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AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH

TRANSLATION NO. VII/38

REPORT ON THE EFFECTS
OF ALLIED AIR ACTIVITY
AGAINST THE RUHR.

Addressed to Field Marshal Keitel by
Reichsminister Speer on 7th November, 1944.

TRANSLATED BY:
AIR MINISTRY, A.H.B.6.
7.8.47.

The Reichsminister
for Armament and War Production.

7.11.1944.

Dear Field Marshal Keitel,

The continuous attacks directed by the enemy against the Ruhr are having the most serious effect on our entire armament and war production. In addition to the bombing of production plants in the Ruhr, the systematic attacks carried out on railway installations are largely responsible for the present critical situation. While the former can result in an appreciable drop in our total war output, the disruption of our communications network may well lead to a production crisis which will gravely jeopardize our capacity to continue the war. The following figures show the consequences of the present transport situation and reduced output:

(1) Coal deliveries from the Ruhr.

The daily output of coal fell in in the last week of October to 237,000 metric tons, (compared to 371,000 metric tons one year ago, and 351,000 one month ago).

The daily output of coke was 59,600 metric tons, (compared with 92,000 metric tons one year ago, and 85,000 metric tons one month ago)

The daily output of lignite from the Lower Rhine area in October was 106,000 metric tons, (as compared with 197,000 metric tons one year ago, and 141,000 metric tons one month ago.

(2) Steel Output

Steel production in the Ruhr fell for the month of October to approximately 700,000 metric tons, - some 400,000 metric tons less than the corresponding figure for last year. The yield of steel for the whole Reich has therefore been approximately halved in comparison with that of the first 6 months of 1944.

(3) Electricity Supplies

5 power stations with a capacity of 180 m.w. are now out of action. In addition, the attacks carried out on the Goldenberg power station have caused a deficit of 150 m.w. in the lignite mining area on the left bank of the Rhine. In all, power supplies have dropped by 26%.

(4) Gas Supplies

Gas supplies have dropped by 50% between August and the beginning of October. As a result of the damage caused to gas producing installations, there will be a deficit of 3 - 4 million cubic metres a day until at least the end of the year. This shortage is gravely affecting not only the civilian population, but also our iron and metal production. Steel production has fallen by between 3-5,000 metric tons a day.

(5) Transport

(a) Railways.

10 railway stations, including Essen, Hamm, Cologne and Muenster are at present completely unuseable. 46 other railway stations are only useable to a limited extent. As regards railway trucks, only 7,786 of these were available daily in the last week of October, compared to 18,700 at the corresponding time last year, and 14,600 last month.

/(b)

(b) Inland Waterways

The movement of shipping on the Rhine is severely impeded by the destruction of the Muelheimer bridge at Cologne. The Mittelland Canal was out of action between September 26th - October 22nd. It was further damaged on October 26th and November 4th and will probably not be in use again before November 20th. Provisional arrangements have been made to divert traffic by the Weser River locks as from November 11th. The total monthly carrying capacity of the canal was 1,500,000 metric tons, of which approximately 750,000 metric tons of coal and 450,000 metric tons of iron ore.

(c) Consequences.

Food supplies are not yet endangered, since the area can live temporarily on local supplies.

As regards coal, half the waggons have had to be delivered to the Reich Railway system, since the average level of stocks in Germany has fallen from being sufficient for 18 days on October 1st, to being sufficient for 14 days on October 20th. The railways in the Hanover, Cassel and Muenster districts have stocks for only 3 - 5 days, while at Munich stocks for only 1 - 8 days are available. These demands have led to a reduction in the reserve stocks held by other consumers. For example, September 1st 3.6%, on October 1st 16%, on October 15th 37% of all gas works in Germany had supplies for less than 2 weeks. Stocks in the steel plants at Watenstedt and Linz have fallen from being sufficient for between 35 - 40 days to between 12 - 20 days.

The Fuehrer has ordered:

- (1) 1,000 heavy Flak guns to be transferred from the defence of war production plants to that of communications key points, (Hamm, Bielefeld, Osnabrueck etc.).
- (2) 2,000 light Flak guns to be made available immediately for installation on railway waggons, and protected by concrete cupolas against enemy aircraft fire.

In addition, the Fuehrer orders that both the Armed Forces and local authorities must take all conceivable measures to restore efficiency and normality in the transport system. This task must not be allowed to fail for lack of equipment or personnel, since it is of the utmost importance in the supplying of our troops and the maintenance of war production, and therefore determines our capacity to continue the war.

I ask you to consider what assistance you can render in this desperate situation.

Heil Hitler !

Yours,

(Signed) SPEER.

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