Price Revision

MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 8 May) claimed that the need for immediate revision of the price structure was becoming increasingly acute, as deficits of government enterprises and private businesses assertedly were growing rapidly. Productive capacity was declining due to the Administration's delay in formulating a definite policy, according to the writer, who warned that the situation will worsen if the Government "hesitates further." Characterizing Administration attempts to adjust prices as "passive," NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 4 May) called for more "significant efforts" to regulate prices in view of the imminent introduction of foreign capital. KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 10 May) also criticized the Cabinet's attitude, and accused the Government of relying on outside investments "to tide over the present crisis."

POLITICS

Possible merger of the Democrats and Democratic-Liberals -- which most editors viewed as prerequisite to the evolution of real parliamentary government -- was a major consideration in rural political commentaries and editorials. Most journals joined in the belief that such a merger, publicly discussed by members of both parties, was being frustrated by sentiment rather than ideology. In this regard, one newspaper stated that uncertainty as to which faction would control such a party -- the "revised capitalists" in the Democrats, or the free enterprise exponents in the Democratic-Liberals -- was the largest stumbling block in the path toward unification of the conservative groups.

Typical of prevailing reaction was an editorial in SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 8 May) stating that such a merger would have to materialize if "Japan is to establish party politics in the true sense of the word." Scoring the futility of two parties opposing each other despite similarity of views, the writer called for an end to "opposition for the sake of principle" as a means of overcoming political unrest and, possibly, the uncertainties of coalition government. Similarly, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 8 May) -- perplexed by what it considered the needless rivalry between the two parties -- criticized an alleged tendency by both groups to take a political rather than a "national" view of a merger. Stating that a merger undertaken in this frame of mind "would not be a merger at all," the commentator declared that the charge by President Yoshida of the Democratic-Liberals that the Ashida Cabinet was stressing "partisan interests" could be lodged against all parties.

"Sentimental loyalty" and "opposition on principle" were increasing -- and thus narrowing the chances of a merger -- because of the so-called political infancy of the two parties. "We have often pointed," began the editor, "to the need to simplify Japan's political structure by unifying conservative parties. * * * However, it is an evil common to both to oppose the other on principle -- to say 'white' if the other says 'black,' and 'wrong' if the other says 'right.'" This, to KITA NIPPON (Toyama, 11 May), exposed the nation to alleged weaknesses of a discordant coalition Government -- "a shack hurriedly built on the foundation of the triparty pact," -- and continually threatened with Opposition offensives.

Political Funds Regulation

Passage of the Political Funds Regulation Bill drew praise in five journals. This action to "cut the connection between politicians and money" was, in the opinion of ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 8 May), a step necessary to the purification of politics, while BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 10 May) hailed the Bill as "one of the biggest accomplishments of the nation's reformed political structure." However, this newspaper joined NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 7 May) in warning that "mere legislation" could not guarantee purification in national politics, and would have to be accompanied by development of "high-minded statesmen."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Warning against "over-optimism" in connection with the domestic and world food situation, nine prefectural journals carried editorials urging speedy implementation of the Government's program for a 10 percent increase in agricultural production. Typical was SANYO CHOHO's (Okayama, 11 May) emphasis on the solution of the food problem as fundamental for the reconstruction of the economy and a return to stability in livelihood conditions, as well as NAGOYA TIMES' (Nagoya, 9 May) and SHIKOKU KEIZAI's (Takamatsu, 9 May) stress on the necessity for equal and coordinated distribution of production materials to the farmers. Unless the Administration develops a "wiser policy" in connection with bonus and incentive goods, and speeds up the process of quota allocation of delivery on the basis of "scientific determination of the fertility of the lands concerned," increase in production will not be forthcoming, the last-mentioned journal pointed out.

Three newspapers, TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 7 May), SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 10 May), and YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 6 May) expressed dissatisfaction with delays in allocation of rice delivery quotas at the terminal level. The fundamental reason for lack of progress, according to YAMAGATA SHIMBUN, was lack of understanding of the new and "technically complicated" system of advance allocation by local committees. SHIMANE SHIMBUN accused committee members who resigned whenever operations did not proceed smoothly of dereliction of duty, and TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN believed committee members to be still under the influence of "bureaucrats and political bosses."

Food Distribution Criticized

JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 8 May) found "ridiculous waste, troublesome procedure," and unwise selection of registered food shops responsible for certain defects in the distribution of goods under the registered shop system. Although cognizant of the advantage of the method as a means of preventing diversion of foodstuffs into illegal channels, the writer, nevertheless, declared that shopowners, assured of trade, had become delinquent in notifying customers of the availability of rationed goods and tended toward high-handedness in dealing with trade. Pointing to a serious delay in food distribution in Kyushu, and recalling similar circumstances in Kanto and Shikoku districts during April, KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 10 May) scored the Government for inept management. "Not only in this problem, but in almost all the work done by officials, there is a marked discrepancy between the plan on the desk and the actual result," the writer remarked.

Straitened Finances in Farm Villages

The Government plan for making funds available to farmers through loans for the purchase of tools, etc. was greeted with mixed emotions by prefectural journals. Detailing the flow of capital funds away from the rural areas, NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 7 May) described the function of financing organizations as that of a huge siphon conveying capital to monopoly capital, thus contributing to the development of an economic crisis which assertedly would overwhelm city and country alike. CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 6 May) feared that Government lending would only speed inflation, likening this operation to that of the Rehabilitation Finance Corporation, which the writer considered uneconomic. Unless goods can be secured at official prices, farmers who borrow money will be forced to divert it into blackmarket channels, and inflation will proceed apace, the writer said. KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 6 May), MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 7 May), ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 5 May), and SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 11 May) also posed the problem in terms of an imminent crisis, with the first-mentioned journal urging the Agricultural Cooperatives to hasten in acquainting themselves with financial provisions in the Agricultural Cooperative Bill which make it possible for them to "grasp economic autonomy in their own hands."

INTERNATIONAL

Revived interest in the United Nations and particularly in UNESCO was observed in prefectural papers, with five journals discussing various aspects of the international organization. World peace must be secured by the efforts and belief of every nation, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 30 April) emphasized, while EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 2 May) felt that "Japan as a nation of peace" should lead the world in movements to secure international amity. Inauguration of local organizations to cooperate with UNESCO, and proposals that Japan be allowed direct participation drew comment from several papers which reported the establishment of cooperating organizations in such areas as Yokohama (KANAGAWA SHIMBUN, Yokohama, 6 May), Sendai (OSAKA NICHINICHI, Osaka, 7 May), and Shikoku (SHIKOKU SHIMBUN, Takamatsu, 28 April). Writers observed, however, that the people as a whole were not conscious of the significance of the movement. The local organizations are not systematized, and their efforts are half-hearted, OSAKA NICHINICHI complained, and added that inasmuch as the Japanese people had been "blindfolded" with regard to international problems during the war, they lacked background on international matters.

Specific suggestions for local UNESCO programs were offered by KANAGAWA SHIMBUN, which felt that executive staffs and members should be completely impartial toward both the US and the USSR, and warned against local associations becoming mere assemblies of "notables" handling the obscure "cultural policies of Government offices."

Senator Vandenberg's suggestion for a meeting between Soviet and American leaders attracted the attention of GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 7 May) and OSAKA NICHINICHI (1 May). "The greater the fear of war, the stronger must be the fight for peace," the Osaka journal believed, and urged that the Japanese people must remember that the US policy toward Russia "rejects war." At the same time, the paper pointed out, it cannot be denied that some factions in Japan are pleased by the talk of war. In this connection, SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 4 May) stated that, with the growing tenseness between the US and the USSR, and with the United Nations still powerless to guarantee peace for the world, Japan is facing "the first test in its great resolution to abandon war." Although some people are beginning to think that Japan needs arms in a world where UN is too weak to ensure peace, "we absolutely reject" such a belief, the paper declared, and queried, "what could we do with small-scale armament even if we were permitted to re-arm?"

REPATRIATION

Scheduled arrival of the first repatriation ship from Siberia since last December brought varied comment. While sympathy for families whose members have not yet been returned to Japan was expressed in editorials such as that of MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 10 May), other journals emphasized the need for specific programs to integrate the returnees into Japanese society. Thus, HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 11 May) urged that "not temporary but permanent social measures" be adopted by the Government for this purpose, while YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 8 May) criticized the Administration for failing to take practical measures for rehabilitation of repatriates. The more intense the repatriates' anticipation of home-coming, the greater will be their disappointment when they face the actualities of life in Japan today, the Kyoto paper maintained. "We must give up merely formal welcome," the journal insisted, and take measures to allow the returnees to be independent and to find their place in society. Somewhat similarly, KITA NIPPON (Toyama, 9 May) urged that "Japan has no room to dwell on the sentimental idea that 'these people are repatriates,' but we desire that they be prepared to produce their food, clothing, and habitation by their own hands." At the same time, the Japanese people must try to make the repatriates realize the real situation facing Japan, and to orient them toward democratization, the paper concluded, observing: "there is one thing which we can show them with pride, and that is the seed of a new democratic country."

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Bureaucrats Attacked

Charges by HOKKAI TIMES that many Japanese still tended to stand abjectly before authority were echoed by two other journals. NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 3 May) said that an immediate result of this "mean-spiritedness" was the continuing expansion of the bureaucrats, who "constitute abundant evidence of surviving feudalism." This "deplorable phenomenon" was delaying the political growth of the people and forestalling the realization of the Constitution's ideals, the commentator maintained. Similarly, GIFU TIMES called for the elimination of "dregs from the old system -- of which the Diet is a typical example." In view of certain "disgraceful" conduct, said the writer, the Diet cannot be looked upon as the supreme organ of the State.

POLITICS

Conflicting views over the effect upon Cabinet unity were noted, as several prefectural writers examined two recent developments -- dissolution of opposing groups within the Socialist Party and decisions reached at the Democrats' national convention. While a few journals emphasized the "peace" aspects of the Socialists' action, most commentators believed that predicted Democratic "renunciation" of the tripartite policy agreement, together with renewed opposition pressure, presaged increased difficulties for the Administration.

Considering the nature of the Democratic Party, HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 7 May) was not surprised that the national meeting had rejected many goals of the Socialists. That these two groups should cooperate was "inconceivable" to the writer who assailed Democratic representations of liberalism. "It cannot be denied," the editorial maintained, "that -- despite Premier Ashida's statements -- the differences between the Democrats and the Democratic-Liberals are not important, while the Democrats and the Socialists differ fundamentally." Similarly, TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 6 May) observed a "gap" between the three Ministerial Parties in interpreting the three-party accord, but doubted that there would be formal abrogation by the Democrats. Such action, the editorialist added, not only would cause political unrest, but would jeopardize progress made in increasing production and curbing inflation.

The minority view was represented by a FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 9 May) commentary which maintained that dissolution of Socialist factions had removed the discord which caused the collapse of the Katayama Administration. Moreover, it was believed that Ashida had reconciled antagonistic groups within the Government so that "now he will be able to make a counter-attack on the enemy . . . and perhaps extend the life of his Cabinet." Although less positive, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 6 May) also indicated that the Government's position had been strengthened, and charged that the Democratic-Liberals "have not convinced the people that they are a responsible opposition."

ECONOMY

Demands for careful deliberations on the proposed revision of the taxation system were made by provincial editors, who disapproved in particular the projected plan to impose a sales levy on the ground that in the long run the people's tax burdens would be greatly increased. However, papers in general favored the reduction in corporation taxes as a preparatory measure for the induction of foreign capital.

NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 6 May) called on the Government to consider closely its tax reform plan in order not to pursue a policy of "merely shifting tax burdens." The journal denounced the proposed sales tax, contending that it would spur inflation and unreasonably oppress medium and small enterprises. Fears that the levies would "sharply rock the household economy of the nation" were voiced by YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 7 May), which warned that unless taxation problems were given more deliberate attention "grave social issues would ensue." NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 5 May) contended that the

Administration's intention to create or increase indirect taxes gave little hope that "sound revision of taxation could be effected," while SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 8 May) charged that such taxes "were contradictory to the Government pledge to ease the people's financial position." CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 7 May) scored the sales levy as an Administration expedient to resolve budgetary problems, and indicated that the basic fault in the entire fiscal setup was the Government's inability to establish "financial order."

ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 2 May) and MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 6 May) censured the proposed advertisement tax, which assertedly would raise prices and increase the consumers' burdens. Contending that industrial prosperity was promoted by advertisements, the first-named journal claimed that the rate of 30 percent would cause a sharp drop in advertisements. The Kagoshima commentator maintained that newspapers would be severely hit, with the result that not only would readers be affected, but "freedom of the press would be difficult to maintain."

Foreign Assistance

Prefectural editors attempted to clarify to their readers the nature and purpose of foreign financial assistance. SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 2 May), for example, explained that the US policy does not mean "economic control or subjugation of Japan." America's efforts assertedly were in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, according to the writer, who added that "there is not the slightest doubt" that the basic US attitude was to help Japan attain economic self-sufficiency. KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 5 May) stated that since the primary need for rehabilitation was not "socialization of industrial bodies, but rationalization of them," it was imperative to use the "American pattern of management technique." Scoring the viewpoint allegedly circulating in some circles that acceptance of US aid "would eventually make Japan a dependent State," SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 4 May) stressed that foreign capital was absolutely necessary to rehabilitate the country's economy and stabilize the people's livelihood. KOCHI NIPPO (Kochi, 4 May) also emphasized the need for investments to "curb inflation, revive industry, and elevate the standard of living."

Railway and Communications Rates

Opposition to the increase in railway fares and postal rates was expressed by several papers, with OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 8 May) warning that the revised system would "inevitably raise commodity prices sky-high" and drain the people's "expenditures for food." SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 8 May) also scored the new rates as an added burden on the consumers, while OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 4 May) accused the Government of attempting to "squeeze the public."

OCCUPATION

Additional comment on the Korean demonstrations appeared in prefectural papers during the last of April and first week in May (Prefectural Press Analysis No. 236). Appeals for order and rejections of violence as a means of obtaining redress in a democratic society were the dominant note of most commentaries. Of particular interest were comments by CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 30 April and 1 May), which attributed the riots to the Japanese "esteem for force," and asserted that although the Communists may have given impetus to the Korean demonstrations, the riots would have occurred without Communist incitement. The journal further observed that only Korea and Formosa were familiar with the Japanese language -- an intangible but definite asset to Japan in the Far East. "If the Korean language is persecuted in Japan, Korea will expell the Japanese language," the paper remarked. Some emphasis was placed on the possibility of Communist participation in the demonstrations, as CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 28 April) "regretted" that Japanese Communists reportedly had backed the riot. Other journals -- such as HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 28 April) -- noted an element of misunderstanding as contributing to the violent disturbances, while TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 28 April) remarked that "if foreigners who live in Japan are dissatisfied with the government they should make their dissatisfaction felt by legal means."

EDUCATION

Although commentators on education tended to focus on specific local problems, concern over lack of funds, adequate physical facilities, and qualified teachers apparently was common to all. Economic difficulties of both students and instructors were discussed at length, and proposed and actual innovations in the school system were judged primarily from this point of view. For instance, reform of the Education Ministry and decentralization of educational authority were looked upon with favor by OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 30 April), HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 26 April), CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 6 May), and KANAZAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 6 May) as a means of furthering "democratic education" and eliminating the overemphasis on militarism said to be characteristic of the war years. At the same time, however, the first-named journal feared that local bodies would be unequal to an increased financial burden and remarked that the tendency to rely on central education power could not be taken away unless local authorities obtain sufficient financial backing.

"Even teachers cannot live on cloud or mist," OITA GODO (Oita, 6 May) remarked, in a discussion attributing the drastic shortage of teachers to their low economic status. IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 2 May) pointed out that salaries ranging from 1,200 yen for middle school graduates to 1,600 yen for university graduates do not provide sufficient financial incentive. Teachers in rural districts often were forced to return to the land because they must pay an agricultural tax on landholdings in addition to an income tax on salary, the writer said. NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 25 April) criticized the "inefficient bureaucracy" for delaying decisions on teachers' qualification investigations for as much as two or three years, thus keeping possibly qualified people unoccupied. Neither will the educational problem be solved by such "makeshift" policies as attempting to mobilize untrained women from the leisured classes to take over teaching duties, the journal observed. For YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 5 May) and KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 25 April) the primary question was one of quality. An instance in which one teacher in the Katashirakawa Elementary School in Kyoto stayed on duty despite a teachers' strike, while declaring that strikes were "fads of the moment" and that he derived his principal inspiration from a text called Kagaku no Teihatsu, allegedly reflecting wartime views, was cited by YUKAN KYOTO. "If education is to be conducted by a teacher with such an attitude, no sound understanding (of democracy) can be born among students," the writer concluded.

Equal educational opportunity for children of poor and rich parents was recognized as a "principle, but rarely realized in practice," HYUGA NICHINICHI and JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 27 April) observed, in advocating financial aid through the higher schools for young people of superior intellectual qualifications. The Government's plan to raise tuition fees in national universities was censured by HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 26 April) in an editorial which pointed out that schools are not operated for a profit but as a "public utility" for the general and individual welfare. The establishment of night schools for young people who must work during the day was hailed by SHIMOTSUKE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 7 May) as a step in the right direction away from the apprenticeship system. KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 27 April) expressed gratitude over the SCAP announcement that individual students may be allowed to go abroad for study. Chosen students were told to behave as "envoys of a peaceful Japan" and make good use of the advantage to bring foreign knowledge and techniques back to their people.

Co-education was advocated by ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 6 May) and OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 29 April), which believed that the traditional prohibition against association between boys and girls after the age of seven had prevented the healthy development of intellectual powers and individual personality among Japan's women. Society is created by the cooperation of men and women, the first-named journal said, and the basis for this cooperation should be laid in school-days.

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Labor-Law Revision

Four rural journals, in surprisingly similar commentaries, warned Premier Ashida that the labor situation was too complex and sensitive to be stabilized by the "mere introduction" of a Taft-Hartley Law for Japan. Typical of the comment was an ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 1 May) editorial, which said that only sweeping economic change -- not tightened labor laws -- could remedy unrest. "The root of the problem is in laborers' wages, ridiculously below the ever-rising prices. * * * It is not the sort of issue which can be solved by a capitalist offensive," the commentator declared.

CONSTITUTION

In editorial comments on the first anniversary of the new Constitution, prefectural journals cited the progress achieved during the past year, but felt that a wider understanding of the charter by the people was essential for the full development of democracy. Toward this end, many writers urged that "relics of feudalism" be completely eradicated.

KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 3 May) declared that the people's rapid adjustment to "changed conditions" made it doubtful if they ever would be "misled by any other principles." CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 3 May), also noting progress under the Constitution, maintained that the Japanese in a relatively short time could not be expected to attain the "high level of democracy of advanced Western nations." To safeguard the people's new rights, the journal urged that all "political circles" be purged to "remove existing evils."

KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 3 May) claimed that however splendidly the Constitution sets up noble ideals, the people would be no better than a "group of spiritless dolls unless their mental processes are remodeled." TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 2 May) stated that "without the guarantee of world peace" a democratic revolution could not be expected. Although conceding that advancement was made under the Constitution, SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 3 May) regretted that "most of the important aspects" were executed by SCAP action, and not by the "national power of the people."

