L.T.-ATOMIC LT-P.G.T. wes. Apr. 22 52.

After witnessing today's atomic explosion here in the Nevada desert, my impressions of the cataclysm, ~~and~~ what I saw and heard -- ~~I'm afraid those thoughts and impressions~~ are still almost as badly scrambled as the desert floor, which we saw rise up before our eyes, like a mountain appearing by magic, a mountain rising up to meet that atomic ~~cyclonthanasum~~ cloud.

Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission leaned back and said to me: "This is the biggest of them all, ~~that is~~ the biggest we've ~~had~~ had here on the Mainland.

Racing back across the desert Millard Caldwell, former Governor of Florida and present national Civil Defense Director said to me: "If that atomic burst had been over New York City it could easily have caused five hundred thousand casualties. The task that he and his fellow Civil Defense workers have undertaken is to educate the American people in matters atomic, so that hundreds of thousands of lives will be saved, when the crisis comes, as if it

~~ever-does.~~ The Governor of Utah, Bracken Lee was also hurrying back with us, rushing to catch a plane for Salt Lake. His summary of what he had seen was put in picturesque language. He said: "I used to think Barnum and Bailey ~~was~~ the greatest show on earth. But, this is so much greater ~~than~~ that Barnum and Bailey almost shrink to nothing." And then he added ~~said~~ "I'd say what we saw this morning was the greatest show since the Israelites fled and the Egyptian Army of the Pharoah was engulfed by the Red Sea!"

By the way, driving in across the desert we were all wondering what it had looked like on television, and Governor Caldwell said: He was sure the effect of the atomic blast was so great that it probably blacked out the television screen, just too much for a TV camera. ~~to get.~~ And here in the news room in Las Vegas I found a story on the U P wire saying that was ~~exactly~~ what happened, a momentary complete TV blackout.

In addition to the two thousand military

personnel who were out there on the desert, there were between three and four hundred of us representing press, radio, television and civil defense organizations, governors and officials. Some had stayed up all night and were perhaps a little more jittery because they hadn't gone to bed. One TV commentator was shaking so much just before and after the burst that he said he found it almost impossible to say anything. Cameramen were there by the score, and one right in front of us after the bomb went off was trembling so violently he could hardly unwrap his film and reload.

All of us, from various parts of Las Vegas, assembled at the Civic Center, at dawn. There we were given a final security check, along with coffee and doughnuts, assigned places in nine big busses, and away we went, for the ninety-three mile ride, north into the great American Desert. Most of us slept, fitfully, and occasionally glanced out at

the desert flowers, the tall Yucca in bloom, the Joshua Trees, and the bleak mountains. Twice enroute, the caravan stopped and uniformed officials of the Atomic Energy Commission awakened us and checked our credentials. They checked and double checked.

Along about seven-thirty we climbed the last pass and headed into the most barren valley we had seen, its floor far below absolutely flat as a table for miles and miles, just over a ridge from Frenchman's Flat -- this one called Yucca Flat. Once the floor of a lake. Sand and clay, a bright yellow. And so hard nothing grows on it. So hard that cars and planes move about as though on a vast man-made landing field.

While trucks loaded with troops flowed on past us to the target area, other trucks pulled up and supplied us with more coffee and sweet rolls. War surplus goggles were issued - so dark that when you put them on you couldn't see a thing, unless you looked directly at the sun and even then the sun only

made a faint glimmer.

Several hundred metal chairs had been put in ~~xxx~~ rows on the bank of this ancient lake bed. Behind them, rough wooden tables for the press. Back of that, a rocky cliff, over which many of the spectators spread themselves. I was interested to see several who looked like authentic cowpunchers. One of these, a cattle man named Floyd Lamb sat beside me during the climax of the atomic show. He told me the entire area was a part of his cattle domain. Open range, but he owns all of the watering places in this part of the desert, and runs his cattle over one hundred and fifty thousand acres including nearly all the places where these bombs have been set off. He said he had seen nearly all of them but from a much greater distance -- this his first closeup. He added a bit ruefully that airmen, sometimes practice skip bombing in the vicinity of his ranch house, and that one bomb had recently landed within a few feet of his front door. He laughed about it.

