

Marshall Islands REPORT

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NITIJELA ELECTIONS:

On January 5, 1979, Election Commissioner, Oscar deBram certified the results of the December Nitijela General Election. Legislators returning to the Nitijela for another term are Iroij Namo Hermios, Kunar Abner and Tom Kijiner from District #1; Iroij Henry Samuel, Iroij Lerok Lebon and Jina J. Lavin from District #2; Iroij Litokwa Tomeing from District #3 and Iroij Imada Kabua and Jeton Anjain from District #4.

Newly elected first term legislators are Jack Jordan from District #2; Iroij Watak Kabua, Carl Heine and Evelyn Konou from District #3 and Botlang Loek from District #4.

Unofficially, 6691 voters exercised their right to vote for the candidate of their choice.

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CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION:

On the 51st day of the Third Session of the Marshall Islands Constitutional Convention, the delegates gathered at the Marshall Islands Memorial Church in Majuro to formally sign the Proposed Constitution for the Marshall Islands.

Agreement on the Proposed Constitution had been reached December 21, 1978, at 7:03 p.m. when 38 of the 41 delegates present voted to approve the final draft. The Proposed Constitution was prepared in final form and presented to the delegates for certification at a formal ceremony January 4, 1979, at the Marshall Islands Memorial Church. Con-Con President Ruben Zackhras, presided over the ceremonies. District Presiding Judge Kabua Kabua, Speaker of the Nitijela, Atlan Anien and District Administrator Oscar deBram spoke to the delegates and spectators. The Rita Youth Choir sang songs of thanksgiving. Almost every delegate to the Convention personally signed his endorsement of the historic document. The Marshall Islands Constitutional Convention adjourned for the last time, after the ceremony on January 4.

Not all delegates were released from their convention responsibilities, however. The committee for Convention Procedures and Jurisdiction chaired by delegate Amata Kabua, still has the responsibility for refining the translation of the document into Marshallese, and having it printed and distributed to the Marshallese people. The CP&J Committee will also join with the Nitijela and the Administration to hold educational seminars to explain the content of the Proposed Constitution to the voters prior to the referendum for ratification of the document.

Other members of the CP&J Committee are Kessai Note, Vice-Chairman; Bilimon Amram, Pija Jerwan, Hermios Kibin, Pijja Josepa, Jaowe Jorju, Kotak Loek, Anekka Lanwe, Iroij Litokwa Tomeing, Kramer deBram, Jina Lavin, Alex Keju and Anjua Loek.

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STATUS, TRANSITION AND CONSTITUTIONAL CALENDAR:

"I'm looking forward to the people of the Marshalls ratifying the Constitution." was the common statement made by Amata Kabua, Chairman of the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission; Atlan Anien, Speaker of the Nitijela; and Tony deBrum, Vice-Chairman of the Political Status Commission. "It is possible for the new government of the Marshalls to become effective May 1, 1979, if the Constitution is ratified in February." added deBrum.

The order of events on status and self government that Kabua and deBrum hope to see occur this year is:

1. Completion of transition negotiations in Saipan January 8-12.
2. The last stages of status negotiations in Saipan, January 15-22.
3. Referendum to ratify the Marshall Islands Proposed Constitution, in mid-February.
4. Elections for members of the Nitijela under the ratified new Constitution, in late March or early April.
5. Conclusion of status negotiations with the U.S., in March 1979.
6. Installation of a Constitutional Government, on May 1, 1979.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Wally Wotring reports that special attention by the police department will be focused on 3 areas in the next few weeks. The police will increase enforcement of laws related to litter, animals running at large, and selling alcohol to minors. A person who is apprehended for littering the environment will be given a citation and will be required to appear in Court. Pigs, chickens and dogs seen running loose will be impounded; if not claimed within 3 days by the owner, impounded animals will be disposed of in a humane way.

It is illegal to sell alcohol to minors in either stores or bars. Persons found guilty of selling alcohol to persons under 21 years of age will be arrested. Bars should not serve drinks to any person without a Marshall Islands drinking permit. These permits can be obtained at the Police Department for \$5. for a one year permit, or \$2 for a one month permit.

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PRE-WHITE HOUSE LIBRARY CONFERENCE:

High Commissioner Adrian Winkle called a meeting of representatives from each district in Saipan December 10-12, 1978, to examine the current information resources and anticipated future needs for library and information services in the Trust Territory, and to develop programs to fill those needs. The meeting was called in preparation for a White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 1979. The purpose of the White House Conference is to develop recommendations for improving the library and information centers throughout the U.S. and its possessions and territories for use by the public.

Marshall Islands delegates to the Saipan conference were Tamara Jordan, Henchi Balos and Barwell Langrin, as voting members; Sister Dorothy Nook, as a non-voting member, and Dwight Heine, as delegate-at-large. The group left the Marshalls with resolutions requesting education and advice in developing libraries; donations of books from U.S. public schools and libraries; development of an inter-library search and loan system between the Trust Territory districts, Guam, the Northern Marianas and Hawaii; that the Trust Territory and Administering Authority provide at least 1 central library for each district and that assistance be given to develop a mobile library facility for remote areas. At the present time, only the Marshalls, Palau and Korsae Districts have public libraries. Each of these libraries is regarded as inadequate, underfunded and understaffed. All Marshall Islands resolutions were adopted by the conferees.