Despite the "sublime ideals" enunciated in the charter, "current actualities are to the contrary," according to KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 3 May), which pointed to the "growing inflation and the failure to establish a responsible government for the benefit of the people." HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 3 May) also felt that there was a "great divergence between ideals and reality," and asserted that such a "contradiction" indicated that the masses were not ready to embrace the Constitution. The editorialist warned that Japan could easily become a "slave to fascism again if the world situation undergoes changes." The journal agreed with NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 3 May) that the nation must "free itself from the enthrallment of feudalistic relics" in order to realize fully the ideals prescribed in the Constitution. Observing "abundant evidences of feudalism," ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 3 May) contended that unless the people were "re-made completely," the democratization of Japan would be hopeless.

Two journals -- EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 3 May) and YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 3 May) -- scored the "excessive assertion of rights" by various groups, particularly the laboring class. The first-named paper cautioned that rehabilitation would be impossible if workers were too insistent on their rights and ignored the public interest. Meanwhile, considering the position of women under the Constitution, MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 28 April) thought that "deep-rooted social attitudes and customs" were hindering their complete emancipation.

ECONOMY

National recovery was the main consideration of economic commentaries appearing in recent editions of prefectural journals, as writers emphasized that attainment of foreign capital was predicated upon a nation-wide demonstration of initiative, industry, and cooperation. "The Japanese people can raise their standard of living only by increased production, and, in order to achieve this goal, all the people must exert their utmost effort," IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 2 May) declared. Similarly, CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 2 May) warned against "optimism about the introduction of foreign capital," asserting that reconstruction depended principally upon "the independent efforts of the Japanese themselves."

A KYOTO SHIMBUN editorial (Kyoto, 1 May) -- stressing the need of increased production through the cooperation of the Government, labor, and capital -- blamed labor disputes for the reported decline of coal output during the month of April. The writer noted "many obstacles impeding the resumption of trade with foreign countries" -- listing the raw materials shortage, "the world-wide dollar scarcity," absence of a standard exchange rate, and indecision regarding war indemnities -- but American aid assertedly would be increased, if a measure of economic recovery was achieved. At the same time, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 30 April) pointed to a balanced budget and the discontinuance of labor controversies as the necessary conditions for US assistance.

Indirect Taxation

Excise levies contemplated under the general budget proposed for the current fiscal year were severely denounced by YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 30 April), which claimed that Finance Ministry statistics showed an increase in the annual per capita tax burden from 28 yen in 1934 to 1,801 yen in 1947. Predicting that this year's per capita would be 3,700 yen, the Kofu journal doubted whether "such an indiscriminate method of imposing taxes is democratic." Meanwhile, the plight of small and medium-scale industries was attributed by a KYUSHU TIMES editorial (Fukuoka, 30 April) to a general decline of mass purchasing power.

GOVERNMENT

Political corruption would be curbed, but not checked, by legislation pending in the Diet, in the opinion of several prefectural journals. Continuing to display deep concern over evidence presented to a lower house committee investigating disposal of hoarded goods (Prefectural Press Analyses Nos. 233 and 234), commentators approved the intent of bills designed to punish offenders, but there was widespread belief that true reform would come only with an end to postwar confusion and insecurity.

As an example, many writers pointed out that laws now limit election expenses, and claimed that these limitations were not observed. One of the reasons, according to IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 26 April), is that inflation has made it impossible for candidates to adhere to the specifications of law -- a view shared by KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 27 April). Maintaining that it cost 500,000 yen to be elected last year, and predicting that two million yen would be required at the next election, the latter declared that "the nation feels that financial power has greatly influenced the outcome of every postwar Japanese election." The editorial gave strong endorsement to two bills before the Diet, but felt that "rationalization of expenditures is the key to the problem."

General support for this opinion appeared in HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 27 April), which contended that pending measures were insufficient to prevent political corruption, and cited alleged "defiance" of existing statutes. "Thorough public management" of voting was regarded as the only certain method of eliminating illegal practices. Similarly, NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 29 April) asked, "How many candidates in the last election managed to finish their campaigns by spending only the officially-fixed amount of money?" In view of the "mysterious fact" that no charges were brought against violators, the paper "entertained some misgivings" about the effectiveness of pending legislation. Moreover, the editorialist observed several loopholes in the bills. "The nation should recognize the spirit of the law," the writer concluded, "by watching the conduct of politicians."

Reaction Abroad Feared

Although hoping that the Diet would carry out a "thorough clean-up of politics," NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 30 April) thought such action "undesirable from the standpoint of the reaction of other countries." Furthermore, it was believed that the investigation of the source of postwar political funds should transcend partisanship and not be used as "a tool in political battles." The journal added that part of the blame for corruption must be shared by the people who "have a tendency to take no interest whatsoever in politics the moment elections are over." Opposition to enactment of a law specifically aimed at preventing unlawful practices was forthcoming from OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 25 April) on the ground that Diet recognition of "the corruptible nature of politics (will cause) the people to be disappointed with public affairs." It seemed necessary, therefore, that such a measure -- "which is a symbol of disgrace" -- be incorporated into other legislation.

In contrast, SANYO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 29 April) praised representatives "who are solving their problems by themselves," and predicted that an "anti-corruption" law would bring "rapid progress in the purification of political circles."

FOREIGN

Recent comment on foreign events covered a variety of topics, as prefectural writers touched on the significance of the Italian election results, the relations between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union, the Palestine problem, the Korean elections, and the political views of ex-Governor Stassen. However, Japanese interest in developments abroad was concentrated primarily on the possibility of foreign aid, and on relations between the US and the USSR, according to SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 2 May), and the majority of the comment was to a greater or less degree related to these general issues. The specific question of American aid was discussed by only one other journal noted, SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 2 May), which reported American assistance to Japan as being directly dependent on the internal situation in this country, as well as upon developments elsewhere in the world. Noting the significance of Near Eastern oil for the accomplishment of the American foreign aid program, the Kobe paper observed that "since all such world issues will have some influence on Japan, it is neither useless nor easy for Japan to decide the attitude she should take to win the confidence of the world as a peaceful nation."

This general tendency to relate world events to Japan's future -- always prominent in Japanese editorials -- also appeared in connection with FUKUSHIMA MINYU's (Fukushima, 30 April) comment on the Italian elections. The journal noted that although Japan had no right to speak in world affairs, and indeed should devote herself to the solution of problems at home, future recovery was nevertheless influenced by external developments. Relations between the US and Britain on the one hand, and Soviet Russia on the other drew comment from such journals as SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 30 April), NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 1 May), and JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 30 April). The latter asserted that the USSR had given the impetus to the creation of two worlds. Disagreement between the Western Powers and Russia over Palestine was discussed by SHIN HOKKAI which foresaw grave difficulties in the solution of this issue, while NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN maintained that the situation in Western Europe had been temporarily stabilized as a result of the Italian elections.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 26 May 1948 No. 240

ECONOMY

Criticism of the 1948 budget was widespread, with nearly all prefectural journals charging that the financial program "fell far below expectations." Editorials claimed that despite Administration declarations that the draft was based on "sound finance," the budget encouraged inflation by failing to advance concrete measures to combat the expected rise in prices. Though income taxes were to be reduced, the burden of taxation was said to be merely shifted to banking institutions and to the people through additional indirect levies. Writers predicted that inasmuch as 100-percent tax collections could not be anticipated, supplementary budgets would become necessary.

Virtually all writers expressed concern over the budget's "inflationary aspect." Representative comment was noted in NIPPON-KAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 13 May) and KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 12 May), which complained that no efforts for economic rehabilitation were made by budget compilers and that the onus of tax burdens was transferred to financial organs "to maintain a normal balance." Although the Government "remained silent in respect to supplementary budgets," both papers insisted that additional appropriations would be required because the budget assertedly was formulated on "impractical figures." The Kobe writer foresaw many difficulties due to the budget's "superficially-established balance." HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 15 May) thought that as long as inflation prevailed, commodity prices could not be stabilized, thus making hazardous the compilation of a sound budget. The writer joined HYUGA NICHI-NICHI (Miyazaki, 13 May) in denouncing the Administration for depending "wholly on outside assistance" to curb inflation, instead of instituting domestic counter-measures. Furthermore, the Miyazaki editorialist charged that reliance on taxes and monopoly profits to meet the huge expenditures was "attempting the impossible in fiscal accounting."

Agreeing, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 13 May) condemned the "trickery enveloping the entire draft," and contended that sound finance was camouflaged by "excessive estimates for tax revenues and monopoly gains." In this connection, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 11 May) predicted that the Government would encounter serious obstacles due to "technical difficulties in tax collection" and to "undesirable effects of price revision." If the Administration had positive intentions of setting the budget on a firm basis, maintained NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 11 May), it would have simplified the administrative machinery and drastically reduced subsidies; but instead, the "gigantic system was retained intact" and the amount of subsidies was fixed at 53 billion yen. SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 14 May) and SANYO MINPO (Kurashiki, 14 May) were among the many papers which advocated careful deliberations before imposing indirect taxes that "would reduce the people to more destitute livelihood."

Foreign Aid

Editorial comment on the induction of foreign capital was divided between journals which feared the program would accelerate the inflation spiral and those which declared that it was indispensable for Japan's rehabilitation. Among papers with the former view were CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 6 May) and SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 13 May). The first-named journal pointed out that foreign investments in the form of basic materials would activate various industries to the extent that employment and wages would be increased. These additional wages, the writer continued, would raise purchasing power, which, in turn, would cause a rise in commodity prices, and thereby intensify inflation. In order to avoid this danger, the commentator suggested that production of consumer goods be raised in proportion to increases in wages.

Declaring that a dilemma existed between the induction of foreign aid and preparations for its utilization, the Osaka editorialist urged that practical and adequate counter-measures be instituted to check inflation. Since Japan's industrial production allegedly was based on "unstable blackmarket economy," the journal warned that if raw materials and mechanical facilities were allocated to industries without any "fixed principle," present abnormal economic activities would be further stimulated. The Government must take drastic measures to control blackmarketeers and exercise closer surveillance over industrial enterprises, concluded the paper.

GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 11 May) observed that actual induction of foreign capital "was still far away." The writer pointed to the cotton loan, which reportedly required six months to materialize, and feared that action on the 150-million-dollar revolving fund would be delayed due to "minute calculations and democratic deliberations." The journal deplored the alleged slackening of efforts for democratization of enterprises and management in view of the existing attitude that introduction of foreign assistance was a measure favoring capitalists.

On the positive side was TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 8 May), which contended that outside investments were indispensable to Japan's reconstruction, but cautioned that the major issue was how Japanese economic circles would utilize the expected funds and materials. The paper scored the viewpoint held by some sections of the public that induction of foreign capital would deprive the nation of economic independence. Such an attitude was attributed to a "fundamental lack of recognition of the real conditions of Japanese economy."

POLITICS

Efforts to settle dissensions within the Socialist Party, and predicted attempts by the Democratic-Liberals to end the coalition Cabinet were emphasized in prefectural political commentaries. Opinions differed regarding the possibility of closing the breach between various Socialist factions, and regarding the effect which purge clearance of Jotaro Kawakami would have on Socialist leadership. CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 9 May), for example, anticipated that Kawakami's clearance and his return to active political life would mean only an addition to the party factions, while TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 13 May) saw the veteran Socialist's "timely" return to politics as "reinforcing the Katayama-Nishio line." In spite of serious doubts over the ability of the party to resolve its internal differences, the hope that the Socialists may become strong enough to take an effective position in Japanese politics was voiced by the Nagoya paper.

Determination of the Democratic-Liberal Party to take steps against the present coalition Cabinet was reported by OSAKA NICHI-NICHI (Osaka, 12 May) which offered an interpretation of the factors involved in the decision. Among these, the paper listed 1) a political situation favorable to the Democratic-Liberals at this time; 2) the possibility that a split in the coalition Cabinet may arise as the result of budget discussions; 3) rumors of shifts in the affiliations of Democratic-Liberals and Democratic Party members in the Diet; and 4) the opposition of left-wing Socialists to certain Cabinet policies. If the Cabinet was unable to settle the issue of war bond interest, the Osaka paper remarked, it could be said to have lost its political capacity.

Premier Ashida's statement at the recent Democratic Party convention regarding the need to abide by "middle-of-the-road" politics met with criticism from CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 13 May) and YUKAN MIE (Yokkaichi, 10 May). The former asserted that implementation of such a policy required "strong political power," and, recalling budget, taxation, and inflation issues, accused the Government of following the reverse of "middle-of-the-road" policies. Pointing to Ashida's warning that labor disputes must be avoided in order to ensure Japan's readiness to make use of foreign funds, YUKAN MIE cautioned that if restrictive steps are taken indiscriminately, repression only will result. The Premier has only indicated by his "middle-of-the-road" policy that he is against Communism -- his position with regard to the extremes of other parties is not clear, the paper complained.

LAND REFORM

An editorial in YUKAN SHINSHU (Nagano, 5 May) subjected the operation of farm land reform in Nagano Prefecture to severe censure. Although 39,600 chobu (98 percent of that scheduled) has been purchased, only 3,000 chobu has been sold, the writer said. Moreover, a tendency was discerned to use facilities privately rather than cooperatively, an instance being cited in which only 10 percent of 200 electric motors purchased for a settlement in Nakasumura were in joint use, the remaining 90 percent being monopolized by individuals. At the same time, small landed farmers in the Manamiyasu area were said to be finding it difficult to change from rice to more profitable rush plantation because of lack of capital and labor, and with the average dimension of fields becoming smaller, production was said to be decreasing. Main reason for delay in purchase of released farm lands was given as the difficulties encountered in the exchange, separation, and recombination of land into easily cultivable units.

CRIME

A reported increase in crimes committed by students drew expressions of concern from several papers, most of which attributed the situation to a general postwar deterioration of morals. Various solutions were proposed, but there was general support for the belief of TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 6 May) that "inflation must be eliminated if juvenile crime is to be halted." In this respect, the Nagoya journal mentioned the responsibility of the Government, as well as the need for "proper training in the home to keep children out of the path of evil."

Increased juvenile delinquency has resulted partly from "a sudden change in environment" and partly from a misunderstanding of democracy, according to IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 1 May). Acknowledging that the solution was not easy, the editorialist recommended that school authorities appeal to parents to assist in curbing offenses. The overall problem of law enforcement was considered by SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 6 May), which maintained that crime was more prevalent in rural areas than in cities. "We believe," the journal added, "that the police should instruct the people on the meaning of the law and then enforce it strictly."

LABOR

Increased production through labor-management cooperation was the keynote of several editorials which urged "mutual conciliation of conflicting interests" in behalf of speedy reconstruction of the nation's economy. SHINANO NICHINICHI (Ueda, 12 May) thought that labor unions were becoming "despotic" and that Communists were taking advantage of this tendency. NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 11 May) asked labor and capital to seek reduction of "superfluous personnel," in order to promote industrial efficiency through increased productivity and decreased costs of production.

NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 13 May) noted that organization of "a complaint settlement agency" was the subject of negotiations between coal operators and the National Coal Mine Workers Union. The former group was said to be insisting upon the establishment of such unqualified opposition to the proposal. Although the Fukuoka journal favored establishment of a grievance body, the writer felt that selection of non-partisan agency members would involve serious difficulties. Meantime, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 15 May) devoted an editorial to the economic hardships of fishermen, in which unions were advocated as a means of obtaining Government-rationed supplies.

POLICE

Recent disturbances in the Kansai area attested to the weakness of present police forces, KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 11 May) believed. Inefficient performance of police officers was attributed to "unsatisfactory cooperation between State and local police systems," and to faulty laws and regulations. To strengthen the police, SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 11 May) said that -- since it would be difficult to increase their number -- development of presently engaged officers by means of additional training was necessary.

YUKAN MIE (Yokkaichi, 13 May) suggested increased salaries to help improve the new police system. One of the pitfalls of the old system, the editorial explained, was the fact that "funds to meet the working expenses of the police came from private circles." Consequently, association developed between the police and the illicit private interests. "How can public servants live on salaries ranging from 1,000 yen to 1,800 yen per month," without becoming prey to "blackmarketeers?" the writer queried.

EDUCATION

Organization of PTA branches was urged in an HOKURIKU YUKAN editorial (Toyama, 15 May) which cited statistics to indicate the slow growth of the movement. Parents were criticized for "leaving the entire responsibility of educating their children to the schools," while some teachers were said to be indifferent to working with mothers and fathers in advisory groups. TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 12 May) regarded the PTA movement as "the basis for democratization of education," and all citizens were asked to join such groups.

University students' reported refusal to pay tuition fees to Government institutions was scored by KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 9 May) as an inadvisable tactic to indicate dissatisfaction with the increase in school assessments. OITA GODO (Oita, 12 May) -- cautioning students not to act "thoughtlessly" -- asked the Administration to appropriate substantial sums for higher education.

MAINICHI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 21 May) and IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 17 May) drew attention to the need for additional teachers throughout the entire public school system. The Mito paper declared that the teacher shortage was due mainly to the fact that instructors were giving up their profession to obtain more profitable employment. The retirement rate also was said to be unusually high, because of "the hardships in making a living." In addition to understaffing, the editorial claimed that the textbook supply was generally inadequate, and that many schools could not physically accommodate all children of compulsory school-attendance age. "Unless collapse in the educational field is checked," the writer warned that "national reconstruction will be impossible."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

MAY 17 1948

PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 12 May 1948 No. 236

LABOR

Division of opinion on the necessity and advisability of labor law revision appeared in the prefectural press during the latter part of April. SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 24 April), GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 29 April), and SHIMOTSUKE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 29 April) considered labor unrest a natural phenomenon in a defeated country ridden with inflation and decreased productive facilities and hardly susceptible of dissolution by mere revision of legislation or restriction of workers' rights. While recognizing the urgent need for "production stability" as a prerequisite to the introduction of foreign capital, GIFU TIMES warned the Administration against allowing its alleged preoccupation with this issue to override its better judgment and bring "great misfortune on the people" by seeking an easy and short-term solution through restrictive measures. Both labor and capital could profitably expend more energy on learning how to operate within the existing legal framework, SHIN HOKKAI believed.

AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 28 April), YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 30 April) and NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 27 April), were in favor of revision; the last-mentioned journal believing that a more specific delineation of the limits of the dispute right would contribute to better understanding on both sides. AKITA SAKIGAKE pointed out that "to give legal authority to the judgment of the labor committee and to give the right of final judgment to the Diet in the event of strikes causing serious hindrance to the national economy and public life, does not mean full suspension of the right to strike." Observing that the present regulations are rife with "defects and contradictions," YAMAGATA SHIMBUN cited the obligation of the Government to reimburse citizens for "losses caused by unlawful acts of government workers" under Article 17 of the new Constitution as an instance in which the legislature was obligated to control labor excess.

Specific suggestions for improvement in labor-capital relations were lacking generally, although OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 27 April) advocated the immediate formulation and implementation of comprehensive policies designed to forestall a repetition of the recent government workers' dispute. SCAP labor advice concerning the establishment of grievance committees was believed to be a "good idea" by CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 30 April), but the writer claimed that if such committees were established in each individual enterprise and given compulsory power, the labor front would be fragmented to the detriment of the trade union movement.

