

About the distressed conditions of
the Metal Mining Industry.

May, 1949.

The Federation of Laborers of
the Metal Mining Industry
of Japan.

We have recognized, through the former strenuous efforts to rise wages neither development of metal mines nor improvement of lives of laborers would be brought to us by simple efforts for wages under the conditions of inflation which is not be able to stabilize the industries and finance of the country or by such exertion which do not take with the increase of production, but on the contrary, the situations are becoming rather worse we, the Federation of Laborers of the Metal Mines of Japan, have not struggled only to acquire more wages but to increase the production aiming at rehabilitation of the Japan's industry, and shall do in future. However, we cannot live our lives without sufficient wages which will enable us to eat normally and work fully. Therefore, to acquire sufficient wages is the indispensable promise and the greatest object as it was before in our struggles to increase production.

Difficulties of Laborers at Metal Mines.

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How Low the wages of laborers at Metal Mines are can be seen clearly when they are compared to those of average of the whole industries (100%). We can see, thus, the wages

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of an underground laborers are 92% and those of a surface laborers are only 69%. To speak from the order of the whole industries the wages of an underground laborer are 12th and those of surface one are 17th of the order calculating on base of wages of 5400 yen for both underground and surface laborers which was decided by the agreement in Dec.. The League of managers of Metal Mines are going to cut them down to the base of 4300 yen through the present struggle.

2. Rationalization of Management.

Number of Metal Mines which was amounted to two thousand and more has decreased to about 300 by poor policies of the successive governments towards Metal Mines.

The Metal Mine, once stopped its operation, is hardly to recover, and such will be a matter of great concern for Japan which is poor in natural resources.

Nevertheless, the present government is making project to import crude ore from the foreign countries. That is, the pyrite ore of 100,000t. which has a rich and exhaustible reserves in the country is going to be imported and subsidiary amounting ¥30,000,000 and more is to be paid for it. We hope, therefore, to save mines from so-called rationalization under such contradictory policies towards the metal mining industry.

3. Efficiency of labor and station of laborers in mines.

As for the efficiency of labor the index of production

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of crude ore per one miner averaged from Jan. to Mar. 1949 is 33% and 37% for metal and coal each other and that from Oct. to Dec. is 44% and 38% as compared with the basic year from 1935 to 1937.

Judging from the results of analysis of the present situations we hope to point out concretely the concentration of working facts, adjustment of transportation system, preservation of operating machinery and fulness of transportation capacity machinery and fulness of transportation capacity than the enforcement of labor as well as the standardization of mining technique to the international level to increase the production more than at present.

As for the station of laborers of the mine, the ratio of number of underground laborers to that of the surface was 5:5 in the former days but after the war it became 24:76 and 31:76 in Jan., 1948. We of course, do not deny the rationalization to regulate the present balance but, besides the above, we would like to state that there are many questions to be inquired such as corrosion of mining equipments and lowering down of efficiency of operation on account of shortage of repairing materials.

Beyond that such problems as the prospecting of virgin mines and rehabilitation and adjustment of devastated working faces.

4. Necessaries for laborers.

Substantial wages for laborers of Metal Mines is 70%

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lower than those of coal. So, increase of distribution of necessaries for laborers is one of ways to rise the cheap substantial wages. And the result of distribution of textile goods in 1948 was, for instance, was less than 10% of necessaries to be required at the least. Moreover, in the plan of distribution of necessaries for laborers, we have allocation of 50% compared with those in coal mine; only 38% of rubber-soled socks and 2% of soap were delivered in spite of the above plan. Thus, our lives are depended on basic wages which are as 70% as the average of the whole industries and substantial wages as 70% as those of coal miners. Therefore it can be supposed not to be inadequate to ask for necessaries as same as coal miners.

5. Circumstances of Laborers.

The unfavorable labor terms of laborers in mines multiply by miserable circumstances of labor, and the important ones of them are diseases in a broad sense such as silicosis and others as well as frequent breakout of accidents and disasters on account of shortage of equipments to preserve mine safety.

1. Silicosis is supposed as an incurable disease and from the result of inquiry cases suffering slightly from the disease among underground laborers who have been working more than five years and less than ten years

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are 22.7% and those in the first and second stages are 36.8% and 2.2% for each. Total of the above amounts to 62% and the hopeless cases are 20%. Estimated number of cases suffering from silicosis is about 500 and against these cases hospitals to be installed have only 100 beds. And the disease is spreading every moment and, accordingly precious miners' lives are destroying day by day. Therefore prompt completion of measure for silicosis cannot be neglected for us.

