Wakaka

HIGHLIGHTS

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS

November 15, 1973

DistAds Hold Semi-Annual Conference

The semi-annual District Administrator's Conference was held last week on Saipan. In the absence of High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston, who is in Washington for U.S. Congress budget hearings, Deputy High Commissioner Peter T. Coleman officially opened the meeting. All of the District Administrators were present for the opening ceremonies with the exception of Leonard Aguigui from Yap who arrived the following day and Oscar DeBrum who was on an inspection trip to Bikini Atoll but was represented by Marshall Islands Deputy District Administrator Edmund Gilmar. Members of the High Commissioner's cabinet were also present for the opening ceremonies.

Miss Mary Vance Trent, Department of State Liaison Officer, presented a review of the future political status including a discussion of the U.S. policy statement concerning the return of public land in the Trust Territory to each district. The Directors of Public Affairs, Finance, Personnel, Public Works, Transportation and Communications, Resources and Development, Health Services and Education presented discussion on certain topics of particular concern to the District Administrators. Also included on the agenda were presentations by the Attorney General and the Director of the Peace Corps.

Director of Public Affairs Strik Yoma explained the high priority program of "education for self-government" to the DistAd's and emphasized the importance of each District's input into the preliminary planning and overall implementation of the program. A review of the Trust Territory Personnel Regulations and recruitment of expatriate personnel were presented by Director of Personnel Arthur A. Akina. Comments on the Sankinsan Maru ordnance removal project were made by several department heads who were involved in the project. Under the direction of Director of Public Works James R. Wheeler, the DistAd's reviewed utility rates throughout the TT and considered the question of payment of utilities by occupants of government quarters.

At the end of the week-long conference, the District Administrators were honored at a picnic beach party held Friday night at Micro Beach on Saipan given by Marianas District Administrator Francisco C. Ada.

District Administrators met at Headquarters Conference Room on Saipan to discuss topics of vital importance to all Districts in the Trust Territory. Special Assistant for District Affairs J. Boyd Mackenzie served as Chairman of the Conference.

New U. S. Land Policy Inside...

Bikini Inspection Trip

A two-day inspection trip to Bikini island completed another phase of the rehabilitation and reconstruction program for the former atomic test site. The house-by-house tour of the first forty buildings to be completed on the island was conducted by Marshalls District Planning Officer Dennis McBreen, as the representative of District Administrator Oscar DeBrum, for the more than three-dozens former Bikini residents who arrived at the atoll Friday afternoon (Nov. 2) on the field trip vessel Militobi.

DistAd DeBrum continued the voyage aboard the Militobi Saturday morning (Nov. 3), heading for Ujelang with members of the Ujelang-Eniwetok Council following their review of master plans for the cleanup and rehabilitation of Eniwetok due to get underway in 1974.

At Bikini, a full day was spent in the initial inspection of the houses there, with the heads of households which will occupy the houses indicating acceptance of the homes and suggesting possible changes. Two of the houses had been fully completed - that is, the main concrete structure consisting of a 32-foot by 16-foot single-room dwelling with large covered porches in front and at the back of the house was complete, and auxiliary buildings had been built adjacent to the main structure. These auxiliary buildings include a cook house, a wash house, and an outhouse, along with a large water tank for the roof water catchment system.

McBreen said that at the end of the inspection tour the Bikinians had agreed that the identical auxiliary buildings should now be finished for all of the houses, that water catchament system should be modified so that water is collected from both the front and rear portions of the roof, and that some portions should be erected inside the main building. Additional items were mentioned from house to house - such as tiles to cover the cement floors and the possibility of walls to enclose some of the porches - and these were noted by McBreen as the inspection proceeded. How much of the additional work can be done will depend on a review of the budget for the Bikini project.

Former Bikini residents board the M/V Militobi offshore from Kili Island where they now live. This was the beginning of the two-day voyage to Bikini for inspection of new homes built for them.

A completed housing unit at Bikini includes buildings left to right—the main house, a cooking house, and a wash house. Water catchment tank from a neighboring house is visible in the photo at right.

The Bikini re-construction program is eventually programmed to include an additional 38 houses, a warehouse, a church, and a community center.

McBreen, other Marshalls district officials, a few of the Bikinians, and the Acme crew left the atoll aboard a DC-4 chartered from Kwajalein. The remaining Kili-Bikini residents were due to stay at Bikini until the Militobi returned to take them back to Kili.