Full enforcement of the Labor Standards Law on 1 May elicited comment from NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 29 April), TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 10 April), YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (22 April), SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 6 April), and MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 27 April). Writers agreed that success of operation depended upon understanding and realization of the spirit and content of the law by the general public and the adoption of a positive attitude by both entrepreneurs and workers. TOYAMA SHIMBUN observed that the regulations had been treated with indifference by employers, particularly in the case of women and juvenile workers, and SHINKO YUKAN feared that without earnest cooperation from both sides, the "confrontation of labor and capital" would tend to be emphasized. MIYAKO SHIMBUN questioned the wisdom of allowing a so-called "cooperative movement" made up of local industrialists to contribute to the extent of 3 million yen to the expenditures of the Kyoto Labor Standards Bureau. Whether or not the influence so exerted is overt, it cannot but diminish the prestige of the committee as an autonomous body, the writer concluded.

ECONOMY

Discussion of the role of foreign capital and international trade in the nation's rehabilitation dominated prefectural editorials concerned with economic matters. KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 29 April) charged "Government authorities" with viewing "the introduction of foreign capital" as a panacea of economic ills, while criticism was made of "capitalists" who assertedly would use such an occasion for suppression of the labor offensive. Citing American aid proposals, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 26 April) declared that, "even with such favorable conditions," signs of national recovery would not be evident for at least a year. The writer believed that it was most important to cope with current economic difficulties, so as to assure extension of loans and credit from abroad.

Possibility of a 60 million dollar loan to underwrite importation of approximately 300 thousand bales of cotton was considered highly significant by commenting papers. For example, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 25 April) -- pointing out that Japan may lose former markets in China and India, because these countries were being industrialized -- suggested that anticipated loans be utilized to improve the quality of textile products, in order that Japan may be prepared to compete in world trade.

Advertisement Tax Opposed

The Administration's plan to permit local bodies to impose "an advertisement tax" was opposed by several rural papers. SHIN NIPPON (Fukuoka, 26 April) denounced the proposed levy as "double taxation," and asserted that the measure would retard collection of corporation taxes generally. The writer also believed that the development of local industries and the growth of a free press would be discouraged. SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 30 April) recalled the unsuccessful wartime experience of collecting a tax on commercial advertising, whereas KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 26 April) -- maintaining that "advertising contributes to the development of trade and industry" -- was apprehensive lest the projected levy would cause a general increase of prices and taxes.

Consumer Goods

Release of stockpiles of consumer goods was urged in a KAHOKU SHIMBUN editorial (Sendai, 24 April), which believed that "the shortage of daily necessities" giving rise to a spiral of ever-increasing wages and prices was the principal factor impeding industrial production. The writer noted that "the rate of inflation has remained unexpectedly low since the beginning of the year." This favorable development was attributed to an improved food supply, as well as to a successful tax collection campaign conducted during the last quarter of the 1947-48 fiscal year.

POLITICS

Conflicting statements on Cabinet policy -- reportedly made by Administration officials during recent tours of rural Japan -- were interpreted by many commentators as evidence of the disunity of the present coalition. Projected American financial assistance gave the Ashida Government "undeserved" strength during its early weeks, writers said, but the inability of the Democrats and Socialists to agree on various issues was considered responsible for growing discontent. A few journals appeared to feel, however, that the transcendant importance of preparing for US aid would compel compromise on controversial issues.

Inconsistent Policies Deplored

Granting that US policy toward Japan had "stabilized the political power of the Ashida Cabinet," SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 28 April) nevertheless deplored the "stalemate" on the above-mentioned problems. Declaring that the published views of Ministers Kitamura, Nishio, Kato, and Premier Ashida were at variance, the editorialist hoped that the Administration would provide the nation with "faith in politics" by adopting a consistent policy. Similarly, SANYO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 28 April) said it was natural that Ministers should differ in drafting policies, and welcomed a change in "the old system of keeping everything secret," but called upon Government spokesmen to be in accord once decisions were reached. An almost identical view was presented by NAGASAKI NICHINICHI (Nagasaki, 27 April), which demanded that discord be "corrected immediately."

Differences between two ministers over revision of labor legislation were said by KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 26 April) to have contributed to "the people's inability to understand politics." Anticipating trouble for the Government over the budget, the commentator warned that failure to clarify policies would cause a Cabinet crisis "sooner than expected." CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 28 April) believed that a crisis was imminent because of the Cabinet's "irresponsible attitude," but a HAKODATE SHIMBUN editorial (Hakodate, 23 April) credited the Premier with having initiated definite plans for checking inflation and for receiving outside capital.

Miscellaneous Political Comment

Miscellaneous political comment included SHINANO NICHINICHI's (Ueda, 28 April) strong endorsement of a merger of conservative parties. Unable to understand why these groups are divided, the paper recommended amalgamation of the Democratic-Liberals, Democrats, People's Cooperatives, and right-wing Socialists to advance their "common interests." Another recommendation was forthcoming from YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 27 April), which contended that the Socialists could regain their "lost popularity" only by returning to the principles of a "class party" -- principles allegedly abandoned at the time of the Katayama Government.

OCCUPATION

Comment on the Korean riots appeared to be relatively light in prefectural papers, with editorials on this subject thus far noted in only six journals. Military Government warnings that such disturbances must not be converted to political purposes were mentioned by MAINICHI (Osaka, 27 April) and NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 28 April), while the part allegedly played by Japanese Communists was considered by SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 28 April) as "most regrettable."

Regarding the legality of the order to close Korean schools, NISHI NIPPON seemed to concur with the Government's stand, although the writer felt that the matter should not end merely with the closure of the schools, but that the Administration should devise "honest remedial measures within the limits of the laws." Considering the reasons for closure, MAINICHI found them essentially the same in all cases -- that schools had not been officially sanctioned in accordance with the education laws, that teaching staffs had not been examined by screening committees, and that the terms of loan of Japanese public school buildings had already expired.

Of the unlawful acts of the Koreans, however, NISHI NIPPON expressed unequivocal condemnation, though observing that the logical basis of the Korean riots lay in the ill-feeling aroused by former Japanese administrative policies in Korea. Less realistic was SHIN HOKKAI's recollection of the "close and friendly" relations between Japan and Korea, and its contention that the friendship between the two nations would be destroyed by an attempt

on the part of the Koreans "to establish a separate sphere within Japan." Of interest was the remark of YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 28 April) that the Constitutional provisions renouncing war anticipated internal as well as external peace, while more usual was KOCHI SHIMBUN's (Kochi, 26 April) contention that demonstrations attempting forceful coercion must be rejected as a threat to democracy.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Provincial journals continued to urge readers to guard against over-optimism regarding the food situation, allegedly fostered by Administration "propaganda" that rations would be increased. Writers pointed to SCAP's warning that the crisis was not resolved, and declared that Japan's food problems should be alleviated by strenuous efforts on the part of the Japanese people and not by reliance on US imports.

Deploring the "general inclination among the people to depend on America for everything," OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 25 April) demanded that the "spirit of dependence be swept away immediately." Though food prospects assertedly have improved, the writer cautioned that Japan must be prepared to continue its "austere life for many more years." HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 24 April), declaring that Premier Ashida's optimistic views "were entirely dependent on the goodwill of the US," warned that US aid would hinge on the materialization of Japan's food production program. NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 27 April) scored the Administration for using the anticipated US imports as a basis for increasing rations. The writer contended that to import food Japan must have exportable goods, which, at present, were said to be of such inferior quality that "they cannot attract buyers." Remarking that it was "extremely dangerous to become intoxicated by the groundless optimism of Administration officials," SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 28 April) was relieved that "those with better sense" were helping to restore the people's outlook to normal.

In order to improve domestic conditions as a requisite to increased rations, various remedies were offered by prefectural editors. YUKAN FUKUNICHI (Fukuoka, 25 April) felt that the Government should control all staple foods by blocking illegal distribution channels, but expressed doubt as to whether the Administration was capable of enforcing such control in view of its "failure to maintain harmony even within the Cabinet." SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 29 April) thought that production could be spurred by effecting reforms in farm taxes and agricultural prices, while three journals -- HOKKAI NICHINICHI, CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 28 April), and YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 29 April) -- agreed that the "ghost population" which was draining rations must be eradicated, and that ration distribution systems must be improved considerably.

Food Production Program

Concern over the farmers' alleged lack of will to fulfill their quotas was voiced by several papers. BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 26 April) felt that the villagers' indifference was justified in view of the Government's asserted failure to carry out its promises regarding prices, bonus goods, materials, and taxes. TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 26 April) and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 26 April) censured the local food adjustment committees for inefficiency, particularly for allegedly delaying the allocation of quotas. The Niigata writer believed that "feudal customs and private circumstances" prevented committeemen in many instances from expressing their opinions freely and acting independently.

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Two commentators maintained that the Government had failed in what was described as an essential to rehabilitation -- the "democratization" of the Economic Stabilization Board. To MAINICHI (Osaka, 20 April) this was but one of several prerequisites to recovery, but to MURORAN MINPO (Muroran, 16 April) reorganization of the ESB was regarded as a factor which might determine the life of the present coalition.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

One year's experience with local self-government -- under the law passed to implement the new Constitution -- has proved its execution and practice fraught with difficulties, according to editorialists commenting in several prefectural journals. Both FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 25 April) and CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 16 April) were indignant at the number of publicly elected officials who had resigned their posts, not, the last-mentioned journal claimed, with justifiable reason, but because they were forced to do so by the internal troubles of the local governing bodies and the "impossibility of carrying on an amicable management of the administration." In Aichi Prefecture, it was said, dissension over the question of "contributions" to the lower secondary schools and the location of the site of the school buildings was responsible for two-thirds of the resignations.

FUKUI SHIMBUN was dissatisfied both with those who had resigned (reportedly because of "pressure from the political bosses" or because salaries were inadequate) and with those who remained in office, these latter having become "proud and despotic" and given to indulgence in "scandalous actions" through illegal connections with the real village "bosses." IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 20 April) agreed with CHUBU NIPPON in condemning the "lack of positive zeal" for self-government on the part of elected officials. It was noted that absenteeism often had made efficient conduct of business in the assembly impossible, and further, ignorance of the system was said to have resulted in some local assemblies passing tax bills without going through a vote.

Charges of political corruption were levied by IWATE SHIMPO in another editorial (18 April). In a certain town in the prefecture, it had been impossible to select the chief of the fire squad without the approval of the street bosses, and the town head and his subordinates "had usurped the clothing ration of the poor and needy," the writer said. ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 16 April) criticized the conduct of an education lottery being held in the prefecture for support of a local university. "Forcible sale of three lottery tickets to a house" was being made by using the power of the old block and village associations, although contributions are supposed to be voluntary, the journal declared.

ECONOMY

Foreign financial assistance was expected soon, and several editorials warned against "reckless optimism" as to the probable benefits to be derived. IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 24 April) remarked that "the optimistic view of Japan's future" would not be warranted until inflation was effectively controlled, and GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 23 April) claimed that "it would be a great mistake to think that inflation will be curbed by the introduction of foreign capital." On the contrary, the writer believed that loans and credit from overseas would not be available until economic stability was attained. As prerequisites to the influx of foreign funds, the writer pointed to enterprise adjustment, labor law revision, and establishment of a satisfactory wage system.

Tax Reform Criticized

The Administration's tax reform program was criticized in a SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN editorial (Shizuoka, 24 April) on the ground that assessment of workers' earnings would not be alleviated, if sales levies were, in effect, substituted for reduced income taxes. KYUSHU TIMES (Kyushu, 24 April) also objected to projected excise taxes, fearing that they would provoke general price increases.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Criticism of reports of improved food conditions continued to appear in provincial editorials, with commentators expressing disapproval of Administration optimism over the possibility of increasing rations. Journals pointed to current delays in ration distribution as indicating that the situation was not so favorable as Premier Ashida believed, and urged greater consideration of the SCAP warning that the food crisis had not passed. CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 23 April) labeled Premier Ashida's statements on raising rations as "political claptrap," and stated that the people wanted "realism" on the food situation instead of "soothing, flattering talk." To consumers, "present full rations are more desirable than promises of increased rations," contended the writer, who felt that it was "too risky to think carelessly on food matters."

Agreeing, SHIN NIPPON (Fukuoka, 23 April) declared that SCAP's admonition was a "piercing reproach" to Government officials who considered the crisis past the danger point. Unwarranted optimism, the writer feared, would cause farmers to "relax their efforts." SCAP's warning also was endorsed by NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 23 April), which declared that delays in rations "everywhere in the country"indicated that food conditions were "not as favorable as reported." Production of staple foods was said to be below capacity due either to villagers abandoning farms because of high taxes, or to planting of "more profitable non-controlled products." Unless such tendencies were eliminated, it was expected to be difficult to achieve the program to increase production by 10 percent.

KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 24 April) and NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 24 April) told readers not to rely on import of US food, but to exert their efforts to boost domestic output in order to assure full rations. The Nagoya editorialist felt that most people doubted the Government's ability to increase rations, and added that while an "amateur" such as Agriculture Minister Nagae may not be fully aware of conditions, those familiar with the "real circumstances" realized the difficulties involved.

EDUCATION

Press complaints over the implementation of the new education system, the poor pay of teachers, and the consequent critical shortage of instructors in the public schools continued in approximately the same volume and tone as in previous weeks. As before, specific suggestions for solution of education problems were less numerous than generalized criticism of administration, teachers, and parents. Among the few definitive proposals offered were TOKAI SHIMBUN's (Okazaki, 22 April) advocacy of greater use of field trips to supplement classroom work, and to help in overcoming the crowded conditions in school buildings, and ISE SHIMBUN's (Tsu, 20 April) endorsement of the Nagano Normal School's claim that "synthetic education," conducted without textbooks, was more effective than strict adherence to text.

Developments in co-edueation during the past year drew the attention of two prefectural papers, one of which -- HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 23 April) -- reported that parents in Toyama prefecture were opposing co-education among higher secondary school students, while pupils themselves were favorable. The trend toward co-education is inevitable, however, the Toyama paper maintained, and concluded that parents must realize that better conditions for sex equality are created by co-education. CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 15 April) placed emphasis on the need for equality of treatment between men and women teachers, and the advantageous effect which such equality among educators would have on co-education.

FOREIGN

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's election as first president of the Chinese Republic occasioned editorial studies of China's political and diplomatic situation in three prefectural newspapers. These commentaries agreed that the election procedures were in line with Dr. Sun Yat-sen's principles for the democratization of the country, at least in outer form. However, restraint and cynicism were apparent, as writers took note of China's continuing civil war, economic privation, and resulting unrest in Nationalist territory. In foreign reviews elsewhere in the rural press, the Italian elections still drew considerable comment, while some attention was paid to the US plan for the trusteeship of Palestine, and to the death of Philippines' President Manuel Roxas.

Skeptical reaction to Chiang's election was strongest in KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 21 April), whose writer felt that although China has reached the "first stage of constitutionalism, only the future can decide whether the nation will pass through the succeeding stages." The writer acknowledged that Dr. Sun's policies had guided the election, but cautioned that the new Constitution was "obliged to recognize the president's dictatorial powers until the civil war is settled, (while) various rights of the people will be restricted."

"Autocratic tendencies of the old Kuomintang Party" seem to be continuing, the editorialist charged, as the People's Convention elected more than 300 non-official candidates of Chiang's party. "But it must be worthy of special mention that China has never absolutely abandoned the idea of a democracy, even though she has momentarily established a military administration and has recognized the existence of the Kuomintang despotism," concluded the writer.

Two other journals -- HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 21 April) and SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 21 April) -- launched from consideration of Chiang's election into pleas for Sino-Japanese friendship. The editors believed that "true friendship" could be established only when China is convinced that Japan has eliminated all traces of militarism from its "national personality." Independence of China cannot be considered separately from independence of Japan, the Asahigawa journal held. "Therefore, we must not only sympathize with China's plight in the civil war, but also must prove our sincerity by guarding against the revival of chauvinism."

Chinese-American differences over the industrial level of Japan were studied by HOKKAI NICHINICHI, which believed that China might yield in its attitude toward Japan in the hope of procuring American aid in the civil war. "In the end the Chinese policy will agree with America's and, since the US views Japan as important to the recovery of the Orient, China will adopt a long-range view," concluded the editorialist.

Reaction to the Italian elections continued to mirror previous comment. Three newspapers -- EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 23 April), OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 24 April), and MURORAN MINPO (Muroran, 25 April) -- agreed that the elections were a miniature of the US-USSR "cold war," and looked for Italian inclusion in the diplomatic federation of western European countries."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 5 May 1948 No. 234

FOREIGN

Prefectural commentators reflected the same extensive interest in the results of the Italian elections as was shown by metropolitan writers, with some twenty regional papers discussing the causes for the anti-Communist victory, and its probable effects on the future of the world. Factors involved in the Christian-Democratic Party's success were given varying degrees of emphasis, but papers generally noted the co-existence of several elements responsible for the Communist defeat.

Thus, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 23 April) mentioned the "negative attitude" of the Soviet as partly responsible for the Italian Communist Party's lack of success; the influence of American aid and the announced policy of Britain and the US regarding Trieste were stressed by HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 23 April), and the anti-Communist stand of the Vatican was noted by a number of papers. Communist Party leader Togliatti was being blamed for adhering too strictly to "a rational campaign policy," ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 23 April) reported, and noted rumors that he would be removed from his post.

In contrast to numerous commentaries prior to the election which had foreseen the possibility of armed conflict in Italy regardless of the outcome of the elections, many prefectural papers believed that a period of at least external calm would follow the Christian-Democratic victory. Readers were warned, however, that Communist attempts to gain influence in Italy and elsewhere would not cease with their set-back in the April election. It would be difficult to predict the future moves of the Communists, TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 21 April) believed, but, like HOKKAI NICHINICHI (23 April), saw a possibility that an attempt would be made to gain control in France. The Communists will never retire without a struggle, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 23 April) thought; CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 23 April) cautioned that the results of the Italian election were not to be interpreted as a truce between the left and the right, and SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 22 April) observed that so long as political, social, and economic conditions remain unstable in Italy, the Communists will retain some influence there. Communist defeat in the elections, moreover, does not necessarily indicate a diminution in Soviet influence, TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 23 April) maintained, and added that the outcome of the Italian election "merely signifies the end of the initial skirmish between the US and the USSR." Apprehension lest Communist influences be extended to the Far East was voiced by at least two papers, both of which feared Communist infiltration in Korea and Manchuria.

Far Eastern Developments

Election of Chiang Kai-shek as the first president of China under the new Constitution drew comment from four prefectural papers which attached particular significance to the influence this might have on China's civil war. Election of Chiang in spite of his determination to reject the nomination was regarded as "only natural" in view of China's complicated internal situation and foreign relations, according to GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 21 April), while NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 21 April) felt that "regardless of his motives in declining the candidacy," criticism of Chiang's one-party government had decreased abroad as the result of his having been "drafted" by the National Assembly. Limitations on presidential power under the

new Chinese Constitution are extensive, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 21 April) pointed out, observing that under such restrictions Chiang might be unable to carry out his campaign against the Communists as he wished, and recalling that "some foreign dispatches" reported the aim of the Nationalist Party to circumvent the intention of the new Constitution.

GOVERNMENT

Increased concern over corruption in government -- as disclosed by a Diet committee investigating illegal property transactions -- was observed in prefectural editorial columns. Described by many commentators as "a postwar phenomenon," the revelations brought several demands for an inquiry of wider scope, and enactment of "strict" legislation." In addition, editorials repeated recommendations that voters reject candidates involved in unlawful activities (Prefectural Press Analysis No. 233).

