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Neil D. Zeiden, General Counsel

May 10, 1961

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

INTERESTS OF DEM IN THE MEDICAL RESURVEYS OF THE RONGELAPSE

At the request of Mr. Forrester, I am providing the following statement as to the interests of this Division in the continuing medical resurvey of the Rongelapese.

Our first interest is really one which is Commission-wide and is related to the responsibility assumed by the Commission for the health of the people who were subjected to fallout March 1, 1954. Although the Rongelapese are currently receiving medical care through the Trust Territory comparable to, if not somewhat better than, that available to the other more remote Marshall Island Atolls, it is our feeling that the Commission should provide annual medical assessment of the Rongelapese by bona fide medical specialists in order to detect any early signs of disease which may have been overlooked by the Trust Territory practitioner. It is particularly important to check for early signs of cancer, and though leukemia is not a curable disease in the usual sense of the word, good therapeutic measures applied early could well alter significantly the clinical course in certain instances. You are aware I believe that the Division through the Test Organization made arrangements some years ago for a two-way radio communication between Rongelap and Kwajalein so as to provide emergency evacuation of clinically ill persons to Kwajalein for definitive care. This has already proved life-saving in one or two instances.

The other reason for DEM interest in continuing the examinations is strictly a scientific one and in the interest of the Commission and the needs of the UN Scientific Committee on Effects of Atomic Radiation and other bodies for knowledge about the long-term effects of radiation exposure in people.

cc: Dr. Bruner

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