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MOBILIZATION OF STUDENTS IN JAPAN

(Translation of an article appearing in the SHUHO (Weekly Report) for 7 July 1943 issued by the Cabinet Information Board discussing the regulations governing the use of students for emergency work and the correlating of study and work.)

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Mobilization of Students

Ministry of Education

Nature of Work

The formal adoption of the idea of a student work plan was first announced on 9 June 1938 by the vice minister of education to the principals of schools under direct control of the government, principals of public and private high schools, and district officials.

After the outbreak of the China Incident the student labor movement was all the more active, and in MIYAZAKI KEN and some other regions, student labor even doubled. They immediately organized Clubs to Aid the Fatherland (SOKOKU SHINKOTAI)¹ and movements began which established public organizations under the supervision of the prefectural governor. These organizations aroused popular enthusiasm and resulted in general mobilization activities, with conspicuous results being attained in breaking new ground, planting, and emergency aid for farmers who have been called into the service. The Minister of Education in considering the educational significance of such labor groups and their general situation emphasized his objectives as follows:

"The law for group labor activity is merely the realization of practical ideas of education, and in addition to being an educational innovation, it is recognized that it has extremely great significance today."

From the standpoint of education, this attitude of the Minister of Education concerning student group labor activity is a natural one, and it has not changed in the least today. The "principles for the establishment of a system of mobilization of students" and "uniting the fields of training and education" which were determined the other day in a cabinet meeting were clearly stated, and the consistent nature of educational duty, practice, and labor in all organizations was emphasized. It was also claimed that we could feel confident of complete training of the minds and bodies of students under a system of overall educational training.

Changes in Scope of Labor

It was inevitable that the nature and scope of student labor activity would have to be increased in keeping with the progress of the times. The following appeared in a notice a year after the original notice:

"There are the following types of labor duties, and many peace-time duties

(1) Handling of equipment for playgrounds, farms, and forestry training schools.

(2) Helping fill domestic and agricultural needs of bereaved families, or the families of men called to active duty.

1) 祖國振興隊

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- (3) Cleaning of Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, or temple grounds, and repairing of equipment.
- (4) Duties on or for public properties such as anti-air raid installations, parks, and playgrounds.
- (5) Simple duties in regard to articles of daily use.
- (6) Breaking new soil and other agricultural duties.
- (7) Simple duties in regard to repairing roads, reclaimed lands and forests."

After this was issued in 1939, the Patriotic Labor Movement for Increase of Charcoal Production (MOKUTAN ZOSAN KINRO HOKOKU UNDO)¹ was started. Then in 1940, when emphasis was placed on the undertaking of projects to increase the supply of fodder, to increase the supply of food by utilization of vacant lands, and on the collection of mulberry bark, the movement took on its wartime phase.

Even in 1941 student labor activity was chiefly agricultural and was concentrated especially on such activities as increasing food and fodder supplies, but when finally in December of 1941 the "Law for the Patriotic Labor Cooperation of the People" (KOKUMIN KINRO HOKOKU KYORYOKU REI)² was promulgated, student labor activity immediately became part of the general mobilization program and was expanded to include such things as increased production of all supplies, repair and distribution work, necessary work in transportation and communication, necessary health and first aid duties, guard duty, and in the military field, such things as construction work.

Although the labor activities which students are undertaking at present have not changed very much since the passage of the "Law for the Patriotic Labor Cooperation of the People," the principal fields in which student labor should be employed were established in the present Bill Establishing Student Wartime Mobilization (GAKUTO SENJI DOIN TAISEI KAKURITSU YOKU)³ which emphasized the four fields, increase of production of food, construction of installations for national defense, production of required supplies, and aid in the field of transportation.

Doubling the Period of Work

Just to consider the original working time of the students is to understand why in the following year (T.N. 1939) the time was increased considerably.

