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NINTH PLENUM SPEECH OF EUGENIUSZ STAWINSKI
ON THE TASKS OF POLISH LIGHT INDUSTRY

Nowe Drogi
Warsaw, Oct 1953

[The following report of Eugeniusz Stawinski, Minister of Light Industry, was given at the Ninth Plenum of the KC PZPR (Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party), held in Warsaw on 29-30 October 1953.

The report was given at the plenum as an amplification of the featured report of Premier Boleslaw Bierut, "Task of Party in Struggle to Raise Standard of Living of Workers in Current Phase of Building Socialism." An English-language translation of Bierut's report is available in the PAP (Polish Press Agency) release of 6 November 1953, pages 1-44.]

The realization of the tasks outlined in the plenum theses and the reports of Comrades Bierut, Minc, and Berman demand that we decide on the proper course to attain these aims. In order to attain the proposed production increases, ranging from 10 to 24 percent in the cotton industry, the silk industry, and the shoe industry, we must also attain the proposed increase in labor productivity and a reduction in costs.

To realize the tasks outlined, we must study the possibilities and the plan as a whole. We must remember that because it was necessary to develop heavy industry more rapidly in the first 4 years of the Six-Year Plan, modernization of light industry was much slower and investments were relatively smaller. Therefore we now face the serious problem of increasing labor productivity and improving organizational efficiency. This requires speeding up technological progress and modernizing the machine park. We shall need much help from the Ministry of the Engineering Industry, especially the division of textile machine building. We have already worked out a plan, based on Soviet experience, for a partial modernization of the cotton industry.

However the textile machine building industry will have to supply light industry, at least partially, with machines to permit a realization of this plan and other plans for the development of the textile industry. This would create the proper conditions for further improvement in production. If the modernization plan for the cotton industry is realized, labor productivity in the old factories will increase more than 36 percent. This is an immense problem. The directives are correct in stressing the fact that, in achieving increased industrial capacity and higher labor productivity, we must concentrate investments primarily on expansion, on removing bottlenecks, and on a certain amount on modernization of old plants.

For example, by remodeling the old plants in the tanneries, at about 30-35 percent of the cost of new plants, we can increase their productive capacity by 30 percent, improve the quality of production, and increase efficiency in the consumption of raw materials by 6 percent. It is suggested in the theses of the plenum that we follow this course. They point out that we can thus reduce outlays and at the same time keep up the tempo of an increase in production. The examples cited indicate the great possibilities of reducing investment outlays without slowing down, and at times even increasing, the rate of industrial development.

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These theses provide for a 7-percent decrease of costs in industry in 1954-1955. The cost of raw materials in light industry comprises about 70 percent of total costs. To achieve the proposed reduction, we must use materials more economically. It is imperative that the chemical industry improve the quality of raw materials (synthetic fibers, dyes, and other chemicals) supplied to light industry. Unless we improve the quality of raw materials, we cannot expect to improve, to any marked extent, the quality of production or reduce costs.

Costs are also affected by the delivery schedules of raw materials. In many instances delivery targets are neglected, although it is the strict adherence to these very delivery targets that assures continuity of production and eliminates unnecessary substitutions in scheduled production. Disregard of delivery targets also affects costs, productivity, quality of production, and workers' wages. The supply enterprises, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and its workers must appreciate the importance of adhering to delivery targets.

A certain amount of risk is involved in raising the plan. For instance, in producing rayon yarn we are dealing with chemical processes which cannot be shortened without affecting the quality of the product. Inasmuch as the textile industry requires the entire output of rayon yarn to fulfill its plan, even the slightest stoppage in yarn production results in a stoppage in the textile plants.

In our efforts to increase productivity and reduce costs, we must study the situation to enable industries to operate more efficiently at a reduced cost and produce better results. This does not mean that we want an easy life, with everything at our fingertips, without difficulty or without effort. We are not ignoring the difficulties, but with proper organization, proper emphasis, and the aid of all concerned, industry could produce the necessary resources to raise the standard of living.

I wish to touch on another problem, the effect of increased agricultural production. Certain divisions of industry are supplied to a lesser or greater degree with domestic raw materials. For instance, the woolen industry receives 16 percent of its supply from domestic sources and 84 percent from imports. The outlays of foreign exchange are immense, especially since most wool is imported from capitalist countries. If we increase the number of sheep and the production of wool about 20 percent within the next 2 or 3 years, we could manufacture an additional 900,000 meters of 100-percent wool cloth, or 1.4 million meters of 60-percent wool cloth. This means that we could increase the production plan of the woolen industry without increasing the import of wool.

Leather is another raw material supplied by agriculture. Every year we buy 2.2 million calf skins. The average weight of a calf skin is 3 kilograms. To date only about 10-12 percent of the skins purchased were of proper thickness, the rest were inferior skins; footwear made of these skins is less serviceable. If we should raise 500,000 of these 2.2 million calves to the age of 8 or 9 months, we could obtain 7,500 tons of skins and 115,000 tons of meat (live weight), instead of 1,500 tons of calf skins and 15,000 tons of meat. As a result, the national economy would gain 930,000 square meters of skins for shoe uppers and about 50,000 tons of pure meat. These 930,000 square meters of skins would produce 4.65 million pairs of shoe uppers. The above figures show the importance of developing domestic raw material sources.

The linen industry is almost entirely dependent on domestic raw materials. This is a separate and very difficult problem. Flax yields have fallen, flax plantations have been broken up, and the number of planters has been reduced. There are many reasons for this state of affairs, prevalent since 1950. The contracting and purchasing agency, under the Ministry of Light Industry, had the wrong attitude toward the peasant planters. Purchasing was very poorly organized, payments for goods delivered were slow, and the peasant planter received no agronomical aid. All this did not inspire confidence in the agency as a government enterprise.

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Since 1952, the ministry has been trying unsuccessfully to regain the confidence of the peasants by reorganizing the agency and changing the personnel.

This problem requires effective work by party organizations. As a result of this situation, the people's councils, the people's council presidiums, and even many powiat, gmina, and wojewodztwo committees are reluctant to take up the problem of flax cultivation. In spite of all our efforts to correct previous mistakes, it will not be easy to carry out the sowing campaign next year unless the party organizations change their attitude. Meanwhile, in a number of wojewodztwos, the important problem of proper planning of flax cultivation on a wojewodztwo scale is being ignored by the people's council presidiums and the wojewodztwo committees. I would like to impress the people's councils, the wojewodztwo people's council presidiums, and the wojewodztwo committees with the importance of working out this problem of implementing the resolution of the presidium of the government on the proper planning of industrial crops.

The production capacity of our retting plants is large enough to enable us to increase the production of linen products if the flax situation improves. Sheaf binding cord for agriculture alone requires the total crop from 30,000 hectares of hemp.

In preparing the 1954 plan, we must try to eliminate shortages of certain types of children's shoes. Even with increased production the ministry cannot solve this problem without the aid of the cooperatives and small-scale industry.

We must increase our efforts to improve the quality of production. In spite of great improvements, we still receive many complaints from the field indicating that our efforts have not been adequate. Not only industry but trade must also make an effort. The trade network must place the orders; it must determine the requirements of the area; it must make its activities more flexible; and it must insist on better quality, new models, and larger assortments. At present the trade network, instead of helping, hampers the initiative of industry in increasing the number of models.

We must make a great effort; we must work out in detail the method of fulfilling the tasks for 1954 and 1955. These are real tasks which cannot be fully achieved unless we make many changes in our present methods of operation.

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