

HEADQUARTERS
U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
(Pacific)
APO 234

File

INTERROGATION NO. 288

PLACE: Tokyo

DIVISION OF ORIGIN: Oil and Chemicals.

DATE : 8 Nov 1945

SUBJECT: Allocation of Oil and Chemicals by the General Mobilization Bureau.

PERSONNEL INTERROGATED AND BACKGROUND OF EACH:

Mr. TAKAMINE, Meitatsu.

Entered the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 1926. Stayed there until 1939 when he went to Manchuria until April 1941. He was there as the Minister of Economics for the Japanese Government. After he returned from Manchuria he became head of Dept. of Documents. He stayed there for six months.

For 1½ yrs. was factory inspector in the industrial section. From July 1943 to Nov 1943 was head of Bureau of Metals. From Nov 1943 to June 1945 was first section head of General Mobilization Bureau of the Ministry of Munitions.

From June 1945 to Aug 1945 he was the Bureau Head of the General Mobilization Bureau. From Aug 1945 to Oct 1945 was general Bureau head of the Dept. of Commerce and Industry. He resigned in October.

Mr. KIMURA, Hideo.

Mr. SHIROMIZU, H.

Commerce and Industry Bureau.
Organic Chemical Section. Specialty:
coal tar.

Mr. IKEO, K.

Commerce and Industry Bureau.
Organic Chemical Section. Specialty:
rubber.

Mr. TANABE, T.

Mr. OHATA, T.

General Mobilization Bureau.
(See Interrogation No. 273)
Commerce and Industry Bureau.
Inorganic Chemical Section. Specialty:
ammonium.

Mr. SATO, K.

Commerce and Industry Bureau.
General Affairs Section. Specialty:
chemical benzine.

Mr. IMANISHI, K.

Commerce and Industry Bureau.
Organic Chemical Section. Specialty:
industrial explosives and oil & fats.

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WHERE INTERVIEWED: Room 810, Meiji Building.

INTERROGATOR: Lt Comdr G. M. WILLIAMS.

INTERPRETER: Mr. Frank Baba (Civ.).

ALLIED OFFICERS PRESENT: None.

SUMMARY:

1. Functions of the General Mobilization Bureau, Munitions Ministry.
2. General Mobilization Bureau controlled only domestic oil production and requested Army and Navy for additional civilian requirement.
3. Method of allocating chemicals.
4. Rubber shortage and synthetic rubber.

Q: I am interested in your duties in the General Mobilization Bureau. Will you outline them for us?

A: When head of the First Section in the General Mobilization Bureau I was connected with the mobilization of material. As the Bureau head I had the same function. My status changed from November 1943 to October 1945 but my duties were the same.

Q: What does the term mobilization of materials include?

A: It includes import materials such as iron, coal, copper, light metals (aluminum, manganese), and oil. My job was the planning of the supply and the allocation of these materials.

Q: What kind of plans did you make for the supply of these materials?

A: I had to find out the production figures, etc. I planned what percentage went to the Army, Navy, and Civilian.

Q: Was your principal function determining the amount of the commodity which would be available and then allocating it to the Army, Navy, and Civilians?

A: Yes.

Q: You didn't have any active function in trying to increase the production of these items?

A: Yes, I made the production plan.

Q: What did this plan consist of?

A: I looked into the supply of iron ore and coal in regard to transportation. I figured then how much could be produced.

Q: Did you do anything like allocating particular materials to the iron industry in order to produce more iron?

A: I shipped more coal to the iron production instead of oil plants, etc.

Q: Did you make any special arrangements to assist the production of oil?

A: I figured the crude oil production within Japan, synthetic oil, and how much coal could be supplied to the refineries.

Q: What priority would the oil industry have in getting coal?

A: It had the highest priority such as the steel industry also had.

Q: It wasn't quite the highest priority was it? The Army and Navy took coal first didn't they?

A: The Army and Navy had first priority on this.

Q: Did the Army and Navy have occasion to have priority on construction materials?

A: They had a first-class priority. Always the Army and Navy had first-class priorities.

