

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY
ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITIES, INC.

UPTON, L. I., N. Y.

TEL. YAPHANK 4-6262

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July 10, 1959

Dr. Charles L. Dunham, Director
Division of Biology and Medicine
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Chuck:

Yesterday I went to the United Nations in New York and had a session with Mr. Nucker as you suggested. It was quite apparent that he was extremely concerned about the number of people coming into and out of Rongelap and the disturbing influence resulting from this. As you mentioned, he seemed to be less antagonistic toward our medical surveys than toward the University of Washington surveys.

It was apparent that the Trust Territory officials do not have a grasp of the significance and importance of the medical surveys. For instance, I was surprised that Mr. Nucker did not appreciate the fact that the body burdens of the Rongelap people had increased since their return to Rongelap. They seem to take the attitude that we are merely carrying out a scientific experiment using the Rongelap people as "guinea pigs." I tried to make our position in this matter clear and to emphasize the importance of continuity in our observations of the people for the early detection of significant changes that may be related to radiation so that they could be treated as soon as possible and that the scientific value of these studies was extremely important, but that this was secondary to the former objective.

I told Mr. Nucker that we understood his problems and were willing to cooperate to as great an extent as possible without compromising our primary responsibilities. To this end I suggested that we might omit the whole-body counts on the next survey, thus avoiding the necessity of a ship and that we carry out, with a team of some 8 men, the basic hematological work and physical examinations. This could be accomplished by prior transport of necessary equipment and supplies from Kwajalein via Trust Territory ship to Rongelap and air-lift of personnel from Kwajalein to Rongelap at the time of the survey. Mr. Nucker indicated that he would like to have Trust Territory medical personnel participate to make it less obvious that it was an "AEC medical team." I readily agreed with this and indicated that it was highly desirable and he promised to furnish us one American doctor,

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Dr. Charles L. Dunham

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either Dr. Macdonald or Dr. Conover, to join the team this year, thus reducing the number of our personnel from 8 to 7. He agreed to help us in every way possible in carrying out these plans based on this limited scope of operation and expressed sincere appreciation of our willingness to cooperate with him in his objectives.

Mr. Nucker was disturbed about the need for the University of Washington making two trips a year to the island and was most anxious that their operation also be reduced in scope and frequency. I was not familiar enough with the program of the University of Washington group to take much of a stand on the issue. He indicated that, if he was forced into accepting a full scale program for the University of Washington group, he did not feel it was fair to me to reduce the scope of our operation and suggested that I contact you at the end of next week to find out the end result of all of this.

On the whole the conference was quite satisfactory and I think that in the end we each appreciated the other's problems better, resulting in coordinated efforts on both sides. I will delay further planning until I have had a chance to contact you next week.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Conard, M. D.

hlb

cc: Dr. Farr

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