

June 2, 1970



AEC 604/138

BIKINI ATOLL: SUMMARY REPORT ON RESETTLEMENT STATUS

Note by the Secretary

The General Manager has requested that the attached memorandum of June 1, 1970 from the Assistant General Manager for Operations be circulated for the information of the Commission.

W. B. McCool

Secretary

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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

JUN 1 1970

R. E. Hollingsworth, GM

SUMMARY REPORT ON BIKINI STATUS

In planning the 1970 survey of Bikini Atoll, Dr. Martin B. Biles, OS, and Mr. Frank D. Cluff, NV met with the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific, the Honorable Edward E. Johnston, and his staff in Saipan on April 28 and 29, 1970. The AEC survey plans were reviewed, as well as Trust Territory progress with agricultural rehabilitation and construction of housing. Use of a Trust Territory vessel by the survey team was obtained. Discussions on the plutonium situation were held privately with the High Commissioner.

About 8,000 coconut trees have been planted on Eneu Island and planting on Bikini Island will commence this summer. Homes on Bikini Island are to be of cement block construction, using local materials for sand and aggregate. Manufacture of cement blocks is to begin in about four months. It was agreed that the survey team is to sample potential sources of these materials in the Atoll. No serious questions were raised concerning the requirements to conduct air sampling on Bikini and Eneu Island or to monitor metal scrap collected for sale.

The Trust Territory staff intends to delay any permanent resettlement of Bikini until 1973 at the earliest. This decision is based solely on the desire to resettle the Atoll only when it can be self-supporting, and not on matters relating to health and safety. This delay will permit further decay of fission products and allow further opportunity to study the plutonium contamination situation.

Discussions in Saipan indicated that there is need for additional information concerning the program to return the people to Bikini Atoll, the safety considerations therein, and the reasons for the recommendations for measures to reduce radiation exposures. A recurring question asked by the Bikinians is why surveys, restrictions, or measures to reduce exposures are needed if the islands are safe for their return. They interpret the decision to allow resettlement as an indication of complete absence of radioactivity. AEC staff are preparing additional material for use in answering these and other related questions.

An eleven man survey team consisting of AEC and AEC contractor staff arrived in Bikini Atoll on May 28, 1970. The team will conduct soil

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R. E. Hollingsworth

sampling and air particulate sampling as a primary mission for a period of about three weeks. Other tasks consist of monitoring both scrap metal collected by the natives and locations of suitable sand and coral aggregate for making concrete. The team will also collect cistern water samples and as many other samples of the environment as time permits.

J. A. Erlewine
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Assistant General Manager
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