Investigation Should Not Be 'Limited'

If the legislative probe is "limited" to its present scope, the people will harbor suspicions that there is no official desire to solve certain questions, in the opinion of GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 17 April). Noting rumors of illegal transactions involving personnel of the Reconstruction Finance Bank, the journal urged the committee to investigate, adding that failure to do so would affect the "purification of political circles." Support for this point of view appeared in NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 21 April), which claimed that the nation was "astonished" at the amount of hoarded military goods which had been uncovered. "We hope," the commentator declared, "that the committee will act promptly in order that the people can regain their confidence in politics."

Similarly, IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 18 April) regarded the committee's findings as "beyond imagination," and charged that corruption in government offices had discouraged industrialists and merchants from dealing with certain officials. But, the journal warned, "mere preaching is not enough; there must be the proper legislation or we will fail to rehabilitate our country." Belief that "misgovernment" was to blame was expressed by CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 22 April), which deplored the influence of "men of small caliber." However, the absence of "political sense by the people" was held to be the principal reason for corruption in government and political circles.

Contributions to politicians and parties were "inseparably connected" with the hoarded goods probe, according to SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 21 April). In connection with the former, the paper observed that although "many deeds may not constitute a crime, those involved cannot escape moral responsibility." Warning citizens not to vote again for "doubtful politicians," the commentator also endorsed legislation which would place elections under public management. This opinion was echoed by HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 22 April), which cited English laws as those which Japan might well copy.

In the only comment of its type observed, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 13 April) linked administrative adjustment with the "shameful situation in officialdom," and called for a purge similar to that in industrial circles.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Most commenting journals favored adoption of "summer time," but objections were raised to the continued operation of railways on standard schedules. TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 22 April) feared that, although government offices and public schools would adjust satisfactorily to the new system, farmers and fishermen would be inconvenienced. CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 20 April) was especially vigorous in opposition to daylight saving time, claiming that "it would disturb sound sleep," and "cause reduced efficiency among the people." The Chiba paper demanded Diet dissolution "if such foolish legislation should be enacted."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

In view of the improved domestic food situation, prefectural editors expressed hope that rations would be increased in the fall of this year, but at the same time cautioned against undue optimism. Scoring Administration officials "who speak carelessly about raising rations," NISHI NIPPON SHIMBUN (Fukuoka, 20 April) contended that it was still "too early to discuss increases." Successful completion of last year's rice delivery and improved world food conditions were not sound reasons for premature promises, according to the writer, who maintained that raising of rations "depends a great deal upon the people's self-supplying capacity." YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 21 April) agreed that the increased food production program was the key factor, but warned that although the plan was "realistic," it could not be attained unless farmers were supplied with adequate fertilizer and equipment. In this connection, TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 18 April) urged the Administration to provide technical guidance as well as materials, while farmers were asked "to exert their utmost energy." Without the enthusiasm on the part of authorities and villagers, the production program "surely will fail," the writer concluded.

With food distribution dependent upon imports from the US it was "too soon" to forecast the feasibility of boosting rations, according to SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (Takamatsu, 21 April), which anticipated factors "that will complicate the situation." TOKAI SHIMBUN (Okazaki, 21 April) also cautioned against haste in discussions on raising rations, and warned that unless increases "are executed at all costs," consumers will be forced to deal with the black-market. Declaring that there was "every possibility that rations would be raised even higher than Government estimates," HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 21 April) hoped that the plans would materialize due to their "psychological effect in curbing inflation." Of the journals noted, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 23 April) was the most severe in censuring the Administration for issuing statements on ration increases, which "were leading people to optimistic notions." Before rejoicing, the editorialist admonished, "the people must realize that ration plans cannot be carried out by ourselves unassisted, but are dependent upon import of 2,000,000 tons of food."

LAND REFORM

Declaring that land reform must be pushed to advance the democratic revolution of Japan, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 21 April) maintained that such reformation could not be completed merely through enactment of laws or by increasing the number of agricultural officials, but would succeed only after the significance of land reform was fully understood by both the villagers and authorities. While conceding that the program was on the whole progressing smoothly, the journal scored "feudal landowners who are impeding its advancement." Unless "stubborn landowners" were checked, the writer insisted, their influence assertedly would create confusion. Landowners also were attacked by SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 20 April) for allegedly violating land reform regulations. Officials were requested to promote wider understanding among farmers so that "their rights and freedom would not be violated." TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 20 April) expressed anxiety over the report that some villagers were returning farms purchased under the land program because "taxes are unreasonably high and quotas too heavy." Remarking that "relinquishment of cultivating rights would be suicidal," the editorialist called upon authorities to make it possible for agriculturists "to pursue their tasks with ease."

LABOR

The majority of commenting journals felt that settlement of the government workers' dispute (Prefectural Press Analyses Nos. 232-3) was characterized by labor's increasing reliance on collective bargaining -- rather than by what was described as forcible reaction to Government opposition. However, editors doubted that

this tendency toward "amicable negotiations" constituted a guarantee against future unrest in government offices. The opposite appeared true, in fact, as papers prophesied that renewed troubles would break out over union opposition to the Administration's proposed "efficiency wage" system.

The manner in which the dispute was settled was, in the overall sense, the most valuable product of the issue, according to YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 20 April), whose editorial praised the conduct of both Government and union representatives in negotiations. Admitting that while the basic issues of the dispute were not "completely resolved," the editor felt that the approach taken by both sides might set a more desirable pattern to consider future issues. "The Government attitude was faithful and constant," felt the writer. * * * It is a matter for congratulation that the dispute entered the stage of peaceful negotiation. We urge both the Government and the unions to maintain these faithful efforts."

The Kofu journal's fears that "privations," stemming from the 2,920-yen wage base, would continue were echoed by NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 20 April), whose editorial foresaw a continuing tug-of-war between the Government and the workers. "Workers call for a livelihood wage, while the Administration wants an efficiency wage upon which the new price system will be established. A truce, therefore, is not immediately possible," the writer felt. This newspaper's belief that the center of the controversy would shift to the new Wage Adjustment Council was shared by AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 18 April), whose editorial called for "quick, realistic settlement" by the Council.

In perhaps the most critical commentary on this dispute, the Akita newspaper demanded "the Government and the employees' unions reflect upon their serious responsibility (in) damaging the public (and) influencing the possibility of foreign aid." In contrast to other editorials, this commentary charged that intra-Cabinet disagreement over the possible revision of labor legislation had protracted the dispute. The situation was further complicated, continued the writer, by labor's insistence that dispute leaders not be dismissed, that workers be paid during strikes, and that labor legislation not be revised.

Charges by AKITA SAKIGAKE that contradictory statements on labor law revision by Vice-Premier Nishio and Labor Minister Kato had complicated the issue were lodged also by TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 21 April). It is doubtful whether Cabinet Ministers are justified in publicizing their own views, stated the editorialist. "Such an attitude on the part of the Government only provokes labor unrest . . . and is inconsistent with Government intentions to stabilize the domestic situation," he said. "In all matters, Cabinet Ministers are expected to be in step."

ECONOMY

Economic reconstruction continued to be the major subject of prefectural editorials dealing with economic matters, as journals again warned against undue optimism in regard to foreign capital prospects. CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 18 April) asserted that "although a vast sum of foreign investments are expected, they will not contribute directly to Japan's economic rehabilitation." The writer believed that adequate raw materials would not be available in the world market, and "even if the required materials are imported, it is doubtful whether the nation has enough productive equipment and transportation capacity to take full advantage of such favorable circumstances." SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 19 April) pointed to two popular misunderstandings about projected American financial assistance. Firstly, the editorial declared that the amount of foreign aid -- contingent upon Congressional approval -- still is uncertain. Secondly, immediately subsequent to the introduction of foreign capital, improved economic conditions were anticipated, but the writer estimated that it would take at least 10 months before raw cotton obtained with revolving fund credit could be imported, processed, and supplied to export channels.

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 28 April 1948 No. 232

GOVERNMENT

Administrative adjustment won widespread support in prefectural editorial columns, with writers advocating not only a reduction in government personnel but drastic changes in administrative procedure. A few commentators appeared concerned over resulting unemployment, but a majority of journals seemed to regard such a program as overdue and inevitable. There were scattered indications that writers believed that over-staffed government offices were hindrances to the introduction of foreign financial assistance.

Because of territorial losses and reduced production, Japan no longer is able to retain the number of civil servants employed before the war, according to FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 3 April). Therefore, "two-thirds or even one-half of the present number of employees will serve the nation well." Moreover, the commentator added, there is a need to "renovate the administrative machinery, changing its feudalistic and bureaucratic nature to a democratic one." Agreement was forthcoming from SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN (Shizuoka, 15 April) and TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 14 April), both of which assailed procedure in public offices as out-of-date. The Shizuoka editorialist was concerned particularly over the "evil practice of making much of the government and nothing of the people," while the Nagoya paper favored "a speedier, simpler office routine conducted by fewer officials."

If the Cabinet takes the lead in enforcing administrative adjustment, private industry will follow suit, in the opinion of SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 5 April), which also believed that branch offices of the central government "do more harm than good." To NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 8 April), it seemed advisable to reduce personnel in both the central and local governments, but the editorial cautioned the Administration to be prepared to cope with consequent unemployment.

Another view of the central-local government question was presented by KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 10 April), which endorsed the principle of transfer of authority from the former to the latter. "Mere adjustment alone will not bring satisfactory results," in the opinion of FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 13 April), unless accompanied by "drastic readjustment" of local offices.

Comment on Ashida's Message

Premier Ashida's discussion of Government aims with political and business leaders drew less attention than in the Tokyo press (Press Analysis No. 752). Belief that the Premier's plea for public cooperation represented another attempt of postwar governments to "shift the responsibility to the people" was expressed by TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 13 April). Recovery will be possible, the editorial declared, only if the Cabinet has "firm determination" and the ability to "lead the people." Partial agreement was noted in SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN (13 April), which insisted that Ashida should "recognize present conditions in this country."

In contrast, BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 12 April) emphasized that the people should cooperate "with all their energy" to assist the Administration in preparing for foreign financial assistance. The role of unions in this respect was stressed because "the problem of labor efficiency is most important." HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 13 April) also voiced approval of the Premier's remarks, but KYOTO SHIMBUN (11 April) charged that the Administration was

unmindful of its own "inefficiency," and that when Cabinet plans end in failure, "the people are blamed." Citizens are aware of the need for cooperation, the editorialist maintained, but "how shall they act when neither the policy nor the character of the Cabinet has been clearly shown?"

LABOR

Prefectural commentators examined a variety of topics relating to the civil service workers' dispute. Without venturing a conclusion, SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 13 April) declared the current tendency favoring "efficiency" as against "livelihood" wages to be the natural consequence of "the economic rehabilitation of a defeated nation carried out by capitalistic instruments." Finding that approximately 88 percent of the Government employees had been on strike during the first three months of the year and comparing this with the relative lack of controversy in private industry, MURORAN MINPO (Muroran, 9 April) believed the former to have demonstrated a lack of understanding of the "present severe situation" of their country, while the latter, realizing that strikes would bring about the ruin of both management and workers, had used restraint out of respect for "objective circumstances."

HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 14 April) charged labor with having forgotten the pre-eminent position of the Diet, and consequently of the people, including themselves, in Japan's new democracy, and urged that the union movement confine itself to peaceful revolution. The Hokkaido Teachers' Union and the Electric Workers' Unions were cited as commendable examples of democratic unionism. Doubtful whether the Administration was in "real earnest" when negotiating with the government unions and considering the suspension of the threatened general strike a "big concession," OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 13 April) nevertheless urged an "early compromise by mutual concession" and the adoption of a "broadminded point of view" by both sides.

NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 13 April) and SHINANO NICHINICHI (Ueda, 6 April) decried the ascendancy of Communism in the union movement and advised labor that its real interest lay in "positive cooperation for the sound rehabilitation of Japan's economy" and in the development of sufficient critical intelligence to combat leftist elements on their own ground.

Revision of labor legislation was favored by both YUKAN SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 13 April) and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 12 April) in editorials declaring that -- while strikes should not be prohibited as such -- in instances in which the public welfare was seriously affected, some restrictive regulation was necessary. The first-mentioned journal admitted to some sympathy for labor because of the "hard reality of living conditions" and the "lack of ability and policy" on the part of the Government, but, nonetheless, believed the strike right had been misused.

ECONOMY

Reform of national and local tax systems was sought in numerous editorials of recent prefectural papers, most of which claimed that the present tax burden was excessive and disproportionately distributed. EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 14 April), for example, noted that, despite the unpopularity of earned income assessments, "tax collections recently have improved." Lowered rates were proposed to alleviate workers' tax load, and strong opposition was voiced against a sales tax suggested by the Finance Ministry as a revenue source to cover the deficit resulting from reduced income taxes.

In contrast, MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 14 April) favored excise levies as "just another step toward the equal distribution of the tax burden." The writer declared that "democratization of the economy" -- achieved through the dissolution of the Zaibatsu -- imposed upon the public responsibility for huge tax payments formerly made by large corporations.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Prefectural editors continued to stress the urgent need of cooperation and industry on the part of farmers, government officials, and consumers alike for the realization of the food production program. TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 15 April) declared that it may be "unreasonable" to place the burden of production on farmers, but because the foundation of Japan's economic recovery hinges on farming, "there is no alternative but to ask the villagers to increase their efforts." The "misfortune" of the nation's agriculture does not come from the "narrowness of the land, but from the narrowness of the farmers' mind," according to the writer, who hoped that all planters would "renew their recognition of the duty to boost their output." On the other hand, the "unsatisfactory quotas and prices decided upon by the Government were said to be important causes "obstructing smooth delivery of produce." In a similar vein, FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 16 April) declared that although the food situation was "brighter than last year," distribution of rations on schedule up to October of this year would not materialize without the full cooperation of all farmers.

Deploring the abandonment of certain farm lands by villagers on the ground that taxes were too high, IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 16 April) called on government authorities to remove inequities in the tax system. If tax revisions were not effected, the editorialist insisted, the farmers should "stand up and fight for their rights." Villagers should remember their "mission as farmers" and not abandon their "precious right as agrarians" through fear of heavy taxes, concluded the journal. Greater care in assignment of quotas was urged by ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 15 April) and HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 13 April). Contending that allotment methods assertedly were causing "great concern" among farmers, the Kanazawa editorialist criticized the "inactivity" of local adjustment committees, and at the same time censured villagers for not taking a more active interest in the allocations. Agreeing that more attention should be directed toward equitable allotments, HOKKAI NICHINICHI claimed that irresponsibility of officials in failing to distribute materials to farmers called for a "thorough investigation."

TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 15 April) urged that modern technical knowledge be applied more extensively so that Japanese agriculture could be released from antiquated farming methods. Measures for increasing production, according to SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 14 April) should take into account the cooperation of consumers as well as farmers. Because consumers assertedly were inclined to forget easily the "pain of delayed rations," it was essential, the writer maintained, that they be included in production movements; otherwise the nation's rural economy would "revert to the feudalistic system."

Ashida's Optimism

Although there assertedly was much rejoicing over Premier Ashida's recent statements on increasing rations, the people's elation was said to have been "crushed" by Agriculture Minister Nagae's subsequent announcement that rations could not be raised until at least November of this year, according to ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 15 April). Remarking that consumers have been perplexed by such contradictory statements from Administrative officials, the writer noted that ever since taking office Premier Ashida's speeches had been "pervaded by optimistic views." The journal thought that successive visits by US trade missions might have been responsible to a certain extent for Ashida's optimism. Although the food situation has shown "considerable improvement," restoration has not yet reached the point where supply can adequately meet demand, concluded the editorialist.

FOREIGN

Italy was viewed by prefectural commentators as the battle-ground for a telling, if not decisive encounter between the politi-cal philosophies of western Europe and the United States on one hand and Russia on the other. Belief that a victory for Italy's Communists would draw the country into the Soviet-controlled bloc was expressed in all canvassed journals, with writers agreed that a Communist triumph would reverberate throughout western Europe. However, political bias was not widespread as most editorials took the form of summaries or speculative commentaries on the then-coming election.

Typifying provincial comment was a NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 16 April) editorial, which stated that Communist failure to win at the polls would check the "western progress" of Soviet power. "If, on the other hand, the Communists win, all Europe except Spain and Portugal would be included in the Soviet design," according to the journal. Agreeing that the political fate of adjoining western countries would be partly determined by the elections, GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 14 April) felt that a Communist victory would bring an "immediate revolution." This possibility, said the writer, had prompted the "positive policy" of the US in considering the withdrawal of aid in the event of a Communist triumph and, at the same time, in demanding that Trieste be returned to Italy.

Perhaps the most partisan comment was contained in JOMO SHIM-BUN (Maebashi, 11 April). In the event that Communists take power, held the editorialist, Italy would be merged with the Soviet bloc and "lose her independence for a long time to come. But the more dreadful outcome would be US loss of confidence in international cooperation and subsequent withdrawal from Europe." If Italy should be communized, concluded the writer, the Vatican would be unable to continue its activities without interruption.

Developments in the "cold war" drew varied comment from three other journals. Attacks were launched against "defeatist thinking" by NIPPONKAI (Tottori, 13 April) in an editorial criticizing those who "echo prophesies of a third world war." The writer recalled that the capitalistic US and socialistic USSR cooperated closely to overthrow fascism, while the United Nations -- the outcome of this cooperation -- still was holding aloft the light of human ideals. We must agitate against the "false illusion of war," con-cluded the writer, lest some Japanese yield to fascist tendencies as the result of surviving militarism. KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 10 April) suggested an "understanding between China and Japan." "Frankly admitting that war is inevitable," said the commentator, "we must be a strong barrier against the materialization of war . . . and strengthen Asian unity toward this end."

Considering US studies of Japan's role as an anti-Communist barrier in the Far East, SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 6 April) sought to explain the differences between present attempts to contain the USSR and the "anti-Communist alliance" concluded by the Tripartite Powers. Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo were moved by destructive motiva-tions, the journal said, while today's campaign seeks to maintain world peace through the "balance of power and the realization of liberty and prosperity."

FOREIGN AID

Prospective American financial assistance again was a major topic in rural papers, although some decrease in the volume of such commentary was noticeable. CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 11 April) expressed belief that the Draper Mission presaged the early introduction of foreign capital, but the journal was apprehensive about "the security of foreign investments in Occupied Japan" -- in view of high cor-poration taxes, uncertainty as to patent rights, inflation, and labor problems. In contrast with the usual optimistic view toward American aid, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 16 April) pointed to opposition in China, the Philippines and in Australia to the complete rehabili-tation of the Japanese economy. The writer believed that the public, fully cognizant of the problems of economic recovery, should depend principally upon its own resourcefulness in reconstructing the nation's industries.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 23 April 1948 No. 231

DIET

A SCAP warning against Diet absenteeism was the subject of numerous commentaries in the prefectural press, with writers joining in strong censure of "irresponsible representatives." Editorials were even more critical than those in Tokyo papers (Press Analysis No. 749), and provincial journals attempted no defense of the Diet members' attendance record, although several papers argued that the Government and political parties should share the blame. Virtually all commentators expressed "deep regret" that SCAP intervention had been necessary.

