Communication from the London Coal Committee on the Potter/Hyndley Mission (14 June 1945)

Caption: On 14 June 1945, the London Coal Committee submits to the European Coal Organisation (ECO) the findings of the Potter/Hyndley fact-finding mission in Western Europe concerning the situation of coalfields in West Germany and in the liberated European countries.

Source: European Coal Organisation 1945 to 1947, Brief description and history. London: European Coal Organisation, 1948. 91 p. p. 48-49.

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Confidential

POTTER/HYNDLEY MISSION.

The following communication has been received from the Secretary of the London Coal Committee.

B. P. AICARD
Secretary, E.C.O.

The Potter/Hyndley Mission to North West Europe has recently submitted a report to the U.S. and U.K. Governments respectively. The following points in the Report may be of interest to the European Coal Organization.

A. Requirements and available supplies

1. It is estimated that, after taking into account the present forecasts of indigenous production in North West Europe, excluding Germany, the minimum essential requirements of these countries, after allowing for the minimum requirements of the Allied Armies in those countries, will total about 30 million tons between 1st June and the end of April 1946.

2. The current rate of supplies from the three main overseas supplying areas — the U.K., the U.S.A. and South Africa — would, if maintained, yield some 5 million tons towards this deficit. The contribution from U.K. and South Africa certainly cannot be increased, while to obtain so large a tonnage as the remaining 25 millions from the U.S., even were the coal available, would present an impossible call on shipping.

3. It is certain therefore that the greater part of the deficit must be met from within the Continent.

4. While self help to the maximum extent must be the aim of the Western Continental Allies, it would be unwise to count upon production in these countries reaching by December next more that 70 % of their normal capacity. The above stated European deficit is indeed based on this assumption.

5. In calculating the deficit, no account has been taken of possible supplies from Polish or German Upper Silesia, concerning which no reliable information is available. Nevertheless, a contribution of say, 10 million tons from this area would go a long way towards solving the problem.

6. The main solution must therefore lie in stimulating production of coal in Western Germany, and in the provision of the transport required to move it.

B. The Present position in Western Germany

7. Total production in the coalfields of Western Germany is at present about 30,000 tons per day, of which 24,000 tons is used in or about the mines for colliery use, including miners' coal coking, power generation and gas-making. The balance of 6,000 tons per day is being moved for use within Germany or for export. In addition, about 13,000 tons per day is similarly being moved from the stocks available in the Ruhr. These stocks are about 51/2 million tons, about half of which is coke, or coke breeze. A considerable portion of the total coal stocks is needed for maintaining working stocks at collieries.

8. Present use of coal inside Germany is restricted to the essential needs of the Army, of transportation, of the Allied Military Government (including Utilities), and of certain approved industries essential to the A.M.G. These uses are absorbing 16,000 of the 19,000 tons of coal being moved from the collieries, leaving 3,000 tons per day for export.

9. Of the 19,000 tons being moved, about 13,000 tons are being moved by rail and 6,000 tons by road. No water transport is yet available.

10. Coal production, at 3 % of normal, already lags behind the availability of transport to move coal, which is now about 5 % of normal and is improving. For this reason, the facilities for stocking an additional 2 million tons which are available in the Ruhr are not being used. Transportation shows every sign of improving more rapidly than coal production.

11. The immediate obstacle to coal production is the lack of adequate food for the miner. Until sufficient food is available, no other measures can bring coal production up to the level of transport avail-ability, or to within measurable distance of meeting the European deficit.

12. The basic food ration for German civilians is 1,100 calories per day. Although S.H.A.E.F. have already taken steps with a view to ensuring 2,800 calories for miners and all other heavy workers, this figure is a maximum and has not yet been achieved. The following comparison of the prescribed calorie intake per day for miners in the various countries:—

Belgium	4,104
Netherlands	4,000
France	3,392
Germany	2,800

The present man-power could be substantially increased from labour available in the coalfield areas, and released P.O.W. are adding daily to this potential labour force. Until sufficient food is available, however, no increase in man-power would yield any substantial increase in coal production. In Germany food is almost the sole incentive at the present time, and the establishment of adequate basic rations for all miners should facilitate recruitment of the type of man-power required and assist the enforcement of discipline, attendance and hard work.

13. Experienced German management is best able to manage a German mine. German colliery managements show every desire to be fully co-operative. They realize, at least, that, unless they produce coal, their means of livelihood will disappear. Every advantage should be taken of this situation, and military or Allied civilian control should be restricted as much as possible to the laying down of policy, the rendering of aid to managements, co-ordination with other authorities, allocation, distribution, and general policing.

14. Complete and efficient records of the German coal industries are available for use by Military Government in directing production and distribution of German coal and their existence should also ensure quick compilation of collieries' needs for mining supplies and equipment.

15. The manufacture of briquettes from brown coal is at present almost at a standstill owing to insufficient transport to clear stocks. At present, transport is not being made available for these briquettes since it would interfere with the movement of hard coal, but so soon as production and movement of brown coal briquettes can be restarted, a substantial contribution should be made towards meeting the European deficiency.

16. The aim should be to make available for export a minimum of 10 million tons during 1945 and a further 15 million tons by the end of April,1946.

17. It should be made clear that this amount must be made available irrespective of the consequence to Germany, and irrespective of plans for other industries or the internal economy of Germany.

18. There should be set up a strong solid fuel section at Allied Control Headquarters to co-ordinate the coal and mining supplies requirements and the general policies pertaining to solid fuels within the various zones. It is envisaged that it will be this Section which will screen requirements within Germany, and declare

export availabilities prior to presentation to the European Coal Organization.

London, 14th June, 1945.