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PUBLIC WELFARE

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A list of the functions and responsibilities of the Welfare Section cannot constitute the plan of that Section for a designated period. The formulation of a plan must outline implementation and procedures necessary to execute and carry into effect the aims of the Section. In a quarterly plan, one must consider the total program, the personnel and the plans of the Welfare Ministry and set up certain targets which must be reached periodically in order that at the end of the year all responsibilities may be discharged.

In such planning, priorities must be established. The first function of the Welfare Section is to prevent disease and unrest caused by need. Therefore, the Prefectural office must regularly and frequently send representatives into the local offices where applications for relief must be studied. The records of recipients must be examined to see that budget computations are accurate, that necessary services, such as medical care, nutrition for expectant mothers, maternity aid, funeral aid, school lunches and educational expenses, spectacles, occupational aid and other provisions of existing legislation are included as indicated. A certain number of home visits should be made by the Prefectural officials to check on the accuracy of the records. Before an administrative review can be completed, the Prefecture should check on local conditions of those on the lowest economic level not receiving relief, to see that benefits of the law are applied to all eligible. Finally, corrective action must be taken immediately with respect to restrictive practices, preferential treatment, and maladministration.

The second priority is to build a comprehensive system of social services. To this end, the Prefectures must study (1) the district system, to (2) invite towns and villages to voluntarily combine welfare functions under a full-time paid worker for every locality having over twenty-five cases, (3) record all applications and their disposition at the local office.

The third priority relates to efficient administration of the social insurance program, and elimination of improper practices, such as allowing premiums to go into arrears.

The fourth priority relates to child welfare services and development of the child welfare centers into effective service.

Other programs include inspection of institutions, development of others as need is established, cooperation with private agencies, provision for housing, public pawnshops, disaster relief, consumers cooperatives, workshops, rehabilitation of the physically handicapped, and other minor functions.

In the light of these, the Shimane Welfare plan is not concrete enough. Note that emphasis is still being placed on training Minsei-in, although it has been proven that this system is costly and ineffective, and the Welfare Ministry contemplates ultimate elimination of the Minsei-in from any official responsibility as to welfare programs. Disaster relief drills have second priority in the Shimane Plan, an unjustified prominence. Expenses for these drills are likewise out of proportion. Phrases like "enhancing," "encouraging" are not specific, are not appropriate for use in a plan.