

Marshall Islands REPORT

EMERGENCY ORDER ISSUED BY DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR:

Due to an outbreak of cholera reported in the Republic of Nauru, Oscar deBrum, District Administrator of the Marshall Islands, issued an Emergency Order on December 13, 1978 restricting entry of persons into the Marshall Islands from the Republic of Nauru. The order states, "... the entry into the Marshall Islands of persons who have been in the Republic of Nauru within five days preceding such entry endangers the health, welfare and safety of the people of the Marshall Islands,..." The order will remain in effect until rescinded by the District Administrator, or the High Commissioner, or by the Nitijela.

NITIJELA ELECTIONS:

The Marshall Islands Nitijela General Election, originally scheduled for December 15, 1978, has been postponed until December 22. The postponement was authorized by the High Commissioner to allow voters registered in one voting precinct, to apply to vote in a different precinct.

Several persons have officially withdrawn their candidacy and are no longer seeking election. Those persons who have withdrawn are: Framer deBrum from District #1; Amata Kabua from District #2; Iroij Mamaru Kabua, Lerioj Neimat Reimers, Ongra Hanerc and Hatfield Lemae from District #3.

Carmen Bigler, Public Affairs Officer, expects that the unofficial results of the election will be available a day or so after Christmas.

NITIJELA SPECIAL SESSION:

The 4th Special Session of the Marshall Islands Nitijela which convened December 4, 1978, adjourned, Friday night, December 15. During the 10 day session, ~~22~~ Bills were passed by the Nitijela. Bill #23 which passed, will make Nitijela members full-time legislators at an annual salary of \$10,340. Annual salaries for the Speaker and Vice-Speaker are \$15,000 and \$13,000, respectively. The Bill will become effective January 3, 1979, if approved by the High Commissioner.

Other Bills passed by the Nitijela are:

Bill #1 - Appropriating \$40,783 for the expenses of the 4th Special Session of the Marshall Islands Nitijela;

Bill #2 - Appropriating \$100,000 for the Political Status Commission;

Bill #3 - Appropriating \$400,000 to the Marshall Islands Development Authority for construction expenses of Tobiolar copra processing plant and for operational expenses of the plant.;

Bill #6 - Revenue Sharing with Municipal Councils.

Bill #14 - Appropriating \$30,157 for expenses of the Nitijela General Election;

Bill #15 - Appropriating \$40,000 for Pick-up Trucks for Airok, Mejit, Tarawa, Lib, Wotje, Jaluit, Arno and Department of Finance;

Bill #22 - Appropriating \$49,735 for Teachers' Salaries;

Bill #24 - Making former Congress of Micronesia Congressmen, Nitijela members-at-large until April 30, 1979, unless they seek election in the December 22 general election. If they seek election, their terms, as members-at-large, will expire January 3, 1979, whether they win or lose the election.

Bill #42 - Appropriating \$30,000 to the Police Department;

Bill #43 - Appropriating \$16,000 for a delegation from Mili to to to Japan to request payment of war claims.

Bill #51 - Fuel tax - allowing the fuel tax to be collected in the Marshalls rather than Saipan;

Bill #56 - Income tax - allowing the income tax to be collected in the Marshalls rather than in Saipan;

Bill #57 - Health Assistance Fund to assist people in paying their hospital and medical bills;

Bill #58 - Copra Producers Retirement Fund - similar to Social Security;

Bill #63 - Import Tax - allowing the import tax to be collected in the Marshalls rather than Saipan;

Bill #64 - Appropriating \$16,500 for Bum-Bum Boats for Jemom Erikub and Memdikdik.

Bill #65 - Reorganization of Department of Finance;

Bill #66 - Political Status Commission membership to "Former" members of Congress of Micronesia;

Bill #73 - Procedures for the Administration of Appropriated Funds;

Bill #74 - Appropriating \$64,000 for reorganization of Finance Department; and

Bill #75 - Creating the Justice Improvement Commission which will allow the Marshalls to receive Federal funds for crime control directly from the U.S.

All Bills passed by the Nitijela must be approved by the High Commissioner before they become law.

