

HIGHLIGHTS

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Deputy High Commissioner

Speaks on Political Alternatives for Micronesia



Martin P. Mangan, Deputy High Commissioner

Deputy High Commissioner Martin P. Mangan gave an hour-long talk on political alternatives for Micronesia to Stanford Research Institute representatives, Trust Territory Headquarters education staff, and a group of educators from the six districts on June 23, 1967, at the Congress of Micronesia chambers. A number of members of the Congress of Micronesia were in attendance.

In his opening remarks Mr. Mangan pointed out that political advancement and economic development of these islands cannot be separated from each other; political evolution and economic progress must move rapidly together.

The future political status of Micronesia has become a timely issue with the Congress of Micronesia's resolution requesting the High Commissioner to petition the President of the United States to establish a commission to study the future political status of Micronesia. A resolution to set up a "status commission" already has been introduced in the U.S. Congress, and others in different form are expected.

The Deputy High Commissioner said that he foresees within 2 to 5 years a plebiscite of some kind likely to offer to Micronesians at least three choices. These could be: (1) complete independence; (2) continuation of the present trusteeship status for a prescribed period before calling again for a political decision; and (3) some form of permanent af-

filiation with the United States. Mr. Mangan noted that limiting the third choice on the ballot to association with the United States was conscionable in view of the many expressions by Micronesians for affiliation with the United States, while no sympathy for joining any other nation has been evinced. He continued that this plebiscite would only be held after a reasonable period of study and intensive political education.

If the people of Micronesia do choose a permanent association with the United States, there are a myriad of precedents to contemplate. Mr. Mangan then discussed the implications of political status as an unorganized, unincorporated territory; as an organized, unincorporated territory; as an organized, incorporated territory; of union with an existing territory; of commonwealth status; of admission as a state; and of union with an existing state. Then, citing article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution, the Deputy High Commissioner concluded that "the entire history of the United States territorial relationship and the Federal Government-citizen relationship sustains innovation and change in accordance with needs. There is no constitutional bar to prevent Congress under the existing Constitution from entering into innovative forms of relationships within the Federal structure--including a binding relationship in order to meet the desires of the Micronesian people."

The Congress of Micronesia, he concluded, definitely will play a very active role in helping the people reach a reasonable level of political understanding so that when Micronesians finally exercise their right of self-determination, whatever decision they make shall be an informed and considered one.

Commission Would View Political Status of Territory . . .

A commission of nine to inquire into the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands has been proposed in a joint resolution (H.J.R. 594) introduced May 24 by Representative Jonathan Bingham (D-N.Y.) in the United States Congress. Representative Bingham is a former president of the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

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