At any rate, the few cowboys who work for him are the only human beings in this region that has become an atomic inferno.

Someone was talking to the crowd intermittently all the time fromour arrival until the explosion. Loud as it was I doubt that anyone heard much of it. Everybody seemed to be talking nervously. But the hum of confusion quieted down greatly, a few minutes before zero hour.

~~Oh yes, I forgot to mention that~~ A half hour before the atom bomb drop, out there on the floor of the desert in front of us, near the atomic target, a large amount of high explosive was detonated, just to give us a comparison. We were told it was the equivalent of twenty thousand tons of dynamite. It sent up a column of dust and a rather small mushroom cloud. There was a flash, of course, but we couldn't even hear it. That twenty thousand tons of high explosive or whatever it was, was just a flicker of light compared to what we were about to see.

At one minute before nine-thirty Dr. Gaelen Felt, spoke to us from the main control room, telling us that the plane with the atomic bomb was already on its run, heading for the target. Moments later, he announced fifteen seconds; then, ten seconds, and then counted them off, five-four-three-two-one. ~~He~~ ~~actually~~ In fact he gave us a ~~n~~ count from the time he said: Bomb away! And it took forty-two seconds to drop, from thirty-three thousand feet, to three-thousand-five-hundred-feet above the target where it exploded. While the bomb was falling we of course all had on those black glasses. Suddenly they were no longer black. It ~~xxx~~ was as though we were looking into the sun. And then we were supposed to count: "One thousand and one - one thousand and two - one thousand and three! Before taking them off. Civilian Defense Director Governor Caldwell told me that he only counted to one-thousand-two-and-a-half and then took them off figuring the scientists had allowed

at least that much margin of safety.

With our goggles off, we looked out at a desert that seemed to rise up before us. And that was happening to a section of Yucca Flat for a width of perhaps ten miles, that desert cloud resembling a new mountain rising thousands of feet.

But by far the most spectacular part was the atomic mushroom in the Heavens -- rolling and boiling. Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission estimated that mass of flame, smoke and chemical was about ten miles wide, shaped like a doughnut. It quickly shot up from three-thousand-five-hundred feet to twenty-five thousand feet, and within ten minutes ~~Gordon Dean said~~ the atomic cloud was at an altitude somewhere between forty ~~thousand~~ and fifty thousand ~~feet~~ where he said it would stay, drifting off with the wind.

This atom bomb rushroom didn't look anything like the one at Bikini. ~~In~~ As we watched ~~the~~ it rolling and tumbling, we could see a coating of ~~ice~~ ice forming

on the upper part of it.

~~How many seconds before we got the report we were not sure. But at the rate that sound travels,~~ It was quite a number of seconds after the explosion, before we heard the tremendous roar, and some seconds after that before we felt the big wave. ~~As the wave hit us, the head of the Atomic Energy Commission turned and said: Did it known anyone over? I didn't see anyone bowled over by it. But~~ The heat from that atomic bomb ten miles away, was intense. Later when we got back to Las Vegas I learned that the burst was seen four hundred and fifty miles off, and the report heard as far away as St. George, Utah, a distance of one hundred and thirty miles.

As we watched this, the greatest of all man-made spectacles, watched in awe, we were all wondering about the troops far out there in front of us in those bunkers and foxholes. And we were all much relieved when we heard that they were safe, no casualties, only showered with dust and sand and

Within a brief time after the blast, the soldiers were out of their foxholes and advancing -- in a military maneuver. The tactical aspect was -- an atomic bombing of an important center of enemy communications, with an infantry and paratroop attack to seize the strategic point. It was safe, in a radiological sense, for the G I's to move promptly into the devastated area. The paratroop drop came an hour and a quarter later after the upper air had been sufficiently cleared of radiation. Then, the soldiers of the sky came swarming down, playing their part in the atomic seizure of an enemy strong point.

Governor Murray of Oklahoma had a new six hundred dollar movie camera of which he was proud. But at the last moment it didn't work and he got no pictures.

On the return trip across the desert to Las Vegas, we watched the atomic cloud. For nearly two hours during that drive the cloud still hung there in the sky of course becoming more and more defused.