Among the 6 Resolutions passed by the Nitijela were resolutions asking the High Commissioner to amend the Marshall Islands Charter to allow the Nitijela to meet in continuous regular annual session, beginning the first Monday in January of each year; commending Iroij Namu Hermios for his work in the Nitijela and asking for a day of prayer for his recovery from an illness that has him hospitalized in Hawaii; authorizing the Chairman of the Political Status Commission to work directly with Ambassador Peter Rosenblatt in obtaining Federal programs without prior Interior Department approval; providing emergency medical assistance to Wotho; inviting 7th Day Adventist assistance in designing a new Marshalls hospital; and having medical referrals approved in the Marshalls without getting Saipan approval also.

MARSHALL ISLANDS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

Marshall Islands Constitutional Convention, which began its current session December 15, is expected to conclude its work on the final draft of the Proposed Constitution before the new year begins. Ruben Zackhras, President of Con-Con, expects the delegates to adopt a Proposed Constitution this week. It will be forwarded to the Speaker of the Nitijela and the District Administrator. The Speaker will set a date to hold the constitutional referendum. An educational program will be organized before the referendum to inform the voters of the content of the Proposed Constitution.

The effective date of the Constitution, if approved by the voters at the referendum will be May 1, 1979.

FISHERMEN'S CO-OP:

Bill Puleloa, Marshall Islands Fisheries Officer reports that since the revitalization of the Majuro Fishermen's Co-op in June, 1977, it has purchased more than 440,000 pounds of fish from its 285 members, an average of almost 14 tons per month. However, these statistics do not reflect the entire catch in the Marshalls, since fishermen often keep part of their catch for personal use.

The increase in local fishing has resulted in a decrease of approximately 40% in canned fish being imported in the Marshalls.

Since 1977, the Co-op has grossed approximately \$300,000 from the sale of fish, ice, fishing supplies and other materials. Income over expenses is marginal because the Co-op is a non-profit organization. The income is used to pay for salaries, materials, and supplies necessary for the functioning of the Co-op. Puleloa emphasized that the fish, of course, are sold to the public, but fishing supplies, lures, outboard engines, and other fishing supplies are sold only to Co-op members to reduce competition

against local merchants. Extra earnings at the end of each year are to be distributed among the Co-op members, as patronage refunds. The more fish a member sells to the Co-op, the higher his patronage refund at the end of the year. Misao Capelle holds the Majuro record for selling the greatest number of fish to the Co-op.

The Marshall Islands Fishing Authority was created by the Congress of Micronesia in 1973, "... to provide the necessary support and guidance to fishing co-operative associations so that these co-operative associations will be permitted to become primary development institutions in the Districts...". Fishing Co-ops were begun in Majuro, Ebeye, and Jaluit Atolls, but by 1976, none of the Co-ops were active.

