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FILES

Transcribed from
Autograph Record
July 16, 1954

Paul B. Pearson

Trip to Majuro

On Sunday, July 4, in Honolulu I telephoned Mr. Frank Midkiff, High Commissioner for the Trust Territory. He was anxious to see us and asked Dr. Boss and I have lunch with him. At luncheon he discussed some of the problems of the Marshallese, particularly as related to the test activities of Atomic Energy Commission. He was particularly anxious for us to go to Majuro and to see the natives who have been moved from Rongelap.

It is about 580 miles from Eniwetok to Majuro and is about a five hour flight, counting the stop that is made at Kwajalein. Shortly after arriving at Eniwetok Wednesday morning, July 7, we learned there was a flight that day to Majuro, and that there would not be another flight for at least a week, so Drs. Hiatt, Boss, and I arranged to go down that day. We arrived at Majuro about 6 p.m. and were met at the airstrip by several of the Trust Territory personnel. That evening we had an opportunity to visit with some of them; among them was Mr. Maynard Neas, who is Executive Officer for the Marshall Islands of the Trust Territory. Dr. Dunham Kirkham is the Medical Officer there.

The next morning we went to Ejit which is the island now occupied by the Rongelap natives. Housing facilities there appear to be quite adequate and are certainly better than many of the natives have on the base island. The animals, particularly the chickens, and ducks and a few pigs that were around appear to be in a good state of nutrition and health. It was difficult to carry on much conversation with the natives as very few of them speak English. There appears to be a difference of opinion among the personnel of the Trust Territory at Majuro regarding the attitude of the Rongelap natives. Some of them indicated that the natives are not at all happy at Majuro and that they are anxious to return to Rongelap. It is quite likely that they are looking forward to returning to their home island. Since the area of Ejit is very small, it appears that the men have very little work or other activities to take up their time.

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129

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Memorandum to Files

After returning from Ejit to the base island, we talked with Mr. Neas regarding the possibility of the Trust Territory personnel making collections of water and coral from the various atolls that they visit during the course of the year. They apparently plan to get around to these atolls about every three months. The atolls that they visit include Ujelang, Eban, Jaluit, Majuro, Mili, Maloelap, Wotje, Likiep, and Utirik. There are other atolls that they also visit, but it would appear that collections might advantageously be made from the ones I have listed. It was agreed that we would write Mr. Neas, sending a copy of our letter to the High Commissioner, indicating the atolls that we wish to have collections made from. A supply of containers, 5 gallon and one gallon sizes, should be sent to Mr. Neas at Majuro. These will have to be sent out from the New York Operations Office. We will also provide Mr. Neas with more precise information on the collections we have made and the frequency of collections. I doubt that it would be desirable to make more than a single collection from each atoll and probably repeat this about four or five months later. These collections can be made at no direct expense to the Commission; I believe that these collections will be quite valuable and that we may want to continue them periodically, particularly in the event that there are future tests at the BPG.

CC: Dr. Bugher

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