For the visitor of Bikini Island, most experience are new experiences, for with the new construction and the anticipation of the ultimate return of the island's former residents to the atoll, there is a feeling of renewal and a certain excitement about being at the place which played such a significant role in history.

For the record, Bikini has been "resettled" for some time. During the debris-clearing, replanting and reconstruction phases of the rehabilitation program for the island over the course of the last five years or so, there has been a steady stream of construction workers and government people in and out of the island community. A small construction camp and administrative center has been set up at one end of the island. It is the semi-permanent home right now for twenty-one government employees, eight of whom have their families with them. There are many women and children on the island, and the camp-village looks in some respects like many other typical outer-island village settlements.

The District Administrator's Representative at Bikini is Lonling Alik who comes from Jaluit. His crew of government employees is responsible for watching over the coconut, breadfruit and pandanus seedlings which are now gaining a foothold in the coraline soil of the island. Particular care has been lavished on the breadfruit trees which have had a hard time becoming established. Each seedling is sheltered in a small lean-to of palm leaves. At the moment they seem to be growing well, though the people realize that it will be several years before they produce any fruit.

(continued on page 7)

U. S. Announces New Land Policy for T.T.

In response to a Micronesian request, endorsed by the Joint Committee on Future Status, the United States Government has made a decision to transfer title to public land in the Trust Territory prior to termination of the trusteeship agreement to those districts requesting such action. When implemented, this decision will return to local control the public land the U.S. has been holding in the districts in trust for the people.

The statement of U.S. policy to this effect was formulated by Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations, and the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations after intensive study of the problem in all districts of Micronesia, consultation with leaders and experts at all levels within the Trust Territory, and with interested agencies of the U.S. Government.

The text of the U.S. policy statement containing this decision was provided to Senator Salii and the Joint Committee on Future Status and released on Saipan November 6th.

The new policy provides for the return of public land to each district if the people of the district so desire. In essence it represents an attempt to be just as responsive as possible to the desires of the people of Micronesia in this important matter. At the same time it will establish certain safeguards for the protection of individuals who may have acquired property interests in public lands over the years and for the retention of the land needed by the Trust Government for public purposes during the remainder of the trusteeship. The policy is designed to meet the desires which the Micronesian people have expressed to date. It permits them to reaffirm their interest in having the lands returned to district control and invites them to establish the mechanism for accomplishing this.

TRANSFER OF TITLE TO PUBLIC LANDS FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ADMINISTRATION TO THE DISTRICTS: U.S. POLICY AND NECESSARY IMPLEMENTING COURSES OF ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Government, as administering authority in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, has always considered public land in Micronesia to be property held in trust for the people of Micronesia.

For years it was thought that the ultimate disposition of these lands would be decided by the people of Micronesia themselves as one of the important features of the post-trusteeship system of government they established under their own Constitution.

Public lands include all lands acquired by the prior Spanish, German, and Japanese Administrations for governmental or other public purposes as well as such lands as the Trust Territory Government may itself have acquired for public purposes. Tide-lands and marine lands are considered public domain as well. As used herein "public land" also encompasses those private Japanese properties, including those of Japanese government-controlled agencies and corporations, which were seized at the end of World War II and placed under the control of an "alien property custodian". Although technically not public lands, they have been controlled and disposed of in the same manner as public lands, and are administratively treated as such.

According to current calculations, over sixty percent of Micronesia's total land area is public land. The public land areas in each of the six districts of Micronesia are: Palau 68 percent; Yap 4 percent; Truk 17 percent; Ponape 66 percent; Marshall Islands 13 percent; and Mariana Islands 90 percent.

II. THE MICRONESIAN REQUESTS

Recently requests have been made in Palau that public land in that district be turned over now to its traditional leaders to be held in trust for the people of Palau. This position has received the support of the Palau District Legislature. Subsequently it was formally endorsed by the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status and communicated to the U.S. Government.

The United States responded that it had no difficulty in principle with this request and agreed to study the early transfer of public land to the districts as a matter of priority, indicating that it could not in a matter as important as this act for one district alone but must consider the problem in all districts. The Joint Committee replied that each district should determine for itself what it wished done with its public land.

III. POLICY DETERMINATIONS

The United States has now completed an extensive study of the problem in all districts. This has included consultation with leaders and experts at all levels within the Trust Territory and has taken into consideration the further views expressed by the Chairman of the Joint Committee recently in response to a series of questions posed last May.

