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DEM:GMD

August 13, 1957

Mr. Maynard Neas  
 District Administrator  
 TRUST Territories of the Pacific  
 Majuro, Marshall Islands

Dear Mr. Neas:

This is in reply to a telegram from HICOMTERPACIS August 6, 1957 concerning the food supply of the Rongelapese.

Since March of 1954 there have been several radiological resurveys of the Marshall Islands. Included in these have been collection and analyses of plant, animal and fish life. These data are summarized in a report Radioactive Contamination of Certain Areas in the Pacific Ocean from Nuclear Tests, which should be completed by the Government Printing Office the middle of this month. We will be happy to send you a copy as soon as they are available.

In this report you will note our conclusion that there need be no restriction on the consumption of the natural food supply except for land crabs. The data on land crabs are not completely clear and we are having these rechecked. It is true that such animals with feeding habits like chickens may contain somewhat higher levels of contamination. However, only small amounts of strontium<sup>90</sup>, the radioisotope of principal concern, are found in the edible parts of these animals. Even considering the possibility of human consumption of parts of bone of these animals, it is highly unlikely that the total strontium<sup>90</sup> intake in the diet by this route would be significant.

The latest biological resurvey of Fongelap Island was made in July of this year and as soon as the analyses of these samples are completed, we will be pleased to transmit them to you. There is no reason to believe at this time that the levels of contamination will be significantly different from those predicted based on the last survey. In this connection, you will be interested to know that the actual external

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Mr. Maynard Neas

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gamma radiation levels measured on Rongelap at the time of return of the inhabitants substantiated our prediction that these levels would be within acceptable limits.

We will be happy to provide you with any further information at any time.

Sincerely yours,

C. L. Dunham, M. D., Director  
Division of Biology and Medicine

cc: HICOMTERPACIS, Guam

DMA

IA

Dr. Shilling

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