

Denver Colo 80220  
April 29, 1975

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An Open Letter to

Rongelap Magistrate

Dear :

I have followed the problems of the exposed and unexposed populace of Rongelap for the last three years, and it was with great interest that I read your letter published in the Micronesia Independent issue of April 25.

I write to give you my gratuitous, unsolicited advice because I firmly believe you are making a mistake if you tell your people not to submit to further medical examinations by Dr. Conard and his group. You are quite right to ask for more human and understanding medical treatment, and you are right when you imply that you have made Dr. Conard famous in medical circles. But I think you are wrong in thinking that there are other doctors in other countries who will treat you better, and you are wrong in thinking that most Americans get better medical care than you do.

Your basic assumption is that Dr. Conard and others with the AEC have used you to further their own careers and their medical research. That is clearly true. They have also given you decent, expert medical care, without asking anything from you except a yearly or twice yearly physical. I suggest that any other doctors, from any other country, will ask a great deal more from you, and you will receive a great deal less. Why should Hiroshima doctors want to examine you or care for you, especially if they must pay their own way? The ONLY reason the Japanese will want to deal with you is that they can further their careers, initiate their research projects, and maybe become more famous than Dr. Conard. Don't fool yourself that they want to examine you because they really care. At least the Americans have a responsibility to you, since they exposed you in the first place. I know that some Japanese and English doctors came one time, but would they come year after year, without pay, and so far from home? If they would come at all, it would be more because they are interested in the research and the uniqueness of the Rongelapese, than because they care about you. Other doctors might ask payment from you in political terms.

You say that Conard's team is technically competent. You are correct, and I am sure you know that the Japanese and English doctors who visited you agreed that the AEC people are competent. You also say you want the kind of medical care America provides its own citizens. You are much better off getting the treatment you now get; America does not provide its citizens with very good health care. There are at least 10 countries that give their citizens better care than America. Most Americans never get the sort of examination you get once a year; if they do get such an exam, they pay a lot for it.

So I urge you to continue your efforts to get decent compensation for your exposure, to humanize the medical examinations, and to complain to the AEC about its failures. I urge you not to cut off the examinations until you know you have something better to replace them.

Sincerely yours,

Chips Barry, former MLSC attorney, Majuro.

/S/ Chips Barry

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