Representative Comment

"Astonished not only by the Diet members' lack of zeal, but by the indifference of representatives friendly to the new Cabinet," CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 7 April) warned that the nation "has no use for legislators who fail to perform their duties as public servants." At the same time, the editorialist claimed, the Administration could not avoid some responsibility for the "low tone" of the present session because of intra-Cabinet disagreement over such issues as suspension of interest on war bonds and price revision. The Diet, the Government, and the nation were exhorted to "size up the actual situation and move together toward the reconstruction of a defeated country." While disapproving of the Diet members ("who were not elected to benefit themselves"), SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 8 April) also felt that the Administration had contributed to absenteeism because it had been "weak and non-committal about rumors of a general election," thereby indirectly encouraging representatives to leave Tokyo for campaign purposes.

"Lamenting the lukewarm attitude of the Diet, Government, and political parties," GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 8 April) also denounced the Cabinet for "permitting the spread of useless rumors about a general election," but -- without explanation -- charged that parties "must bear the responsibility for a deplorable situation." A parallel opinion appeared in KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 8 April), which explained, however, that party leaders were at fault for having encouraged members to stay away from legislative meetings. To improve attendance, the editorialist advised "the people to watch the behavior of the representatives they elected," and endorsed a proposal to report absenteeism in the press and over the radio. More drastic measures were urged by KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 8 April), which claimed that "the people have the right to impeach negligent representatives," and advised the Diet to establish means for disqualifying or punishing constant offenders.

Nation Also Held at Fault

To many journals, the problem of absenteeism had arisen not so much from rumors of a general election as from the general attitude of the electorate. For instance, SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 8 April) "recognized that the deplorable condition at the Diet is partly attributable to . . . the nation's inexperience in parliamentary government and a lack of understanding," while NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 7 April) indicated that voters had been deficient in "supervising and encouraging the people they elected." In agreement, KITA NIPPON (Toyama, 8 April) called for "self-reflection," and maintained that the nation had only itself to blame for a "shameful" situation. SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 7 April) acknowledged that representatives had been "irresponsible," but contended that "the people are ignorant of Diet activities and should watch their representatives."

ECONOMY

Draper Mission recommendations -- that reparations be virtually suspended and the level of Japanese industry raised -- joined six prefectural editors in hopes of an earlier industrial rehabilitation. Rural editorialists saw the Mission's findings as an acceptance of similar suggestions by the Strike Committee, which reflected the American contention that Japan's reconstruction is indispensable to the rehabilitation of the Far East. Nearly all writers warned against expecting a sudden economic revival on the basis of the Draper and Strike recommendations alone, but the general tone of editorial reaction was sounded by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 6 April), which stated that "American aid for Japan has been definitely decided."

The international aspects of the new American policy were largely ignored by commentators, except for widespread references to the aid program's connection with the Anglo-American "anti-communism" drive. For example, HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 6 April) stated that America was continuing the fight for world stability and, in this case, foreign aid programs could be considered as "military expenditures in the cold war." Elsewhere, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 9 April) believed that international suspicion of Japan was considerably dispelled by Draper Mission statements that "this country's resurgence as a military power is impossible."

Only in SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 11 April) was one feature of the Draper Mission held in question. Considering a statement that economic controls should be removed from Japan, the writer cautioned against "simultaneous removal of all limitations." Controls should be democratized, said the editorialist (apparently construing the Draper Mission statement as an allusion to local controls), but complete abolition at this time would bring nothing but economic confusion and instability.

Premier Ashida's statement that labor unrest might discourage foreign financial aid was noted by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN, which wondered whether "the American Congress would hesitate to help Japan as long as labor instability continues." In this regard, OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 11 April) looked upon labor stabilization as prerequisite to foreign assistance. "We must remove internal friction," the editorialist stated, "as it is unreasonable to expect aid from a country, particularly a victor country, if democratic decisions are reversed and judgments handed down by autocratic elements." But opposition to using prospective foreign aid as a "weapon against labor" was voiced by CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 12 April). While admitting that strikes might adversely affect foreign loans, the editor nevertheless warned against any unconditional acceptance of Government "oppression of the working classes and attacks on their right to dispute." Foreign capital would be introduced for all the Japanese people, said the commentator, not for the benefit of the select.

Plight of Smaller Industries

Financial hardships -- believed stemming from tax collections, Government enterprises, and the labor offensive -- were imperiling small and medium-sized industries, two journals reported, and the difficulty of winning financial aid assertedly threatened the existence of these "bulwarks of democracy." YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 10 April) feared that "tax collection offensives" might force these businesses into bankruptcy, or deprive them of working capital and thereby block chances of increased production. Similarly, HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 11 April) said that price rises in material, cheap consumer prices, and delays in government payments were bankrupting smaller enterprises, and "larger enterprises might appear again."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Appeals to central government and prefectural authorities to exert greater efforts to aid farmers in attaining the 1948 production goals continued to appear in prefectural editorial columns. SHIN NIPPON SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 10 April), for instance, urged agricultural officials not merely to advocate increased production, but to "take full cognizance of the dire situation" and develop the food program into a "great movement of the entire populace." The major responsibility for the success of the delivery plan rests with the Government, continued the editorialist, and the degree of achievement will depend upon the Administration's ability to implement land reform and establish cooperatives. Furthermore, the writer claimed that the Government can assist the agriculturalists by improving the food delivery system, modernizing farming methods, and eliminating "unfair" taxes. Unless farmers are able to realize reasonable profits with which to purchase sufficient equipment and materials, the journal concluded, farm villages cannot be expected to fulfill their quotas.

SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 12 April) agreed that the Government must render more concrete assistance to villagers, adding that the Administration food program was of "no avail" unless fertilizer, insecticides, and materials were adequately and promptly distributed The Administration must make special efforts to deliver fertilizer on schedule, insisted the writer, contending that "past experience" gave cause to doubt the Government's capacity to provide farmers with the required amount. On the other hand, the journal maintained, villagers must endeavor to apply more scientific methods, select seeds with greater care, and study ways to prevent damage to crops. To this end, the farmers were urged to maintain closer relations with agricultural experimental stations in the localities.

Remarking that many complaints were voiced by farmers over the reported failure of the Government to distribute bonus goods last year, NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 6 April) said this "bungling indicates the irresponsibility of the bureaucrats." The writer warned the Administration not to make the error of emphasizing completion of quotas without taking the necessary precautions to preclude delay or default in delivery of bonus items. Otherwise, the farmers' determination to fulfill their allotments would be "perilously affected," concluded the journal.

Agricultural Cooperatives

Slow progress in the development of cooperatives was deplored by NIPPONKAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 11 April) and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 12 April). The first-named journal thought that the alleged indifference of farmers was due to their "bitter experiences" with the former agricultural associations and to the "middle-class farmers' resistance to accepting changes in the agrarian economy." Unless villagers in general are able to cast off old ideas in a changing world, concluded the writer, little hope can be held for the advancement of agricultural unions. The Niigata editorialist expressed concern over the farmers' asserted lack of enthusiasm to form cooperatives because the delay in organization is "forcing many technical experts to leave their posts." In addition, the attitude of unions in many cases is "too ambiguous" for these experts, the writer continued. Men with technical knowledge were urgently needed to help farmers increase their output, the journal insisted, and if the villagers fail to organize unions on a sound basis immediately, the cooperative movement may become a "truck without a driver."

LABOR

As tension over the civil service workers' dispute lessened, prefectural commentators turned their attention to a variety of topics related to labor problems. HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 10 April) warned against revision of labor legislation, pointing out that union action disrupting Japan's economic rehabilitation could be controlled by present regulations, while the imposition of new restrictions might be an instance of a "remedy worse than the evil." TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 11 April), on the contrary, believed that "the axe should be struck at the root of the evil," and advised union and Government cooperation in changing labor legislation so that the "solution of problems becomes easier."

HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 13 April) contributed a survey of the influence of Communist "factions" in the unions. The journal gave credence to the theory that labor unrest could be attributed to leftist activity, but said that inflation had caused an increase in livelihood difficulties impossible for the workers to bear. Labor Minister Kato received unqualified support from KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 11 April), which was of the opinion that State Minister Nishio, Chief Cabinet Secretary Tomabechi, and certain officials in the Labor Ministry itself were bent on opposing any plan worked out by the Labor Minister. "In today's political situation, the ablest man can do nothing if he does not receive cooperation from others," the writer added.

Full-time employment of prefectural labor relations committee members was advocated by CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 12 April) in an editorial pointing out that long delays in settlement of disputes necessitated by committeemen's preoccupation with their own business contributed in no small measure to dissatisfaction and unrest. For instance, the case of the Nippon Woolen Textile Company, appealed eight months ago, was still unsettled, the paper said. IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 9 April) called for the establishment of a comprehensive unemployment program designed to absorb already idle urban workers and latent unemployment in rural areas.

EDUCATION

Allocation of sufficient funds for operation of the new 6:3:3 system was considered of prime importance by JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 12 April). Statesmen and "administrative bureaucrats" were too prone to think of the new plan as an "ideal," and thus neglect opportunities for improvement, the writer said. EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 12 April) criticized teachers for lack of enthusiasm and for clinging to "anachronistic" and "feudalistic" thinking, and doubted whether the "democratic spirit" could be transmitted to school children by such mentors.

The shortage of teachers was attributed to economic difficulties by SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 10 April), which urged the Education Ministry to raise the level of teachers' pay at least to that received by other government employees. DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 6 April), on the other hand, urged teachers to disregard their problems as much as possible in an effort to make the atmosphere of the schoolroom "cheerful and pleasant" for their charges. Remarking on union capture of major positions in the Japan Educational Association, CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 10 April) considered responsibility for tempering traditional conservatism in that organization to have now fallen on the shoulders of the Japan Teachers' Union, and advised them to make good use of this opportunity.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 21 April 1948 No. 230

LABOR

Prefectural commentators on the civil service employees' dispute continued to evince sympathy for the workers' livelihood problems while admitting, at the same time, that under prevailing economic conditions a drastic wage increase was impossible. Most criticism, however, was directed at the Administration. CHUBU KEIZAI SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 8 April), for instance, referring to the SCAP ruling against the coordinated regional strikes planned by the All-Japan Communication Workers' Union, believed the Government to have resorted "to the power of GHQ" while "begrudging to take effective measures for the settlement of the dispute" on its own.

Most writers considered a "livelihood" wage system to be more "realistic" than the efficiency wage advocated by the Government on the ground that a living "minimum" must be secured for all the workers before the adoption of wage theories characteristic of more advanced and prosperous western countries. To allow the electrical workers a 5,383 yen base -- thus paralleling the relatively high wages paid such technicians in the US -- would be "unfair" in present-day Japan, SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 2 April) said, and would only decrease the "productive desire" of other laborers. "It is because workers cannot eat" that strikes break out, reasoned JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 7 April), but the same journal also pointed out that wage raises were complicated by the fact that the Government's only recourse was to increase the tax burden of the whole populace, already subject to the same livelihood difficulties as the workers. OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 8 April), YUKAN MIYAKO (Kyoto, 8 April), and YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 1 April), agreeing that the wage question could not be solved by a mere raise in the nominal wage, advocated stringent measures to curb the inflation and regularize the economy on a nationwide scale.

Revision of Labor Legislation

While a HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 7 April) writer considered labor protest against revision of labor legislation "presumptuous," in that this problem was one rightly decided by the Diet as representative of the whole people, KITA NIPPON (Toyama, 6 April) and SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 6 April) warned against repressive and restrictive measures. "Indulgence invites disaster, but in the case of youth, it is also necessary to be patient," the first-named journal said in an editorial attributing turbulent expression of labor unrest to inexperience and the rapid growth of the trade union movement in Japan. SHINANO MAINICHI felt that strict control would only intensify "defiance of a political nature" and, in the end, impede the progress of democratization.

Influence on Foreign Aid

GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 6 April) and CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 7 April) warned that continued labor disputes adversely affected chances of foreign aid considered essential to the nation's recovery, and the last-mentioned journal quoted a New York Times dispatch to that effect. GODO SHIMBUN emphasized further that "radical strikes" bring little benefit to the workers, but on the contrary incur public opposition and confuse rank and file union members.

Teachers' Strike

AKITA MINPO (Omagari, 10 April) voiced objections to the attempt of the Akita Prefecture Teachers' Union to influence the children under their care by holding mass meetings to explain reasons for a projected walk-out. The writer attributed these tactics to a "secret movement" of some teachers led by a "communist faction" within the organization.

FOREIGN

Strained diplomatic and administrative relations in Berlin were a leading topic of consideration in the prefectural press. Editorials -- appraisals and summaries rather than partisan commentaries -- found writers agreeing that measures and countermeasures by the two powers were logical expressions of the "cold war." However, journals did not believe that any of the developments were tantamount to actual hostilities but illustrated that fundamental differences between "western and eastern concepts of democracy" had not been reconciled. Commenting papers invariably called upon the Japanese to keep informed of this situation as one means of determining Japan's international role when she is again admitted into the family of nations.

This was the concluding summons of a TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 5 April) editorial, which counseled readers to "pay strict attention to the situation in Europe." The writer believed that the American action in surrounding Soviet railway headquarters in Berlin was a departure from the "traditionally passive attitude" and had been rendered "unavoidable" by previous Russian moves. The administrative skirmish between Russians and Americans, continued the editorialist, was rooted in the intensification of limitations on travel through the Russian zone "enforced by the chief of the Soviet military group." These limitations not only hampered Allied administration of their separate areas in the west, but, in isolating Berlin, had "tragic" consequences on western Germany, the journal said.

Broader aspects of the "cold war" were studied in editorials on the Marshall Plan in CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 5 April) and HOKKAI TIMES (Otaru, 7 April). The first-named journal said that "overwhelming Senate approval of the Marshall Plan denoted American ardor and resolution for rehabilitating Europe (and) was a victory for peaceful diplomacy." But in view of the universality of Communist influence, the writer was confident that the Marshall Plan would be extended to the Far East. In this regard, he reported that representatives of the Draper Mission and Prime Minister Ashida had "clarified" a program for the reconstruction of Japan "as a barrier against Communism in the Far East." However, the Otaru paper believed that such aid would come only gradually and disagreed that such a program was dictated by ideological compulsions. "We must remember that such a plan aims at eternal peace, not at war, and America will help us to contribute toward a more stable world," the commentary concluded.

Perhaps the calmist appraisal of the Berlin situation was contained in HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 6 April). War anxiety arises mostly from suspicion, and anxiety is therefore an illusion, stated the writer. "We must have a sure understanding" and not misjudge the world situation; those who fear that war will grow out of the Berlin indicents do not understand the long-range foreign policies of Russia and the United States, the editorialist held. The writer emphasized that to look upon war as the only immediate solution to such a situation was to indicate a "lingering militaristic attitude (instead of the) clear thinking demanded by the times."

In a secondary editorial, the same newspaper expressed Japan's hopes for early settlement of the Korean question. "Korea has become the most active battleground of the 'cold war,'" the commentator believed, "and as Russia and the United States become more assertive, so do their occupation policies in this country. * * * The Japanese people hope from the bottom of their hearts that the Korean people will strive untiringly to conceive a sound, capable government

ECONOMY

Financial aid prospects continued to be a principal topic of prefectural editorials, as numerous papers urged economic stabilization measures as preparatory steps for the introduction of foreign capital. For example, CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 7 April) declared that the Draper Mission emphasized increased industrial output as a prerequisite of American aid, and, accordingly, the writer stressed the need of greater productivity, initiative and self-reliance, and quoted Undersecretary of War Draper's statement to the effect that "the best way for the Japanese people to win the confidence of the world is to prove that they are exerting their utmost efforts to help themselves." OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 8 April) also pointed to increased production as a means "to induce foreign assistance," as well as to curb inflation. Meanwhile, KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 6 April) feared that "the importation of capital from abroad will lead to the justification of large-scale dismissals," but denounced those who would "identify the introduction of foreign funds with colonization of this country."

Tax Problems

A balanced budget as the requirement for US credit was stressed in several editorials. KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 6 April) expressed objections to proposed sales taxes, and suggested "re-investigation of the entire system of indirect taxation." Another Fukuoka paper -- NISHI NIPPON (7 April) -- registered special opposition to projected increased levies on tobacco and sake, and heavy taxation of blackmarket profiteers was recommended instead.

KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 8 April) asserted that tax collection was the primary problem in the attainment of "sound finance," which was said to be an essential condition of foreign aid. On the other hand, MURORAN MINPO (Muroran, 6 April) felt that efforts to eliminate deficit financing should not fall short of enterprise rationalization and production costs reduction.

Small Business

Small business was believed to be suffering from excessive taxation, according to the editorial opinion of three provincial papers -- GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 8 April), JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 10 April), and SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 9 April). The Gifu journal complained that "current rates were based on blackmarket calculations," and, paradoxically, "small business is forced to resort" to illegal transactions in order to obtain revenue for tax obligations. JOMO SHIMBUN also maintained that "assessments were based on blackmarket standards." The writer alleged that many bankruptcies among small establishments were precipitated by burdensome tax obligations. Meantime, BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 7 April) called upon the Government to lend assistance to the development of small and medium-scale industries, which were considered essential to the peace and prosperity of the nation.

Economic Controls

A KOCHI NIPPO editorial (Kochi, 11 April) expressed a desire for the removal of economic controls at the earliest possible time. The journal declared: "We are desirous of establishing a free economy through which commodities of high quality will be produced in abundance at low costs. We hope that along with the introduction of foreign capital and increased production, a free economy will be instituted as early as possible. The fundamental step in that direction may be the lifting of the price controls which have paralyzed private enterprise." Similarly, BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 9 April) demanded the expeditious restoration of free enterprise, without which the stabilization of the national economy assertedly could not be accomplished.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Fears that an agricultural panic would hit Japan as a result of improving food conditions elsewhere in the world again were voiced by prefectural editors. TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 8 April), for example, believed that with such heavy-producing countries as the US, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and the USSR stepping up their food output through extensive mechanized farming systems, an agricultural crisis in Japan would be "inevitable." If Japan, with its "primitive and expensive farming methods," should be flooded with imported food, its agricultural economy "will be easily crushed," according to the writer. On the other hand, as far as consumers were concerned, an abundant food supply would be beneficial, for it would "tend to lower prices."

YAMANASHI JIJI SHIMBUN (Kofu, 8 April) was of the opinion that industrialization of farm villages would be one of the "remedies for the impending crisis." The writer opposed investments by capitalists, however, because the "aim of industrialization should be solely to strengthen the economic security of the villagers." Farmers should not find it difficult to raise the necessary funds, the paper felt, but there was danger that they would not "secure superior technical equipment." In planning their program farm leaders must take a long view and consider at all times the welfare of the farmers as a whole, concluded the writer.

On the other hand, SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 6 April) contended that fears of a panic were unfounded. By losing all overseas possessions, Japan would be unable to overcome its food shortage for "years to come," according to the editorialist. Furthermore, it was said to be impossible to import food in such large quantities as to affect domestic prices drastically. On the contrary, a slump in prices should be welcomed, the writer maintained, because it would "indicate a return to normalcy." In addition, the journal believed that the introduction of foreign capital would be a deterrent to a crisis, for it would enable Japanese farmers to secure modern equipment and thereby increase their productive capacity.