As a result of that study the ' United States has now concluded that if it is the desire of the people in a district that public lands in that district be turned over to the district now before the termination of the Trusteeship the United States is willing to accede to their wishes and to facilitate the transfer of title. This transfer, however, must be subject to certain limitations and safeguards set forth below designed to protect those individuals who have acquired property interests in public lands under the Trusteeship and to meet the continuing land needs of the Trust Territory Government for public use. These limitations and safeguards will apply until the Trusteeship ends, at which time the new government will be free to modify them as it chooses.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

IV. MAJOR COURSES OF ACTION

A. Role of the Legislative Bodies

The Congress of Micronesia is requested to pass such enabling legislation as is necessary to effect the early transfer of title to public lands as indicated herein and to amend or modify as necessary the Trust Territory Code as it relates to public land.

The United States requests that the District Legislatures in each district formally indicate the wishes of the people in that district with respect to the public land located therein. This should include specifically whether the people of the district wish the Trust Administration to turn over public land in the district and if so to whom in that district and when.

The proposed recipients must be legally qualified to receive and accept title to property, and if a legal entity is not available or is not qualified legally to receive real property under the law, it must be created or become so qualified for this purpose. Recipients must agree to hold the public land in trust for the people of that district to be disposed of under terms determined by the District Legislature and subject to the limitations set forth below.

B. Limitations and Safeguards

1. In the case of public lands now being actively used by the Trust Territory Administration and subordinate units thereof, title to these lands will not be transferred but will be retained by the Trust Administration so long as it is needed and will revert thereafter to the districts, as above.

2. In order to meet immediate future needs under the Trusteeship, the Trust Administration will also retain title to those public lands which are specifically identified as needed for capital improvement projects contained in previously approved economic development plans covering the next five years. For other needs the Trust Territory Government will negotiate directly with property title holders but will retain an ultimate authority of eminent domain as presently provided under the Trust Territory Code. This authority may be shared, however, with any district if its legislature so decides.

3. Where former public lands have been turned over to individuals as part of the homestead program, title shall remain in the homesteader or his assignees. Where applications for homesteads have been approved before a date to be determined by the Congress of Micronesia but full title has not yet been issued by reason of inability to fulfill the requirements for a certificate of compliance, title shall be retained by the Trust Adiministration to be turned over to the homesteader as prescribed by present law. If, however, any such applications are not finally perfected within the time period prescribed by the Trust Territory Code the land involved will revert to the appropriate district to be disposed of as the legislature of that district may prescribe. District Legislatures will be free to institute their own homesteading programs as they may desire.

4. In the case of other interests in public lands, including leases and other land uses acquired by individuals or business or private concerns from the Trust Administration prior to the effective date of transfer of title to public lands to the district, title to such land shall not be turned over to the new titleholder in the district until that titleholder has formally agreed to respect the terms of the arrangements previously entered into by the Trust Administration. In the case of tenants at will or tenants by sufferance now occupying public land with the concurrence of the Trust Administration, title would not pass until the new titleholder has formally agreed to respect such arrangement for a reasonable period of years, whose number is to be determined. In both cases the new titleholder would receive rents previously paid to the Trust Administration.

5. Where public land is to be used to meet defense needs under the terms of proposed future status agreements with the United States, title to such land will pass simultaneously with the prospective titleholder's formal commitment to accommodate those needs in good faith on terms to be mutually agreed with United States authorities.

6. In the case of public land to which there are unresolved claims transfer of title to each district shall be subject to such claims, which may then be settled under procedures and means prescribed by the individual District Legislatures, which may include traditional means; providing, however, that in the event such claims still remain unsettled the claimant will have access to regular courts of the Trust Territory. The titleholders to public land must agree before title is finally passed to hold the United States and the TTPI Administration harmless from claims other than those resulting directly from the action of the United States or its duly authorized agents.

7. Title to tidelands, filled lands, submerged lands and lagoons shall be turned over to the districts; provided, however, that the central government of the Trust Territory shall retain the right to control activities within these areas affecting the public interest.

C. The Cadastral Program

The U.S. Government intends to initiate a special effort under direction of the Trust Administration to complete within three years the Cadastral Program on all public lands. Funds to initiate this effort will be sought by supplemental appropriations and it will be accomplished by special contracts which will permit current land office personnel and resources to concentrate on completion of the private land cadaster program as the districts may desire.

