

March 17

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A-Blast Burned 10 Seamen

Japanese Boat In Bikini Area

TOKYO, March 16. (Tuesday). — (AP) — A Japanese sea captain said today that an atomic blast in the Bikini area March 1 showered "snow-white ashes" on the 23 men aboard his fishing boat for two hours.

"Three days later, we discovered our exposed skin turning reddish-black and blistering," said Capt. Isao Tsutsui of the 100-ton Daigo Fukuryu Maru, in an interview with the newspaper Yomiuri.

"It was our first realization we were suffering from atomic radiation burns."

One crewman was reported still in serious condition at a Tokyo hospital.

SAW FLASH

Tsutsui said his boat "accidentally wandered into the Bikini atomic test area, ignorant of the impending atomic tests."

On March 1, Tsutsui said there was a brilliant orange-red flash on the horizon about 80 miles away.

"Seven minutes later, we heard a deafening explosion and then saw in the next instant a huge mushroom form shooting up in the distant sky," he said.

"About 90 minutes after the blast, snow-white ashes began falling all around the ship. The ashes continued for two hours."

On March 1, the Atomic Energy Commission announced briefly in Washington that an "atomic device" had been exploded in mid-Pacific, "the first in a series of tests."

Interest in the latest tests has focused on speculation that they would include a hydrogen bomb, the most powerful explosion ever set off by man.

On March 11, the AEC said that 28 Americans and 236 natives of the Marshall Islands "were unexpectedly exposed to some radiation" but suffered no burns and all were reported well.

Burned Japanese Fishermen In Hospital

By JIM BECKER

Associated Press Foreign Staff

TOKYO, March 17.—The United States today offered top-flight American medical aid to 23 Japanese fishermen burned and blistered by ashes from a supersecret United States nuclear test in the Pacific.

United States Ambassador John Allison also proposed a joint Japanese-American investigation of the March 1 incident in the Bikini-Eniwetok test region.

Only one of the 23 crew members was considered in dangerous condition when their boat arrived Sunday, but all had entered a hospital today. Three were added to the "serious" list, but doctors said they expect all 23 will live.

Hydrogen Blast Suspected

The intensity of the burns—skin blackening and hair falling out—and the men's story of the blast stirred speculation that the March 1 test may have been a thermonuclear (probably hydrogen) explosion. The crew members' reports indicate they were about 80 miles from the blast center.

The United States embassy said a team of three American and three Japanese doctors associated with the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in the atom-bombed city of Hiroshima will treat the victims.

Allison's offer was the first official comment from the United States on the incident.

Official Discussion Planned

Kyodo News Agency said the Japanese Foreign Office intends to take up the matter with the United States officially. Japanese officials said they will ask compensation for the victims.

One nuclear specialist, Prof. Mitsuo Takeya of Rikkyo University, said he believes the blast may have been a "hydrogen-caliber bomb," basing his theory on the belief a regular atomic bomb could not have hurled the radioactive debris 80 miles. He said the ashes were pulverized coral.

Shock Felt 176 Miles Off Bikini

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON, March 17. — Representative Durham, Democrat, North Carolina, ranking Democrat on the Congressional Atomic Committee, said today the United States "exploded the month" a thermonuclear weapon many times more powerful than the explosive test of Nov. 1, 1952.

Other sources said the shock was felt 176 miles from Bikini the test site.

"The 1952 explosion was a success," Durham told a reporter. "This more recent one is just much greater."

Representative Cole, Republican, New York, chairman of the Senate-House atomic group, had announced last night that the United States has the hydrogen bomb — "thermonuclear" is the scientific adjective for this new weapon—and can deliver it anywhere in the world.

Cole said it is a fair assumption that Russia has an H-bomb.

Experts Astonished

Others in a position to know, but who asked not to be quoted by name, said a "warm-up" explosion of a hydrogen device in the Pacific March 1 astonished American scientists with a blast at least 600 times more powerful than the Hiroshima atomic bomb. They said it was three or four times stronger than had been expected.

The Hiroshima bomb, which caused 60,000 deaths, was measured at 20,000 tons of TNT. The March 1 hydrogen explosion was measured at between 12,000,000 and 14,000,000 tons of TNT, it was said. These sources also said it was five times greater than the measured force of what was believed to be the first H-bomb test, November 1, 1952. Other comparisons with the 1952 tests varied.

Explosion Described

Those who reported the 600-times-Hiroshima effect, also said of the March 1 blast:

The blast was set off from a 150-foot tower and shot a nuclear cloud more than 17 miles into the air.

The shock was felt at Kwajalein Island, 176 miles away.

There was a fall-out of nuclear dust on an inhabited island 330 miles away, but in harmless quantities at that distance.

And, it was added, scientists now believe they can build hydrogen weapons with an explosive power of 100,000,000 tons of TNT, as compared with the 12,000,000 tons of TNT used in the 1952 tests.