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July 19, 1954

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

JAPANESE EXPEDITION TO THE PACIFIC PROVING GROUNDS AREA

Note by the Secretary

1. At Meeting 1014 on July 7, 1954, the Chairman requested that the staff ascertain the accuracy of details of newspaper stories about the Japanese expedition to the Pacific Proving Ground area.

2. The Director of Biology and Medicine has advised that the best summary of information presently available is contained in the following dispatch from Ambassador Allison in Tokyo on July 7, 1954:

The research vessel SHUNKOTSU MARU returned July 4 after a 9,000 mile survey of the Pacific test area. A detailed report and samplings were submitted to the fisheries agency upon arrival. The data is being studied by the new group, Bikini waters investigation liaison council, with the findings "to be treated as national property and given to the world."

Newspapers on the following day quoted the fishing agency as announcing that: (a) Interim reports show that fish from the test area are edible unless caught in the northern equatorial current; (b) Radioactive contamination of sea water and marine life is strongest between 8 and 12 degrees north latitude west of Bikini; (c) Most radioactivity on tuna was found in the internal organs and around the gills, very little in the flesh;

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- (d) Plankton was much more radioactive than fish;
- (e) Exposure to sea water in the area is to be avoided;
- (f) Only minor radioactivity was found in the air;
- (g) The safest fishing area was south of Bikini where no radioactivity was found;
- (h) Navigation was not jeopardized barring further tests in the area.

A fisheries spokesman envisaged another expedition next year; also stating the Pacific current would not bring contaminated water to the Japanese Coast.

A newsreel taken aboard is now showing in Tokyo and there is substantial daily output from nine newspaper men participating in the expedition. Press accounts are largely factual and moderate in tone, some of them constructively pointed out (a) Radioactive fish were eaten during the trip; (b) Certain scientists aboard have scoffed at overnervous dumping of radioactive fish here; (c) Highest radioactivity encountered was .65 milliroentgen per day or one percent of the danger limit.

3. The Director of Biology and Medicine stated that while it will be some time before AEC has its own data in hand, the newspaper accounts seem temperate in tone and not out of line with data already available.

ROY B. SNAPP

Secretary