D. The Land Management Function

Land management functions will be turned over to the districts to be handled as the District Legislatures may determine. The Trust Administration will maintain a small land management office of its own to administer land used by the central Government and to provide such advisory services as may be requested by the districts.

E. Timing

Transfer of title can take place just as soon as necessary implementing action has been taken by the elected representatives of the people of Micronesia, the individual District Legislatures and the prospective titleholders. Transfer need not take place simultaneously for all districts.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy will rest with the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory. Further instructions and guidance regarding its implementation will be provided by the Department of the Interior.

BACKGROUND PAPER ON U.S. DECISION TO RETURN MICRONESIAN PUBLIC LANDS TO DISTRICT CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

The United States has always considered the public lands which the TTPI Government is holding in trust for the people of Micronesia to be Micronesian property, which would ultimately be returned to Micronesian control. When the U.S. was informed earlier this year that many Micronesians favored an early transfer of control over the land to district authority, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams said that the U.S. had no objection in principle, and that the U.S. would immediately undertake in each district a priority study of local views on public lands, including the question of how the transfer to local control could best be managed, given the many different land patterns and traditions throughout the TTPI.

The comprehensive study which followed included extensive discussions in all the districts of Micronesia as well as with land experts at all levels within the Trust Territory Government. The study also considered the views of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status which were submitted in response to a series of questions posed by Ambassador Williams. Since there appears to be general agreement in Micronesia that there should be an early solution to the public lands problem and strong sentiment for district control over public lands, the United States is willing to transfer title and control over Micronesian public lands to the district in which those lands are located if that is the desire of the people of the district concerned. The U.S. approach to accomplishing the transfer was released Friday November 2 to Senator Salii, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Future Status and will be discussed with him and the Joint Committee on Future Status when they meet with Ambassador Williams in Washington beginning November 13.

THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC LAND AND ITS EXTENT

According to current calculations, over sixty percent of Micronesia's total land area is included in the working definition of "public land" used by the TTPI Government. The proportion of public land to the tota land area in each of Micronesia's six districts is: Palau 68 percent; Yap 4 percent; Truk 17 percent; Ponape 66 percent; Marshall Islands 13 percent; and Mariana Islands 90 percent.

The Trust Territory Code and various Trust Territory court decisions define public lands as all lands acquired by the prior Spanish, German, and Japanese Administrations for governmental or other public purposes, as well as those lands which the TTPI Government may itself have acquired for public use. As in U.S. Territories, tidelands and marine lands are also considered to be in the public domain. Moreover, former private Japanese properties, including those belonging to agencies and corporations controlled by the Japanese government, which were seized at the end of World War II and placed under the control of an "alien property custodian", are administratively handled as public lands, although they are not technically a part of the public domain.

Only a very small proportion of the Trust Territory's public lands is currently being used for such public purposes as schools, hospitals, airports, roads, post offices. Additional small parcels have been leased for commercial undertakings, or have been made available to individuals for homesteading. However, the great bulk of public lands is not in use, and will thus be available for the Micronesians to dispose of themselves in accordance with whatever appropriate legal procedures they choose to establish.

THE U.S. APPROACH TO RETURNING CONTROL TO THE DISTRICTS

Under the new U.S. policy there will be an early transfer of public lands to the districts if the people of these districts so desire, subject only to some minimum safeguards and limitations. Since the disposition of the public lands is recognized to be a Micronesian issue to be handled by the Micronesians, according to their laws, customs and traditions, only a limited number of safeguards appear necessary. These are designed to enable the Trust Territory to continue to meet its responsibilities for serving public needs during the remainder of the Trusteeship and to protect private Micronesian citizens who have acquired property interests in public lands, have leased public lands, or are now living on public lands by agreement with the Trust Territory Government.

The Congress of Micronesia will be asked to play an active role in the land transfer by passing enabling legislation and appropriately amending or modifying the Trust Territory Code. It is expected that prior to the January session of the Congress of Micronesia the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory will submit a list of land laws that should be amended by the Congress before a transfer can be affected. A rather large body of present legislation may be affected.

(continued from page 5)

Each District Legislature will be asked to indicate whether the people of its district wish the United States to transfer public lands to the district and if so to whom the lands should be transferred and when. The persons or groups or organizations receiving the public lands, however, must have or be given by appropriate action the legal capacity to hold title. For example, if it is determined that title should go to a district legislature, prior action would be necessary to charter that legislature to enable it to hold title to land. Or, if it is determined that land title should go to municipalities, land boards, traditional leaders or specially created legal entities or other types of trustees, they would have to be given a similar capacity.

