

Looking at WASHINGTON

Official Report Reveals Power Of Atomic Bombs

It is highly probable that the public generally has not correctly appraised the atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll. Prior to the explosion, there were many irresponsible predictions that exaggerated the effects of the new weapon and, consequently, when the bomb failed to sink all of the ships in the area, the public experienced a "let-down" and was over-impressed by the suggestion of some writers that the first test was a "dud."

From the report of the Army-Navy chiefs of staff it now seems possible to secure a much more accurate estimate of the effectiveness of the atomic bomb. In the first test, as the reader will recall, the bomb was dropped from an airplane to test its destructiveness in an aerial explosion. Only one ship was within 1,000 feet of the surface point over which the bomb exploded, and about twenty ships were within half a mile.

All of these were badly damaged, five sinking and others being so damaged that repairs would have taken twelve days just to get them under their own power.

More significant, we think, is the radiation intensity which accompanied the explosion. From a study of animals exposed to the lethal radiations, which are gamma rays and neutrons, the experts conclude that all personnel normally stationed aboard the ships centered around the air burst, and many others at greater distances would have been killed. Those protected by steel, water or other dense materials, in the outlying target vessels, might have escaped but "vessels within a mile of an atomic bomb air burst would eventually become inoperative due to crew casualties."

The second, or under-water explosion, produced violence estimated to be equal to 20,000 tons of TNT, lifted a column of water 2,200 feet, which the experts estimate contained 10-

000,000 tons of water. The 28,000-ton battleship Arkansas also appeared to be lifted, but this awaits confirmation.

While the base of the huge column was surrounded by a wall of foaming water several hundred feet high, waves which were 30 to 100 feet in height about 1,000 feet from the center of the explosion, rapidly diminished in size as they proceeded outward. When the waves reached Bikini Island, they were only seven feet high, failed to pass over the island and did no material damage.

While the second explosion did not produce an initial flash equal to that of the aerial burst, it produced radioactivity in the water estimated to equal that of many hundreds of tons of radium. Great quantities of this highly lethal radio-active water descended upon the target ships, constituting a hazard that made it unsafe for inspection parties, even after four days, to spend any useful length of time on those anchored at the center of the target area. The target ships did not present a normal anchorage but were placed to obtain maximum data, with twenty being within one-half mile and an additional twenty within the next half mile.

Pointing out that an atomic burst cannot be measured in terms of conventional explosives, the committee says that the largest bomb of the past was effective within a radius of only a few hundred feet, but that the atomic bomb does its work in a distance measured by thousands of feet.

Conventional bombs must score a direct hit or near-miss to cause significant damage to battleships, but in the underwater explosion at Bikini, a battleship sank immediately although at a distance of well over 500 feet from the explosion.

The air bomb did great damage to the super-structure of major ships within a half mile radius, but only minor damage to their hulls, but no ship within a mile of either burst could have escaped "without some damage to itself and serious injury to a large number of its crew."

Concerning the radiological phenomena accompanying the two bursts, the Joint Chiefs point out that in the case of the air-burst bomb, unprotected personnel within one mile would have suffered high casualties by intense neutron and gamma radiation, as well as by blast and heat.

In the underwater explosion, the air-burst wave was far less intense, without any heat wave of significance, but large masses of highly radio-active water were thrown onto the decks and into the hulls of vessels. "These contaminated ships became radio-active stoves and would have burned all living things aboard them with in-

visible and painless but deadly radiation."

Veto Of Oil Bill Leaves It To Courts

President Truman's veto of the "Tide Land Oil Bill" should cause no surprise and we are unable to see where there is any basis for a difference of opinion as to the propriety of the presidential veto.

As the reader knows, the bill would have renounced claims to such oil rich lands, principally between low-tide marks and the three-mile limit along the coast and, thus establish the title of the respective states to the area in question.