11. Disasters and mine safety.

Disasters in mines are very often occurred the circumstances that the mine safety law has placed on the order of the Diet is so new problem that we would like to put it outside the question, but it can be assured that overtime labor of 30% at the end of 1948 will promote the frequency of disasters and therefore we are afraid that enterprisers who apt to think little of preservation of mine safety by reasons of difficulties to acquire funds and materials in collusion with officials in charge of mine safety may ignore laborers' earnest conceptions about mine safety. For these reasons, we hope to call their attention and encourage to the administration of mine safety.

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Causes of the hard situation and our opinion
on the government's Policies for the Metal
Mining Industry.

Following the hard situation at present of Metal Mine laborers described in the proceeding section, we would like to explain the causes of it. We hereby expect your thorough understanding of the causes. Although it is obvious that the hard situation is caused by the inadequacy of Japanese Government's Policies for the Metal Mining and that the League of Metal Mine Managers is also responsible for it, it is an undeniable fact that governmental controls over funds, materials and prices are among the causes too. For the very reason, we are pushing our steps to change and revise the governmental measures. In the following, we will give a brief explanation upon the present situation of the matter.

1. Price.

Controlled prices of various kinds of metals are framed within the limit of cost calculation. More concretely, no consideration is made for profit. Layouts for supplies are calculated on the assumption that all supplies are obtained at the controlled prices. Moreover, not only neither labor arrangement nor costs for prospecting operations are properly reflected in the prices, but also we are obliged to make up for the deficits in the prospecting department by the profit in the smelting and refining department under the present system of cost calculation despite the competent

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authorities recognize the deficits. For this reason, minor enterprises, with the exception of major ones undertaking smelting and refining, are driven toward bankruptcy while the rationalization of management is out of discussion. In a word, they are doomed to a reproduction on a lessening scale and self-destruction. Though one year and a half has passed since we started our strenuous efforts to increase production in Oct., 1947, the labor is encountered by the enforcement of labor intensified to the maximum extent, non-payment and delay of wage and even by the breach of agreement on wage on the part of the management. The above statement means, we understand, a coercive sacrifice pressed on the labor while efforts to adjust and reconstruct the price policies are totally neglected.

We hereby make a frank demand that "fair prices of mineral products be established." To give some examples of irrationality in the price by kind of products,

1. Lead and Zinc.

Government subsidies for lead and zinc were abolished on April 1st this year and consumers' controlled prices alone are obtaining now. There are wide differences as given below between the low controlled prices of lead and zinc effective now and the market prices of

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the metals in the United States calculated in term of the newly established exchange rate of ¥360.- against

1.	<u>U. S.</u>	<u>Japan.</u>
Lead	¥118,800.-	¥80,810.-
Zinc	102,980.-	58,050.-

it is clearly seen from the above statement that the Japanese controlled prices are fixed too low in view of the fact that the comparison is made with the American market prices as at the time when they showed great falls. Although it is said that the government is contemplating a certain degree of upward revision of controlled prices, no immediate effect can be expected for the forthcoming measure, while the blow given by the abolishment of government subsidies described above is hanging heavy on both parts of the labor and management.

Owing to the abolishment, operating funds of companies are deficient by a considerable amount and in the dull demand on and rapidly increasing stocks of metals we see a reflection of the poverty of governmental policies.

ii. Electrolytic Copper.

Export of copper as a counter-measure to dispose of the rapidly increasing stocks of the metal, contains various difficulties.

Although it is claimed that export of copper products

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is preferable to that of cathode copper, demand is greater on the latter abroad. Furthermore, the export price of \$448.45 fob Japan is equivalent to ¥161,000.- when converted at the rate of ¥360.- against \$1. This means that export can not be realized at ¥181,000.-, the producers' controlled price of copper effective now. However, copper is exportable at a good profit at ¥102,000.-, the consumers' controlled price. The fact that secondary copper which is supplied to market at ¥102,000.-, is alone exportable means, as can be seen by the general public, that there must be taken some measure to adjust the balance between the producers' controlled price of primary electrolytic copper and the export price as converted at the exchange rate stated above. As for the importation of copper ore from abroad as a means of cutting down the copper price, production cost of copper can be reduced to 59% against 100% as at present if a full operation of whole equipments for copper refining is realized. However, it is necessary, for attaining the goal, to pay careful consideration to the removal of monopoly by big enterprises and the increasing press on the Japanese domestic metal mines.

2. Fund.

Though money borrowed by the leading Metal Mining companies as operating funds amount to ¥2,177,064,000.-

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as at the end of February this year, the figure is only 41% against 100% in December last year.

On the other hand, balance of accounts payable for supplies amounts to 23 billion yen while stock of copper also comes up to a considerable quantity. Besides, the League of Metal Mine Managers is not able to pay the amount of wage as agreed upon owing to the curtailed finance available from the Reconversion Finance Bank and repayment of loans and accounts payable, thus causing a wage cut down. It is impossible for the labor thus reduced to a hard situation to maintain and develop the enterprises.