In addition, the new titleholders must hold the public lands "in trust" for the people of the district. This means they do not hold it for their own individual or personal use. Disposition of public land can be accomplished by traditional means or new homesteading programs, or by leasing or by other means as locally determined.

Under these procedures the requested transfer of public lands to the traditional leaders in Palau in trust for the people of Palau seems feasible. Other districts could decide for themselves what they wanted.

After these arrangements have been made, the TTPI Government will transfer title to all public lands not being used or not needed for immediate future use, by the Trust Territory Government. However, such action need not take place simultaneously for all districts.

The TTPI Government must be able to go forward on presently approved capital improvement projects such as water, electric and sewage lines, new roads, hospitals, new schools, enlarging docks and harbors, and improving airfields. The public land areas needed for these projects have already been identified. Once public lands are no longer needed title will be turned over to the districts. Any other future needs will have to be met by negotiation between the Trust Territory Government and the land owners. The Trust Administration will continue to hold the power of eminent domain until the end of the Trusteeship to be used only as a last resort, but this power may be shared with the districts if the legislatures so desire. The power of eminent domain can then be exercised locally for district projects as well.

Citizens who have gained title to land by homesteading, along with their heirs and assignees, will remain in possession of their lands. Where people have entered land under a homestead program but have not yet received title, they will get it from the TTPI Government as soon as the homestead requirements have been met. If the homesteader does not satisfy the homestead requirements under the law, then the title to the homestead property will be turned over to the district.

Where people have leased public land from the TTPI, they will be able to continue to use the land under the terms of the lease. If people now use or live on public land without a legal agreement but under an informal arrangement with the Trust Administration, the title to these lands will not pass to the district until an arrangement is made to permit the person now occupying the public land to continue in possession for a reasonable period of years after title is transferred to the districts.

In the case of public land to be used for defense purposes under proposed future status agreements with the United States, title will be passed to the new titleholders when they have formally committed themselves to accommodate those requirements on terms to be mutually agreed with the United States.

There are some plots of public land over which there are unresolved claims. In these cases transfer of title to each district will be subject to such claims, which may then be settled under procedures and means prescribed by the individual legislature, providing, however, that in the event such claims still remain unsettled the claimant will have access to regular courts of the Trust Territory. In addition future titleholders to public land must agree before title is finally passed, to hold the TTPI Administration and the United States harmless from claims other than those resulting directly from action of the United States or the TTPI Administration or their duly authorized agents.

The U.S. will have no objection to having title to tidelands, filled lands, submerged lands and lagoons also turned over to the districts. However, the central government of the Trust Territory shall retain the right to control activities within these areas affecting the public interest, such as prescribing measures for navigation, control of pollution and the protection of the environment.

The U.S. plan for transferring public lands recognizes the inadequacy of existing land data and boundary descriptions involving public lands. It also recognizes the operational difficulties encountered in the current survey program under the Trust Territory Government and the inadequacy of the resources allocated to that program. Because these two shortcomings could significantly delay the transfer of lands, and because many leaders in Micronesia have requested a completed survey and boundary settlement by the U.S. prior to a transfer, the U.S. Government has already requested the U.S. Congress to authorize funds to initiate a special cadastral effort. This augmented program will be under the direction of the High Commissioner. He is being asked to complete within three years a cadastral program on all present public lands. Without such a special program, it is estimated that almost thirty years would be required to complete the surveys of these lands. Hopefully, the proposed three year cadastral program will be accomplished by special contracts which will leave present land survey personnel and resources free to concentrate on completion of the private lands cadaster program as desired by the districts.

More on Bikini

(continued from page 2)

The house-to-house inspection proceeds with heads of households and Marshalls district government officials. All forty houses in the initial increment were covered in one day.

Others in the government crew are responsible for the maintenance of a fair stock of government public works construction equipment used by the contractor for the construction program. Others are simply part of the administrative force on the island.

The construction crew itself numbers twenty-nine men, including an American supervisor, Virgil "Greaserack" Stinnett, and their colorful Portuguese-Hawaiian American cook, George "Russian" Switz. They work for the Majuro-based Acme Construction Company, and Sunday was their last day of work for a while until the next series of work order is processed based on last week's inspection trip with the people who will be occupying the houses the crew has built.

