

R E S T R I C T E D  
HEADQUARTERS  
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY  
(PACIFIC)  
APO # 234  
C/O POSTMASTER, SAN FRANCISCO

Interrogation No. 292 U.S.S.B.S.

Place: Tokyo

Date: 1 November 1945

Division of Origin: Oil, Chemical, and Rubber Division.

Subject: Plans formulated by the Greater East Asia Ministry for the Economic Development of Japan based upon the resources in Occupied Territories.

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

Mr. Okita Saburo - Graduated Imperial University in 1937, from Engineering School. Works for the Ministry of Communications on power supply. At the present time the power supply is handled by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Worked there for two years. Stayed there until 1939 and then went to Peiking.

Remained in Peking until February 1942. Was working in the same business. Then returned to Tokyo and entered the Greater East Asia Ministry. At that time it was not known by this title. It was called the East Asia Development Bureau. It was an independent bureau directly under the prime minister. Over that there was a technical bureau.

His principal work was in relation to industry and principally in China. When this became the Greater East Asia Ministry he entered the investigation section. He was in the investigation section until the spring of this year when he entered the economic section with Mr. Aichi until the dissolution of the Greater East Asia Ministry in August.

He is now working at the investigation bureau of the foreign office at which place he was interviewed.

Where interviewed: Foreign Office.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. G. M. Williams.

Interpreter: 1st Lt. G. Oujevolk.

Allied Officers Present: None.

Summary: (See Text).

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I N T E R R O G A T I O N

INVESTIGATION: There were two books which were checked into, both written for the government by Mr. Saburo while working for the Greater East Asia Ministry. The following facts were gathered about them.

BOOK NO. 1: "Material Power of Japan After the Japan-China Incident," July 1945.

In June of this year the material resources of Japan were very low and the Greater East Industry Ministry conducted this investigation.

CHART NO. 1: Shows graphically the resources of the most critical material of the Japanese economy which included coal, electrical power, cement, steel, ammonia sulphate, soda ash, and aluminum. This chart shows actual figures up through the year 1944 and for 1945 it shows estimated figures.

QUESTION: What is the most important feature of this chart from the Japanese point of view?

ANSWER : The most important feature is that the maximum production of steel was in 1938 and it gradually fell off until 1943 when it entered a sharp decline until 1945.

QUESTION: What was the cause of this decline?

ANSWER : The reason was the stoppage of importation of scrap iron from the United States. Next in importance was the decline in availability of shipping. The steel industry in Japan depends upon shipping and approximately 40% of shipping is used for iron and steel.

QUESTION: I would like to get your impression of the chemical industry.

ANSWER : I have no connection with that branch. However, from 1930-38 the production of soda ash increased tremendously after the Manchurian incident. Beginning in 1938 production fell off rapidly due to the lack of salt. The main usage of soda ash is artificial silk and glass.

QUESTION: What is the situation in regard to ammonia sulphate?

ANSWER : Maximum production was around 1941, about 1,200,000 tons. It is the most important industry in Japan. It is used for production of fertilizer for rice. It is used 30 times more than compared to the United States and Japan uses it more than any country in the world, when used in hectar of land.

QUESTION: Why aren't there any charts on oil?

ANSWER : The oil was run separately by the Army and Navy and we do not know anything about it.

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QUESTION: Was this peculiar or was it true in other materials also?

ANSWER : It was true for oil only. The figures, data, and material on these charts was obtained from the Ministry of Munitions. Only oil was not on this list.

CHART NO. 2: Monthly production of 1944. Some articles shown in decline. After June and July the declination is fairly sharp because of lack of transportation.

CHART NO. 3: Production and loss of ships.

QUESTION: From where were these figures obtained?

ANSWER : From the Ministry of Munitions. The dark line is loss and the white lines production. The most important reason for the war power of Japan was shipping. The industries of Japan depend upon shipping very largely in comparison with other countries.

CHART NO. 4: The relation of continental resources to the Japanese economy, 1939-45. Coal: the white line represents the production in Japan, the black line is for Korea and Sakhalin. The vertical hatch shows imports from China including Manchuria. The chart on the righthand side of the page shows coal used for coking in the steel industry. 90% of the hard coking coal comes from China, and also Manchuria. That used in production of carbide and soda comes from French Indo-China. Because of shortage of shipping it was secured from Shanshi Province of China and the rest from Korea. The highest maximum of coal in the iron industry was 1942.

CHART NO. 5: Consumption of Iron Ore, 1938-45. The white line shows the imports from South Asia, Malaya, and the Philippine Islands. The diagonal hatch represents the China ore, the vertical hatch the Korean ore. The white block represents the home island production. Before the great war Japan depended mostly upon ore from Malaya and Philippines. After the beginning of the war Japan depended mostly upon China. In 1939 Japan discovered new ores in the island of Hainan from which came 1,000,000 tons. The property of Hainan ore is very excellent.

CHART NO. 6: Supply of Salt, 1938-45. The white part represents imports from Formosa, and includes Africa and Somaliland. The diagonal hatch represents salt from China. The vertical hatch represents salt from Manchuria. The white block at the bottom represents homeland production of salt. The important feature of the chart is the increase of salt production in China. Most of this comes from the salt mines of Northern China.

QUESTION: What was Book No. 1 used for?

ANSWER : It was sort of reference material for the minister secretariat.

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QUESTION: Was this used at all when they were making their decision to surrender?

ANSWER : It may have had some bearing on it. I'm not sure.

BOOK NO. 2: "Revision of the Japanese Economy in Accordance with the Resources of the Continent," February 1945.

All the main materials such as salt, soy beans, aluminous shale, magnesite, graphite, fats and oils, coal, iron ore, manganese ore, oil fuel, and cotton.

QUESTION: What was the purpose of preparing this treatise?

ANSWER : We could not get the materials due to lack of shipping. This report deals with our efforts in Manchuria and China.

QUESTION: You were trying to develop this part because supplies from the South were cut off?

ANSWER : The imports from the South last year suddenly declined. In February of this year the articles coming from China and Korea also declined. This study was made so we could decide what was best to do.

The conclusion of this study showed that 60-70% of imported material went to the iron industry. This was to be used to see whether the percentages should be changed.

The following facts were given on salt: (1) Salt is the principal mineral for the people and (2) salt is used in the soda industry and also for cooking.

Consumption of salt in Japan per year exceeds 2 million tons. Half of it is used for the soda industry and the other half for cooking.

QUESTION: Was the salt used for cooking needed in canning factories or consumed in households?

ANSWER : A breakdown would read about this way:

- 20% - household
- 20% - factory manufacturing
- 15% - "Miso"
- 15% - Japanese Sauce
- 20% - pickles
- 10% - storing of fish

QUESTION: As a result of this book did they take heed and make a change in the ratio of imports?

ANSWER : They changed salt to 70% of imports and iron and steel to 30%.

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QUESTION: Couldn't you tell at that time that the war was over now that you had to change from war materials to food for the people on the homefront and that you could no longer bring it to a successful conclusion?

ANSWER : The people who prepared this report knew that they could not win the war.

QUESTION: Did the Greater East Asia Ministry do anything about it?

ANSWER : The minister did read it and all he did was to increase the food production. In April a decision was made to control the food imports.

QUESTION: Do you know who had control over the allocation of shipping?

ANSWER : Mr. Shinichi Tanaka.

QUESTION: What was his position when he controlled it?

ANSWER : In the General Mobilization Bureau in the Munitions Ministry.

QUESTION: When was this decision made to convert to food for the homeland?

ANSWER : The decision was made at a conference at which representatives of the various interested ministries were present.