Food Production Program

Greater support for the farmers' efforts to meet their 1948 production quotas was urged by prefectural journals. TOKAI SHIMBUN (Okazaki, 6 April) said that the burden of alleviating the nation's food problem should not be placed on farmers alone, but that non-farmers also must increase their output to contribute to the over-all production of foodstuffs. KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 7 April) stressed that the proposed 10-percent increase in production would be difficult to attain unless villagers were given more tangible assistance by government officials. Desk plans assertedly were impractical if they were not effectuated and if they did not apply to the actual conditions of specific areas. Therefore, it is urgent, the writer insisted, that the program be administered by agricultural authorities thoroughly familiar with the local situation. The new pre-planting allocation system was considered by SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 10 April) to be "rational" since it reportedly would aid honest farmers who would be able to sell their surplus rice and sweet potatoes to the Government at increased prices. "This is progress," the writer claimed, for it marks a "stepping stone toward a free economy." However, production will not "develop smoothly," the journal cautioned, unless allotments are made reasonably and accurately.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 16 April 1948 No. 229

Reconstruction of the Japanese economy with the prospective aid of foreign capital was the dominating topic discussed in editorial columns of a large number of prefectural journals. As continued emphasis was placed upon the nation's demonstration of initiative to warrant financial assistance from overseas, increasing criticism of Cabinet policy became evident. For example, NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 3 April) declared that "if the Government relies only upon financial aid from abroad, without manifesting an earnest desire to solve internal problems," foreign capital will not be made available for rehabilitation. MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 5 April) proposed five prerequisites for the introduction of foreign capital: 1) security of investments; 2) workers' stabilized livelihood; 3) "democratization of enterprises"; 4) increase of productivity to the international level, and 5) "drastic renovation of production techniques." The responsibility of management for harmonious labor relations was stressed particularly.

Labor's Role in Reconstruction

Prefectural editors leveled criticism at the "lack of responsibility" of both the Government and the unions in the recent civil service workers' strike, and urged immediate settlement to pave the way for the introduction of foreign capital. Most journals deplored the necessity for SCAP intervention in the dispute, and called for sober reflection by both sides to avert similar conflicts in the future. SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 6 April) was of the opinion that the unions "erred on the side of haste," and counted too heavily on their organized power instead of resorting to negotiations. Doubting that the workers' attitude was properly befitting of civil servants, the writer believed that while the unions' economic demands may have won public sympathy, their tactics lacked general support. Workers were cautioned to consider the domestic situation carefully before asserting the right to strike. But the Government's attitude also was attacked by the journal, which charged that alleged failure to act positively had disappointed the public. Hope was voiced by GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 31 March) that the Administration would not attempt to force a "high-handed settlement" on the strength of the SCAP memorandum, and thus irritate the unions further.

Similarly, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 31 March) thought the Administration could not escape the charge of incompetency, and felt that the Government, encouraged by the railway workers' acceptance of the 2,920-yen wage base, was trying to oppress its striking employees by "force of public opinion." If Premier Ashida had earnestly established a sound labor policy, he could have averted the strikes, according to the editorialist. On the other hand, the writer believed that if workers continued to abuse the right to strike, "they will dig their own graves." To avoid future disputes, the journal recommended development of "more proficiency in collective bargaining negotiations and strengthening of labor committees to establish their authority."

HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 3 April) and AKITA SAKIGAKE SHIMBUN (Akita, 3 April) urged the Government and the unions to "reconsider their conduct." The former journal condemned the Administration for its "betrayal of sincerity," and strongly disapproved of any attempt to squash the labor movement. For their part, unions were asked not to resort to strikes thoughtlessly as means of realizing demands. Labor stability, according to the writer, is essential not only for the introduction of US aid but also for setting the date for its application. In a similar vein, the Akita editor suggested that both sides "take a wide view of the objective conditions" to enable Japan to prepare for the utilization of foreign assistance. KITA NIPPON SHIMBUN (Toyama, 3 April) called on workers to examine themselves more closely to determine why the public did not support them and "to set the limits of labor action."

YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 6 April) queried whether "a labor-capital truce" was possible, and claimed that work stoppages were the main deterrent to contemplated US assistance. "As long as promotion of the public interest is demanded of labor, the same must be required of capital," the editorial maintained. Criticism of Government labor policy was expressed by TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 3 April) to the effect that the Administration was using public sentiment in favor of foreign investments as a lever to suppress the struggle of "the laboring classes" for improved conditions. In contrast, NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 5 April) called upon "labor leaders" to collaborate with Government efforts to secure foreign capital. Meanwhile, SHIN EHIME SHIMBUN (Imaharu, 3 April) suggested as preparatory measures for credit extended from overseas that corporation taxes be reduced, a standard exchange rate be established, and mounting inflation be checked.

Warning Against Communism

SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 5 April) was of the opinion that "extreme leftist elements were active in the strikes." Unfortunately, many members were obliged to support the action of their union even though it was "embarrassing and against their will," the writer observed. YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 2 April) also told workers not to be misled, and asked them to unite constructively in order to rebuild Japan's economy. In making the choice between democracy and communism, workers were admonished against choosing the latter. The ideal and theory of communism can be easily understood, the paper declared, but the "Soviet interpretation is too uncivilized and sometimes inhumane." KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 5 April) deplored the alleged tendency among laborers to be controlled by the "political machinations of left-wingers who are taking advantage of the workers' ignorance of politics." The editorialist felt, however, that this trend was temporary, and that when the workers assert their rights after becoming accustomed to their emancipated status, the situation will change. Therefore, the paper opposed any Government attempt to revise existing laws aimed at restricting the actions of labor leaders. If the Administration policy becomes "oppressive and unduly disciplinary," the writer feared that the workers' spirit of enterprise "might turn reactionary." Furthermore, it was felt that the actions of left-wingers could not be suppressed no matter how strongly efforts are made to check them.

Draper Mission

Several journals attached considerable significance to the visit of the Draper Mission. In a representative editorial, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 29 March) thought that the Mission was of "epoch-making importance" and heralded "a turning-point in the Japanese economy." A few papers, however, cautioned against the presumption that American aid would be forthcoming immediately and in large sums. In this respect, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 6 April) reminded readers that the "$760 million aid fund has not yet been authorized, and the Strike Commission's reparations program may not be completely realized at one time."

OCCUPATION

Release on 31 March of General MacArthur's recommendation to the Secretary of the Army regarding removal of certain restraints on Japan prior to the conclusion of a peace treaty brought comment from at least twelve prefectural papers during the first week of April. The significance of SCAP's proposals to remove certain restrictions on trade and commerce, and to permit travel abroad, and the assertion of America's responsibilities toward Japan, was recognized by writers who saw the SCAP recommendations, together with the Strike Report and statements by the Draper Mission, as constituting a trend toward speedier rehabilitation. In this connection, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 2 April) recalled Undersecretary of the Army Draper's observation that aid to Japan must be extended from several points of view, and remarked that promotion of Japan's self-sufficiency is not based on "simple motives and purposes" but is "founded on humanism and is endorsed by the spirit of tolerance."

Most journals concentrated their commentaries on the need for Japanese initiative in settling internal problems. EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 2 April) called for "self-settlement of domestic issues"; TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 2 April) asserted that "success of Japan's recovery hinges upon the self-consciousness of the Japanese people," and NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 2 April) remarked that the SCAP recommendations cited so many examples of successful efforts "that we feel rather abashed," insisted that Japanese must consider whether they are sufficiently well-qualified to "be favored with these generous measures and plans," and urged greater efforts on the part of the people as a whole.

American policy now calls upon Japan to play a part in preventing the spread of communism, KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 3 April) believed, and added that "before everything, it is necessary for the Japanese to extend their field of vision and ascertain Japan's position in the world."

FOREIGN

Enactment of the foreign aid bill and President Truman's call for resumption of the draft were regarded by prefectural commentators as "logical" US moves to check the expansion of communism, but readers were cautioned not to regard such developments as making war inevitable. There was general agreement with the belief of NAGASAKI MINYU (Nagasaki, 5 April) that such thinking was "a hasty conclusion, typical of the Japanese." It was the writer's opinion that war was unlikely because "the real object of America's preparations is the preservation of peace," and, moreover, Premier Stalin was considered "a practical statesman who is not apt to plunge into war recklessly." A similar view was expressed by CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 6 April), which maintained that the intent of the Marshall Plan had been changed in the last nine months from one of "defense against totalitarianism to economic rehabilitation." It was indicated that Congressional approval of the Plan had created conditions which would strengthen forces working against warfare. American aid itself was regarded as insufficient to guarantee peace, however, because in addition "there must be cooperation among the various nations of Western Europe."

CULTURE

Prospects of Japanese participation in international cultural and scientific groups were discussed in YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 5 April) and SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN (Shizuoka, 5 April), while other prefectural papers considered the level of culture in rural areas and the enlargement of public libraries. Favorable economic conditions in farming areas "are accompanied by elevation of rural culture," SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (2 April) thought, but like NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 5 April) believed that efforts should be made to raise the cultural level in rural areas to that of urban regions. Farmers' unions, labor unions, and youth associations should take a hand in eliminating "feudalistic ideas" among farm groups, and should stimulate cultural interests on a plane familiar to rural populations, the Suwa paper observed.

WELFARE

Several prefectural newspapers joined in warnings that "conscientious and devoted" workers must be in charge of administering the new Child Welfare Law, if this legislative measure to control juvenile delinquency and assure the nation "a healthy population for the future" is to have full effect. In considering implementation of the Law (promulgated early this month), editors cautioned against a "national tendency" toward formalism in respect to such matters as child welfare, and emphasized a past inclination toward "faith in mere paper plans." The journals agreed that child welfare should not be only the responsibility of a government agency, and said that the public itself must assume a large measure of the task of properly guiding the nation's youth.

Representative comment was contained in a GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 3 April) editorial. "We cannot say that this excellent law by itself serves as protection to children," the editorial held, "nor can child welfare be left entirely in the hands of authorities. It is of utmost importance for the people at large to be fully acquainted with the spirit (of the law) and be prepared to protect all children." This public consciousness, added OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 1 April), would result naturally in a revaluation of children's role in society and "limitless potential value" to the nation. Such a revaluation, added NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 20 March), would bring about "long-needed changes in schooling methods." At present, said the editor, teachers "neglect either to train personalities or to guide students into desirable fields."

Three journals were especially insistent that social workers of the "broadest possible outlook" be selected to administer the Child Welfare Law. NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 1 April), for example, expressed fear that welfare offices were "still bureaucratic," while KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 3 April) attributed "chronic desertions" from welfare homes to the "lack of love for children" among officials. This journal's charge that juvenile delinquency was often the result of parental delinquency was echoed by TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 2 April), which found that 70 percent of children arrested for thievery were of good families. As parents themselves are hard-pressed, the editor concluded, the "success or failure of this law depends on the character of those engaged in its administration."

Welfare Administration

Administration of the national welfare program as a whole was considered by HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 30 March) and CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 5 April). The first-named paper said that repatriates, especially, have increased the social workers' responsibility "enormously," and called for a stream-lined, adequately-financed program to overcome the social evils attending a "repatriate population." The Nagoya journal, too, called for sufficient funds and personnel to assist repatriates.

POLICE

Inauguration of the new police system evoked hopes among prefectural editors that it would be free of the evils of the former system, particularly the influence of political bosses. KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 25 March) declared that the dignity of the police could not be maintained unless all attempts of bosses to gain power were warded off. Contending that the success of the system depends on the caliber of the Public Safety Committees, FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 30 March) emphasized that the people must watch closely lest the activities of the committees be influenced by politicians.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

APR 20 1948

PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 14 April 1948 No. 228

LABOR

Announcement of the SCAP memorandum defining the threatened nation-wide "coordinated work stoppage" of the All-Japan Communication Workers Union as a violation of existing Occupation policy on general strikes (see Press Analyses Nos. 742 et seq) evoked from prefectural editorialists virtually unanimous expressions of regret that an "internal"problem again had to be settled by Allied direction Like SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 31 March), most journals regarded the move as not unexpected, and agreed that scheduled regional strikes were, in essence, little different in economic and social effects from the general strike prohibited last year. Although the food situation was thought to be somewhat improved, the present state of Japanese economy was believed by OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 31 March) to warrant "no optimism" and to be unable to stand the stress of continued walkouts by labor.

Interpretations of "responsibility" in the new situation varied, but the bulk of criticism seemed to be directed at the Government. KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 31 March) called attention to the fact that the memorandum had been issued to the Government and not to the union (in contrast with last year's procedure) and concluded that the Administration thus should bear the brunt of inducing a settlement with the workers. "It hardly can be denied that the Government, taking advantage of friction between the union and the masses, is attempting to find refuge in the shelter of public opinion," the writer said.

Characterizing the Administration conduct of negotiations as derived from a "sneaking, contemptible, and irresponsible attitude," SHIN NIPPON SHIMBUN (Fukuoka, 31 March) advised the authorities to concentrate on "taking concrete steps" to prevent walkouts rather than merely emphasizing that "strike actions should be banned under the current circumstances." Both SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 30 March) and NIIGATA NIPPON (Niigata, 31 March) believed it beyond argument that the Government had made no effort to establish a "justifiable wage policy," although the last-mentioned journal also advised the unions to find some criterion by which to judge "what is attainable and what is not" in the objective situation.

CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 1 April) found the Administration policy "bureaucratic and indicative of lack of Cabinet unity," while KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 31 March) dubbed it "impotent." In the same vein, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 31 March) scored the Administration for having left the situation "to take its own course," when the livelihood of the workers had reached "rockbottom." Neither public inconvenience nor the possible effect on chances of foreign economic aid were "justifiable pretexts" for preventing strike action, when at the same time, the Government does not strive "sincerely" to reach a solution of workers' demands, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 31 March) said.

Although prefectural writers were of the opinion that difference must and could be settled by collective bargaining, and a number suggested Central Labor Committee or Diet intervention if the deadlock between the unions and the Government continued unbroken, they were careful to point out that issuance of the SCAP memorandum by no means solved the problem. SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 30 March) apparently believed that continued "oppression of the labor offensive" would be of no avail unless the inflation from which their livelihood difficulties stem is attacked with "valor and sympathy" by the Government.

Inconsistencies in the wage-price policy of the Ashida Cabinet were pointed out in this connection by HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 31 March) and SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 31 March), the last-mentioned journal calling attention to the difference between the average industrial wage as computed in the case of the electrical workers and in the case of general public employees as a serious menace to the stability of the wage level under the new price system anticipated in April. TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 31 March), NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 31 March), KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 1 April), and AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 30 March) discussed the virtue of efficiency vs. livelihood wage systems, and were generally agreed that while the former was more "rational," it could not be accepted when the productive capacity of the nation was incapable of assuring a "minimum standard" of living to the workers.

KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 31 March), AKITA SAKIGAKE (31 March), SHIN HOKKAI (30 March), and SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN (Shizuoka, 29 March) enforced their plea for an end to labor unrest on the ground that much-needed foreign aid may not be secured until relations between Japanese labor and capital become more stable. Referring to the possibilities of US economic assistance, the first-mentioned journal said: "When we think of our escape from the widespread death by starvation which might have resulted from our defeat, we should bear up under the present torture (of economic shortages) for a time." AKITA SAKIGAKE, widening Japan's responsibility to that of "subscribing to the economic rehabilitation of East Asia," cautioned that the amount of outside assistance was dependent upon "actual proof of the efforts and diligence" of the Japanese people, a development considered not likely to ensue if the economy is torn by strikes.

ECONOMY

Increasing interest in reported prospects of American financial aid was indicated in prefectural discussion of the significance of the Strike Report and Draper Mission recommendations. Although provincial journals acknowledged that national economic recovery would require foreign credit and investments, writers generally emphasized the point that such assistance would not be a panacea, and that Japan's ultimate reconstruction depended upon her own resourcefulness in the solution of domestic problems. In a typical commentary, KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 28 March) declared that "American aid is a stopgap measure to help Japan stand on her own feet. Currency stabilization and improved labor relations are not necessarily achieved simultaneously with the introduction of foreign credit. Establishment of an independent economy and a peaceful country may be realized only through the initiative and diligence of both the Government and the people."

Similarly, SHIN HOKKAI SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 26 March) believed that availability of American aid would be contingent upon a demonstration of the people's industriousness. "We must at first help ourselves as Mr. Draper suggested," the editorial declared, "by resuming overseas trade, balancing the budget, and increasing production of staple foodstuffs." HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 30 March) thought that "the reconstruction of the Japanese economy should be attained through the autonomous efforts of the people themselves, with dependence upon foreign aid limited to most serious deficiencies." Meanwhile, CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 24 March) complained that "employees' diligence" was being discouraged by allegedly unethical trade union practices. The writer objected to newspaper-reading, chatting, smoking, and tea-drinking during business hours. "Even worse," in the writer's opinion "workers carry on union activities on company time . . . and in some cases actually make campaign trips at a firm's expense."

HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 26 March) also charged organized labor with responsibility for economic reconstruction. Demanding prompt settlement of public workers' strikes, the journal claimed that "restoration of industrial peace was the paramount prerequisite for the reception of foreign capital." On the other hand, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 26 March) emphasized that "fundamental Government policy" should provide for workers' economic security. "An efficiency wage system, drastic reduction of earned income taxes, and discontinuance of progressive taxation of wages" were proposed.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Most prefectural editors expressed confidence that the program to increase food production by 10 percent would succeed, but felt that the farmers' task could be alleviated if more cooperation and assistance was forthcoming from central government and prefectural authorities. KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 31 March) urged the adjustment of tax rates which were said to be "so heavy that farmers are becoming discouraged in their productive efforts." The writer also scored the "lack of enthusiasm" among prefectural officials who were said to possess an equally heavy responsibility toward the realization of the production goal. The reportedly insufficient number of authorities to fix allocations, the editorialist feared, will result in "inaccurate estimates and unfair assignment of quotas." Apprehension over incorrect allocations also was voiced by OITA GODO SHIMBUN (Oita, 1 April), which thought that the pre-planting method of setting quotas might lead to inaccuracies and injustices. The editorialist hoped that officials would exercise utmost care so that unfair quotas "would not force farmers to quit cultivation."

CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 28 March) was of the opinion that agricultural authorities should assist villagers in obtaining knowledge of modern farming methods. The responsibility of the Government does not end with the "formulation of desk plans," the writer insisted. Unless Administrative officials aid farmers to improve their technique and generally "to raise their intelligence level," the paper feared that quotas for 1948 might not be attained. Similarly, TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 31 March) urged the application of more up-to-date farming methods. It is this utilization of modern agricultural knowledge which reportedly accounts for the great differences in output of farms operated under the same conditions of soil fertility and labor supply, according to the writer.

Agricultural Cooperatives

Comment on agricultural cooperative unions was noted in YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 31 March) and FUKUSHIMA MINYU SHIMBUN (Fukushima, 1 April). The former journal charged that the "unnecessary interference" of prefectural authorities in the establishment of cooperatives was retarding the movement in many areas. The farmers' free will must be respected at all times, the editorialist insisted, and they must be permitted to settle "all internal problems." The paper also criticized the influence of former agricultural association leaders, who reportedly were infiltrating the unions "under the guidance" of prefectural officials. If the independence of farmers should be disturbed by the will of authorities, the democratization of rural villages would be "far from realization," concluded the writer. FUKUSHIMA MINYU SHIMBUN thought that clarification of the aims of cooperatives was needed to stimulate their organization. To announce merely that the purpose of unions was to democratize farming villages was "too vague," the editorialist maintained. Rather, farmers must be shown that the cooperative system is a necessity in Japan where small-scale farming prevails, and that the unions make possible such benefits as "lowered production costs, saving of labor, and availability of modern equipment."