The atomic cloud, with its radiation will circle the planet -- all the way around, in approximately a month, - until they detect it right back here again, on its return.

All this is a long range matter. The hour of crisis may not come for a year, or two years or many years. But we must all know what we are to do --if and when the hour does come. That was why we were out there at that desert inferno today.

SUB PRIMARY

The first figures in the big eastern primaries are from Pennsylvania, where xx scattered returns show an overwhelming sweep for General Eisenhower. Not enough of the votes are in to mean anything really, xx but the first districts reporting give General Ike, sixty one thousand seven hundred and two. Harold Stassen, seven thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven. Senator Taft, two thousand four hundred and twenty-eight. The point is that Senator Taft xxxx made no fight at all in Pennsylvania. His name not on the ballot. His votes -- write-ins.

In New York State, the polls closed from nine to ten, eastern standard time. So, the count has hardly begun.

IMPEACHMENT

A congressional move to impeach President Truman because of the seizure of the steel industry. The motion was introduced by Republican Congressman Hale of Maine -- charging high crime and misdemeanor. This is not likely to be much more than a gesture, but the impeachment resolution will go through a certain amount of congressional routine -- and probably won't get anywhere before the President retires from office in January anyway.

PRISON

At the Michigan State penitentiary, one of the captured guards was released today having been held as a hostage ever since yesterday. But ten other guards are still in the power of revolting convicts -- standing seige in a cell block. The Warden is bargaining for the release of the remaining hostages. He has told the rebellious convicts that a state investigation has been ordered -- to look into prison conditions. (The mutineers complain of bad treatment. ~~The warden informs them that their protests will be considered by a State government. But at last reports, the prisoners in the cell block have not given in.~~)

At Rahway, New Jersey, on the other hand, there was a surrender of rioting prisoners this afternoon. (~~They have been holding out since last Thursday, but gave in upon being promised that their complaints would be considered. Eight hostages were turned loose and the mutineers filed out of the prison building in which they had been besieged.~~)

WANGER

In Hollywood, Walter Wanger got a token sentence today -- four months in the county jail. Having thrown himself on the mercy of the court, he was found guilty, in the shooting of a Hollywood agent, He was jealous because of his wife Joan Bennett. The court granted the mercy asked, and imposed a light sentence of -- four months.

ATOMIC-LAS VEGAS

I'm lucky tonight to have two views of operation "Big Shot". While I was at the scene of the blast, the ladies of our party had a look at it from Las Vegas, ~~ninety~~ 80 miles away. Which is a long distance -- and yet even there the spectacle was impressive, ~~they told me~~.

They had a grandstand seat -- literally. We are stopping at the Last Frontier, at which resort hotel there is an arena for sports events -- and from the ~~xx~~ grandstand, is an unimpeded view across the desert, in the direction of the atomic proving grounds all those miles away.

~~A number of people, were at this vantage point,~~ Las Vegas people thought they might not see much -- because of a heavy ground haze, which made the nearby mountains ~~xxxx~~ vague and dim. Nevertheless, as they watched, there was a sudden great flash on the desert horizon, like a dome of distant fire. The color a vivid orange. ~~Likely enough, because of the haze~~ Then, within seconds, the mushroom shaped cloud rose --

appearing above the level of the ~~misty~~ haze, soaring high - into the sky.

~~They were astonished -- the at not hearing anything~~. Minutes went by, eight minutes before the sound came, a great ~~xxxx~~ rumbling roar from afar,— ~~which was~~ dramatic evidence of the distance -- the sound taking that long to travel across the so odd ~~ninety~~ miles. ~~All of which made the spectacle so very impressive -- it was all so far away~~.

At Las Vegas this time they felt no shock wave -- ~~and actually xxxxxx~~ as the scientists had said they might not. Explaining that both sound and shock wave might ~~skip one place,~~ bouncing over, ~~and~~ go~~ing~~ on to some other place farther distant. ~~The roar of sound came in all right -- but no shock wave was felt, as they watched from the grandstand at the Last Frontier.~~

And now from the atomic scene back to you, Nelson.