

HEADQUARTERS
U. S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(PACIFIC)
APO 234
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

INTERROGATION NO: 213

PLACE: Kawasaki
DATE : 1 November 1945
TIME : 1030 - 1230

Division of Origin: C E C

SUBJECT: Structural Steel

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Dr SASABE, Manager of KAWASAKI Plant

Where interviewed: NIPPON KOKAN KK. (Japan Steel Tube Co., Ltd.)
KAWASAKI Plant

Interrogator: Capt Rosenblatt and Lt Call

Interpreter: Lt (jg) Holmes

Allied Officers Present: None

SUMMARY:

Interview with manager of KAWASAKI Plant of Japan Steel Tube Company.

Statistics on production of the 20 Plants belonging to the Company are arranged for.

Interrogation on production, capacity, raw materials, value of Control Association.

DISTRIBUTION: All Divisions.

I N T E R R O G A T I O N

Arrangements were made for early compilation of complete statistics on NIPPON KOKAN (total for all plants) production of structural steel, including capacity, planned and actual production, government demand, and allocation to various users, such as Army, Navy, civilian, etc.

The KAWASAKI Plant itself represents 70% of the company's productive capacity. The company as a whole represents 30% of the steel industry in Japan, Japan Iron accounting for 60%, and miscellaneous companies taking up the remaining 10%.

Significant portions of the interview follow:

Q. Why did the government demand for your products steadily decline, although the need for steel became more and more acute?

A. We had to get our raw materials (Coal, ore, etc) through the government, not on the open market. The government had increasing difficulty in getting coal (particularly North China coking coal), and as the quantity and quality of the coal declined, the government realized that it could not expect as much steel as was needed, and scaled down its requirements accordingly.

Q. Couldn't you mix N. China coal and Japanese coal?

A. We tried it, but it was not successful for coking.

Q. The government demand and your production of structural steel rose sharply between 1940 and 1944. The production in 1940 was 5,000 M. tons, and that in 1944 was 12,000 M. tons. What is the reason?

A. This was a result of the expanding aircraft program: structural steel was used in airplane fuselages.

Q. Why did your production of steel ingots drop from 478,000 M. tons in 1940 to 190,000 M. tons in 1944?

A. Lack of pig iron forced us to shut down some of our furnaces.

Q. At what percent (%) of capacity did you operate?

A. At from 1/3 to 1/2 of capacity. Capacity remained constant, since we had no difficulty in maintaining and replacing equipment.

Q. Was the Steel Control Association any help in getting raw materials etc.?

A. None at all. The Control Association was some help in getting food and clothing for our laborers, who were short of both, but beyond this, they could do nothing.