

CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS, 96950

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE
CONCERNING RONGELAP &
UTIRIK ATOLLS
(Public Law 4C-33)

Senator Olympio T. Borja, Chairman
Representative Timothy Oikerill
Representative Hans Willander

REPOSITORY

COLLECTION

BOX No.

FOLDER

DOE/PASO
DOE/NU

1228 "ERDA # 3"
BIO-MED, DR. CONARD
01 THRU 12/1972

July 7, 1972

The Honorable Edward E. Johnston
High Commissioner
Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Mr. Johnston:

I have been informed that there remains some doubt as to the intention of the Special Joint Committee's recommendation, relative to your suggestion concerning an Atomic Energy Commission-financed medical survey team, to conduct a medical survey of the people of Rongelap and Utirik. To clear up any possible ambiguity, I would like to state that the intention of the recommendation contained on page eight of the May 16, 1972, Interim Report is not to have the AEC finance a team composed solely of Dr. Conard, Dr. Ezaki, and one doctor each from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). Rather, the intention is that Dr. Ezaki, and the doctors from WHO and PHS will travel with the regular Brookhaven team sponsored by the AEC and headed by Dr. Conard. In other words, the three additional doctors will travel with the Brookhaven team which usually visits Rongelap. These doctors, however, are asked to submit their own reports—separate from the annual report of the Brookhaven team—to the Special Joint Committee. These reports, as stated on page eight of the Interim Report, will contain a thorough evaluation of "(a) the (Brookhaven) medical team's methods of examination, and (b) an evaluation of the medical treatment given to the Rongelapese in the past, and that given to them in the proposed survey."

With regards to the matter of financing, the Committee is aware that neither it, nor the Office of the High Commissioner can direct the AEC to conduct the survey. It is merely that the Committee is in agreement with your suggestion that there would be no objection if the AEC did finance the team. We, of course, realize that the AEC has

5051966

Page 2

expended considerable money in the aborted March, 1972, survey, and that the decision to field another survey is entirely up to them. We are, however, concerned about the welfare of the affected Marshallese and aware of the expressed concern and dismay of several doctors who have accompanied the Brookhaven team in the past that there should be no delay, as the health of the people concerned is of paramount importance. Thus, we should hope that since the health and welfare of the people is also a primary concern of the Brookhaven team and the AEC, that they will concur in the need for another team to be fielded as soon as possible.

Furthermore, this so-called "independent" team has no relationship to the offer made by Dr. Jesse Steinfeld. If the USPHS fielded a medical survey team, it would be completely separate from the Brookhaven team. At this point in time, the Committee has only asked Dr. Steinfeld to indicate how long it would take to assemble such a team and has not requested a PHS team.

Perhaps it should also be stated again that there will be no interference with said AEC-financed survey, and that the people of Rongelap and Utirik will not refuse examination. This point, I believe, was made clear in your meeting with Congressman Ataji Balos of April 11, 1972; and it has also been reaffirmed in the Committee's subsequent discussions with Representative Balos.

I hope that the above information will resolve any uncertainty regarding the Committee's recommendations, and that we can look forward to the annual survey being conducted for the benefit of the people of Rongelap and Utirik as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Senator Olympio T. Borja
Chairman, Special Joint Committee
Concerning Rongelap and Utirik Atolls
Congress of Micronesia

cc: Deputy High Commissioner
Director of Health Services
Dr. E. P. Cronkite, Brookhaven National Laboratory
Dr. R. A. Conard, Brookhaven National Laboratory ✓
Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, Surgeon General of the United States

5051967