

Report by the European Coal Organisation on coal production (10 June 1947)

Caption: On 10 June 1947, the European Coal Organisation publishes a report on the situation of the coalfields in Europe and proposes measures to alleviate manpower shortages and to improve the outdated methods of coal production and distribution.

Source: European Coal Organisation 1945 to 1947, Brief description and history. London: European Coal Organisation, 1948. 91 p. p. 50; 52-56.

Copyright: All rights of reproduction, public communication, adaptation, distribution or dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

The documents available on this Web site are the exclusive property of their authors or right holders.

Requests for authorisation are to be addressed to the authors or right holders concerned.

Further information may be obtained by referring to the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/report_by_the_european_coal_organisation_on_coal_production_10_june_1947-en-37c7183f-3e59-4d65-8ce8-9a6a19fa0dfb.html

Publication date: 02/12/2013

EUROPEAN COAL ORGANISATION

Report on coal production (10 June 1947)

At the Conference held in Paris under the auspices of the European Coal Organisation in May, 1946, at which 19 nations and 6 international organisations were represented, it was resolved *inter alia* to draw the special attention of Governments and of international organisations concerned to the fact that widespread unemployment and serious retardation of post-war recovery owing to shortage of coal in Europe could be avoided only if effective steps were taken:—

- (i) to provide special incentives to attract recruitment of labour to the mines;
- (ii) to ensure adequate food for miners, particularly underground workers;
- (iii) to give special priority to the manufacture and distribution of mining equipment and mining supplies generally; and
- (iv) to ensure the availability of adequate facilities to lift and transport every ton of coal mined.

All E.C.O. countries concerned have been asked to report what progress has been made on these points, either consequently or irrespectively of the passage of this resolution, during the twelve months which have elapsed since the Paris Conference. A statement compiled from these reports is attached and a summary of the conclusions to be drawn from them is set out below.

Conclusions

1. The various measures to attract labour to the mines, which have been very similar in each country have proved in different degrees successful and the production graphs show approximately the same increase in each case. In most cases, the rations have been raised to about 2,000 or 3,000 calories a day above the normal civilian ration and special privileges, priorities and higher pay, together with special welfare facilities and improved working conditions have all contributed to the increase in the labour forces in the mines. Nevertheless:—

(a) the labour forces underground are still insufficient and, in spite of extra privileges to those working underground, labour is still more easily attracted to surface work;

(b) the output per manshift remains markedly below pre-war.

2. The measures necessary to overcome (a) and (b) above, though difficult to achieve in present circumstances, remain clear and need no repetition of the Paris Conference to ascertain.

3. In time, the need for additional labour will no doubt be limited by an increase in output per manshift. That this stage has not yet arrived is demonstrated by the fact that production in Europe, in terms of hard coal, was 395 million tons in 1946 and is expected to be 450 million tons in 1947, as compared with an average of 560 million tons in the years before the war.

4. Although much progress has been made with measures to attract recruitment of labour and to make available food and consumer goods to provide the stamina and incentive required for full work, it is clear that further progress along these lines is necessary if the required increase in production is to be achieved. The extent to which this further progress can be made is largely limited by the national resources of each producing country. Easement of difficulties in this connection by international co-operation and mutual aid between all European countries who need coal would quickly benefit all.

5. Increase in output per manshift, though susceptible of immediate improvement in existing technical conditions by the further progress mentioned above, is mainly dependent upon the provision and maintenance of mining machinery and equipment. This is largely outside the immediate control of most European coal producing countries. The production of mining machinery and spare parts in Germany — main supplier of European coalfields before the war — is severely limited by lack of steel, and purchase from the United States is severely limited by lack of dollars. The United Kingdom is producing little more than sufficient to meet her present needs. The limited imports of mining machinery available to those countries without adequate indigenous resources, especially in the case of Poland, is a severe handicap to the extensive programmes of mechanisation planned in Europe and the scarcity of spare parts with which to maintain existing machinery is a menace to existing production.

6. The problem of transportation, except during the exceptional weather of last winter, has been eased by the priority given to coal movement in each country and by the fact that coal production in Germany has been disappointing. As production increases, there is every indication that transport will become the limiting factor unless steps are taken to restore the pre-Hitler pattern of movement by I.W.T. and rail and to use to the full extent the natural ports of the Rhine. Repair and extension of the port facilities in Poland is most urgently required if full advantage is to be taken of increasing Polish production.