There were about a hundred and twenty-five people on Bikini for a few days early this month, more than have been there for any length of time for a long while.

There was entertainment of sorts in the evenings for the people who traveled to Bikini last weekend. OEO Legal Services Attorney Hamlet Barry had recently obtained several films from the Atomic Energy Commission which depicted the initial atomic tests at Bikini and some of the marine biological followup surveys in the post-testing years in the atoll, and brought the films along for the former Bikini residents to see. Barry said that as far as he knew it was the first time the people had seen the films of the atomic explosions which took place at the atoll.

The films depicted the Operation Crossroads series of atomic explosions which took place in the summer of 1946, only a few months after the people of Bikini had been moved from their homes to make way for the testing program. One film showed both the Able and Baker test explosions, the first one from a weapon dropped from a B-29 aircraft and the second an underwater explosion. Another film showed a team of marine biologists from the Bikini Radiological Laboratory at the University of Washington as they collected specimens of fish and other marine life and took it from Bikini to the University for testing and analysis.

A third film was an hour-long television film in Italian, produced about two years ago by a film crew from Italy for presentation on the Italian government-owned television stations. While no one in the audience understood the Italian narration, it was fairly easy to follow the program as it reviewed the testing program at Bikini, talked about the life of the former Bikini residents at Kili island and interviewed some of the people about their desires to return to Bikini.

MOC Students

Electrical Trades and Plumbing students at Micronesian Occupational Center in Koror, Palau have received intensive practical experience in their trade areas recently.

Seven trainees in the electrical area worked several days assisting Palau Public Works Department in converting the island's power from 4160 volts to 13,800 volts. Supervised by Public Works officials and MOC instructor William Mallens, the students' work consisted of hooking up new transformers across the island of Koror.

According to a letter sent to MOC officials by David Herr, Power Generation Supervisor, "their willing attitude and assistance helped this department to accomplish the job in record time."

Meanwhile, the 10 students in the new plumbing class at MOC earned field experience by dividing their time between Koror and the island of Babelthuap. On Babelthuap, the job was at the site of the new Airai airport terminal building. Under the direction of their instructor, Lou Malone, the students first observed and then assisted the local building contractor.

When not at the airport terminal site, the plumbing class worked at Marine Resources to install plumbing for the new hatchery there. The hatchery project is an extensive one, and will entail weeks of work before completion. The plumbing class will continue to meet on the MOC campus periodically for instruction in theory, but will utilize the hatchery project for field work.

Under supervision of District Public Works officials, two MOC students repair power lines on Koror as part of their regular schooling at the Micronesian Occupational Center.

Status Talks Progressing Well in Washington

Micronesian Delegation accept U.S. Land Policy

The Seventh Round of the Micronesian Status Negotiations currently underway in Washington D.C. is progressing well and the talks are expected to end soon with substantial ground covered since the U.S. and the Micronesian delegations last formally met in 1972.

Micronesian News Service Bureau Chief Jon Anderson reported this week from Washington that the Micronesian delegation has accepted the new U.S. Land Policy for Micronesia, and with this acceptance a way has been cleared for further work on the remaining titles of the proposed draft compact of association between Micronesia and the United States.

"Now that the land question is out of the way, the task before us is to complete drafting the Compact of Free Association. There is no reason that this task cannot be completed in a short period of time. Both sides have had more than one year to formulate their position on the remaining issues of finance and termination. Our drafting committee is prepared to meet with yours immediately to begin that task", Senator Salii told the U.S. Delegation.

And the drafting committees did begin their work immediately. By the evening of November 14 official position papers of both sides have been exchanged covering the remaining portions of the draft compact. There was no indication, however, how long the session might last. But Senator Salii gave an indication that the work might be completed rather rapidly in one of his statements. "I do not find this great Capital city objectionable in any respect, but your weather is a bit too cold for our warm blood. You can therefore be assured that our delegation is prepared to wind up this session in the shortest amount of time possible for several reasons," Salii said.

These are the heads of the Micronesian and U.S. delegations now meeting in Washington D.C. to complete the draft Compact of Free Association between the United States and Micronesia. Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman of the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status and Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, President Nixon's Personal Representative to the Micronesian Status Talks.

HIGHLIGHTS
Jim Manke, Editor
Patrick Mangar, Assistant Editor
Nick Guerrero, Graphic Artist

Public Information Office
TRUST TERRITORY of the PACIFIC ISLANDS
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950