Collapse of the Metal Mining as one of the basic industries will exercise a baneful influence on the economy of Japan. To avoid such catastrophe, it is desirable that some measures be carried out for settling the problems given below.

1. Though we appreciate the necessity of repaying loans borrowed from the Reconversion Finance Bank, we hope that an exceptional consideration be made for the metal mining where restoration from war damages is behind other kinds of industry and capital investment is returned through a longer term of years than in other forms of industry.

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ii. Complete restoration of devastated underground workings, caused by indiscriminate mining operation forced during the war-time, is not accomplished yet.

iii. We expect that some immediate steps be taken to fill the shortage of bullion abroad and to dispose of metal stocks here. To set forth an additional hope, it is desirable that an expedient finance of the same amount as the producers' controlled prices be given us.

3. Statement of present situation of demand on and supply of major metals and counter-measures.

Unbalance between demand on and supply of major metals is now exercising a destructive influence on many lines of economy.

As stated above, we hold a considerable amount of stock of copper at hand here, and as for lead, it is anticipated that an oversupply of the metal might be ensued by the plan to import a large quantity of bullion lead.

Despite demand on zinc is increasing abroad, production of the metal is far below the moderate goal owing to the unprofitableness resulting from the controlled price fixed too low and limited supply of electric power available.

Production curve of pyrite was upward before March this year. Therefore, if proper policies be enforced, it is

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possible to bring about a further increase in output and to secure an enough supply to the connected industries.

Judging from the hard situation of the Metal Mining, the most difficult problem facing it is the large amount of stock, therefore, emergency finance and prompt disposal of stocks are the temporary measures to be taken. Among the financial steps are counted immediate payment of government debts, postponement of repayment of loans payable on the part of mining companies and finance on the security of finished products and concentrates. Stocks of various metals shall be disposed of by promoting domestic demand on them and by increasing export. To attain them, it is necessary that, in the first place, military and speculative character be completely removed from the economy of Japan, in the second, peace-time industries be encouraged, and export trade be undertaken with democratic countries with no restrictions.

4. Prospecting.

It is of urgent necessity that appropriate plans be immediately drafted for the future development of Japanese metal mining with complete understanding for the importance of prospecting in mind.

It is by virtue of prospecting and discoveries of new ore deposits that the major mines of Japan have been

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in operation through hundreds of years.

Therefore, production plan must be performed with the relationship between positive and probable ores and ore reserve and grade in view. However, prospecting undertaken was only 12% in copper and pyrite, 50% in lead and zinc and 4% in gold in 1947 as against 100% in 1930 while metal contents of positive ore reserve is as low as 63% in copper and pyrite as against 100% in 1930.

We believe that governmental measures must be taken to furnish fund and materials necessary for furthering prospecting and restoring, devastated working faces and that layout for these items be incorporated into the prices of metals. As the coal mining is obtaining fund and materials and by virtue of them, is increasing production, we expect that the Japanese Government will offer a positive support to the metal mining industry.

END

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申 入 書

本争議を斡旋するにあつて両当事者より種々事情を調査した結果、客観情勢の推移に照合し、現在の段階に於ては次の結論に到達した。

賃金問題に関しては、三月以降の新情勢等よりして賃金制度それ自体に種々再吟味を要するものがあり、次期協定以後については画一的賃金制度存続の可否についても考慮の余地があると認められるが、差し当り三月以降の至過措置としては前協定によることを原則とし、一方その後に於ける事情変化を勘案して至理上到底支拂困難と認められる会社については、適当な修正の余地を認める等の方法を講ずることが妥当と考えられる。よつて両当事者は左記の線に従い、相協力して当面の賃金問題の解決にあたられたい。

- (イ) 三月以降七月迄の賃金については、前中央協定の定める基準によることを原則とする。
- (ロ) 米価改訂による負担を軽減するための措置については双方協議の上善処されたい。
- (ハ) 已むを得ず前項の原則により得ない特殊の事情がある会社については、賃金額に関する前協定書第三項の規定に準拠し、三月以降の新情勢等をも加味して、経営者、組合、協議の上その修正又は履行に関し別段の定めをすることが出来る。協議ならざるときは本幹旋員において斡旋する。

尚 本申入書が出たについては客観情勢も考慮し、経営者としては事態の速かなる收拾につき、より積極的に努力されたく、組合としては目下続行中の争議行爲につき自主的且つ早急に善処されたい。

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昭和二十四年六月三日

中央労働委員会

同 幹旋員 野崎 竜七

同 磯村 乙巳

同 武田 昇

全日本金屈鉉山労働組合連合会
中央執行委員長

原 口 幸 隆 殿

申 入 書

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昭和二十四年六月三日

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