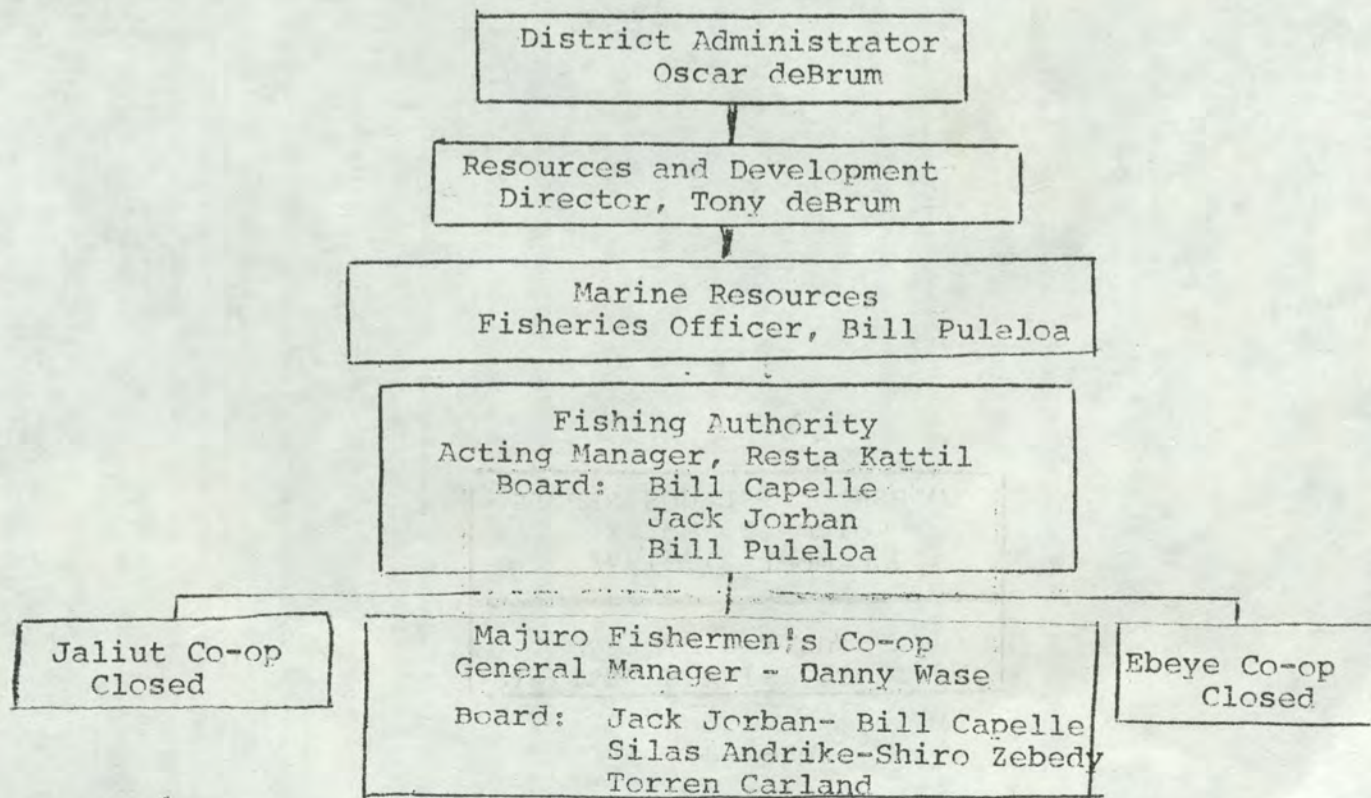
In 1977, the revitalization of the Majuro Co-op began with the reorganization of the Department of Resources and Development under Tony deBrum, Director. Mr. deBrum encouraged all areas of resources to be developed toward self-sufficiency. With this impetus, Bill Puleloa was hired as Fisheries Officer. He has a Master's Degree in Marine Biology with special studies in Fisheries of the Pacific Islands. In September, 1977, Danny Wase, who had just returned from completing his B.A. degree in Business Administration, was hired to manage the Marshalls Fishing Co-operative Association. Working funds were obtained by levying a 10% tax on foreign fishing vessels that call into Majuro Port; taxing the supplies goods, and materials the vessels purchase locally. This money has been used to promote fishing co-op activities, and supports the three staff members of the Fishing Authority, including Mr. Resta Kattil, Acting Manager. In addition, the funds also supply loans to the co-op members for the purpose of buying fishing boats, engines, and equipment. These loans must be approved by both the Fishing Authority Board and the Fishing Co-op Board. The Co-op retains 20% of a member's catch until his loan and 4% interest are repaid. Additional expenses for the Fishing Authority also include office supplies, materials, and a pick-up truck.

The first fish exported by the Marshalls since 1940 were shipped this year to Guam, the Marianas and Nauru. Co-op fish are also sold locally to the hospital, the education department, and about 1 ton per month, to stores in Ebeye. To facilitate local sales, the Co-op also delivers fish at wholesale prices to several stores in Majuro for resale to the public.

Persons interested in becoming a member of the Majuro Co-op may apply at the Fishing Authority office. If the application is approved, a \$10 entry fee, plus the purchase of a \$15 share in the Co-op is required.

Mr. Puleloa states that the people involved in the Fishing Authority and the Majuro Fishermen's Co-op are optimistic about the years ahead. He is also trying to have the defunct co-ops at Jaluit and Ebeye become active again.

Mr. Puleloa has provided the "Report" with an organizational chart of the Fishing Authority and Co-op structure. Following, is the chart:



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

U. S. POSTOFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday - 9:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday-Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday - 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

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