



Burned out KYODO

crete factory and its nearby head office.

"Almost all the facilities are gone. We, the workers, are totally at a loss, since our lives have been heavily dependent on the industry," said a middle-aged seasonal em-

ployee who also works as a farmer in the Tajima area of northern Hyogo Prefecture from spring through fall.

"I hope the national government will offer some relief measures in case we are unemployed," he said.

Another brewer, Kyoto-based Takara Shuzo, said it suffered an estimated ¥1 billion in damage to its plant in Nada Ward.

"It (the quake) happened at the most important time for us brewers," Misato said.

Sake brewing in the area is usually in full swing between November and March, as sake ferments well when exposed to the cold northern wind blowing from the Rokko Mountains, he said.

Of the 50 brewers in the area about 40 are small companies like Daikoku Masa-

mune, which brew in the traditional way—making most of their sake in wood buildings in winter.

An executive director at Fukuju, a local brewer, said about a quarter of the annual production from small brewers would be lost if their plants remained idle.

He said it would take enormous effort for small companies to cover losses caused by the closure of their breweries, because even if they manage to rebuild their facilities, they can only make up for the loss in winter.

About 10 major companies, on the other hand, can make up for their losses fairly quickly, he said, since they can brew sake in other seasons, using air conditioning.

However, things do not seem rosy even for the big brewers.

Although the major firms' modern reinforced concrete buildings do not seem to have been damaged, some high-technology equipment may have been destroyed, Misato said.

"We cannot say anything definite until we conduct test runs on the production lines," said a spokesman for Hakutsuru, a major brewer.

"Like everybody else, we're dying for water," said a spokesman for another major brewer, Kikumasamune.

Although the brewer suffered only minor damage to its facilities, none of the finished sake products could be bottled until water was available, he said.



Dock facilities destroyed KIMIO IIDA