

PUBLIC SAFETY

File Second A-Test Suit

Marshall Island residents are among those who have joined together in a second attempt to bring suit against the U. S. Government demanding end to nuclear bomb tests.

► A SCHOOL teacher who lives only 200 miles from the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's Pacific nuclear test site filed a Federal Court suit in Washington demanding an end to nuclear bomb detonations.

Dwight Heine of Ebon Atoll, Marshall Islands, claims the United States has gone far from home to conduct dangerous nuclear tests at the expense of the health and welfare of the peoples whose homes have been invaded for the tests.

Mr. Heine was joined in filing the suit against Defense Secretary Neil H. McElroy and members of the Atomic Energy Commission by 15 fellow Marshall Islanders, including his wife and six children, one American Samoan, three Japanese and an American from Wisconsin.

Their attorneys, who also filed the earlier suit brought by Dr. Linus Pauling and others, hope to consolidate the new suit with the older one still awaiting a hearing and have the two heard and judged together. (See SNL, April 12, p. 228.)

They believe the Heine suit will "possibly add substance" to the Pauling suit.

In an attempt to prevent further nuclear weapons tests during the "long time it may take to bring these matters to a head," they also requested an injunction which would bring an immediate halt to the tests. Arguments on the injunction request are scheduled to be heard in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, July 7.

The Heine suit, which is identical to the Pauling suit in most respects, goes beyond the earlier suit in two major points:

1. Most of the plaintiffs in the new suit

claim they are directly injured in some form due to their proximity to the test site, although they point out that any person, no matter where he resides, should be an "interested party" because of the possibility of world-wide fallout;

2. The new suit charges that the tests violate freedom of the high seas and the United Nations trust agreement for the U. S. Mandate over the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Heine told reporters land has been taken from his people and citizens have been displaced to make the tests possible, and that the economy of the islands is suffering.

One of the Japanese plaintiffs is the captain of a fishing boat who has been put out of business, the suit charges, because he "cannot enter said area for fear of being blown to death or being seriously injured" and because the waters and fish of that part of the Pacific are said to be contaminated by radioactive fallout.

Mr. Heine was the Marshall Islands spokesman before the U.N. Trusteeship Council in 1954 when the islanders made a formal request for suspension of nuclear tests.

He was formerly superintendent of elementary schools under Navy administration of the islands, and became administrator for education when the Department of the Interior took over.

Mr. Heine currently is on leave of absence to Honolulu where he is taking advanced college courses in education.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1958

PUBLIC HEALTH

Healthy Economy Fights TB

► IN ADDITION to the success of several antituberculosis drugs, a high standard of living and a healthy economy have helped immeasurably in the fight against tuberculosis, Dr. Herman E. Hilleboe, New York State commissioner of health, told SCIENCE SERVICE.

The past few years have shown a decline in the number of deaths and cases of tuberculosis in New York as well as in the rest of the country. The standard of living is constantly rising. This contributes to the fight against malnutrition and poor housing facilities, the breeding grounds for tuberculosis.

Although the death rate from tuberculosis is generally higher in the South than in the North, the rate of decline in recent years in all parts of the country has been approximately the same.

Concentrated efforts have been made by public health authorities to discover individuals with tuberculosis and isolate them until recovery.

Case-finding through chest clinics, mass chest X-ray surveys and routine chest examinations of persons admitted to general hospitals, plus the availability of hospital beds and clinical facilities, have been important factors in improving the tuberculosis situation, Dr. Hilleboe said.

New York State is currently closing its Broadacres Sanatorium at Utica, one of six state tuberculosis hospitals, with a capacity of 182 beds. In 1957, four county tuberculosis hospitals in upstate New York were closed.

A decrease in reported cases and deaths has occurred throughout the country since the widespread use of new drugs and sur-

gical advances in the tuberculosis field. Streptomycin and paraaminosalicylic acid (PAS) came into general use around 1950 and isoniazid (INH) became available in 1952.

In 1957 there were 467 deaths attributed to tuberculosis in upstate New York. From 1949 to 1957 the decrease in the TB death rate was 76%. During the same period, the drop in newly reported cases was 60%.

The Veterans Administration in Washington also reports an average decrease of 16% in the daily number of tuberculosis patients in Veterans hospitals since 1954.

"For the ultimate control of tuberculosis it is essential that our economic status remain high and that all the tools available to the medical and public health professions be used to the fullest extent. Among these tools none is more essential than the availability of an adequate number of hospital beds," Dr. Hilleboe concluded.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1958

NUTRITION

Child's Nearsightedness Aided by Special Diet

► CHILDREN suffering from nearsightedness can be helped by feeding them a special, well-balanced diet, P. A. Gardiner of Guy's Hospital, London, England, reported.

A one-year study was conducted comparing experimental and control groups of children who suffered non-congenital nearsightedness. The experimental group received a diet containing an amount of animal protein equal to ten percent of the calorie count. The controls continued on their regular diets. Results of the experimental group revealed:

1. The gradual deterioration of vision associated with nearsightedness was arrested in some children 12 years of age or more.

2. Some of the children 12 years of age and older actually experienced some improvement in their nearsighted condition.

3. Among those children under 12 who received the special diet the deterioration rate toward poorer vision was slower than that of the control group.

The difference in treatment between the two groups lay primarily in the increased amount of animal protein consumed by the treated group, although it is clear that other factors were influential, the ophthalmologist says in the British journal *Lancet* (May 31).

It is certainly possible that the balance of the diet and not the animal protein content may be a factor, he reports, since diets were radically changed by the treatment.

Previously, it had been known that nearsightedness, or myopia, increased more in children who refused animal protein in their diet than those whose tastes were more general.

It has also been known for some time that myopic children whose vision is deteriorating eat less food for every pound they increase in weight than do normally sighted children and those nearsighted children whose vision is not becoming poorer.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1958