

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

INTERROGATION NO. 290

PLACE: Yawata Kyushu

DATE: 3 November 1945

Division of Origin: Basic Materials Division.

Subject: Japan Iron Works(Nippon Seitetsu)Yawata Plant
Operations During War Years

Personnel Interrogated and Background of Each:

TACHIBANA, Kanichiro	Head of Administration Dept., Yawata Works
KAHARU, Mikiji	Head of the Blast Furnace Dept., Yawata Works
HACHIYA, Shigeo	Head of the Open Hearth Dept., Yawata Works
KOHIRA, Isamu	Head of the Special Steel Dept., Yawata Works
SUNAGA, Miyoji	Head of No. 1 Rolling Mill Dept., Yawata Works
ARAKI, Yukio	Head of the Purchasing & Selling Dept., Yawata
KITAMURA, Tokio	Head of the Operations Section, Yawata Works
KUME, Masao	Head of the Labor Section, Yawata Works
SHIMAMURA, Tetsuo	Central Office of Nippon Seitetsu Co., Tokyo
NOMURA, Takuichi	Central Office of Nippon Seitetsu Co., Tokyo
UCHIKAWA, Satoru	Central Office of Nippon Seitetsu Co., Tokyo

Where Interviewed: Yawata plant offices of Nippon Seitetsu

Interrogators: R. H. DORR, Lieut., USNR, R. I. GALLAND, Lt.(jg), USNR

Interpreter: R. P. ALEXANDER, Civilian

Summary:

Shortages of coolie labor at Yawata made transportation within the plant a bottleneck. Production losses due to air raid alarms and damages were actually mere delays in production. For by the time raids reduced production, the plant was operating at less than capacity because of a lack of both ore and coal. Plant capacity was not reduced by air raid damage to the point where available raw materials could not be processed. A shortage of rolling stock to transport finished steel became acute in October 1944.

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LABOR

Q. With reference to Table No. 8 "Employment Data" does the column "Average Persons on Payroll" include persons who were drafted into armed forces but who continued to receive service pay even though they were not available at work.

A. Yes, we will furnish a new table separating out those persons in military service or otherwise not on the working force.

Q. I note a discrepancy between columns "Daily Planned Manhours" and "Daily Actual Manhours". Did you fall behind in production because of this; that is, was there ever a time during the war when operations were held up because of labor shortage?

A. Not until May 1944, because of the Compulsory Labor Law. In May many workers were conscripted into military service. (We had only 1000 of 60,000 workers declared essential.) The labor shortage was felt particularly in transportation, that is moving materials inside the plant. This coolie labor was a problem all along. They migrated from plant to plant. There was no effective government control. We applied to the Labor Control Association but it had no effective control. Then we fell back on the Labor Conscription Law, hiring workmen and putting the less skilled at coolie labor tasks. In June 1944 university students were conscripted for plant work, but we were not allowed to use them as coolies. Korean coolies were imported but of the three to four thousand we had only 2000 working. They kept running away.

Q. Did lack of coolie labor slow up unloading from ore ships?

A. Yes, it was a bottleneck.

Q. Aside from reducing ore supplies by increasing turn-around time for ships did the unloading delay reduce the amount of ore available for production?

A. No. But transportation within the plant was a bottleneck.

Q. Was any plant operation slowed up because of labor difficulty?

A. Quantity was not reduced but the effect in the quality of labor had an effect on quality of products. (In view of limited time the latter point was not pursued.)

Q. With regard to the number of hours spent repairing bomb damage, were the laborers taken from their regular work to repair damage?

A. We used general plant maintenance, coolie and other general labor. In cases of shutdown of a department, the labor force of that department was put on repair. And we borrowed labor from other departments when possible. Production was not reduced by diversion of labor to repair of bomb damage.

SINTERED ORE

Q. You have an item in your table of ore consumption headed "sintered ore". Where did that ore come from?

A. It came from Korea and Japan.

Q. Can you furnish a breakdown of domestic and overseas sintered ore?

A. Yes. We will do that.

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Q. Did war cause the slack off in use of sintered ore?

A. Yes, imports were reduced because shipping was slowed down from Korea and domestic takings by domestic transport difficulties.

Q. Did the domestic sintered ore come by boat or rail?

A. Both. We will furnish a breakdown which will show the amount of deliveries from these various sources throughout the war.

Air Raid Damage

Q. In this table "Production Lost Due to Air Raids and other causes", how do you figure "Production Lost Due to Air Raid Alarms"?

A. We multiply the time of stoppage during the alarm by the rate of production for the facilities stopped. Rate of production is based on average monthly production.

Q. In July, August, September of 1944, for example, you indicate a total of 34,140 tons of coke production lost due to air raid damage and 10,280 tons lost due to alarms. Still, the difference between planned and actual production is only 18,700 tons.

A. That is because production lost due to air raids is calculated as I said, but the difference between planned and actual production is measured in coke produced. There was capacity unused before the raids for which raw materials had not been available that was used after the raid in order to meet the planned production schedule.

Q. That is, unless bomb damage reduced capacity below planned production capabilities, bombings merely caused a reallocation of raw materials to capacity not being fully used?

A. Yes. We exceeded planned production in the next quarter.

Q. In April, May and June of 1944 you show a loss of production due to causes other than air raids of 45,420 tons of pig iron and give "poor quality coke and ore" as the cause.

A. Yes, that is when we shifted from imported to domestic coal for coking.

Q. Were you operating your blast furnaces at capacity?

A. No, We were operating all the furnaces, but not at capacity. Then in July 1944 we banked two blast furnaces.

Q. Could you have met the planned production schedule with the poor quality of coke and domestic iron ore?

A. Yes. But we were uncertain as to the future and with the limited quantities of coal and iron ore on hand it was better to run light charges on furnaces than to face a shutdown later.

Q. Then the reason was shortage of coal and iron, not the poor quality. You were conserving raw materials?

A. Yes.

Q. Your production of ingot steel fell short of plan by 122,700 tons in July, August, and September of 1944, of which you attribute 64,740 tons to a shortage of pig and electric power, 44,890 tons to air raid damage and 13,070 to air raid alarms. Does this mean that your planned production was at capacity and you could not shift available raw materials into other furnaces?

A. Yes. But the next quarter we were able to exceed our planned production which was only 60% of normal capacity, by using the iron raw materials not used in July, August and September.

Q. You show a loss of production of 10,900 tons of rolled steel in January, February, March of 1941 due to lack of raw materials.

A. Yes at that time we were receiving ingots from the outside and that source was short.

INSPECTORS AND OUTSIDE CONTROLS

Q. Was there any other organization besides the Tosei Kai that controlled production schedules, for example the Army or Navy.

A. The Army, Navy and Railroads had representatives in the plant to check specifications and urge production etc. There was a Rolling Committee towards the end of the war, of which these inspectors were members, to inspect and control production of rolled steel.

Q. Was there any control of carloadings by the Army, Navy, etc. to determine priority of loading of steel materials?

A. Production through to loading was controlled by the Rolling Committee.

Q. Was there ever a shortage of flat cars and other rolling stock?

A. Yes, In 1943 it began to become troublesome but it really was acute beginning in October, 1944.