

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

INTERROGATION NO. 248

PLACE: Tokyo
DATE: 5 November 1945.
TIME: 0930

Division of Origin: Basic Materials
Subject: Coal Imports and the Koeki Eidan
Personnel interrogated:
R. ISHIDA President of Koeki Eidan.
K. KOSUGE Chief of Coal Section, Koeki Eidan.
Where interviewed: Meiji Building, Room 748
Interrogator: Lt. BURNES
Interpreter: Lt. MANNING
Allied Officers Present: Lt. Comdr. BURR, Lt. DORR, Lt. GRAVES

SUMMARY

- 1 - Organization and functions of the Koeki Eidan.
- 2 - Coal imports.

DISTRIBUTION:
All Divisions.

Mr. R. Ishida has served as president of the Koeki Eidan (Import-Export Trading Co.) since 1 June 1943. He was formerly connected with Mitsui and Co., serving with the company for 30 years, mostly in foreign countries (6 years as manager of Mitsui's interests in New York), and finally as Senior Managing Director until October 1941. At that time he was forced out as a result of his outspoken opposition to the plans of the War Clique for war with the United States. He speaks English well.

Mr. K. Kosuge has served as chief of the coal section of the Koeki Eidan for approximately 2 years.

1 - Organization and functions of the Koeki Eidan.

The Koeki Eidan was established by the government on 1 June 1943 for the purpose of collecting and importing into Japan important materials used in the prosecution of the war. Its capitalization was fixed at 300,000,000 yen of which the government supplied about 90%, the remaining 10% being furnished by the large trading corporations, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, etc.

Mr. Ishida agreed to furnish a chart describing in detail the organization of the Koeki Eidan. In general it can be said that the officials were appointed by the government and that the corporation submitted reports periodically to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

As originally instituted, the Koeki Eidan was to take charge of the collection of raw materials outside of Japan as well as the importation of those materials into Japan. Actually, however, the Koeki Eidan had nothing to do with (a) the mobilization of materials, (b) the shipping of those materials to Japan or (c) their distribution within Japan. Its sole function appeared to be that of paying the difference between (a) the high prices paid to the continental producers for the materials which were collected and (b) the lower selling price (fixed by the government) of those materials in Japan. Such funds were supplied to the Koeki Eidan by the government. At first payments were made after the coal arrived in Japan but later they were made when the coal was loaded on ships in continental ports.

2 - Coal Imports

Mr. Ishida agreed to furnish available data on coal imports from all areas from 1931-1945. In addition, he will provide information on the number of coal ships lost at sea while en route to Japan. When asked whether he had figures on coal handling facilities at the various Japanese ports, he stated that such information could be obtained from the Japan Coal Company. According to Mr. Ishida, the government ordered the Koeki Eidan to improve the coal unloading facilities of the Japan Sea ports. One of the company's engineering experts, a Mr. T. Takahashi, was sent to carry out an investigation, but the war was terminated before anything could be accomplished.

At the close of the interview Lt. Dorr, Overall Economic Effects Division, asked a number of questions relating to Koeki Eidan's export business. Mr. Ishida agreed to submit information regarding the nature and volume of that activity.