

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

INTERROGATION NO. 14
(Obtain from G-2)

PLACE: TOKYO
DATE: 8 Oct TIME: 1400

Division Of Origin: MFC

SUBJECT: Man Power (Students)

Personnel interrogated and background of each:

OMURA, Seiichi - Ass't to Education Minister.
NAKANE, Hideo - Student Labor Specialist, Education Ministry.

Where interviewed: Education Ministry.

Interrogator: Lt. Comdr. O. W. DeWOLF, USNR.

Interpreter: Lt. CORHAM, USNR.

Allied Officers Present: Lt. BAGDON, USNR, USSBS.
Lt. HERSHSTRITT, USNR, USSBS.

Summary:

- a. Development of Student Labor Mobilization 1941 - 1945.
- b. Procedure for Student Labor Mobilization.
- c. Objective of Student Labor Mobilization.
- d. Number of Students Employed.
- e. Effect of U. S. Bombing.

1. Omura and Nakane were interviewed for approximately one and a half hours 8 October at the Education Ministry on the student labor mobilization program. Lieut. Gorham acted as interpreter, neither of the Japanese speaking more than a few words of English. Prior to meeting with Omura and Nakane, the interviewers met briefly with Mr. Tamon MAEDA, who was awaiting official notification of his retention in the SHIDEHARA cabinet as Minister of Education. MAEDA referred the interviewers to Omura and Nakane as the best sources of information concerning the student labor mobilization program.

2. Development of Student Labor Mobilization: Approximately seven years ago, a movement was undertaken to mobilize students for summer work on farms. This was, according to Omura and Nakane, the forerunner of wartime student labor mobilization. Care was taken at the outset by Education authorities not to let the farm work interfere with studies by limiting the working time to the summer vacation months. However, in February 1941 it became necessary to use students on farms even though it interfered with their education. This development was followed in June 1943 with the expansion of student labor into factories. At first, the Education Ministry ruled that no student could work more than 30 consecutive days. Although in theory, a student could work 30 days, rest one, and then commence another 30 days work period, Omura and Nakane said this was not the actual practice. Nakane explained that a customary procedure was to assign one school class to 30 days of labor, then return them to the classroom while another class took over their jobs. This 30-day work limit was modified in January 1944 to 120 consecutive days largely, the officials said, because manufacturers protested that 30 days was too short a time to train and make effective use of the students. In February 1944 the ban on the number of working days was lifted entirely. The Education Ministry considers that April 1944 marked the beginning of what they really considered as conscripted student labor.

3. Procedure: Prior to February 1944, the Education Ministry handled all requests for student labor and officials indicated that they made an effort to keep the primary emphasis on education rather than on labor. However, in February 1944 the Welfare Ministry assumed responsibility for allocation of student labor, which operated as follows:

A factory desiring student labor would make its request to the Welfare Ministry. If the request was for 100 students, it was not unlikely that the Welfare Ministry would approve only 75 students and then pass it on to the Education Ministry. The latter would take appropriate action to furnish the students. Any student above middle school (17 years and or older) was directly under the supervision of the Education Ministry and would be notified by the Ministry where and when to report for work. Students of the middle school and below were under the cognizance of education authorities at the prefectural level. Minimum age for working in factories, boys and girls, was 12 years.

It appears that the Education and Welfare Ministries operated pretty much under their own rules until August 1944 when an Imperial Rescript was issued empowering Education to set up official rules and regulations. In this connection, the officials took care to point out that at the outset of student conscription for industry, an attempt was made to keep them out of mines, chemicals and other industries considered detrimental to health. These restrictions were later removed because of the deterioration of the Japanese war effort. An indication of the growing importance of student labor is seen in the elevation of the Student Mobilization Headquarters to bureau status in July 1945. Copies of several handbooks relating to the rules laid down by the Education Ministry for the employment of students were obtained and will be at least partially translated.

4. Objective of Student Labor Mobilization: As explained by the two officials, the original objective of Student Labor was to stimulate adult conscripted labor to greater efforts. It

was reasoned that the patriotic fervor and enthusiasm of the students for the war and war production would inspire the other factory workers and, in addition, the eagerness and vigor of the students, could be well utilized in factory work. This emphasis on leadership fitted in well with plans of the Education officials but did not exactly work out as they had anticipated. In some cases, as Vice Minister Kameyama of the Welfare Ministry said in an earlier interview, the students were influenced by, rather than influencing the adults. In some cases, presence of the students did stimulate the conscripted labor but in the majority of cases it had no noticeable effect. However, if the students failed partially as morale-builders, they more than compensated for it by their actual labor. Student workers apparently were in great demand and their contribution to Japanese Industry is of significance. Some Japanese factories were entirely dependent upon student labor at the end of the war.

5. Number of Students Employed: Overall figures for student employment must await translation of charts furnished by the Education Ministry. However, it roughly exceeded three million (3,000,000) with the peak coming in July 1944. The officials were of the opinion that the greatest percentage of students were absorbed by the aircraft industry although again exact figures will have to be translated. Some plants used as much as 60-70 per cent student labor; others virtually none. It may be noted here that until 1944 the military allowed some draft postponement for college students. After 1944 only a few students with particular technical or scientific bent were deferred.

6. Effect of Bombing: As in the case of adults, the disruption of communications and transportation and the attempted dispersion of factories, all served to keep students away from their factories. However, Education officials believe that the absenteeism due to U. S. bombings was far less in the case of students than in the case of adults. Officials stated that dispersion of factories was the biggest single disrupting

factor in the student labor program.

7. Evaluation: Further inquiry into student labor mobilization probably should await translation of documents now in hand. OMURA, who is relatively new in his job, is considered of no further value. NAKANE, on the other hand, is well versed in his field and should be of considerable value should further information be desirable. Both men were cooperative.

O. W. De WOLF