The law of 1938 stated as follows, "It has been decided that in keeping with present conditions, in general, it shall be suitable for students to work for a period of five days at the beginning and end of the summer vacation and at other appropriate times." In the law of 1939, however, it stated, "The time for student activity shall not be limited to summer vacations alone, but shall be established in proportion to the needs of the government and shall be employed in emergencies," thus a relationship between labor time and school time was concretely established. Then, in 1941, it was further painstakingly established in the notification of 8 February which concerned the Movement for the Increased Production of Supplies of Food,

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- 1) 木炭増産勤勞報國運動
 - 2) 國民勤勞報國協力令
 - 3) 學徒戰時勤勞體制確立要綱

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Fodder, etc. (SHOKURYO SHIRYOTO ZOSAN UNDO)¹ It is as follows:

(1) "In addition to the employment of vacation and after school time as much as possible, school days and lesson periods may be used for labor duty in times of necessity in order to advance this movement.

(2) A period of not more than thirty days may be taken from the school year and applied to labor duty.

(3) The days which are applied to labor duty will be considered as lesson periods."

In Article IV of the "Law for the Patriotic Labor Cooperation of the People" the establishment of this thirty day period was stated as follows:

"The period of required participation of subjects in patriotic labor cooperation has been decided by law to be not more than thirty days in one year. It is possible to exceed these thirty days in times of extreme necessity and in situations where the person concerned consents."

It was further established in the provisions for carrying out this law that "even if in accordance with Article IV, Paragraph 2, a situation of extreme necessity exists, the period of labor should not exceed sixty days." Recent amendment of this bill has doubled the original limit by establishing one of "not more than sixty days." However in applying this law to student labor, it has been considered that the situation until now has not demanded that their time be increased to sixty days, so the thirty day limit is still in force.

The number of days of student mobilization for all the schools in the country has not, on the average been great up to now. There has been sufficient leeway in the thirty days and sufficient room for large scale mobilization of students. Of course, in some schools there were incidences of using 27 or 28 days and even some rare ones of exceeding the thirty days, but when you consider the use of vacation and festival days and the practice period, which was recently decided on in an amendment of the student plan, it is not considered extremely inconvenient. According to the recently established provisions for the Bill Establishing Student Wartime Mobilization activity, however, the period of mobilization will probably be decided by considering the types of schools and the kinds of labor in relation to the needs of the country and the specific circumstances. The period of labor for the students of agricultural schools throughout the country who have been sent to HOKKAIDO has been set at 2 months.

The vice minister's notification of 25 June announced "In view of the needs of the town, cities, and farms of rural areas, it is deemed necessary to extend the ban against lessons during the farming season for children of high school age in the high school or elementary sections of national schools in agricultural areas." Concerning the group organized for emergency aid to increase food production in HOKKAIDO, transportation difficulties arose; and regarding the use of the period there for summer labor, it had already been determined in 1941 that "when operating on the principle of a 30 day stay, if necessary, the time could be extended in the northeast area about 10 days and in all other

1) 食糧飼料等増産運動

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areas it could be extended about five days." The recent extension of this limit to two months was done because of the transportation difficulties and the national need for increased production of food in HOKKAIDO.

Mobilization Areas and Movement of Schools

The areas in which students are mobilized included Manchuria and China with the organization of patriotic groups of student laborers in China in 1939, but these are exceptional cases. The areas of student mobilization in Japan are generally limited to the prefectures in which the schools are located. It is however gradually working out that students are being sent in large numbers to other prefectures, especially to HOKKAIDO, and when students were sent into KARAFUTO this summer one might say that the extent of student mobilization is countrywide. This is more true since it was stated recently in the Provisions for Establishing Organizations for Student Wartime Mobilization, as the number of students increases and periods of work lengthen the solution to mobilization may be found in the movement of/entire/schools. In the construction of defensive installations especially countrywide mobilization plans are being considered.

The Number of Mobilized Students Exceeds a Million

As indicated before, the mobilization of students for labor progressed very quickly in the succeeding years and the number of students who have taken necessary positions and done emergency service probably has exceeded a million. As to the actual labor of the students, generally only the schools which received emergency requests or orders sent them out to emergency agricultural areas, factories, or other projects, and the patriotic spirit of the students toward such labor was gradually being destroyed. Moreover since there was a tendency for students not to be advanced on a par with the results of their labor the recent bill coordinated schools and tasks and arranged that specified schools could go out to work in specified agricultural areas or in specified factories or projects. This substantially improved the results of student mobilization.