7. The main problems still confronting the production and distribution of European coal are, therefore, to obtain adequate skilled underground labour, to stimulate the availability of mining machinery and to ensure adequate facilities to lift and move coal up to the limit of production.

Issued: 10th June 1947.

From: 37, Upper Brook Street, London, W.1.

W. Ciszewski,
Vice-Chairman

[...]

Chapter 2

To provide special incentives to attract recruitment of labour to the mines

United Kingdom.

Apart from provision of additional food for miners in Great Britain, efforts have been made to increase the supply in mining areas of consumer goods not subject to rationing or similar controls. In addition, arrangements have been made for surplus demobilisation clothing to be sent to mining areas but supplies of these goods are still so short that the increase in mining areas will be small.

Other incentives are largely psychological. Although certain material incentives have been provided such as the increased rations shown in Chapter 1, the greater part of the recruiting campaign has consisted of presenting, as simply and as strikingly as possible, the opportunities for a career in mining industries which are now opening up. All media of publicity, such as films, pamphlets, lectures, posters, exhibitions, radio, etc. have been used to drive home the message that a new era is beginning in the coal mining industry of Britain and that the young men and boys who are now entering the industry will receive thorough training, adequate welfare amenities, regularity and security of employment, better conditions of work underground, greater opportunities of promotion and so on.

The comparison between recruitment figures for the last quarter of 1946 and the corresponding quarter of 1945 shows that these methods have not been unsuccessful. In the December quarter of 1946 the total intake was 18,600 compared with 14,800 in the December quarter of 1945, i.e. an increase of 26%. This increase was achieved despite the fact that the number of ex-miners returning from the Forces fell by 4,600, but this drop was more than offset by the substantial increase in the total of juveniles and adults without previous experience of mining who were recruited during the December quarter of 1946 compared with the same quarter of 1945. 3,000 juveniles were recruited in the last quarter of 1946 as compared with 2,300 a year

earlier and 6,200 against 1,400 adults without previous mining experience were recruited in the corresponding period. This is an increase of 30% and 340% respectively. The number of ex-miners recruited from other industries also showed the same increase; the relative figures being 6,300 compared with 3,400, i.e. an increase of 85%.

France.

France has lately granted a special status to everybody employed in the mines (Order in Council, 14th June, 1946). This has given them numerous advantages especially regarding wages and holidays with pay. In certain parts of the country, particularly in the Moselle, miners have been recruited amongst workers who live as far as 10 kilometres away, and the recruitment of surface workers has now had to be stopped due to the excess of surface labour in the total labour force. The result has been that the number of underground workers in France, excluding prisoners of war, has increased between January and October, 1946, from 167,400 to 172,200, i.e. by 3%.

As far as workers living in France are concerned, in order to estimate accurately the amount by which freshly recruited labour exceeds losses due to miners having left the mines, the following movement of foreigners should be taken into account:

(1) Emigration from France (Approx.)

Poles	5,000
Soviet nationals	600
Yugoslavs	200
Total	<u>5,800</u>

(2) Immigration into France (Approx.)

Moroccans	1,500
Italians	1,400
Total	<u>2,900</u>

(3) Deficit due to emigration 2,900

Netherlands.

No further material incentives have been introduced in the Netherlands mines since May, 1946, but from the 1st January, 1947, a production allowance instead of the "coupon allowance" has been paid in accordance with the overall coal output in the Netherlands.

The following special efforts have been made to increase the number of underground workers between April and December, 1946.

(i) *Free Dutch Workers.*

A special recruiting drive resulted in a net increase of 283 workers, i.e. 1.4% of the total underground workers;

(ii) *Collaborators.*

Collaborators were invited to work in the mines voluntarily, and the number of these workers increased from 468 to 2,486, i.e. an increase of 430%;

(iii) *Non Bona Fide Germans.*

Similar recruitment of these workers as volunteers resulted in 324 being employed at the end of 1946 as against nil in April, 1946.

Poland.

