

PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

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Marianas

SOLAR DISTILLERS INSTALLED AT MAJURO

Truk

Ponape

Marshalls

Yap

Palau

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Dec. 20 . . . Professor Everett D. Howe of the University of California aided by Mr. George L. Chan, Sanitary Engineer of the South Pacific Commission, have recently completed installation of three demonstration solar distillers on Majuro Atoll. These units are capable of producing over five gallons of distilled water daily on sunny days using ten gallons of sea water as a source. One of the units is located at the U. S. Weather Bureau Station in Majuro and will be used for determining the performance characteristics of these units under the prevailing conditions of latitude and weather cycle. The other two are located at private homes and will be used to study the feasibility of using "home-size" units for supplying potable water to individual families in isolated outer-island locations.

Installation of these units at Majuro is part of an experimental program of the Health Section of the South Pacific Commission in the field of water supply. Mr. Chan has already visited eleven other areas of the South Pacific Commission's area and has observed the water supply arrangements in a variety of islands. While on mountainous islands deep wells and surface catchments continue to be the best and most economic sources

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of water, skimming wells, roof catchments and solar stills are regarded as the most appropriate water sources for potable supplies on the coral islands and atolls, with solar distillation particularly recommended where there is a combination of low rainfall (less than 40 inches per year) and an annual "dry" period of four or five months. This combination occurs in the northern atolls of the Marshalls district.

Attempts to distill fresh from salt water are, of course, not new. These particular distiller units, only 5 feet square and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, were designed by engineers at the University of California at Berkeley and pre-tested at their Sea Water Conversion Laboratory in Richmond, California. The components for these stills were made up in kits and shipped to several locations in the Pacific. Using these kits Professor Howe and Mr. Chan have assembled similar units at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, at Rangiroa in the Tuamotus, at Lautoka in Fiji and at Fisherman's Island near Port Moresby, New Guinea. An additional unit will be placed in one of the drier atolls in the Marshalls and a demonstration unit will be installed in Saipan.

The Majuro installations were made with the assistance of the Community Development ~~Department~~ of the Trust Territory, with Mr. Allen, Community Development Advisor of Saipan, in charge of all local arrangements. Also present and participating in the work were Mr. Melvin Koizumi, Sanitary Engineer with the Public Health Department of the Trust Territory and Mr. Carl Dennis, Sanitarian with the Public Health Department, Headquarters.

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