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BOX No.

1227; "ERDA# 2"
BIKINI SURVEY (BIO-MSD)

FOLDER

July, 1969

The Seattle Times

SEATTLE WASHINGTON 98111

July 7, 1969

TELEPHONE MAIN 2-0300

Lloyd Meeds, M.C.
House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Lloyd:

Dr. Edward E. Hold of the University of Washington has returned from his latest survey trip to Bikini with some information that, if confirmed, could slow down the program to return the people to that atoll.

Dr. Hold was unable to check the facts and neither have I. But he said he heard the same story both on Bikini and in Honolulu. Briefly, these are his points:

1. Inferior equipment is being used in the atoll cleanup being coordinated by the Defense Atomic Supply Agency (DASA). Landing craft being used for across-the-lagoon transportation are in such bad condition that the Navy crews are unable to keep them operating, despite all-out efforts by the crewmen themselves.

Dr. Hold said the Navy crew worked all night to get the engine operating on one of the boats, only to have the steering mechanism break down a few boat-lengths from the dock. As a result of the continual breakdowns, Dr. Hold's party was unable to visit some islands along the atoll's western rim. Consequently, one member of the survey team will have to return to Bikini later to visit those islands.

Dr. Hold said construction equipment furnished by DASA to Holmes & Narver, the contractor, is in such poor condition that work has been slowed down.

2. Due to lack of Army cooperation, the Bikini program is being supported out of Hickam Field rather than nearby Kwajalein. The story that Dr. Hold picked up from personnel on Bikini was that DASA had approached Kwajalein directly for cooperation--and was promised full cooperation. However, orders later came from Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, that Kwajalein support be extended only for emergencies. Dr. Hold was told that individuals at Kwajalein still do all they can, but on an "under the table" basis.

This situation must be adding to the cost of the clean-up being financed by the Department of the Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission. But it would be even more serious if the policy was continued into the time when the Trust Territory Government takes over.

In my opinion, the second problem is potentially more serious than the first.

I would appreciate receiving any information you can turn up on these matters.

Thanks for your help in the past.

Sincerely,

Hill Williams

Hill Williams
Science Editor