

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

407167

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MEMORANDUM:

TO: Elmer B. Staats, Executive Director
Operations Coordinating Board

FROM: Paul F. Foster
Special Assistant to the General Manager

SUBJECT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF AEC OCEANOGRAPHIC SURVEY IN PACIFIC

Starting in late February, an oceanographic survey of the Pacific currents has been carried on by the AEC, the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and the University of Washington. The survey party has been aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter, TANEY, and has carried on sampling of waters and plankton in the various currents of the Pacific north of the equator.

The cruise will conclude in Japan about the middle of this month. To avoid exaggerated rumors about the findings of the survey as to radioactivity, the Commission plans to issue early next week an announcement giving general report on the cruise.

At the direction of Chairman Strauss I am sending copies of the announcement text approved at yesterday's meeting of the Commission. This should be issued no later than April 12, as the TANEY is due to dock in Japan April 13. It will be greatly appreciated if you can obtain the comment of OCB members and provide it to us by next Monday, April 11.

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Marine biological surveys which have been carried on by AEC and cooperating agencies for some years in the Marshall Islands have now been extended to the major currents of the Western Pacific.



A team of six scientists from the Atomic Energy Commission, the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and the Institute of Applied Fisheries of the University of Washington is carrying on the studies. They are aboard the United States Coast Guard Cutter TANEY. The expedition departed from the West Coast of the United States February 26, 1955. It has traversed wide reaches of the Equatorial and North Equatorial currents and before the end of the expedition on or about April 15 will traverse the Kuroshio Current east of Japan.

The scientists aboard the TANEY are making measurements at various depths of temperatures, current characteristics, salinity, and the traces of radioactivity, natural and introduced, which may be found in the sea water. They also are collecting plankton and other marine life and are measuring these specimens for radioactivity.

The preliminary survey data of the group of the TANEY are consistent with the findings of Japanese scientists on the cruise of the SHINICOTSU MARU in June 1954. The Japanese expedition found that residual radioactivity from the test conducted in the Marshall Islands in the spring of 1954 continued to be detectable. Since then, this residual radioactivity has greatly diminished in intensity in accordance with the known laws of radioactive decay and through mixing with large volumes of the ocean water.

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The minute traces of radioactivity being found by the TANEY expedition exist in proportions predicted by oceanographers. The activity is much smaller than any which would create a health hazard.



It is expected that the data collected during this cruise will clear up a number of presently obscure points in oceanography. The presence of traces of radioactivity from the CASTLE series of tests is being utilized in mapping the course and rate of flow of the North Equatorial current. The expedition will follow these waters as long as it is possible to detect the identifying activity. Valuable information concerning the depth of mixing of surface waters and the rate of turnover of the deeper waters should result from these studies.

Commander Albert J. Carpenter is in command of the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter TANEY and the members of the scientific team are as follows:

Dr. John H. Harley, Mr. Robert Morse, Mr. Rudolph Anker, Health and Safety Laboratory, New York Operations Office, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission; Dr. Warren S. Wooster and Mr. Robert Gilkey, Scripps Oceanographic Institute; Dr. Allyn H. Seymour, Institute of Applied Fisheries, University of Washington.