There was a good reason for this. It was more important than anything else that the persons who used student labor deepen their understanding of the nature of the project; that students understand sufficiently the significance of student labor, and that there be very close liaison between school officials and the managers of projects. Until now, whenever there has been close liaison between school officials and project managers, exceedingly good results have been gained on both sides.

In this connection it is necessary that plans be made to coordinate the types of schools and the types of jobs, and something should be done so that special abilities are used to the fullest extent. The practice of having subcontracts for factories and projects and encouraging increases in food production by taking advantage of the practical experience of the schools and not deterring educational aims is extremely significant from the standpoint of the regulation of labor. It is necessary that the men who demand this labor, especially the managers of factories and special businesses be all the more actively cooperative.

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Incentives for Mobilization

When students go out on labor activity it is generally for one of the following three reasons:

1. They have received participation orders based on the Law for Patriotic Labor Cooperation of the People. This naturally is limited to general mobilization duties which are indicated in Clause I of the provisions for carrying out this law, but the great part of student labor activity consists in service activities. Mobilization on the basis of these participation orders entitles the participant to priority transportation on railroads, discount in expenses, and other benefits, and their movements are expedited. Since, however the procedure of knowing whether or not participation orders are available at present is fully understood, there are actually comparatively few examples of demands for student aid on the basis of participation orders.

2. The most frequent occurrence is mobilization in response to the Great Movement (ICHIDAI UNDO)¹ which was planned for this country and Korea. Every year there are frequent instances of mobilization for such things as increase of production of food or increase of production of charcoal.

3. Nowadays, however, frequently students go out spontaneously after the schools have been asked for aid and have surveyed the work. This is especially true where the pressing urgency of the present situation weighs heavily on the minds of sincere students, who feel that the country should make use of them. They seek out the tasks themselves by sending committees to government officials. Frequently they go out on their own, expressing their fervent desires to be of service directly in increasing wartime strength. It is believed that student contributions will be exceedingly great even from the standpoint of national mobilization if they go out to work as it is provided in the law for the establishment of student mobilization activity.

Various Plans for Education

Lastly because they are contributing to the accomplishment of the plans for national mobilization it seems wise to discuss two or three examples which are being carried out by the minister of education.

1. Since the amendment of the educational system last April 1, (T.N. 1943) the former five year middle school term was changed to four years, and the former three year term of the high schools, was changed to a college preparatory course of two years. Naturally this established a four year middle school and a two year high school. The education courses were simplified and improved according to Imperial doctrines, and the results were not inferior to previous ones, but on the other hand, using students, and sending them out into the world even one day earlier has been the means which has effected the uninterrupted realization of the nation's requirements. That is, the changes in the school system which were recently carried out are to a great extent responsible for facilitating the accomplishment of the plans for national mobilization.

1) 一大運動

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2. There are now plans underway to change various types of schools. The enrichment of educational curricula and equipment are the immediate chief objectives, but in addition it is planned to establish and maintain a supply of student labor through these changes. That is, it is a situation of losing schools in which the courses of study are not important under present circumstances, and those in which the new changes of curricula cannot be carried out by any means, and using the personnel who are thus available as the source of labor mobilization supply. The extent to which they are used and considered as the source of supply in the plans for national mobilization is an indication of the importance of changes in the various schools.

In the recent establishment of national schools (KOKUMIN GAKKO)¹ youth schools (SEINEN GAKKO)², and others except those enforcing compulsory systems, very rigid controls were set and due consideration was given to resources so that there would be no obstacles in the consummation of the plans for national mobilization. It is with this same objective that continuation of studies is limited to graduates of technical schools.

In short, because national mobilization is an increasingly important question for the nation at war, the Ministry of Education while always on the alert for developments which should be added permanently to our national educational system, is hoping that the nation as a whole will understand that the improvements which are being steadily added are appropriate to the times and that they will be increasingly cooperative in carrying out the various educational policies.

1) 國民學校 2) 青年學校