

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

INTERROGATION NO. 240

PLACE: Tokyo

DATE: 31 October 1945

Division of Origin: Basic Materials

Subject: Coal Mining Production Problems.

Personnel Interrogated:

ICHIKAWA Chief of Technical Department, Coal Control Association since February 1944. Graduate of Imperial University; 1927 - 1944 mining engineer with Mitsubishi

Where Interviewed: Associations' office.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. D. A. BURR, Lt. R. E. BURNES

Interpreter: Lt. B. A. MANNING

Allied Officers Present: No others.

SUMMARY

Until 1937 Japan's mines were exploited for most efficient, low-cost production. From 1937 to 1941, an attempt was made to redesign and reequip mines for long-range expansion; in 1941 the long-range program was abandoned in favor of expedients for maximum immediate exploitation.

Worst Problems:

1. Nature of mines: thin seams, with much gas and water, which could only be improved by better machinery that was not available.
2. Lack of new machinery and materials for repair. Very little in repair or replacement could be done during the war. The chief manufacturers of mining machinery (Hitachi, Mitsubishi Denkk, and Yasukawa Electrical Works) filled no orders since 1942.
3. Labor
  - a. Inexperienced in handling machinery; required long training.
  - b. Army drafted skilled workers indiscriminately until June 1944, when some deferments were allowed. By August 1944 a few began to return to mines, from troop units stationed in Japan.
  - c. Replacement of able ordinary miners by inefficient Koreans.

4. "Very great difficulty" was caused by some regions' having 50 cycle electric current and some 60 cycle, which made maximum utilization of equipment impossible.
5. Air raids in Kyushu and Western Honshu. Although only two mines received direct damage, frequent alerts deprived miners of rest and in many cases stopped mine operations. Destruction of rail facilities caused congestion at mine-heads. Electric power supply became short and caused reduction in use of power machinery.

Prior to 1942, preference in mining equipment allocation was given to Manchurian and Chinese mines, but after that date these fields also got very little from Japan. Beginning in 1943 the Army relaxed its priority for continental production and emphasis was shifted to increasing home Island production. Production difficulties due to air attack will be developed further in future interrogations. Records will be difficult to obtain because of destruction of the branch office at Fukuoka and lack of reports during 1945.