EDUCATION

Alleged decrease in the quality as well as the number of teachers was deplored by several prefectural papers which noted the retirement of competent educators because of inadequate compensation. Further, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 28 March) reported that there had been only eight applicants for admission to the local normal school, which was equipped to enroll 120 new students. While admitting the difficulties under which teachers operate, however, neither OITA GODO (Oita, 29 March) nor EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 27 March) completely absolved teachers from responsibility, and the latter paper urged that instructors should not accept defeat in the struggle for better living conditions, but should "fight honorably to improve their treatment." At the same time the Oita journal noted that while improvement of teachers' working conditions was, of course, essential, a spirit of inquiry and re-education were equally important for the success of the new educational system.

The issue of equipment for the new schools and colleges also was discussed by prefectural writers, among them an editorialist in KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 31 March) who regarded "completeness of study equipment" as the most pressing need to ease the research problems of low-salaried professors and students. A contrasting opinion was voiced by SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 29 March), which believed that under the present economic crisis "it is too selfish to expect perfection of educational equipment alone," and added that "while many people have no houses to live in, it is inconceivable that grand school buildings (should be erected)." Educators were criticized for saying that they cannot teach without "perfect educational conditions," and the writer suggested that solutions might be found if problems were approached reasonably.

POLITICS

The absence of significant political developments in urban areas was reflected in the rural press, as prefectural preoccupation with labor and economic issues restricted editorial comment to passing consideration of Premier Ashida's administrative speech and the new Democratic-Liberal Party. Even in the Prime Minister's address to the Diet -- which continued as the largest single topic of editorials -- industrial and livelihood questions bulked large, and only in accompanying editorials were political considerations introduced.

Premier's Statement

Representative comment of canvassed journals continued to register dissatisfaction with the "vagueness" of the Prime Minister's policy statement before the Diet. For example, YUKAN SHINSHU (Nagano, 26 March) found that the address "in covering every sphere of national activity had failed to establish clarity and emphasis." Especially, the writer charged, had the statement fallen short of enunciating a concrete labor policy -- an indication, he continued, that the Socialist influence in the Coalition was less than people had been led to believe. Considering Ashida's expressed hopes for foreign financial aid, the editorialist stated that the Cabinet had neglected to announce how this aid would be applied with regard to the direct benefit of the people.

The writer's summons to "reconstruct our nation without complete reliance on foreign assistance" was echoed by SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (Takamatsu, 21 March), which also demanded some kind of assurance that such aid would be "utilized for democratic reconstruction, with its goal the elevation of the economic standard of the working people." Ashida's allusion to Japan as a "peace force" in the world also was scored by OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 30 March) as "lacking in concreteness." The Premier's weakness in this connection, said the editorialist, revealed he "is not yet convinced of how expensive war is, and how inexpensive peace is."

In the opinion of TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 28 March), the program envisioned by the administrative address was built on the "weak foundation" of the tri-party policy agreement, and the writer felt that cracks in the base already were appearing. Pointing to basic ideological disagreements between the Democrats and the Socialists, the editorialist predicted that bi-party antipathies would increase over such issues as suspension of war bond interest payments, administrative adjustment, and suggested hikes in freight rates. Still another threat to the Coalition lay within the Democratic Party itself, the article maintained, in the form of a strong conservative wing opposed to further concessions to the Socialists.

Conservative Parties

Renewed charges that the Democratic-Liberals were concerned first with capturing political power -- rather than formulating their policies for public study -- appeared in SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 26 March). The Democratic-Liberals now form the largest party in the lower house, the commentator said, but as yet they show none of the "realism or practicality" of either the Democrats or the Republicans in America, or the Conservatives in England. Dismissing a contention attributed to President Yoshida of the Democratic-Liberals -- that there is no room for a compromise party between the radicals and conservatives -- the editorialist said that only by broadening the base of both camps can a true, two-party system emerge in Japan.

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APR 12 1948

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 9 April 1948 No. 227

ECONOMY

Arrival of the Draper Mission to investigate the progress of economic rehabilitation and the advisability of "converting Japan into the factory of the Orient" was greeted by prefectural editorials with expressions of renewed hope for American financial assistance. The rural press, nonetheless, stressed the point that foreign aid presupposed a demonstration by the Japanese of efforts toward economic recovery.

EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 26 March) noted that US aid was contingent upon attainment of economic stability, and TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 28 March) believed that the Draper group would be instrumental in the formulation of proposals which would provide Japan with a unique opportunity for national reconstruction. In preparation for anticipated assistance, the latter journal urged increased production and control of inflation. The Government was asked "to proceed with a long-term economic program" exclusively on the basis of domestic resources, and to render positive guidance toward establishment of a balanced budget, development of labor-capital cooperation, and judicious implementation of the Economic Deconcentration Act.

Belief that economic recovery would be impossible without the introduction of foreign capital was expressed in a SHIN EHIME SHIMBUN editorial (Imaharu, 28 March). In order to attract prospective investors, the writer felt that increased productivity was necessary, and, consequently, labor unrest was considered "the most urgent issue at this time." CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 28 March) also recognized that labor-management discord would discourage foreign investment, but the writer demanded "a sound labor policy" in lieu of the alleged tendency to appease capital. Meanwhile, several editorials attributed political significance to the Mission, asserting that its purpose was to promote Japan's economic independence as a bulwark against the expansion of Soviet power.

Taxation

Appeals for prompt and complete tax payments continued to appear in rural papers as the 1947 fiscal year drew to a close. SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 25 March) declared that "the primary source of dissatisfaction with taxes is asserted over-assessment," but allegedly excessive tax bills, according to the writer, were subject to re-examination. Reported complaints about high rates also were held to be "incomprehensible," in view of public indifference to tax questions during the period of Diet deliberations.

KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 19 March) pleaded for "tax payments as a minimum requirement of national recovery," and the editorial thought that Occupation authorities would regard this matter as a barometer of the Japanese people's sincere desire to establish a democratic society. Similarly, SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 23 March) declared that complete collection of prefectural levies was necessary to assure "realization of a peaceful, democratic nation."

POLITICS

Continued comment on the Prime Minister's administrative address found provincial editors more evenly divided in support and criticism of the Ashida Diet speech on economic recovery, with about half the writers stating that the Premier had successfully sketched the outline of Japan's industrial comeback. But although editorial hostility was by no means so widespread as in initial reaction, both foes and supporters agreed that Ashida had erred in not coming to grips with the details of economic reconstruction. Little change was detected in the opposition's approach, as discontented editors again described the address as "vague" and "abstract."

Qualified Support Noted

The type of qualified support which Ashida appeared to be winning in rural journals was found in SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 24 March), which, while basically sympathetic, criticized the Premier for not detailing projected measures for labor stabilization and industrial reform. Possessing a program broad enough to attract both "capitalistic businessmen and laborers," the writer felt that the Prime Minister could have increased his strength by detailing these plans. "Unfortunately," concluded the editorial, "he did not, and such terms as 'dignity of labor' and 'social solidarity' remain abstractions in people's minds."

Similarly, TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 22 March) considered the six-point address as "faultless in scope," but handicapped by an absence of "preciseness," while NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 21 March) thought that the promise of a "bright future" suffered from the "dark events of the present." However, charges by these two journals that Ashida had neglected domestic issues were disputed by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 22 March). In the most enthusiastic review, the commentator hailed the "vitality" of the address and praised it for considering domestic administration in relation to world economy.

Insufficiencies Charged

Critics continued to oppose the address as typical of what NIPPONKAI (Tottori, 23 March) assailed as "the weak, abstract policy of a Cabinet formed out of a political vacuum." Agreeing, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 21 March) dismissed the policy speech as "laying bare the weak points of a coalition government." The Prime Minister presented only a skeletal outline of economic recovery, the writer complained, leaving "flesh and blood to be added." Echoing these criticisms, OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 22 March) added that the Prime Minister had presented no concrete measures for overcoming inflation or arresting the labor offensive, the fault, it was held, of a coalition of "conflicting desires."

New Party Comment

Two of three editorials commenting on the Democratic-Liberals doubted whether the new Party had changed its "reactionary outlook." Both TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 17 March) and TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 22 March) suspected that the political group was still dominated by the ideology of the old Liberal Party. In this regard, the first-named journal held that the Liberals had "disclosed their continuing faith in old ideas (such as lese-majesty)," and warned that such "traditional spirits as these cannot be depended upon to save the situation." But despite this, the Aomori paper believed that the Democratic-Liberals still would constitute a serious threat to the Coalition.

LABOR

Twenty-seven prefectural editorialists considered the development of the dispute between the Government and its employee unions during the fourth week in March and were unanimous in demanding a return to collective bargaining. Widely expressed was the feeling that the possibilities of negotiation had not been exhausted and both sides were urged to "sincerely" endeavor to avert strikes which would immeasurably inconvenience the general public and obstruct economic recovery. Strike action was characterized as a "last resort" to be used cautiously and circumspectly when all other means failed, and while commentators regarded the unions' demand for wages calculated according to minimum requirements for nourishment with some sympathy, they also pointed out that Japan's economic condition is by no means ideal and advised labor to be more "realistic" in its demands.

Typical was YAMANASHI JIJI's (Kofu, 25 March) emphasis on the prior necessity for increased production. The wage struggle, however "reasonable," must not be carried on endlessly the writer said, "the only normal road is an ordered and controlled negotiation with the Government and the capitalists until the ultimate objective is obtained." KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 24 March) believed the "fundamental principle of democracy" to include the "sharing of responsibility along with the insistence on rights." Measures, on either side, which seek to accomplish selfish ends through the "suffering and sacrifice of the nation by neglect of duty" should be avoided.

Objecting to "disputes for the sake of disputes," HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 27 March) urged "both parties to refrain from resorting to oppression and demonstration in an effort to settle the situation." The only journal to offer a specific solution was CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 26 March), which thought the Government should pay the 2,920-yen base in the same manner as the 1,800-yen base on condition that the workers call off the threatened strike and immediately enter into "peaceful negotiation." A number of journals criticized the Government for "procrastination" and it was generally believed that the political vacuum created by the fall of the Katayama Cabinet and the time lag involved in formation of the new Administration had contributed to labor unrest. OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 26 March) charged the Ashida Cabinet, as well as the Katayama Cabinet, with endeavoring to "reconstruct the national economy through the people's endurance of poverty," and advised that labor efficiency would never be increased by "sermonizing."

The difficulty of obtaining public support when strikes involved public services was stressed by NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 25 March), KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 26 March), and FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 25 March). TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 25 March) doubted whether the unions had promoted access to information enabling the public to support labor's position.

Revision of Labor Legislation

Opposed "in principle" to restricting the "sphere of freedom of the labor movement," KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 22 March) yet cautioned that chronic strikes may be "suicidal" for Japanese labor. SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 27 March), apparently concerned about the same problem, listed the "freedom of combination, negotiation, and strike" as guaranteed by law and opposed only by those who "adhered to feudalism." While admitting that recent labor developments have been "somewhat excessive and unhealthy," the writer believed this to be no reason for "denying the existence of labor unions or rejecting their action." Referring to an Administration denial of any intention of changing labor legislation, YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 23 March), attributed the statement not to Government "goodwill," but to the "social power" of organized labor. The same journal advised continued vigilance on the part of the unions to protect recently acquired rights and privileges.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Prefectural editorials lauded the successful completion of rice delivery, but warned that farmers could not be expected to meet next season's quotas unless the Government and urban consumers exerted greater efforts to supply the farming villages with fertilizer and agricultural equipment. All papers stressed the sacrifices many farmers made to meet their allocations last year, and felt that Administrative promises to distribute production and bonus goods should be fulfilled promptly and adequately in 1948.

Three journals -- NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 24 March), TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 24 March), and YUKAN FUKUNICHI (Fukuoka, 21 March) -- urged Government officials to eliminate discrepancies and injustices in assigning quotas. The first-mentioned paper scored the rich and influential farmers who, allegedly by controlling the village "administrative power," were able to force disproportionately high quotas on poor farmers. Unless the power of wealthy farmers is "entirely removed," the editorialist insisted, the reconstruction of Japan's agricultural economy cannot be realized. TOKAI MAINICHI suggested that accurate surveys be made prior to making allocations because last year farmers who openly declared their acreage for crop assignment "suffered heavily" at the hands of "dishonest farmers with hidden fields," who reportedly were able to obtain low quotas. YUKAN FUKUNICHI thought that a "scientific study" of land was essential because the soil varies in quality in different areas. On the other hand, TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 27 March) felt that farmers should willingly accept new allocations "since they are all based on scientific figures."

NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 20 March) believed that the chief cause of inflation was the shortage of food. If the cost of food increases, prices of other commodities likewise advance, which makes labor disputes "unavoidable" and hence disturbs production, according to the writer. Therefore, although the increased production program will entail great hardships and many sacrifices, farmers were reminded that its success "will have a salutary effect on the nation's rehabilitation." CHUBU NIPPON SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 20 March) asked consumers to refrain from foraging, because this tends to boost food prices, which in turn have "injurious effects on the inflation spiral." Farmers were concerned over the impending change in the price structure, according to GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 23 March), because they will have to purchase commodities under the new level, but will be paid for their rice under the old system.

Agricultural Cooperatives

Farmers were urged by prefectural editors to take greater interest in agricultural cooperatives and endeavor to be "masters of their unions." EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 25 March) declared that although Ehime Prefecture boasts of the largest number of cooperatives in the country, their "make-up is not healthy." Memberships in unions average 200, while paid-in capital per member is only 100 yen, according to the paper. The writer maintained that such "trifling" memberships and funds were due to the farmers' lack of knowledge and enthusiasm, and feared it would cause the movement to end in a "nominal democracy." Farmers assertedly were faced with financial difficulties due to their purchase of materials for spring planting and to their "decreased opportunity to divert products into the blackmarket." Therefore, to improve their situation, farmers were told to place greater reliance in cooperatives, but were cautioned against the influence of former agricultural association officials and the "encroachment of capitalists."

NANKAI TIMES (Uwajima, 23 March) said that contrary to popular belief "times are not good in farming villages," and if farmers expect to withstand the "economic panic which is not far distant" they must cast away "selfish, feudalistic attitudes" and organize cooperatives. "The tendency toward feudalism" among some union leaders also was deplored by AKITA SAKIGAKE SHIMBUN (Akita, 23 March), which contended that unless the members elected their officials with greater discretion cooperatives could not be formed on a sound basis.

WELFARE

Complaints in regard to the housing shortage appeared in several papers, with writers warning that recovery in other fields would be retarded so long as there is an insufficient number of houses. Thus, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 27 March) declared that "there will be no enthusiasm for work until the housing problem is solved," and CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 25 March) maintained that "a moderate amount" of food and clothing, together with adequate housing, was necessary to inspire "the will to produce." Noting the number of persons living in railway stations and public buildings, the last-named paper added that "this way of life is breeding the germs of social evils." To KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 21 March), the solution lay not only in increased construction, but in "making owners of large houses release portions for homeless persons." The editorial proposed "firm measures" against owners of houses which were vacant or were being used as storehouses.

Formation of new public welfare committees also aroused editorial attention in a few journals. Fear that the influence of "bosses" would lessen the committees' effectiveness was expressed by commentators in SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 25 March), SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 23 March), and YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 25 March). Although the method of selecting committee members has been revised, the Imaharu writer argued that even under the new system "persons of influence" were being chosen for the nominating groups, and predicted that the committees would be composed of "the same kind of men." It was believed that a suggestion of the Welfare Ministry -- that half of the committee members should be women -- should be carried out. In another commentary, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 24 March) urged "better treatment" of social workers and the extension of their activities into farming communities.

FOREIGN

Prefectural papers were divided in expressions of pessimism and hope over the direction of world events. Thus, SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 29 March) anticipated that the international situation would attain a "stable balance," and saw the possibility of war as "gradually disappearing"; SHIZUOKA SHIMBUN (Shizuoka, 26 March) felt that it was "dangerous" to expect a third world war. In contrast, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 25 March) continued to see a grave danger of armed conflict; SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 24 March) regarded the world as more clearly divided into two parts, and BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 31 March) expected an increase in the intensity of the cold war. In the face of intensified international stress as indicated by President Truman's speech of 17 March, many prefectural journals urged that the Japanese people adopt an attitude of international awareness.

Japan's Position

Actual effect on Japan of the world split between communism and democracy was evaluated in several journals. American policy toward Japan is affected by US-USSR relations, SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 29 March) believed, but felt that this was not the whole explanation of America's policy of reconstruction for Japan. Somewhat similarly, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 20 March) thought that the American aid program in Japan was stimulated in large part by fear of Communist domination, but the journal urged that -- in combination with American assistance -- the Japanese people make greater efforts for rehabilitation. (Meantime, SHINANO MAINICHI, Nagano, 27 March, noted popular fears that American assistance in Japan might lead to Japan's reduction to the status of a colony, together with the idea said to be held by some Japanese that a third world war would lead to the restoration of Japan's former colonies. Both ideas were condemned by the journal which maintained that reconstruction could not be undertaken without assistance, but required hard work on the part of the Japanese as well.)

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

APR 12 1948

PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 2 April 1948 No. 226

GOVERNMENT

The prefectural press was generally critical of Premier Ashida's administrative address, but -- in contrast with Tokyo papers (Press Analysis No. 735) -- several journals approved the "optimistic tone" of the speech, especially noting the reference to the likelihood of increased foreign financial aid. It was the opinion of most commentators, however, that Ashida had failed to present a realistic program to cope with such pressing problems as inflation and labor unrest.

Representative Comment

Representative of the critical comment, a MIYAKO SHIMBUN editorial (Kyoto, 22 March) was "surprised at the poor content of the address, which makes us realize how impotent the Government is." Although "we wanted to know what practical measures had been prepared to deal with inflation, the labor offensive, and administrative adjustment," the writer saw no indication as to how the Administration intended to realize its goals. SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 22 March) was not only disappointed in the message, but was "skeptical" of the Premier's ability as a politician, and claimed that his speech to the Diet reflected "unpreparedness." The need for foreign funds and for labor-capital cooperation were considered "all too well understood without having to hear them from Dr. Ashida." Similarly, NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 22 March) declared that the invitation of foreign capital "is not a new idea," and insisted that control of inflation was the key to the solution of most of Japan's problems.

Comparison with Katayama Address

Different conclusions were reached by two editorialists who compared the Katayama and Ashida speeches. Although questioning the wisdom of his remarks, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 21 March) contrasted Ashida's "optimism" to the ex-Premier's "pessimism," while ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 22 March) found "no practical policies or originality" in Ashida's address and recalled that the Socialist's talk had been "rich in contents." In another comparison, HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 23 March) predicted difficulties for the new Administration because "it has the spiritual qualities of the Katayama Cabinet and the material qualities of the rightists." To HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 22 March), Ashida's speech was "bright and optimistic" in comparison with Katayama's "sermon and theories." (While virtually all provincial papers were disappointed at the lack of specific measures in the Katayama policy address on 1 July 1947, a majority nevertheless endorsed the Socialist leader's "frankness and sincerity"; Prefectural Press Analysis No. 155.)

