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September 1, 1954

Honorable John W. Heselton
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Heselton:

Of necessity Mr. Cole has been out of the city a great deal recently. He has, therefore, asked me to reply to your inquiry of August 13 with regard to the letters from your constituents concerning the Spring H-bomb test series in the Pacific. He too has received letters of a similar vein from worried citizens.

Although the Japanese fishing vessel incident was indeed unfortunate, Mr. Cole has endeavored to point out the following relevant facts in answering these inquiries and protests:

(1) The Japanese fishing vessel, the "Lucky Dragon", was more nearly 120 miles than 1200 miles from the last explosion. It was just outside the original safety zone, which was a rectangular area 240 miles by 120 miles. The new safety area, which reaches out 450 miles, is believed to be more than adequate, according to the Atomic Energy Commission, to protect shipping in the area.

(2) The Spring test series in the Pacific was completed early in June and no further tests are scheduled at this time. However, in the development of our weapons' program it is vitally important that we test new designs in order that we may maintain our lead in military strength. We, as a people, must keep in mind that we are engaged in a titanic struggle with world communism and that, to date, our strongest protection against Communist aggression has been our military program, particularly our atomic weapon stockpile. It is essential for our national welfare that we continue to push our research program to develop new and improved weapons for we may rest assured that the enemy is not idle.

(3) The atomic program, as a whole, has the finest safety record of any industry in the country. The test program itself has a very excellent safety record. When you realize that the atomic energy program has consumed \$10 billion over a period of ten years and has

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Ltr to Hon. John W. Reselton
House of Representatives (Cont'd)

September 1, 1954

employed an average of 100,000 people, this one incident, unfortunate though it may be, can, we think, be judged in its proper perspective. Equally, although the Commission believed due care had been taken to protect all personnel involved in the tests, the civilian populations and the shipping in that area, even greater precautions will be taken in the future.

(4) The Congress, through the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, is kept fully informed concerning the Commission's weapons test program and the Committee will continue to follow future test programs with keen interest.

I sincerely hope the above information will be of assistance to you in answering the inquiries you have received.

Sincerely yours,

Wayne P. Brobeck
Acting Executive Director

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