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Serial

June 1, 1956

For United States Government Use Only

Mr. Anthony T. Lausi  
 Director, Office of Territories  
 Department of Interior  
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lausi:

I was pleased to learn from your letters of May 15 and May 23, 1956, that pending a final recheck of Rongelap Atoll after the current nuclear test series, it appears that the return of Rongelap people will be approved.

We have been planning somewhat for this event, hence most of the specific questions raised by Dr. Dunham and other Atomic Energy Commission officials already have been under consideration here. In addition, there are several other points which we feel should be considered prior to return.

1. Sale of Rongelap Copra

Rongelap copra will have to be tested prior to the resumption of normal copra production. If it should turn out that the level of radioactivity content is questionable, arrangements will have to be made by Atomic Energy Commission and the Trust Territory to continue underwriting the support of the Rongelapese.

2. Subsidization of People on Rongelap

While a copra income can be anticipated, we will have to allow for a period of adjustment, possibly three months or longer, during which we will have to provide a subsidy for subsistence. Food crops on Rongelap have been without care for two years and certain of these will have to be brought back into production. Further, there will be a considerable lag between their resumption of copra production and its sale.

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This subsidization after return to Rongelap should be raised with the Atomic Energy Commission.

### 3. Need for agricultural and sanitation survey prior to resettlement

In this connection, we propose to have a preliminary survey made of Rongelap by a Marshall District agriculturist, the district field anthropologist, the sanitarian, and the Rongelap leaders, to determine what needs to be done and what period of time must be considered to make Rongelap self-supporting again.

a. An adequate and safe water supply needs to be insured. The cisterns have been without care for over two and a half years. They will need cleaning, screening, and possibly additional cisterns may have to be built. When the Uterikese were returned, the Navy repaired, flushed out and pumped in a supply of 10,000 gallons of fresh water for the Uterik cisterns. A similar plan must be provided for the Rongelap move. If the move occurs in early fall it will coincide with the start of the dry season and the insuring of adequate water supply will be vital.

b. The dry season also will effect recropping and a longer period of agricultural readjustment may have to be planned. In two and a half years time a great deal of jungle growth obviously has choked out food crops as well as affected coconut growth. It may be that more clearing will be necessary than we anticipate.

### 4. Transfer of housing on Ujit

We intend to transfer the housing on Ujit to Rongelap. Some repairs may be necessary since it is reported that a portion of the wooden house material has deteriorated.

In February, 1956, at a public meeting with the Visiting United Nations Mission, the Magistrate of Rongelap reported that the number of houses built for them on Ujit was less than the ones they had on Rongelap. He pointed out that when the move was made to Ujit, some Rongelapese were off the island on work contracts, in school, and visiting elsewhere. These individuals gradually infiltrated into the Ujit village since they were not able to return to Rongelap. A portion of this group are hangers on who probably will not be going back to Rongelap. In any event by September 8, 1954, 44 additional individuals had joined the original 84 who had been transferred from Rongelap. As of May 28, 1956, the population on Ujit was estimated at 173.

It seems likely that some additional houses may have to be made available to provide the same numbers of houses that were formerly on Rongelap.

5. Radio communication

We do not feel radio communication to Majuro would be essential, but would recommend a simple communication setup to allow radio contact with Ebeye. The Atomic Energy Commission radio link to Kili was not carried through only because of the complexity of the proposed elaborate setup. Kili had neither the trained technician nor transportation available to keep such a unit in operation. Under our own auspices, we have a simple receiving and transmitting radio on Kili at the present time. One of this nature should be established on Rongelap.

6. Care of leper and boy with rheumatic fever

We will make the necessary arrangements to take care of the leper as well as the 12 year old boy with rheumatic fever at Majuro. With respect to this point, there appears to be some discrepancy in facts. Your letter of May 15, 1956, reports a leper plus a 12 or 13 year old boy with rheumatic fever. Dr. Dunham's memorandum, on the other hand, mentions only a little leper boy. We shall check this with administration authorities in Majuro.

7. Pigs and chickens

A replacement of pigs and chickens for those formerly on Rongelap should be provided. Ejit, as a temporary site, was not equipped to raise pigs since subsistence food was not grown there. The original replacements could not be maintained on Ejit. Obviously, the inability to maintain such stock was something over which the people in Ejit had no control.

A new stock of pigs, chickens, and ducks, should be given to them. Our Director of Agriculture will determine whether a new supply needs to be shipped here by the Atomic Energy Commission or whether we can supply these out of local stock.

I shall look forward to discussing the Rongelap move with Dr. Dunham and you next week in Washington, D. C.

Sincerely,

D. H. Nucker  
Acting High Commissioner

cc: Distad, Majuro  
Director of Agriculture