

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY  
 ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITIES, INC.  
 UPTON, L. I., N. Y. 11973  
 TEL. AREA CODE 516 YAPHANK 4-6262

REFER: *R*

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

April 9, 1969

Dr. John R. Totter, Director  
 Division of Biology & Medicine  
 U. S. Atomic Energy Commission  
 Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear John:

I have three matters that I should like to bring up.

First the medical survey in the islands went very smoothly. We found one new thyroid case in an adult exposed Rongelap women and three other cases in children that had not responded satisfactorily to treatment. There was also one suspicious thyroid nodule in a Utirik woman. We plan on bringing these five cases back to BNL the latter part of this summer for evaluation and surgery. During the survey I visited the Bikini people at Kili and had an opportunity to explain to them the purpose of the urine examinations and whole body checkups that will be conducted in the future. They asked a number of questions, the chief of which regarded concern over the safety of Bikini from the radiation point of view. I assured them on this point and believe that I answered their questions to their satisfaction.

In regard to a whole body counting facility at Bikini, while at AEC Honolulu I learned that a bunker facility on Bikini island is available and seems adequate from several points of view: it is spacious, it is shielded by earth and I believe the radioactivity levels are quite low inside, a water catchment system is possible from the top of the bunker, and a shower facility can be constructed within the bunker. We believe it would be possible to bring in light weight 2 1/2 KV generators to furnish sufficient electricity. AEC Honolulu probably has thought about the cost of adapting this for our use.

Item 2 - During the past four years we have carried out medical examinations at Utirik island on two occasions, including this survey. This was subsequent to the compensatory payment of the Rongelap people and the Utirik people have had an undercurrent of dissatisfaction that they had not received any payment, having been involved in the same fallout

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situation. I was questioned at length on this subject by the people and I attempted to explain to them that the small amount of fallout that they had received had not produced any finding in any one that was related to fallout exposure. In contrast the Rongelap people had significant findings particularly in regard to the thyroid. The compensation was based on fallout effects. However, it is difficult for them to understand and they continue to argue that since they had received a "little bit" of fallout they should receive a "little bit" of money.

I suppose we made a mistake in not giving the Utirik people a token payment and perhaps it is not too late to do something about it. Perhaps if we could give each exposed person \$100(including the descendant of deceased); I believe this would quiet their dissatisfaction. These people are very poor and even a very small amount of money would look big to them. Though we have managed to maintain fairly good rapport with these people, such a token payment would probably greatly improve the relationship. The 157 Utirik people so recompensed would not be a large sum of money.

Third topic - During the survey on Rongelap island, one of the exposed people, who owns one of the small northern islands, Naen, in the northern part of the atoll complains that he is not producing copra from that island because of fallout effects. I have visited this island, and in fact we have made a report on the vegetation, a copy of which is enclosed. It does appear that these islands are in very poor condition but not having seen them prior to the fallout it is difficult to know what they were like before. claims that he got about 25 bags of copra(\$75. worth?). I told him that I would mention this matter to the AEC. I would guess the Trust Territory should be consulted if anything is done. It is too bad that we never had a good botanical study of possible fallout effects on Rongelap atoll. Perhaps John Wolf might be able to initiate such a study. At one time Jim Brewbaker at the University of Hawaii was interested in a pollen study for detection of radiation effects.

I hate to worry you with these items but felt that I should bring them up. If you need any further clarification, please let me know. With best regards.

Sincerely,

PRIVACY ACT MATERIAL REMOVED

Robert A. Conard, M.D.

RAC: jr

cc: Mr. George Milner - Dept. of the Interior  
Mr. W. A. Bonnet - AEC, Honolulu ✓  
Dr. E. P. Cronkite

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