The question of labour in the Polish mines is not so acute as other mining problems, but there is still need for more skilled labour and technicians, and the need will increase even more with steadily rising production. The Polish delegate reports that because of the inadequacy of Poland's resources at present, no special incentives can be provided to attract workers to the mines. Extra bonuses are paid for piece work results. In addition a housing programme has been started and over 10,000 prefabricated wooden houses will be imported this year under special agreements from Sweden and Finland in order to accommodate new miners and their families, but this covers only a part of the accommodation necessary.

Belgium.

The following special measures have been taken in Belgium:—

(i) Wages.

Wages for surface workers have been brought to the same level as those of workers in other industries, and wages of unskilled underground workers have been raised to 125% of those of unskilled surface workers. Underground workers have been classified in ten wage categories, the minimum category being equal to the wage of an unskilled worker and the maximum category being 157% of the unskilled worker's wage;

(ii) Holidays.

Extra holidays for underground workers are given up to a maximum of 12 days in the year;

(iii) Military Service.

Postponement of call-up and exemption of military service are given to underground workers who stay in the mines until they are 28 years of age;

(iv) Status.

The setting up of a "Miner's Status" is under consideration with a view to giving the miners a special position for social and material conditions to raise their standard of living;

(v) Propaganda.

The Belgian "Fédération des Associations Charbonnières" with the support of the Government has been running a propaganda campaign for the return of workers to the mines;

(vi) Conditions in the Mines.

Special action has been taken to improve conditions in the mines especially regarding coal dust;

(vii) Housing.

Further attention has been given to the housing problem and extensive schemes have already been planned. Loans are granted to miners at a small rate of interest for the purpose of purchasing or building houses;

(viii) Miscellaneous.

Grants of cash bonuses are made on certain terms to newly-recruited men who enter the industry as underground workers.

The result of these various incentives has been that the number of workers on the books increased from 106,000 at the beginning of 1945 to 129,000 in January, 1947. This latter figure includes a certain number of free foreign labour (Swiss and Italians). In addition to this labour, Belgian mines have employed German prisoners-of-war, the number of which reached a maximum of 46,000 at the beginning of 1946, but declined to 36,000 in January, 1947, owing to wastage by ill-health. It is foreseen that, by the end of October, 1947, no prisoners-of-war will be left in the mines.

Turkey.

(i) Wages.

The following increases have been made to the pay of the miners according to their grade, skill and place of

work.

Underground workers from 40 to 120 piastre/day

Surface " " 30 " 80 " "

It has also been recently decided to pay an annual attendance premium (bonus) in July each year to the workers with a record of regular attendance. The effect of these steps will be more clearly seen during next summer when the labour shortage is more acute and when the Essential Work order will have been removed;

(ii) Clothing.

One suit, one cap and one pair of shoes have been provided free to every regular worker;

(iii) Welfare.

The building of dormitories, baths, canteens and laundries has been continued during 1946 and is still proceeding.

Chapter 3

To give special priority to the manufacture and distribution of mining equipment and mine supplies generally

United Kingdom.

Measures to improve the supply of mining machinery and equipment in Great Britain have been in force for some considerable time and, although during 1946 the supply of materials and components has presented abnormal difficulties, the general improvement in the supply to the mines has continued. As indicative of the trend, the following table shows the production of various items of coal face machinery since 1943:—

Machinery	1943	1944	1945	May, 1946 (1 month's output)		
	Oct. 1946 (1 month's output)					
Coal-cutters	537	600	649	86	123	
Conveyors	1,042	1,321	1,575	228	239	
Power Loaders		57	90	88	11	10
Totals	1,636	2,011	2,312	325	372	

The improvement recorded in recent years is largely due to official encouragement of the development of mechanisation in the collieries, while at the same time additional capacity has been planned in the manufacturing industries. During the summer of 1946, serious difficulties were experienced in obtaining certain materials and components, and arrangements were made to give the highest priority to the mining industry's requirements for such items. While it cannot be said that these arrangements have been fully effective in all cases, as a result of this policy it has been possible to maintain during recent months the upward trend in the production of the more important items of colliery machinery and equipment.

France

As early as April, 1945, the French coal mines were given an absolute priority for the satisfaction of all their requirements. As a result of this and in spite of the extreme shortage of French resources, mining equipment has been repaired and the main requirements met as shown by the following details:—

(i) Hand Tools.