- Q: What sort of priority did the chemical industries have?
- A: It depended on the stage of the war. For ammonium sulphate the priority became higher when the food problem became acute.
- Q: What were the critical chemicals the General Mobilization Board had to deal with?
- A: Ammonium sulphate, carbide, nitric acid, sulphuric acid, and ammonia. Also important were salt and soda ash.
- Q: Was there in existence any general plan covering a period of years for any of these products?
- A: We had a quarterly plan.
- Q: Was that the plan that the SEI SAN KAKUJAHAN prepared?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Let's turn to the allocation of fuel. What was the function of the General Mobilization Bureau in the allocation of fuel?
- A: My office was connected with the supply and allocation of oil. It was separate from the Army and Navy.
- Q: What do you mean it was separate from the Army and Navy?
- A: The total supply of oil which my office controlled came from the Japanese homeland factories which we controlled. This included oil from the well and refineries, synthetic oil, and alcohol. A certain percentage of oil was secured from what the Army and Navy had in the south. We made demands to the Army-Navy Oil Committee from where we got an allocation. My office makes the supply plan, distribution, and allocation. The Army and Navy get some of this. What the Army and Navy take back I presume is for the local armed forces and for the factories which they control in the local vicinity. The Army and Navy have their own factories generally.
- Q: In what way did you make your request to the Army-Navy Oil Committee to get an allocation?
- A: We explained the total production figures at the committee meetings. From past experience we know just how much the Civilian needs are. The situation is explained to the Army and Navy at the meeting and they supply whatever they can.
- Q: Who was the person who went to the Army-Navy Oil Committee for you?
- A: In most cases official demand was not made, but by informal talks sometimes over the phone, usually by department heads.
- Q: Did you ever make such requests for oil, Mr. TAKAMINE?
- A: No.
- Q: Who in your division made such requests?
- A: One of my section chiefs such as Mr. TANABE.

Q: As far as you were concerned Mr. TAKAMINE, the matter of allocation of oil was only a matter of allocating local production plus whatever the Army and Navy gave you from their supplies. Is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have anything to say about the allocation of the total amount of oil that the Army and Navy imported into Japan?

A: We had nothing to do with it. All our office could do was make demands.

Q: What was the function of the General Mobilization Bureau?

A: It was concerned with two things: (1) transportation by ship and rail and (2) allocation of materials.

Q: Did you have anything to do with the sailing schedule of tankers?

A: The Army and Navy had control of this.

Q: Was there a similar plan to that of the oil allocation in the determining of the supply and allocation of the various chemicals?

A: The allocation of chemical products is different from that of oil. It falls under the general allocation of materials and was controlled by the Munitions Ministry.

Q: How did the allocation of chemicals work?

A: This plan I will give is not for chemicals alone but for everything except oil. The Army and Navy make a demand for their necessary amount to our office (GMB). The General Mobilization Bureau asks what they are to be used for but the Army and Navy explain only in a general way and do not go any further. The General Mobilization Board gives them what they want anyway. I do not know whether the Army and Navy's total use is the same figure that their demands to us is. Some of their materials may come from outside sources. As far as rubber is concerned, the Army and Navy were responsible for the transportation of it from the southern areas. Whether they took any of this out for themselves without bringing it into the country, I do not know. The General Mobilization Board presented their absolute Civilian requirements and between the two they negotiated and reached compromises.

Q: The rubber picture was the same as the oil picture?

A: Yes.

Q: Was there a great shortage of rubber in the home islands since the beginning of the war?

A: About December of last year the Civilian shortage became acute.

Q: Was rubber rationed before December 1944 in the home islands?

A: Since the China Incident rationing has been in effect.

Q: Up until December 1944 was there enough rubber to meet the essential needs for the military and war industries?

A: For the military needs there was enough but for the civilian needs it was very acute. The shortage was in conveyor belts for factories, rubber for making miner's boots, and automobile tires.

Q: Was the shortage on the civilian side felt as critical, or was it considered to be only an annoyance?

A: It was acute even before 1944. Shortages in items like miner's boots figured in the coal production. And due to bad roads, tires deteriorated very fast.

Q: Was any effort made to develop synthetic rubber?

A: A synthetic rubber production effort was made by the Army and Navy. However, unlike America the product was made from calcium carbide instead of oil. The highest production reached was 50 metric tons per month.

Q: Where were these plants located?

A: There were about ten plants in Japan. The largest one was Kurosaki Plant of the Mitsubishi Company located in Fukuoku precinct, Kyushu. A large quantity was made at the Japanese Nitrogen Company in Korea. The factory was located northwest of Keijo. This was Sesui Plant. Northeast of here was another factory, Konan Plant.

Q: Did the production of synthetic rubber ease the acuteness of the rubber situation by any great degree?

