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CLASSIFICATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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INFORMATION FROM FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

COUNTRY

DATE OF

INFORMATION

SUBJECT

Economic - Industrial

DATE DIST.

1950

HOW

Daily newspapers **PUBLISHED**

Jun 1950 -

WHERE

PUBLISHED

Mukden; Canton; Hong Kong

NO. OF PAGES

DATE

PUBLISHED

17 Apr, 27 May 1950

SUPPLEMENT TO

LANGUAGE

Chinese

NAVY

X AIR

STATE

REPORT NO.

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Newspapers as indicated.

NORTHEAST SUFFERS MUCH FIRE DAMAGE; REPORTS ECONOMIC CONDITIONS GOOD

FIRES CAUSE GREAT DAMAGE -- Mukden T'ung-pei Jih-pao, 17 Apr 50

During the spring of 1950, various areas in Northeast China suffered severe fires, causing great damages to personnel and public property. Based on an incomplete report, there were 209 fires in the Northeast. The total amount of damages was 11,500,000,000 yuan, and 20 individuals were injured or killed. Fifty-five of the fires occurred in mines and factories.

In Sungkiang Province, 97 percent of the fires were in mines and factories. Fire caused damages amounting to 3,500,000,000 yuan to the electrical equipment plant of the Hao-kang Mining Affairs Bureau, 4 billion yuan to Hu-lan Match Factory, and 1,500,000,000 yuan to the rubber plant of the materials section of the Northeast Railroad Department.

Recent dry weather and high winds were the cause of fires in the northern part of the Northeast. On 9 April 1950, fire started in Tieh-li and Sui-leng hsiens and swept through a 200-li strip of land, approximately 100 li wide.

In Sungkiang Province, fires covering several hundred li have been raging in numerous mountain areas. Such fires have caused damage to 15 hsiens, including Mi-shan, Fang-cheng, T'ang-yuan, T'ung-ho, Hai-lin, Chi-hsien, Hua-chuan, Mulan, I-lan, Mu-leng, Lin-kou, Tung-ning, Chi-hsi, etc. In Wu-chia village of Pinhsien, the entire village, consisting of 30 residents, was burned to the ground.

Recently, there were 18 occurrences of fire in Inner Mongolia. In one instance, fire consumed a 300-li area in 2 hours, and in another instance railroad stations at Ch'i-k'ou and Lu-shui were destroyed.

In general, approximately 80 percent of the fires that occurred in industries and mines may be traced to lax management policies. Many of the fires have been due to faulty furnaces, chimneys, and electric wirings. For example, fires in the Harbin Chen-hsin Match Company and the I-chun Forestry Affairs Bureau were caused by faulty chimneys. Fires originating from passing trains have caused much damage. On 9 April, 19 fires were started along the Sui-hua--Chia-mu-ssu line in this way.

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Another cause of fires is sabotage. In one instance, enemy agents caused 300-million-yuan damage by fire.

DISCUSSES ECONOMIC CONDITION -- Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao, 27 May 50

Shanghai, 20 May -- Upon the request of the Press Office of the Shanghai People's government to describe the existing economic conditions in Northeast China, Shen Ts'e (1) /number refers to appended characters/, who heads the Northeast General Labor Union Delegation to Comfort the Unemployed Shanghai Workers, gave the following account at the Press Association Building on 19 May:

Definite guidance by the people's governments, maximum effort contributed by the working class, and the completion of the land reforms, have all contributed toward surmounting many difficulties. As a result, unemployment has been eliminated, considerable advance has been made toward restoring and developing industries, and workers' wages have reached a new high.

Heavy-industry workers now receive an average of 150 kung-fen per month (each kung-fen equals 2.55 catties of millet, equivalent to one day's ration for one man). Compared to the wages earned in 1946, this wage shows a threefold increase. Light-industry workers receive about 120 kung-fen, which is more than 200 percent of the 1946 level.

Private and public enterprises have been restored quickly. For example, a 100-percent restoration of private and public factories occurred in Mukden during June - December 1949. Labor disputes have decreased, production has increased tremendously, and labor insurance has been universally taken out by workers. During 1950, 170,000 workers will be enrolled in anti-illiteracy classes. All industries in Northeast China will be restored in 3 or 4 years.

PLANS INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION INCREASE -- Canton Nan-fang Jih-pao, 27 May 50

Mukden, 25 May (Hsin-hua) -- During 1950, 40 percent of the total budget allotted for the Northeast People's government will be used for industrial construction. Of that amount, 85 percent will go toward restoring existing industries and constructing new ones.

The output capacity of machinery in principal industries, as compared to capacity at the end of 1949, will be increased as follows: puddling furnaces, 205 percent; copper ore cupola furnaces, 250 percent; electrical machinery, 350 percent; machine tools, 143 percent; paper-making machinery, 197 percent; cottonspinning spindles, 166 percent; and cloth-weaving machinery, 154 percent.

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