

Radiation Illness Widespread

The purpose of this article is to describe the medical evaluation program of the Marshall Islands Atomic Testing Litigation Project. Dr. Thomas Hamilton, M.D., Ph.D, is a medical consultant to MIATLP and has been performing complete medical evaluations on Marshallese people since November of 1982. The purpose of these evaluations is to detect radiation injuries, however, this can be done adequately ONLY if complete medical evaluations are performed. Therefore all medical problems are diagnosed whether they are radiation related or whether they are not radiation related. The complete evaluations are performed in Majuro; each individual person has a 2-3 hour evaluation which includes completing a medical questionnaire, talking with the doctor, a complete physical examination, and laboratory tests. Finally, a medical report is prepared and a copy is included as a permanent part of each person's hospital record. In addition, a copy of this report is provided to the MIATLP attorneys. People who have serious medical problems are immediately referred by Dr. Hamilton to either local physicians or in some cases are presented to the Referral Committee for referral to Honolulu. In each case a copy of Dr. Hamilton's report is provided to the physician. Every individual has a final appointment

The reason Dr. Hamilton began these examinations in June, 1983 was because he began to find a large number of previously undiagnosed thyroid tumors on people living in Majuro who were all from the northern Marshall Islands listed above. This suggested the possibility that radiation from nuclear fallout from the 1954 Bravo explosion (and possibly some of the other 65 explosions between 1946 and 1958) may have contaminated many atolls other than Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utirik. It will take at least another 6 to 8 months to complete these examinations on the people from the above named atolls. However, the preliminary information shows a large number of thyroid tumors as well as a number of other significant medical problems which were undiagnosed and untreated. The purpose in identifying these people on these atolls with these problems is to recommend that they be referred to see Dr. Hamilton for a complete evaluation in Majuro. At the completion of the examination on each atoll, a list of the people recommended for complete evaluations is given to the health aide as well as copies to the mayor and senator from each atoll or to local leaders on Ebeye.

Nearly 2000 people, including children

health care of all the Marshall Islanders it has never conducted health care surveys and examinations of all the people. also it has never done a complete, independent, radiological survey of all the islands and atolls. Therefore no one knows how many of the islands are contaminated by radioactive materials and no one knows how many people suffer from illness caused by nuclear testing.

The government of the United States has admitted that the atolls of Enewetak, Bikini, Rongelap, and Utirik were affected. We had seen enough medical problems on the other atolls to fear that the problem was much more widespread. We are sorry to see that Dr. Hamilton's preliminary findings suggest that this is true. These findings should cause the United States to immediately start radiological and medical surveys of all the islands and all the people so that those affected can be treated and so that further injury from contaminated atolls or poisoned food can be prevented.

Such surveys are needed now. They should not await the outcome of plebiscites of all the Micronesian countries. Nor should they be postponed the many years it may take before the United States Congress acts on the Compact of Free Association even if it is approved by the

an. Every individual has a final appointment with Dr. Hamilton to have the medical report explained. He currently has about a hundred people with less serious or no medical problems who have not yet had their final appointments, however these should be completed by October, 1983.

A second part of the medical evaluation program began in June of 1983. This involves a screening examination of all Marshallese people in the northern Marshall Islands including Rongelap, Utirik, Mejit, Ailuk, Likiep, Wotja, Lae, Ujae, Wotho, and all people living on Ebeye from these atolls. As of August 27, 1983, almost all people from Rongelap, Utirik, Mejit, Ailuk, and Ebeye people from Rongelap, Utirik and Mejit have had this screening examination. This examination consists of a blood pressure check and a complete neck and thyroid examination.

above age two, have had these screening examinations between June 1983 and August 27, 1983 from Rongelap, Utirik, Mejit, Ailuk, and Ebeye. Over 20 new thyroid tumors were found in people during this period of time. In addition, over 25 people were found with other significant medical problems which were undiagnosed and untreated. Some of these people required immediate treatment - the other people were recommended to see Dr. Hamilton in Majuro for complete evaluations. Since many of these people with new thyroid tumors from any atoll were actually on a different atoll during 1954 during Bravo, it will be necessary to examine all people from the northern Marshall Islands, and possibly ALL of the Marshall Islands, before a more complete story can be reported.

Although the United States under the Trusteeship has been responsible for the

approval of the Micronesian people.

As more and more radiation related illnesses are discovered it becomes more and more apparent that the money provided under the 177 agreement is grossly inadequate to compensate all those who suffered injury to either their persons or property, even without the clean-up of Bikini, which we are told must come from the same inadequate funds.

The Compact of Free Association with the attached 177 agreement should be defeated. The Government of the United States should carry out its duties under the Trusteeship to immediately provide for an independent radiological survey of all the islands and a medical survey of all the Marshall Islanders.

Vote jab and write to Congressman Sieberling asking for immediate surveys.

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