A: No, but since the rubber was oil resistant they used it in that way. It was used in the construction of bullet-proof rubber gas tanks. It was used as covers for engines where the oil flows. Another use was for shock absorbers.

Q: Getting back to allocations, just what was the process of allocation. Where did they get their figures on the supply and where did they get their demands from?

A: From the reports of manufacturers.

Q: Is this requirements or supply you are referring to?

A: It depends upon the item. Some are actual production figures and some are expected figures.

Q: Let's take ammonium sulphate. Where did you get your production figures for this item?

A: The amount of the coal production we know. From this we can figure how much ammonium sulphate was produced.

Q: How do you figure out your requirements so that allocations can be made?

A: It depended upon the supply of coal at the end of the war; therefore, the amount required was not very much of a problem but how much could be produced was the problem.

Q: After the raw materials have been obtained, how do you determine to whom to allocate it?

A: The total production is shipped to the Japan Fertilizer Company under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. This company decides what prefecture gets what part of the allocation.

Q: How do you determine the production of nitric acid?

A: First the amount of ammonia is decided from the figures on coal production. Then the Army, Navy, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry decide what percentage of ammonia will be used for the production of nitric acid and ammonium sulphate, ammonia nitrates, and others.

Q: Are these conferences held under the supervision of the General Mobilization Bureau?

A: Originally this allocation wasn't under the General Mobilization Bureau but since the middle of 1944 it fell under them.

Q: In the event of any dispute as to the percentage of allocation, was the General Mobilization Bureau able to settle the dispute itself?

A: In case the final decision was not reached in this group, it was brought up at a Cabinet meeting since the fertilizer and explosive problem became acute at the end. Final decisions were usually made here, but if not they were sent to the Supreme War Council for a final decision.

Q: How did the production and supply of sodium chloride and sodium carbide work out?

A: The supply of sodium chloride as far as the production of Japan proper was concerned, could be estimated from the coal production. Continental sources depended upon the allocation of shipping.

Q: Who determined the allocation of coal and shipping?

A: This was done by the basic planning in the General Mobilization Bureau and in case a decision could not be reached, it was brought up to the Supreme War Council.

Q: What do you mean a decision could not be reached? Who was party to the conference?

A: A preliminary plan was made by the General Mobilization Board and brought up to the Cabinet meeting.

Q: How did they make the plan in the General Mobilization Bureau?

A: Assistant to Department heads made the original plan.

Q: If the people who made the plans were all in the same department, why would there be any indecision?

A: The Assistants make the decision but they must be approved by the Army, Navy, and Munitions Ministry (bureaus on aviation ordnance, iron ore, chemicals, and non-ferrous metals).

Q: How was the allocation determined after the supply was figured out?

A: The requirement demand is made by various ministries such as transportation and communications, including the Army and Navy.

Q: And then what happened?

A: The requisitioning bureaus of each Ministry get together and negotiate awhile and then they make their final decision. If one cannot be made, the matter goes to the Cabinet meeting and if not reached there, to the Supreme War Council.

Q: How often did they go to these higher authorities?

A: Very few times.

Q: Did the General Mobilization Board act as chairman at these meetings?

A: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in the production of calcium carbide? How did they determine their supply?

A: That depended upon the coke supply. The GMB decided the allocation of coke.

Q: How did they determine the allocation?

A: The Chemical Ministry and the Agriculture and Forestry Ministry decided what percentage of the carbide would go to each need such as fertilizer.

Q: Was this a conference which the General Mobilization Bureau presided over?

A: Yes.

Q: What part did the control associations play in the allocation of materials?

A: The chemical control association supplies figures for production plans which has how much of various materials can be produced and then orders the individual chemical companies to make production according to the plan finally decided upon.

Q: Is there one or more than one chemical control association with which the General Mobilization Bureau works?

A: The chemical industry control association is connected with the chemical bureau of the Munitions Ministry but has no direct connection with the General Mobilization Bureau.

Q: Does the General Mobilization Bureau get its figures from the chemical bureau or directly from the chemical industry control association?

A: Chemical bureau of the Munitions Ministry.

Q: When the allocation is made for civilian use, is that an overall figure which is given to the Chemical Bureau?

A: When the plan is made between the General Mobilization Bureau and the chemical bureau of the Munitions Ministry they make the plan for civilian use. When the plan is made the chemical bureau and the chemical industry control association get together, discuss the matter, and the latter carries out the plan they make.