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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE TWO-YEAR MEDICAL RESURVEY
OF THE RONGELAP PEOPLE

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There has been little illness among the people during the past year and they appeared to be in good health and in a good state of nutrition. An epidemic of chickenpox had occurred during the past year without complications. Many of the older Rongelap people are beginning to become more infirm, such as _____, the 100-year old woman. _____, the 78-year old preacher, is getting quite feeble and has given up preaching. Of the Rita controls, 57 of the original 82 were re-examined.

Most of the clinical findings were found to be similar to those that had been seen in previous examinations and occurred with about the same degree of frequency in the controls as in the Rongelap people. A few additional findings, not believed to be new diseases, were noted which probably had been overlooked before. Two Rongelap people had developed serious diseases during the past year. _____, No. 46, a 77-year old man, developed an apparent cerebral accident about 9 months ago and was partially paralyzed in the right arm and left leg. He cannot get around without help, though there is some improvement in function at present. The other case was norio, a 13-year old boy, who was hospitalized with acute rheumatic heart disease with congestive failure in December. He improved on digitalis and salicylates. Though he is apparently fully active at present, there is evidence of pronounced mitral disease and some degree of cardiomegaly, but with no evidence of decompensation. _____, No. 77, the leper, continues to show active, indolent ulcers on the soles of his feet. He presents a real problem in psychological adjustment since he is ostracized by his people and leads a lonely existence.

None of the clinical entities noted in the Rongelap people appear to be related in any way to radiation effect. It is difficult or impossible to say whether any of the increased aging might be due to radiation effect. Fertility certainly was not affected in view of the number of new babies and increase in pregnancies.

In both control and Rongelap children, impetigenous lesions remain quite common. Fifteen Rongelap people continue to show recognizable residual radiation skin lesions, but all lesions showed some degree of improvement on this examination. Areas of hyper-pigmentation, particularly on the back of the necks, showed less hyper-pigmentation and in some cases pigment had returned to normal. The dusky color noted earlier was not apparent at this time. All deeper lesions which had shown depigmentation now showed some degree of repigmentation. The foot lesions showing most residual changes were in _____ (No. 25), _____ (No. 26) and _____ (No. 76). These lesions showed depigmentation, atrophy of the skin and some degree of adherence to subcutaneous tissues. The ear lesion in Tina (No. 79) continues to show scarring, atrophy and in one place adherence of the skin to the underlying cartilage. In none of these cases, was there any evidence of tissue breakdown or sign of malignancy. Dr. Cannon did not feel that surgical procedures were indicated in any of these cases at this time. Color pictures and biopsies were taken which will be reported on later.

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Preliminary survey of the hematological data shows that there is in most cases continued improvement in the blood picture. The degree of improvement depends on which set of control data is used for comparison. The W.B.C. and absolute neutrophils appear to be about normal now. The lymphocytes, though slightly increased over one year, still appear to be slightly below control means. The platelets showed slight increase in the males over the one-year counts, but slight decrease was noted in the females, so that in general the platelet mean counts still remain slightly below control mean counts. The hematocrit was found to be about the same as in the control people. In view of the eosinophilia present in many of the people, both controls and Rongelap, stool examinations were carried out on 10 Rongelap individuals with high eosinophil counts. No ova or parasites were seen. The cause for the eosinophilia remains obscure.

Examination of the eyes by Colonel Lowrey revealed no lens opacities or other findings which could be directly related to radiation effect. Many eye conditions were encountered among both controls and Rongelap people, however, In several cases cataracts had resulted in marked visual impairment and surgical removal was accomplished.

Fifty-seven liters of urine were collected at random from exposed Rongelap people and precipitated for radiochemical analysis at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Preliminary results have revealed measurable activity to be present. A more detailed report, along with specific analysis for radionuclides, will be forthcoming in the near future. Ten individual 24-hour urine samples on Rongelap people were obtained and given to NEDL for analysis. No results have been reported on these samples yet.

Respectfully submitted

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