

REPOSITORY

LOS ATAMOS NAT LAB

CL 14

COLLECTION

CL-14

404390

BOX No

11331-1

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CASTLE NATIVES

April 15, 1954

Classified by _____
by authority of _____

UNCLASSIFIED

Dr. Thomas W. White
% CTG 7.1
Eniwetok, M. I.

To

By

*Elizabeth Kelly 7/15/77
Mary Joe Taylor*

Dear Tom:

Bob Canada of W-Division has kindly agreed to carry this letter out along with another letter to Al Graves. The letter primarily constitutes a proposal for a study to determine the date at which the Rongelap natives might be returned to their own home, and I suggested to Al that he should discuss this with you. It is our feeling that if this problem is stripped of all emotionalism and all political and diplomatic complications it should not be too difficult. Those of us here have done some pretty intensive thinking about it and feel that a small team of LASL people, assisted by Donaldson's group, advised by Tobin or Wilds, and supported by H&N could probably do the job with a minimum of confusion and delay. Such a project would have only the single objective of deciding when it would be safe to let the people return, and it should not be hampered by having a lot of experimental work tacked on to it. It is our feeling here that we could do all of this provided we could have charge of both the collection of samples and the analysis. We would be reluctant to have some other group collect what samples they regarded as proper and expect us to carry out the assay, nor would we wish to collect samples to be assayed at NRDL or NYOO.

We feel quite strongly that the study should be started at the earliest possible moment, which would mean that you, Leo, Bob, Jim Perrings, plus those of Donaldson's group still around, would be definitely involved. Payne Harris, and possibly others, would come out from here. We would not expect all of you who are out there at the present to remain in the Forward Area for the duration of the study, but we would have to make certain that the results of repeated sampling trips were comparable and that samples and readings were obtained with the same type of instruments and at the same locations. If we can't play this game the way we wish to, we are rather inclined not to play it at all. We have, of course, no desire to disregard the work which has already been done; that forms the principal backlog of information on which we would work. We do realize that the political and diplomatic implications in the problem are of sufficient magnitude that the play may be taken completely out of our hands, which won't hurt our feelings in the slightest.

You have undoubtedly by this time seen the TWI sent to Al Graves on Tuesday giving the findings to date on the first set of urine samples. Had we not had the arm counter, it is possible that we would have missed the iodine

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altogether. As it was, when they started to evaporate some of the specimens they found that almost three-fourths of the gamma activity was disappearing. This activity was first found by putting raw samples right into the arm counter. This ought to make Perrings happy.

Pat Schiavone turned up here on Monday and Bill, who is driving from Los Angeles, should be here later in the week. My own trip was quite comfortable as I managed in Kwaj to get aboard the Super-Constellation coming from Guam. I got to Hickam about two hours ahead of Dick Durant who was on the Flyaway. As always, it is a little surprising to find life going on here as usual. You probably noticed that I left behind a supply of liquor tickets which should be enough to keep you in a pleasant glow for a considerable period of time. I hope this act will not adversely affect your standing in the chess tournament.

Quite a number of people should be coming home, thereby leaving life on the island less crowded and less confused. We hope it continues enjoyable and also uncomplicated.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS L. SHIPMAN, M. D.
Health Division Leader

TLS/lca