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ECONOMIC SITUATION IN HOLLAND (1944)

From the Diary of the German Ruestungsinspektion Niederlande (Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands):

1 July 1944:

Complaints of armament enterprises about defectiveness or complete lack of shoes for their workers increase steadily. This may be partly responsible for the high sickness rate in the enterprises. It is suggested that the allotments be revised. Similar difficulties arise for work clothing and additional food for armament workers.

13 July 1944:

Gas block hours are introduced in Den Haag, Haarlem, Groningen, Mijmegen, Leeuwarden, Vlaardingen, Almelo, and Gouda. Gas pressure is reduced to such an extent that its use is practically impossible. The most important armament enterprises dependent upon gas supply are being equipped with gas suction equipment. Gas use periods are so arranged that upon proper adaptation the supply for the population is ensured.

22 July 1944:

In order to conserve power, the Netherlands railroad administration has been ordered to cut electric domestic train traffic on Sundays by 50%.

25 July 1944:

Enterprises are ordered to cut use of automobiles for transport of materials to a minimum.

30 July 1944:

1,000 trucks are confiscated by the Army, thus creating transportation difficulties for the industry. A large number of trucks of the armament industry are already laid up due to lack of tires.

2,859 workers were recruited for the Reich during July 1944.

6 August 1944:

Theft of explosives from the Ensi Cement plant in Maastricht. Thieves escaped unrecognized.

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Explosion in transformer installation of the Associated Tin Plants in Amsterdam. A large part of the building was destroyed, forcing complete shutdown. Explosion caused by a tetryl-filled time-bomb. Resumption through emergency installation will be tried.

10 August 1944:

Efforts are made to cut the high sickness and accident figures in the Netherland armament enterprises.

15 August 1944:

Production quotas have generally been fulfilled. Sabotage and explosions in transformer stations have not affected them to any considerable extent.

20 August 1944:

In order to ensure the urgent demand for wooden shoes in armament enterprises, an additional allotment until the end of the forestry year (1 October) is granted.

24 August 1944:

The food situation has been adversely affected by unfavorable spring weather, loss of agriculturally usable area through military safety measures (flooding and evacuation of the Zeeland islands alone resulted in the loss of 5% of total cultivating area, i.e., 10% of the total utilization value), and lack of transportation space. There is, furthermore, an increasing tendency toward passive resistance among the producers. However, the continuation of additional food in war-important enterprises through the issue of a warm meal through central kitchens (more than 500,000 meals daily) has been ensured.

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Example of results of passive resistance in industry through simulated sickness: In 1942 and 1943, maximum coal mining production in the Limburg coal area had been over 40,000 tons daily. In July 1944, it was

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still 33,500 tons daily, in August 1944 it sank to 29,500 tons daily. Toward the end of August 1944 in some of the Limburg mines there were up to 36.5% sick reports.

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Report of the Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands, dated 1 August 1944.

Re: Caves near Maastricht.

Four main groups of caves near Maastricht have been discovered. Three of these groups are located on Netherland territory, part of the fourth on Belgian territory.

The various groups include up to eight individual caves. The total space available for industrial use amounts to 500,000 square meters. A probable expansion through new discovery is estimated at an additional 200,000 square meters. This amounts to more than the entire industrial space of Greater Berlin.

About 1/10 of the cave area is located on Belgian territory. The protective earth cover begins at 6 meters and increases up to 80 meters. The preliminary power estimate amounts to 60,000 kilovolt-amperes.

For the utilization of these caves for industrial purposes, a company was formed, called "Industrielle Umsiedlung" (Industrial Relocation) with a capital of 20 million guilder. The Plenipotentiary was Dipl. Ing. Muenster, who acted mostly through the Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands, Maastricht field office, the chief of which was Major Reiner.

..... One of the foremost sabotage acts in Belgium has always been destruction of high-tension wires. For the caves, however, the high-tension wires must work absolutely perfectly because electric current is needed not only for production, but also for ventilation and air supply. Air shafts, too, are to be protected because they are of vital importance.

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... Transportation planning, including the necessary ramps, might encounter difficulties due to the topography of the terrain, but tests seem to be promising.

A particular difficulty arises out of the necessity for sanitary installations and dwelling space. Since work in the caves can be done only with artificial light (neon light) anyhow, it is intended to work during the night. After work, the workers should then relax in shelters inside the caves. Thus the workers can use daytime for their leisure.

It may be assumed with certainty that the enemy will direct his attacks almost against the settlements of workers of the cave-hidden industries, once he realizes that the caves are attack proof. That is why shelters within the caves have been planned.

A conservative estimate of 50,000 workers would mean that living quarters in the caves would be quite crowded. That, of course, increases the air danger [Luftgefahr. It is not clear whether this is a reference to air attack or to a ventilation problem].

...The power requirement is estimated at 60,000 kilovolt-amperes. This power will not be drawn from the net in daytime, but will be distributed over different periods, which ties in with the plan to work at night.

... At present 14,000 earth and concrete workers are employed in the caves. OT (Todt Organization) is in charge. The main work consists of levelling of floors, support of walls and ceilings, and dustproofing of the walls. An air conditioning installation is under construction.

Narrow-gauge railroads are operating within the caves, which could be used to move men and material from one work place to others.

The Fokker plant's preliminary work has progressed so far that assembly work will probably begin in August and production will probably be resumed during this month, too.

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Interested firms:

Fokker	50,000 sq m
Volkswagen plant	43,000 " "
Admiral of the Netherlands (plant for speedboat motors)	10,000 " "
Phillips, Eindhoven	60,000 " "
Phillips, Aachen	15,000 " "
front repair shop	10,000 " "
Wolframmetall-Werke	100,000 " "
Luftgau (air district), for storage purposes	60,000 " "

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The document further contains various short reports on the removal of machinery, raw materials, and finished products to Germany prior to the advance of the Allies. This was not an intrinsic part of the German economic administration, but rather its liquidation, and as such is of little interest in this connection.

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The document further includes the following lists:

List of armament enterprises in the area of the Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands. The list contains 446 firms, their names, addresses, type of production, number of employees, and the German armed forces branch in charge until 30 August 1944.

List of 338 contractors for the armament industry; enterprises are listed by name, address, and code letters for enterprises exempt from labor conscription, small shipyards, shipyard auxiliary enterprises, plant numbers, and numbers to denote the German armed forces branch in charge.

Lists of 3,136 enterprises exempt from labor conscription. The lists date from 15 January 1944 to 5 July 1944.

List of 413 enterprises subordinated to the Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands. Date: 15 May 1944.

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