

quakes

The Sentinel

Rash Of Quakes— Just Restlessness Of Pacific Coast

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SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A rash of recent moderate earthquakes in California has attracted unusual public attention because of the destructive Feb. 9 Los Angeles quake and its aftershocks, but there is no discernable connection, scientists said today.

They have found no pattern in the succession of tremors up and down the state. It is just a continuation of the ages-old restlessness of the Pacific Coast.

"Two quakes under Monterey Bay Monday and Tuesday generated many more inquiries than two similar ones in the same area last August," said David Stuart, assistant chief of the National Center for Earthquake Research in Menlo Park.

"The previous quakes were felt, but people paid little attention and quickly forgot them.

"There is no conceivable connection with Los Angeles, or with the other recent small quakes elsewhere," he said.

Police from San Francisco to Monterey, about 75 miles away, said they received numerous calls Tuesday after a medium-sized quake in Monterey Bay. It registered 4.6 on the Richter scale, compared with a tiny 3.5 earthquake that was also felt Monday.

The Los Angeles quake pushed seismograph needles to the 6.6 mark, still short of the 1964 Alaska earthquake figure of 8.4.

In the past three weeks, at least six medium-sized earthquakes have been felt in California. There were 75 minor shocks alone on March 1.

None of these quakes did reportable damage and none was connected directly with the notorious San Andreas Fault which runs most of the length of California.

The state is cross-hatched with fault zones of assorted sizes, some highly active, some inactive for many years.

story in San Francisco. "They appear to be independent.

"In this business, one has to watch for patterns, but we see so many false patterns that we come not to trust them until something is very obvious.

"We are cataloguing them, but at this stage they are not worth the expense of special studies.

"The Los Angeles quake has definitely made people more aware, but you have to consider statistical fluctuation.

"An average of one 'feelable' shock a week doesn't mean there will be one every week. Some come close together, then there might be none for a long period."

Stuart said, "as far as Monterey Bay is concerned, I would not even assign it to a particular fault.

"The bottom of the bay is pretty well chopped up, and this trend has been going on for a very long while.

"We moved a station to that area last August, but there have been no significant developments."

Recorded small quakes in the past three weeks have included:

Feb. 23, centered 10 miles north of Santa Cruz, 2.5 on the Richter scale.

Feb. 26, a 100-mile stretch of the north coastal area embracing Eureka, 5.25 rating.

March 1, a "swarm" of 75 or more small shocks within 12 hours along the central California-Nevada border, rated up to 4 but mostly much smaller.

March 3, Lake Isabella area about 40 miles east of Bakersfield, 4 rating.

March 8, Lake Isabella area again, 4.75 rating.

March 9, Monterey Bay again, 4.6 rating.

Nason attributed the Lake Isabella activity to the White Wolf Fault, which he said had been unstable ever since the 1952 quake. That one, rated at a

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