The delay in delivering pneumatic picks has been approximately two months since the beginning of 1946. The delay on drills and drilling machinery has now been reduced to three months and the position for other small tools has improved. The average time for all machines of this type is five to six months.

(ii) Mining Equipment.

Every effort has been made to increase the production by manufacturers and producers of hoists, conveyor driving heads, shaker conveyor motors. The delay in delivery is about a year.

(iii) Steel Products.

There are still great difficulties in the supply of steel products which handicaps the production of chains, ball bearings, shaker conveyors and tubs.

(iv) Spare Parts.

A third of the manufacturers' order is devoted to the production of spare parts. The position, however, is difficult as far as German equipment is concerned.

(v) Foreign Equipment.

Very little of the equipment ordered from America has been received. Coal-cutters, conveyors, hoists, miners' lamps and spare parts have been received from England fairly promptly.

Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, compared to May, 1946, the position of hand tools is satisfactory, but difficulty is experienced with the maintenance of existing and new mining machinery. 100% of the coal mined is won by pick hammer.

Poland.

The increase in production from 2,200,000 in July 1945 to 4,790,000 tons in March 1947 has been achieved almost solely through Poland's own efforts. Poland depends however entirely on imports of mining equipment, and spare parts, mine installations and turbo-generators in particular are urgently required from Germany. Modern mining machinery is on order from the United States and certain mining equipment has been received through UNRRA. Shortage of dollars or of other hard currency has seriously impeded the negotiations for certain mining machinery urgently required. In order to secure and speed up the planned additional increase in production, it is essential to overcome financial difficulties and to order all the equipment immediately.

Belgium.

The Belgian Coal industry has been faced with the problem of the renovation of its mining equipment which it was not possible to carry out to any large extent during the war.

Coal mining is entirely mechanized. Pneumatic picks are mostly used and to a lesser extent, coal-cutters. It is expected that the use of coal-cutters will be developed, but there are some difficulties regarding the supply of this equipment.

The possibility of using new working methods is under consideration and experiments are being carried out in this respect.

Turkey.

There has been little change in the position of mining equipment in Turkey although imports of spare parts and new hoists, pumps, compressors, fans etc. have improved the situation generally.

Mechanization of the mines has not yet taken place on any large scale and no pneumatic tools are yet in use. Nearly all the coal is extracted by hand and explosives.

Chapter 4

To ensure the availability of adequate facilities to lift and transport every ton of coal mined**United Kingdom.**

This year the position of rolling stock in Great Britain has been aggravated by the results of war-time deterioration, and there is a shortage both of waggons and locomotives. In consequence, although the amount of production lost is relatively insignificant, about a quarter of a million tons of coal, mostly open-cast, have had to be stocked as priority is always given to the pits in the matter of waggon supplies to enable them to maintain production.

Consideration is being given at the highest level to improve the movement of coal which already enjoys a considerable priority over other traffic. In addition, as much coal as possible is forwarded by road and substantial tonnages are diverted to coastwise shipment.

France.

Since the movement of coal was given first priority in France, the daily production of the mine has, as a general rule, always been despatched, and inland movement has hardly suffered any delay from transport difficulties.

Netherlands.

Since May, 1946, the movement of coal both at the mines, inland and by I.W.T. in the Netherlands, has been entirely satisfactory.

Poland.

Some transport and port installations have been allocated from American surplus stocks in Europe and transport availabilities and port facilities have improved in 1946 to a certain extent. Nevertheless, present transport availabilities and port facilities are insufficient to cope adequately with increasing production and rising exports to European countries by sea as well as by land. Exports from Poland to European countries are rising from 5.3 million tons in 1946 to about 11 million tons in 1947 (7 million by sea and 4 million by land). In 1948 exports to European countries only are scheduled to reach 18 million tons by sea and by land.

Belgium.

All disposable output in Belgium is moved from the mines daily and there are no particular difficulties regarding the transport of coal generally.

Turkey.

The replacement of old coal tubs and rails by imports has recently improved the mine transport satisfactorily. In 1946 the output was distributed without difficulty in accordance with the pre-arranged plan and allocations.