Lanwi, Chairperson; Neijon Edwards, Vice-Chairperson; Rosalie Konou, Secretary; and Jennie deBrum, Treasurer.

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EMERGENCY ORDER REPEALED:

The emergency order issued by District Administrator, Oscar deBrum, on December 13, 1978, restricting entry into the Marshall Islands from the Republic of Nauru has been repealed, effective February 2, 1979. Persons from Nauru can now enter the Marshall Islands; but they must register with Immigration Officials upon their arrival.

Air Nauru has not, as yet, begun flights to Majuro and will not do so until the President of Nauru has approved their new schedule.

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BROOKHAVEN INSTITUTE CONTINUES RADIATION SURVEY:

Evie Craighead, Cultural Consultant for Brookhaven Institute, Upton, Long Island, New York, and former Peace Corps Volunteer living on Rongelap, was recently in Majuro with Nat Greenhouse and Bob Miltonberger, Health Physicists with Brookhaven. They were here to get current data on the level of radiation still in the bodies of the people who were moved from Bikini. They had expected to find approximately 50 Bikinians living on Majuro Atoll but found the figure closer to 100. Information gathered, through whole body counts, will be submitted to Brookhaven where it will be analyzed by scientists.

MARSHALL ISLANDS REPORT Sponsored by Marshall Islands Nitijela
Betty Knapp - Editor