As the President says, however, the question should be decided by the Supreme Court, not by Congress. "If the United States owns the areas," he argues, "they should not be given away." He adds that if the Supreme Court decides that the Federal Government has not title to or interest in the land, it is unnecessary for Congress to quit-claim them.

Congressmen Tend To Protect Seniority Rule

The Congressional Reorganization Bill, in the opinion of many observers, represents something along the line of modernization of Congressional machinery, but does not go far enough.

The objection is made that the recommendation of the La Follette-Monroney Committee, that the rule of seniority by which Congressmen automatically are elevated to committee chairmanships, be ended, and that the number of committees be radically reduced.

The argument advanced for terminating the seniority rule is that it prevents the party in power from putting its ablest men at key posts in Congress. Another argument, advanced in some sections, is that it enables one-party Southern Democrats to secure important assignments. Again, it often results in the presence of anti-administration congressmen in important key jobs.

The custom of Congressmen in gradually moving up upon committees, until the senior member of the party in power acquires the chairmanship, has been in effect for many years. It will be very difficult to have the rule abolished and, in fact, proponents of Congressional reorganization clearly understood that inclusion of this provision to abolish seniority would have defeated the entire measure.

The rule will probably retain its power for some years to come, not only because of the natural desire of men with long service to secure positions of power, but because all members of Congress, from the smaller states, have the suspicion that if it is abolished and the leaders elected by majority vote of the party, all of the key positions will go to Congressmen who come from important or doubtful states. This will, in the opinion of some Congressmen, mean that members from the larger states will have an unfair advantage over other members of Congress.

In addition, it should not be overlooked, the basic conception of the American government is a system of checks and balances. At no time, in the early formation of our governmental machinery expect, or desire, that a popular vote of the people should decide important questions.

There was the balance provided in the two Houses, with the Senate based upon equal representation in each state and the House membership based upon population. Nowhere in the original framework of the governmental structure was provision made for the people, upon the basis of a majority vote, to decide any important question.

Congress Divides Funds On The Basis Of Need

Congress has passed and sent to the President a bill to provide Federal funds to assist states in the construction of non-profit hospital institutions. The interesting provision is that the basis upon which the states will share in the fund is "need" which will be determined by the ratio their per capita income bears to the national average value of products, population and other factors.

Senator Lister Hill, of Alabama, says this is the first time Congress has ever approved variable grants to the states and suggests that it sets a precedent in distributing Federal funds on the basis of need.

The effort of many Americans to make every section of the United States conform to the ideas of the majority, and to make all states conform to the decision of the majority of states, has been noted for years. If the trend is to continue, there is no reason whatever why the Federal Government should not distribute all of its funds to the states upon the basis of need for the purpose of establishing essential equality of opportunity for every citizen.

We call attention to these trends without indicating that they have our approval. Without it, however, the campaign to unify the nation and to make it in one mold, has gained considerable impetus. It now threatens the local self-government that was, at one time, the possession of state governments.

Free Classification For Cotton Needed

The difference between the different grades of cotton is very large this year and it is more important than ever that farmers know the grade and staple of their cotton before marketing it.

Dan Holler of State College, Ex-

tension cotton marketing specialist, says that 26 of the major cotton producing counties have qualified for the free classing service this year in North Carolina.

He points out, however, that all of the ginners in those counties have not bonded themselves and made arrangements for taking samples. This step is necessary before farmers are sure of getting the free classification service under the Smith-Doxey Act.

Applications for the classing service were required to be filed by August 15 but there is yet time for the ginners to bond themselves and arrange for supplies in taking the samples. Holler suggests that growers check with their ginners to see that this has been done.

Last year some farmers sold their cotton for considerably less than they could have obtained with a Government loan. Others sold their cotton without waiting for a few days to receive the classing card, telling them the grade and staple of their cotton, and also its loan value. Holler says that in any number of instances they sold their cotton for less than what it was worth simply because they did not know its value.

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