

JAPANESE TRADE AND INDUSTRY

PRESENT AND FUTURE

by

MITSUBISHI ECONOMIC RESEARCH BUREAU

1936

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CHAPTER XXXIV

CONCLUSION

The foregoing survey of the economic situation in Japan shows that 1930 and 1931 were the worst years of depression, while uneasiness continued to prevail in the following year, due to the aggravation of international relations consequent on the outbreak of the Manchurian incident and the growing distress in rural districts. Conditions, however, changed entirely after 1932, and industrial development in the following years was extremely rapid, the progress achieved in 1934 and 1935 being perhaps the most remarkable in the history of the country. This industrial development and the consequent advance of foreign trade still continues though at a slower rate of progress. The astounding expansion of Japanese trade at a time when other countries have not yet fully recovered from the world-wide depression, has not unnaturally attracted the attention of foreign observers.

Essential factors which have contributed to this development of Japanese industries are, according to general opinion, currency depreciation, a vast increase in Government expenditure, and a scale of wages which, in spite of a mild type of inflation, has hardly risen. As regards currency depreciation, it should be borne in mind that the yen was

probably substantially overvalued, as expressed in purchasing power, during the years prior to the reimposition of the gold embargo, hence part of the subsequent depreciation should be considered as a correction of the previously existing exaggerated price structure. The decline of the yen, therefore, occasioned only a slight reactionary advance in prices of domestic commodities, and, though an important contributing factor, does not fully explain the expansion in competitive power of Japanese industries since 1933, by which time the decline had been brought to a standstill.

The Government emergency relief measures and financial inflation served to furnish an outlet for idle funds, and at the same time stimulated the national purchasing power. Whilst this development was not confined to Japan, it is noteworthy that the cost of production has been very much lowered in Japanese industry, partly on account of increased labour efficiency, in contrast with the tendency in similarly situated industrial countries which have witnessed a sharp advance in production costs. The general assumption that the cheapness of Japanese goods is entirely due to low wages cannot be maintained in view of the well-known fact that low wages and a low standard of living do not, by themselves, constitute a factor making for the low cost of production. "The important point is the relationship between standard of life and standard of efficiency, and available evidence points to this relationship being affected rather by technical improvements (rationalization) than by inability of the Japanese standard to change."*

* Prof. T. E. Gregory, "Memorandum on Japanese Competition," London 1935, p. 15

The economic progress recently achieved would not have been possible but for the greatly strengthened position of Japanese industry since the World War, and the technical and administrative rationalization measures adopted during the years of depression. In this sense, the industrial advance is not a temporary phenomenon based entirely on currency depreciation and financial inflation, but is due to deep-rooted changes in industrial organization.

There are, however, many problems confronting Japanese economy in the future. One of the most urgent is the necessity of supporting the increasing population, which is expanding at a rate of nearly one million per year. Two methods may be suggested for meeting this situation, that is emigration and absorption in new industries. As to the former, the tendency in many parts of the world to restrict or prohibit Japanese immigration renders this outlet hopeless. It is true that emigration to Manchoukuo offers some possibilities, but not on a scale adequate to solve the population problem. Accordingly, the industrialization of the country and the expansion of overseas trade present themselves as the only solution.

Of the total national production, agriculture now accounts for only about one-fourth, but affords employment for about 47% of the population. The density ratio of the population to cultivated land in Japan is the highest in the world, and agricultural production capacity has almost reached the maximum; therefore it is evident that agriculture cannot be depended upon to absorb the expanding population and to support a future advance in the standard of living. On the

contrary, owing to the distress prevailing in the agricultural areas, which unhappily continues, there has been for many years a steady exodus of people to the cities. The degree of self-sufficiency in agricultural products is steadily declining due to the advance of industrialization, and about one-fourth of the country's requirements has to be imported. In staple foodstuffs, Japan has managed so far to be self-supporting, but it is probable that increased importation will be necessary in order to support the growing population. In the face of this situation, it is apparent that the promotion of agriculture, and if possible, the augmentation of agricultural products should be one of the first considerations in the formulation of a national policy.

Japan is poorly provided with raw materials and is compelled to import them on an increasing scale. Mineral resources are equally limited in volume if not in variety.

