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CONGRESSMEN REPORT ON RADIATION EXPOSURE

WASHINGTON MARCH 18 (USIS) -- A report was submitted to the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy today regarding radiation exposure suffered by Pacific Islanders as a result of the latest atomic test at Eniwetok.

Committee Members Senator John O. Pastore and Representative Chet Holifield, submitted the report after visiting Kwajalein Island.

Holifield said in a covering letter to Joint Committee Chairman W. Sterling Cole:

"On March 15 Senator Pastore and I visited Kwajalein Island and personally investigated the care being given the native population which was evacuated from its home islands because of radiation exposure from a recent atomic test. We interviewed a number of the Islanders and observed all of them closely. As laymen, we could detect no visual evidences of radiation exposure, nor did we notice anything unusual about them. They seemed to be normal, happy and in the best of spirits.

"After our visit to the barracks where Island residents are housed, we received testimony from medical and evacuation team personnel. The evidence shows that naval vessels evacuated the natives promptly. They are being given medical care of the highest quality.

"It is true that some of the residents of the Islands received radiation exposures considerably in excess of the tolerances set for workers in atomic energy plants. All scientific and medical testimony given to date seems to indicate that no permanent injury will occur as a result of this level of exposure. A competent team of medical experts is keeping the entire group under daily observation. The evacuees are well-housed in civilian barracks on Kwajalein Island. Their diet is superior to their regular food supply on their home islands. A complete supply of clothing has been issued to each of them, and they are thoroughly enjoying their first experience with American athletic games, and other types of recreation.

"Our observations included the 28 American technicians as well as the Islanders.

"As nearly as we can determine, the unexpected radiation exposure was a result of (A) larger explosion than expected, and (B) unpredictable shifts in the winds at high altitudes.

"Senator Pastore and I are submitting herewith a detailed report and transcript of the hearing.

"I returned to Washington on the next plane and Senator Pastore and staff members left for Japan." Item

KG 128 Records of the JCAE, General Correspondence

Box 712

Federal Weapons Tests (Eniwetok) 1954/1955