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1267th AEC Meeting 2-21-57 S 2. AEC 125/30 - Return of Rongelapese to Their Home Island (pp. 3 - 7)

Dr. Dunham reviewed AEC 125/30 - Return of Rongelapese to Their Home Island, which recommended that the Commission adopt a position that the Rongelapese, who were displaced from their island by tests during Operation CASTLE, could be returned to their home island in the Marshall Islands as soon as rehabilitation has been completed.

Dr. Dunham said studies had been made of the external radiation hazard to the Rongelapese as well as the strontium 90 hazard in contaminated food. He said radiation exposure of these people would not exceed the maximum permissible body burdens of 100 Sunshine units as established by the National Committee on Radiation Protection.

In response to a comment by Mr. Vance, Dr. Dunham said he did not believe there was any evidence that the Rongelapese did not want to return to their home island.

Mr. Libby commented on the extensive studies which had been made of the soil and of the plant life of the island as well as the fish in the surrounding waters. He said he did not believe there is any problem in returning the people but sug-

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gested that studies should be made every six months to determine the amount of strontium 90 that had accumulated in these people's bodies. Dr. Dunham pointed out that such studies were included in continuing medical inspections which will be a part of a long-term study of radiation effects on the island.

After further discussion, the Commission:

a. Approved the position of the Atomic Energy Commission that the Rongelapese could be returned to their home island as soon as rehabilitation procedures have been completed on the island as described in Appendix "B" to AEC 125/30;

b. Noted that the Department of the Interior and the Department of State will be advised of this action by letter such as Appendix "C" to AEC 125/30;

c. Noted that a draft announcement such as Appendix "E" to AEC 125/30 will be proposed to the Department of Interior for issuance when the Department determines that the natives can return; and

d. Noted that the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, the GAC, and the MLC will be advised of this action by letter such as Appendix "D" to AEC 125/30.

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