

(a) There are no insane asylums or orphanages in the Marshalls.  
USNMG Leprosaria, Bokkan Island, Jaluit Atoll.

(b) The leper colony on Bokkan Island, Jaluit Atoll, was visited by a Medical Officer and a Hospital Corps Officer on 20 December, 1946. This island lies approximately five miles south of Otole Island, Jaluit Atoll, and was reached by native outrigger sailing canoe. The settlement consists of a group of seven thatched houses of substantial but primitive construction. At the present time there are thirteen occupants, eight males and five females. All were examined at the time of this inspection. Five of the cases present definite evidence of nodular leprosy and three are cases of advanced nerve leprosy. Of the remaining five people in the colony two are married to resident lepers and are free of disease, two show no clinical signs of leprosy and state that they were sent to the colony by the Japanese although they were not conscious of being ill, and the fifth joined the colony voluntarily to escape the Japanese about two years ago.

There are two additional lepers, a man and a woman, still living on Aili Island, Jaluit Atoll, which was the original location of the leper colony during the Japanese regime. This island was bombed out by American planes during the war and the lepers evacuated to Bokkan Island. Aili Island was not visited by the inspection party, but was emphatically preferred by the Bokkan group to their present location, for reasons as follows:

The economic situation on Bokkan is far from satisfactory. A few pigs and chickens were seen about the place, and fish are obtained from the lagoon. But the principle native staples, such as breadfruit, taro, sweet potatoes, bananas, arrowroot and yams are totally lacking. The people subsist largely on charity. The coconuts and pandanus growing on the island are inadequate to supply more than a fraction of their dietary requirements. Supplies of food are collected sporadically by the preachers on other islands of the atoll and sent to the colony from time to time when the need becomes acute. Water is obtained from rain-collection barrels and drums placed beneath palm and pandanus trees to catch the runoff as it drips from foliage overhead. No covers of any kind are in use. The water is stagnant and discolored by debris. Human waste is disposed of in the customary Marshallese manner by bowel evacuation in the nearby lagoon.

Flies were prevalent everywhere although not more so than in other native villages visited in the Jaluit area. Mosquitoes were not observed during the period of investigation nor were mosquito larvae detected in the water storage devices. Rodents were stated by the natives to be numerous. Medical care is provided by the Marshallese practitioner based on Otole Island, Jaluit Atoll who makes rounds once or twice a month. No attempt has been made to administer chaulmoogra oil or other therapeutic agents commonly used in the specific treatment of leprosy.

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(c) In spite of the lack of natural food resources on the island of Bokkan, there is no malnutrition among the inhabitants. An emergency does not exist at the present time. However, the people without exception protested strongly against being retained on this island, and requested with equal conviction that they be returned to Aili Island, Jaluit Atoll, where natural food elements are present in abundance. Since the native houses on Aili have been bombed out it will be necessary to reconstruct adequate housing, of native type or otherwise, before moving the colony to its former and more desirable location. Four males and four females of the leper group on Bokkan are either free of disease or have it in non-capacitating form. It is recommended that these eight people be transported in time to Aili Island as a labor party to construct homes for themselves and for the more seriously ill who will follow them as soon as housing facilities are adequate to receive them.