Consumption of raw materials by industries in Japan corresponds to more than 60% of the domestic industrial output, and about 27% of them is supplied from abroad. The total imports of raw materials and semi-finished products increased from about 70% in 1929-31 to almost 80% of total imports in recent years, and it is essential that this increment be balanced by a corresponding augmentation in the exports of finished articles made from those raw materials. On the average, Japan exports about 15% of her total domestic production, and about 21% of her industrial output of finished articles. Consequently, the future development of industries must be paralleled by an increasing importation of raw materials and an advance in the export of finished products.

Self-sufficiency in raw materials to the greatest possible degree is naturally desirable, but efforts in this direction must be made on a basis compatible with the smooth development of national industries. An economy based on self-sufficiency would be of great value in periods of emergency, but could not survive in Japan in normal times. as an alternative, the enhancement of the human factor in industry, notably the increase of labour efficiency and scientific achievement, becomes of paramount importance. Internationally, Japan must aim at economic development on the basis of international co-operation and reciprocal trade, and remain aloof from the tendency toward economic nationalism now rampant throughout the world.

The question of future capital supply also requires some consideration. A scarcity of capital in the past has often hampered industrial development, and high interest charges on debentures have been a great burden to national industry. Although money rates have gradually been lowered in recent years, yet the average rate on debentures during 1935 was 4.5%, which is still high compared with those in Great Britain and the United States. The demand for capital is bound to increase concurrently with the expansion of population and industry. The amount of industrial capital which will be required in the future is roughly estimated at a minimum of about 1,200 to 1,500 million yen annually.

The establishment of a concrete policy relating to overseas trade will also require attention. There has been a tendency in some quarters to consider the attainment of an excess of exports as the principal object of foreign trade.

It would be more correct to formulate foreign trade policy as an adjunct to the development of national industries, and such a policy would inevitably serve to expand exports. The overseas trade of Japan, in spite of its recent development, accounts for only 3.3% of international trade. The export value per capita of population was about ¥36.00, which is extremely low in comparison with those of other leading industrial countries.

Textile manufactures constitute at present the greatest part of the Japanese export trade. The future expansion of this trade, which is indispensable to the Japanese national economy, will depend to a large extent on the ability of Japanese industry to compete in other finished products, particularly machinery and chemical manufactures. Even more than in the past, the direction of Japanese trade expansion is bound to be towards East and South Asia, as these regions are important sources of raw materials and offer the best prospects for reciprocal trade.

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Def. Doc. #715 (29)

辯護側文書第七一五(二九)號

日本の貿易と産業の現在と將來

一九三六年(昭和十一年)
三菱經濟研究所

第三十四章 結 論

日本に於ける經濟情勢に關する前述の調査が示す處によれば、一九三〇年及一九三一年(昭和五年、六年)は不景氣のどん底の年であり、不安の狀態はその翌年も續いた、これは滿洲事變の勃發による國際關係の惡化、並に地方農村に於ける窮乏の深刻化に基くのである。併しながら情勢は一九三二年(昭和七年)以後全く變化し、其の後に於ける産業の發展は極度に迅速であつた、一九三四年、一九三五年(昭和九年、十年)に於ける進歩は恐らく我國歴史上最も顯著なものであらう。此の産業の發展並に之に伴ふ外國貿易の進展はその速度は以前より速いが依然繼續してゐる。他の諸國が未だ世界的不況から脱してなかつた際に日本の貿易が驚異的膨脹をなしたことは當然外國の觀察者の注目を惹いたのである。

此の日本産業の發展に寄與した要素は、通貨の價值の下落、政府歳出の

莫大な増加、並に緩慢なインフレーションにも拘らず殆ど昂つて居ない
貨銀の基準等であるといふのが一般の意見である。

通貨の下落に關して注意すべきは圓の價值は金輸出再禁止以前の數年間
購買力として表はれてゐる様に實質的には恐らく過大に評價されてゐた
ので再禁止後の通貨の下落はある程度それ以前に存在した妥當でない價
格体制の修正と考ふべきことである。其れ故に圓の下落は僅かばかり國
内物價の反動的騰貴を惹起したに過ぎなかつた、圓の下落は重要な要素
ではあつたが一九三三年（昭和八年）以來の日本産業界の競争力の膨脹
を説明するには不充分である。而してその下落は同年以前既に停止して
ゐたのである。