Dwight Heine was elected to attend and represent the Marshalls at the White House Conference and Henchi Balos was elected as alternate.

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MAJURO HOSPITAL:

Franz Reksid, Chairman of the Trust Territory Task Force assigned to improve the Majuro Hospital reports that the conditions of the hospital have been improved very much, but they are not completed yet. "I want to do things the best", stated Reksid. He reports that structural damage has been repaired, a basic hospital cleaning has been accomplished, the hospital supplies have been replenished, and renovation of the Physical Therapy Department is almost completed. Dr. Sally Forneste, an M.D. from the Philippine Republic originally came to Majuro on a 3 month contract. She has recently signed a 3 year contract. Reksid announced that a surgeon, also from the Philippines, has been hired for the hospital, and Reksid adds, when an internist and pediatrician are added to the staff, "This will make me happy." He reports that a Registered Nurse cannot be hired until funding is acquired through the Nitijela.

Reksid said that the people of Majuro have done much to aid the hospital environment. The public has responded to task force requests and have co-operated with observing hospital visiting hours, using the new parking lot, and have encouraged children to stay out of the hospital. It is especially important for the health of the children that parents do not bring them to the hospital to visit. Children are more susceptible to illness and are easily infected with germs that they carry home with them. Reksid also requests that the public help to keep the hospital environment clean. Three janitors are employed by the hospital, but only 2 work during the day. The public is requested to do their part in putting refuse in trash cans and not leave trash, soiled diapers, candy wrappers and other disposables on floors, counters, tables and chairs.

Reksid explained that the Task Force is now on the second phase of hospital improvements. The first phase sought to improve the regular hospital program and functions. This is now completed.

A meeting is being held in Honolulu January 9-12 with U.S. Corps of Engineers to discuss preliminary plans for a new hospital building. It is hoped that bids can be let soon for architects to design the structure.

Reksid hopes that a new hospital administrator will be hired soon. He hopes the new administrator will begin working in Majuro as soon as late January or early February.

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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

Last week a team of representatives from Trust Territory Headquarters, the Nitijela, the Marshalls Administration, and the J.C. Tenario Engineering firm from Guam met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss capital improvement projects in the Marshalls in the areas of power, water collection and storage, and construction of a new hospital.

Rodger Cotting, Budget and Fiscal Officer for the Marshalls District, stated that the Marshalls delegation planned to request a 90% stage of completion review of the Architectural and Engineering work done on power plant and distribution systems of the Majuro electrical power system. They will request a 30% stage of completion review of the Architectural and Engineering work done on the water catchment project in Majuro, which includes two 3 million gallon capacity raw water reservoirs. This project is located in the same area as the existing water reservoir in Majuro. They also hope to correct the existing catchment facility on the ocean side of the airport runway and need funds to pay for the resurfacing of this area. Repair of the surface would result in double the amount of

rain water caught from that surface.

Also under discussion with the Corps of Engineers is the Majuro hospital. Cotting explained that they hope to find funds with which to begin construction of a new hospital facility immediately.

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TROPICAL STORM ALICE:

M/V Micro Pilot left Majuro January 4, 1979 with a team to assess the damage caused by Tropical Storm Alice as she moved thru the Marshall Islands. Word received from the Micro Pilot indicated that Namdrik suffered an estimated \$108,950 damage to homes, 63 families were left homeless, crop loss at 89% and soil erosion at 35%. Approximately \$2000 of damage was suffered by public buildings.

In Ebon, crop loss was estimated at 35%. In Kili, crop loss was estimated at 7.5%.

Preliminary reports indicated that at Enewetak Atoll, the storm passed within 25-30 nautical miles of the southern part of the Atoll with steady winds of 70 knots for 1 hour. Gusts of 80 knots were recorded before the instrument malfunctioned. Heavy damage was sustained to structures at Enewetak. Considerable property damage was also sustained at Ebeye.

No loss of life has been reported thus far.

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CORRECTION AND APOLOGY:

The Marshall Islands Report apologizes to the Nitijela for erroneously reporting in its December 21 issue, that Bill No. 73, "Procedures for Administering Appropriated Funds," passed. The Bill was in fact deferred, and the session ended before it could be brought up for consideration.

HIGH COURT IN THE MARSHALLS:

The Honorable Harold W. Burnett, Chief Justice of the High Court of the Trust Territory is presently hearing civil cases in Majuro. Judge Burnett also expects to hold arraignments of all new criminal defendants while he is here. He expects to leave Majuro on January 19, to Saipan.

AGRICULTURE CHIEF:

Mr. Joaje Aisak has been appointed Acting District Chief of Agriculture effective December 28, 1978.

AIRLINE SCHEDULES:

Air Micronesia flights to Saipan continue on the following schedule:

Tuesday-Thursday-Friday-Sunday: Arrive Majuro - 10:39 a.m.
Depart Majuro - 11:09 a.m.

Air Micronesia flights to Honolulu continue on the following schedule:

Monday-Wednesday-Saturday: Arrive Majuro at 5:47 p.m.
Depart Majuro at 6:17 p.m.

Thursday - Arrive Majuro 11:17 P.M.
Depart Majuro 11:47 P.M.

Air Nauru flights continue to be suspended until further notice.

MARSHALL ISLANDS REPORT
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