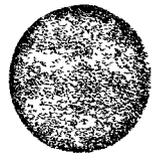


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*... should be
... facts well
... and recognized by us*

CONDITION OF EXPOSED JAPANESE FISHERMEN



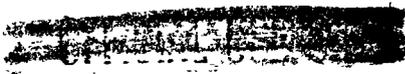
The crew of the fishing vessel FUKURYU MARU apparently are suffering from exposure to radioactivity. It is to be regretted that their illness may have been the result of the position of the vessel in near proximity to the Pacific Proving Grounds during the current test series. Immediately following press reports of exposure of the crew, all medical facilities of the Far East Command were placed at the disposal of the Japanese for treatment of the 23 crewmen reportedly injured. As evidence of the good faith of this offer, 21 of the patients were flown from Yaizu to Tokyo in U.S. transport aircraft. In addition, at the request of the AEC, the facilities, equipment, and medical staff of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission were offered to the Japanese by the Director of the project. Subsequently, our Ambassador at Tokyo made further offers of assistance both in terms of scientific counsel and medical examination and treatment. The record clearly demonstrates that the welfare of the patients has been and continues to be of prime interest to the United States.

Despite repeated offers of assistance on the part of United States medical authorities, and repeated assurances that these offers would be accepted, thorough medical examination of the patients by U. S. physicians has not been permitted. Hence we are compelled to rely almost exclusively on Japanese sources for fragmentary medical data concerning the patients. On the other hand, the Japanese did accept our offer to analyze urine samples of the patients for the possible presence of important radioactive materials. The results of these analyses in and of themselves are inconclusive as to the over-all condition of the patients. Complete data essential to diagnosis and prognosis have been requested but have not been received.

For your further information, the 236 Marshallese inhabitants of the atolls nearby the Pacific Proving Ground who were exposed to radioactive fall-out appear to be in no danger of serious permanent after effects. As soon as it was apparent that these people were exposed to radioactive fall-out, they were evacuated to the U.S. Naval station at Kwajalein where care was immediately provided by the U.S. Navy. In addition, a team composed of medical experts from the AEC, the U.S. Army and Navy was promptly formed and sent to the forward area to assure the best available medical attention and care. The welfare and continued well being of these people will remain a matter of vital interest to the United States.

May 3, 1954
EM: HCBrown

DOE ARCHIVES



STATUS VERIFIED
BY William D. Krauser DATE 3-18-84

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EFFECT OF FALL-OUT ON TUNA

outside the immediate test area

There is no evidence that tuna or any other commercially edible fish in its natural habitat has by virtue of the Pacific tests been rendered unfit for human consumption. If we accept Japanese reports that fish aboard the FUKURYU MARU were grossly contaminated, this could only have resulted from their becoming contaminated after being taken aboard; i.e., their contamination was secondary to the contamination of the vessel itself.

Statements have appeared in the Japanese press to the effect that fish appearing in the Japanese market other than those from the FUKURYU MARU have been grossly contaminated. However, we have no authentic reports from the Japanese government to the effect that tuna except from the FUKURYU MARU, had levels of radioactivity that would even approach permissible levels of contamination.

Informed scientific opinion, borne out by recent continuous monitoring by the Federal Food and Drug Administration of tuna fish coming to the west coast from Pacific fishing grounds, and further supported by the results of marine biological studies carried out over the past several years under AEC auspices, provides no basis for concern over tuna caught or to be caught in the Pacific fishing areas.

May 4, 1954
Howard C. Brown, Jr.
Division of Biology and Medicine

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