政府の應急救濟策及び財政的インフレーションは遊休資金に對し捌け
口を與えることとなり同時に國民の購買力を刺戟したのである。此の進
展は日本のみに限らなかつたのであるが茲に注目し價する事は生産費が
日本の工業に於ては非常に低下した事である、これは一部勞働能率の増
進によるものであつて他の同様の状態にある工業國に於て生産費が著し
く昂騰した趨勢と對照をなすものである。日本商品の低廉なることは全

く低賃銀の故であるとする一般の臆測は低賃銀及び生活の低水準は其等だけで生産費を低廉ならしめる要素とはならないといふ周知の事實に鑑みて、之を支持することは出来ない。「最も重要な點は生活水準と能率基準との關聯性である。この關聯性は變らない日本人の生活水準によるよりも寧ろ技術的改善（合理化）によつて影響を受けてゐる事は現在の證據に徴して明かである。」

一九三五年、ロンドンにて刊行の
テイー・イー・グレゴリー教授著「日本の競
争に關する手記」第十五頁參照

近年達成された經濟的進歩は世界大戰以來非常に強化された日本産業の地位並に不景氣の數年間に採擇された技術上及び經營上の合理化對策がなかつたならば可能ではなかつたであらう。此の意味に於て右産業の進展は通貨の下落及財政的インフレーションにのみ基く所の一時的現象ではなくして産業組織に於ける根深い變化に基くものである。

併しながら將來日本の經濟が直面する多くの問題が存在する。最も緊要なるものの一つは年に約百万の割合で膨脹しつゝある人口を支持する必要のある事である。此の事態に對處する爲めに二つの方法が示唆され

るであらう、それは海外移民と新産業に吸収する事とである。前者に付て言へば世界の多くの國々に日本人移民を制限し、又は禁止しやうとする傾向がある爲め此の捌け口は絶望的である。滿洲への移民がある程度の可能性を提供してゐる事は事實であるが人口問題を解決する程の規模のものではない。従つて我國の工業化及び海外貿易の擴張のみが唯一の解決策となつてくるのである。

全國の生産の内で農業は現在約四分の一を占めてゐるに過ぎないが約四十七パーセントの人口に對して仕事を與へてゐる。日本に於ける人口の耕作面積に對する密度は世界中で最高である、而して農業生産力は殆ど項點に達してゐる、其れ故に膨脹しつゝある人口を吸収し將來その生活基準を向上せしめる爲めに、農業に依據することは出來ないといふ事は既に明かである。他方に於いて農村地方に於ける窮乏は今も尙不幸にも續いてゐるのであるがそのために長年の間人口の都市への移動が間斷なく續いてゐるのである。農産物の自給の度合は工業化の進捗により確實に低下してゐるので我國の必需品の約四分の一は輸入しなければならぬ主食品では日本は從來何とか自給して來たがこの増加しつつある人口を

支へる爲めには恐らく輸入を増加することが必要となるであらう。此の事態に直面して農業の振興及び出来るならば農業物の増産は國策の樹立に際して第一に考慮すべきものの一であるべき事は分りきつた事である。日本は原料に乏しく已むを得ず一層大規模に之を輸入しなければならぬ。鐵産資源も同様に於ては制限されてなくとも量に於て制限を受けてゐるのである。

日本の工業が消費する原料は國內産業産出高の六十パーセント以上に當るそして其の二十七パーセントは海外から供給されてゐる。原料及半製品の全輸入高は一九二九年より一九三一年までは全輸入高の約七十パーセントだつたが近年に於てはその約八十パーセントまで増加した、而して最も肝要なことは此の輸入の増加は此等の原料で作つた製品の輸出がそれに對應して増加することによつて均衡を得なければならぬといふ事である。平均して日本はその國內全生産の約十五パーセント、而して其の製品の工業生産高の約二十一パーセントを輸出してゐる。従つて將來の産業の發展のためには原料輸入の増加と製品輸出の進展とが相平行することが必要である。