Perhaps the most enthusiastic commentary on the Ashida policy outline appeared in GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 22 March), which contended that "Ashida's hope-inspiring words are excellent material for giving the people greater courage." Agreeing with the Prime Minister's appraisal of the nation's problems, the editorialist thought that if domestic issues were met in view of the world situation, "ample reason exists for the Administration's intention to create an epochal turning point in Japan's economic reconstruction." Praise also was forthcoming from HOKURIKU YUKAN (22 March), which considered Ashida's statement "noteworthy and commendable." The Premier's emphasis upon international considerations "deserves rousing applause," in the opinion of YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 22 March), but the journal warned that rehabilitation "must be preceded by the restoration of the people's confidence in the Government."

ECONOMY

Commenting on the new Government wage standard, HYUGA NICHI-NICHI (Miyazaki, 15 March) declared that "without solving the problem of inflation fundamentally, neither stabilization of the cost of living nor industrial rehabilitation could be expected." The journal believed that government workers' unions were "justified in opposing the new wage level," in view of the fact that it assertedly was calculated on the basis of existing commodity prices. Price adjustments were predicted in the near future, as a consequence of which revision of the new 2,920-yen standard would be required -- thus setting in motion another increase of wages and prices. "As long as such a situation continues," the writer believed that "it is only a matter of time before inflation reaches a most critical stage."

A TOYAMA SHIMBUN editorial (Takaoka, 15 March) denounced the prevailing wage system as "feudalistic and irrational." The writer pointed out that only a small portion of employees' earnings represents basic wages, and that family allowances and temporary livelihood grants constituted the major part of payments. Consequently, the wage system was said to induce workers' dependency upon employers, as well as neglect recognition of individual capacities. Therefore, the journal proposed that -- through the medium of collective bargaining -- a system be established which would provide "efficiency wages" and a sliding scale corresponding with cost-of-living fluctuations. In addition, a minimum wage to assure a daily standard of 2,400 calories was deemed imperative.

Foreign Capital

A measure of economic recovery could be attained -- "even though hopes for an early peace conference are fading" -- if only foreign capital were made available, FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 17 March) commented. However, prospects concerning the introduction of foreign capital and the resumption of international trade did not warrant optimism, in the writer's opinion. As preparations for anticipated loans, the editorial urged achievement of the current year's coal quota of 26 million tons, and greater output of domestic products generally.

In contrast, SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 17 March) was extremely hopeful of obtaining foreign assistance, and pointed to financial aid under consideration of the US Congress. The Saga paper noted "reports indicating that America's economic policy toward Japan gradually was becoming lenient, (and) that positive steps were being taken in the direction of fostering the nation's economic independence." Nevertheless, the commentator admonished that "Japan is still in the throes of inflation and under-production. If we do not do all we can to help ourselves under these conditions, prosperity will not materialize." Meanwhile, CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 18 March) asserted that -- to promote prospective foreign investors' confidence in Japanese industry -- rationalization of enterprises was desirable.

Reparations

The Strike Report drew favorable reactions from KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 18 March) and HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 15 March). The former asserted that projected reduction of reparations demands appeared to have resulted from the view that an economically weak Japan would be a burden on American taxpayers. "Reconstruction and stabilization of the nation's economy" were believed to be impossible without US aid. Industrialists were urged to plan for the resumption of foreign trade, and the cooperation of working classes was sought.

The Kanazawa journal contrasted the Strike Report with the Pauley reparations recommendations. The latter -- assertedly seeking the reduction of Japan's heavy industries to the 1931 level -- were criticized on the ground that "the dismantling of basic industries, and the return to an agrarian economy, might lead to the revival of feudalism." On the other hand, the Strike Report was commended for acknowledging that "Japan needs increased productive capacity," which would "benefit the Far East in general and alleviate the world commodity shortage."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Editorial consideration of the agricultural cooperative movement appeared in three journals, which expressed dissatisfaction over the progress being made in establishment of the unions. Although Chiba Prefecture has more cooperatives than any other prefecture, CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 16 March) doubted if the "principles of unions were thoroughly understood." Because village bosses are influential, the editorialist feared that formation of unions had not been democratic, but involved only a "change in name." The paper urged farmers to utilize to the utmost all the facilities of the organization, and cautioned them to guard against heavy investments in village industries by capitalists who may seek to exploit rural districts.

Similarly, YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 18 March) scored the influence of village bosses and admonished farmers to supervise carefully the transfer of assets of former agricultural associations -- totaling 30 billion yen -- to the new cooperative unions. HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 17 March) was of the opinion that the cooperative was the only organization by which farmers could become "independent of city merchants," and speed up their slow progress toward democratization. If farmers are to raise their productive power, their method of management must be modernized, the writer pointed out. They must abandon their "isolationism" and pool their capital resources in order to secure better equipment and improve marketing methods.

Distribution of Vegetables

Concern over the distribution of fresh vegetables was voiced on 16 March by two Morioka papers, IWATE SHIMPO and SHIN IWATE NIPPO which described the situation as "unsatisfactory," and by HOKKAI TIMES, which said it was "random." The first-named journal attributed the "indescribably acute" shortage of vegetables to the "failure of control policies." It is not enough to strengthen vigilance over blackmarket operations, the writer maintained, unless parallel efforts are made to tighten controls over distribution. Declaring that the shortage is forcing the purchase of vegetables through illegal channels, SHIN IWATE NIPPO urged stricter control by government officials over perishable greens, as well as fish, which was said to be 30 to 50 percent more scarce for the first three months of 1948 than for the comparable period last year. HOKKAI TIMES criticized the "irresponsible" distribution in Hokkaido where delivery of vegetables has fallen much below the required amount, particularly for radishes, carrots, and cabbages. The writer scored control officials for their indifference, pointing out that vegetables reach wholesalers in quantities ordered, but thereafter are "lost" in the process of distribution.

POLICE

CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 17 March), noting the increase of crimes stemming from "economic instability," contended that unless sufficient funds are provided the new police system cannot be expected to function effectively. Therefore, the editorialist suggested a "special form of taxes or sale of public bonds" to raise the necessary funds, and added that though this may be burdensome in some respects, the people in the long run would be compensated through "elimination of social evils."

NAGASAKI NICHINICHI (Nagasaki, 13 March) carried a commentary on the inauguration of the new police system by a professor of law at Tokyo University, in which he stated that the reformation of the police was one of the "most important steps to democratic revolution," and that the nation's "democratic foundation depended upon its success or failure." The writer approved the system's intention to "prevent police from abusing their power," and hoped that police activities would be limited strictly within the "sphere of their original duty" without interference in personal rights. Decentralization of the police was "inevitable" under the new Japanese Constitution since the police had occupied a position in the life of people in "excess of their original mission," the writer believed.

LABOR

Prefectural papers deplored the increasing number of strikes by government workers and urged speedy settlement in order to accelerate the nation's economic recovery. Most journals thought that demands by unions were "not unreasonable," but felt that since they allegedly lacked adequate public support they should be "more prudent." Some writers held the Ashida Cabinet responsible for the unstable labor situation, and charged that the Administration lacked "concrete labor policy."

While believing the 2,920-yen wage scale insufficient, SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 18 March) considered the workers' position weak because the "objective of the projected strikes is too vague" for the people to comprehend, and because the Government assertedly had made the public believe its wage offer was "democratic." The writer suggested that labor might be appeased to a certain extent if income taxes were reduced and the distribution of necessities increased. FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 21 March) and OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 21 March) said the workers' "legal right to strike" should be used only as a last resort, and reminded unions that "amicable means to settle disputes still remain." The Fukui writer cautioned that the right to strike does not "authorize them to act against public welfare." Similarly, TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 20 March) explained that the position of unions was "disadvantageous" due to the people's "lack of fair understanding of labor tactics," which causes them to attribute inconveniences of strikes solely to unions.

CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 20 March) and SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 22 March) were critical of the Administration's alleged lack of preparation to meet labor problems. The first-mentioned journal said that if the goal of economic rehabilitation is to be achieved, the Government must evolve "more concrete measures than those included in the tri-party policy agreement." The SHIN OSAKA editorialist requested that Labor Minister Kato "act with credit to the Cabinet," but at the same time the journal urged workers to "consider prudently the objective circumstances which confront the nation and conduct themselves accordingly."

KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 23 March) was of the opinion that the chief cause of the present "critical situation" was high prices, and called upon the Government to do its utmost to check inflation. Referring to the communications workers' strike moves, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 19 March) believed that the differences were due largely to the "inefficiency and incompetency of the Katayama and Ashida Cabinets." However, the writer pleaded with union members to reconsider their stand because regional strikes "are not in accord with public opinion."

FOREIGN

President Truman's Congressional address on 17 March was interpreted by MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 20 March) as indicating a firm determination to prevent the continued spread of communism, while CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 20 March) saw the message as the commencement of "a new stage of the cold war." YUKAN MIE SHIMBUN (Yokkaichi, 18 March) believed it "necessary that the Japanese consider realistically and dispassionately what attitude they should adopt regarding the cold war," and charged Communists with "taking advantage" of social unrest caused by commodity shortages and economic hardships. "This is why communism has spread throughout various areas of the world," the writer explained, urging serious consideration of "these important questions: Who saved the Japanese from hunger and confusion? What nation will be a friend of long standing? What political system will best assure freedom of thought and religion, and the protection of human rights?"

KOCHI NIPPO SHIMBUN (Kochi, 21 March) applauded the Truman speech as "a remarkable statement . . . an epoch-making event," because it established "the basis of an independent foreign policy." Hitherto, US policy, in the writer's opinion, had operated principally through the medium of the United Nations. FUKUSHIMA MINYU SHIMBUN (Fukushima, 19 March) also attached pivotal significance to the Presidential pronouncement, declaring that "it has become clear that US diplomacy can permit no further expansion of Soviet power."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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Civil Information and Education Section
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 31 March 1948 No. 225

FOREIGN

Comments on US relations with the USSR appeared in papers published throughout Japan. While divided in evaluations of the likelihood of a war between the two great powers, most journals expressed hopes that the present situation would not develop into armed conflict and several pointed out that President Truman's 17 March speech was not made with the object of provoking war but of preventing it. Also stressed was the position which Japan might be expected to play in the present international crisis.

Of particular interest were the observations of SHIN IWATE NIPP (Morioka, 19 March) and MAINICHI (Osaka, 19 March), which emphasized that the Truman speech had not posed a direct choice between war and peace (a possibility which apparently had been anticipated). On the other hand, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 19 March) found the President's words "pessimistic," ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 19 March) felt that the content of the speech was in accordance with expectations, and CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 19 March) saw no deviation from previous statements of US policy with the exception of the emphasis on military preparedness.

A strong attitude on the part of the United States in dealing with international affairs was commended by a number of journals, among them AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 20 March) which hoped that the attitude expressed in the President's speech would be a successful means of ensuring peace. Similarly, NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 19 March) saw necessity for a "firm stand" on the part of the US, and felt that if such an attitude were not taken, the situation in Europe would degenerate, and the peace would be severely shaken. In much the same manner, SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 19 March) saw a need to confront "the Russian offensive" with armed strength, and NAGASAKI NICHINICHI (Nagasaki, 19 March) expressed conviction that the US would succeed in enforcing its "decisive measures." ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 19 March) and MAINICHI (19 March) believed that the time when Communist aggression could be stopped by economic aid was already past, and that expansion of American military strength was now also essential.

The Japanese desire that their disclaimer of war will not end in vain, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 19 March) observed, while SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 19 March) asserted that Japan shares American concern for world peace, and NANKAI TIMES (Uwajima, 19 March) urged that Japan must stand for peace. That is, the latter added, against "destructive communism," but this should not be taken to mean action against the Japanese Communist Party "so long as it is not a tool of an aggressive USSR." American policy in Japan has been to restore the nation economically and to prevent the spread of communism in Asia, SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 19 March) and YUKAN SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 19 March) agreed in discussing the Truman speech, but SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 14 March) believed that in its "peculiar position," Japan must work to secure world peace along the lines followed by Gandhi.

POLITICS

Provincial editorials on the formation of the Democratic-Liberal Party agreed that such a development might encourage the eventual development of two major political factions, but the new Party itself failed to win support. Writers questioned whether the group had overcome the "reactionary character" of the Liberals or had evolved sufficiently definite policies. These two considerations dominated practically all comment, and journals reminded Democratic-Liberal leaders that negative-minded policies -- such as "opposition for the sake of opposition" -- would not attract enough public support to give the Party "real meaning." However, these reactions took the form of expressed fears, rather than outright charges against the Party. Most of the 20 journals canvassed took a basically tolerant, if critical attitude, while only one was rigidly opposed to the Democratic-Liberals.

The fact that the new Party had grown out of and around the former Liberal Party appeared to be the source of most apprehension. Such expressions as "feudalistic taint, and casting off the Liberal skin" abounded in commentaries, and again only one paper suggested that Party leaders had moved positively to change the Liberals' "boss personality." The prevailing attitude was struck by MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 18 March), which admonished the new Party to "make a considerable effort to purify its essence . . . and destroy its reactionary core." The Liberal Party, the writer felt, clung to the liberalist traditions of 1913-26 instead of "progressing steadily." In contrast, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 18 March) believed that the advisory positions bestowed upon Shidehara and Saito, both former Democrats, indicated that the Democratic-Liberals were concerned with "purifying themselves and eliminating criticism as a 'boss' group."

The Democratic-Liberals' alleged failure to offer the voting public a concrete program which would consider the "economic compulsions" of the times brought renewed charges in OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 19 March) that rightists might be bent merely on "capturing a large number of Diet votes." The paper warned that if conservatives hope to recapture the Government, they must "offer a positive program of political, economic, and social conditions." The Party's "dazzling name . . . and announced campaign against idealistic socialism" cannot win public confidence, the writer held. Similarly KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 17 March) failed to discern any policy beyond "a return to free economy." We have always felt, said the editorialist, that the Liberals, more than any other Party, are out of touch with the present. EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 17 March) agreed, and added that "no political sense can be made of a Party which is merely dedicated to capitalism and opposed to communism."

Perhaps the sharpest criticism of the Democratic-Liberals was voiced by YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 18 March): "A Party which grew merely by scraping up the rubble can on no account be called a great Party, nor win public consent. * * * The reconstruction of Japan should begin by banning such conservatives from active politics."

Two journals, NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 16 March) and CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 16 March), foresaw impending political clashes between Democrats and Democratic-Liberals. The former, describing a merger as "impossible," said the opposition group would work even harder to overthrow the Cabinet, while the Nagoya paper observed that the numerical strength of the Democratic-Liberals rendered "absurd" any hopes for the stabilization of the political situation. But even though it admitted the possibility of further unrest, YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 17 March) believed the tendency toward larger political concentrations would bring "smoother political changes" and end the confusion which accompanied the end of the Yoshida and Katayama regimes.

LABOR

Commentators on the current wave of government employee strikes were quick to point out the disastrous effect of work stoppages on Japan's economy and consequently on the public livelihood. While not unsympathetic to the workers' demand for minimum wages, YUKAN FUKUNICHI (Fukuoka, 17 March), for example, emphasized that the Japanese people's every move must be conditioned by the "self-evident fact that only increased production can save Japan." In like manner, KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 13 March) cautioned against upsetting the delicate and precarious post-war economic balance, contrasting this country's situation with that of Russia and the US, where an "elasticity of economy" favored by "rich natural resources" was thought to permit expression of labor-capital antagonism without undue harm.

Four journals -- NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 16 March), TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 19 March), KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 16 March), and DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 20 March) -- stressed the importance of settlement by negotiation on the ground that a prolongation of public service strikes would alienate the goodwill of the people. In addition, TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN predicted that the influence of a series of local strikes might in the end be more serious than that of the general strike narrowly averted last year. In this connection, MURORAN MINPO (Muroran, 17 March) remarked that the current labor offensive "has not a sign of a political nature as was the case with last year's February strike." However, while admitting livelihood problems to be the "essential feature" of present unrest, the journal believed that only the checking of labor disputes and inflation and the return to a stabilized economy would solve these problems.

Revon Fitzpatrick

From a somewhat different point of view SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 18 March) came to the same conclusion. Since "official business" is both "unproductive and inefficient," there is good reason for a wage differential between government employees and those in private enterprise, the writer maintained. With regard to the establishment of a minimum wage based on caloric needs, it was claimed that "any revision of government workers' wage level will directly influence the prevailing wage base . . . and accelerate inflation to the further soaring of commodity prices."

Two Nagoya journals commented on the decision of the Government Railway Workers Union to accept the new wage standard. CHUBU NIPPON SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 18 March) commended the move and advised other government employees to follow suit and resume amicable negotiations for settlement of differences. In contrast, CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 17 March) declared that NGRU executives were isolated, by preference, from the rank and file, held secret caucus meetings to put through "reactionary" policies not acceptable to the members, and were showing the "utmost indifference" to livelihood problems of laborers.

SCAP Labor Policies

Three papers made specific reference to Occupation labor policies. FUKUSHIMA MINYU SHIMBUN (Fukushima, 18 March), citing at length the SCAP statement which prohibited the 1 February general strike in 1947, pointed out that labor's "right to strike" is not affected as long as such action does not tend to "destroy Japan's economy." At the same time, however, the journal believed that SCAP wished to see the present labor disputes settled "by means of collective negotiation," and pointed out the "stress on the utilization of the mediation organ" by electric industry and coal mine workers in the December report on the Occupation. HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 17 March) hailed the Ishikawa Prefecture labor education convention as "exhilarating" and helpful in explaining "in a most concise way" theories and methods for worker education in the labor movement. Commenting on a SCAP spokesman's statement that labor unions were "tolerating acts suicidal to their autonomy" by incorporating paternalistic policies, such as special marriage, childbirth, funeral, etc. allowances in their wage demands, YUKAN SHINSHU (Nagano, 16 March) pointed out that such "irregularities" in

the wage system had a long and complicated economic background. Only the wiping out of inflation will serve to establish a social and economic order in which it will be possible for laborers to survive on a more modern single wage standard, the writer said.

EDUCATION

Concern over the acute shortage of teachers and sympathy for teachers' problems were voiced by a number of editorials which accused the Government of "doing nothing" (HOKAI TIMES, Sapporo, 7 March) to remedy the situation. Scoring politicians for not providing sufficient funds for education, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 11 March) expressed fear that if steps are not taken to provide such funds the 6:3:3 system would collapse, while HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 11 March), reporting likelihood of a teachers' strike in Hokkaido, asserted that the only way to avoid the walkout would be for the Governor to take drastic measures for adequate appropriations in the new budget. Settlement of a teachers' union dispute in Kochi Prefecture was noted by KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 14 March),which observed that the teachers had gained public support because, while firm in their demands, they had exhibited no violence. In contrast, educational authorities in the prefectural office were considered "self-conceited bureaucrats" who had made little effort to understand the teachers' problems.

While most commentators appeared to side with the teachers in their economic difficulties, some opposition to teachers' unions as tending to lessen the dignity of the profession by reducing teachers to the status of "mere laborers" was indicated by YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 16 March). Although in partial agreement ("teachers should not blindly obey the orders of unions"), SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 17 March) argued that it was feudalistic to believe that walkouts were "unbecoming" to educators, because "their rights should be protected the same as those of other workers." Sympathy also was expressed by ISHIKAWA SHIMBUN (Kanazawa, 20 March), which deplored "the dreadful influence upon children" caused by reported resignations of teachers to become "blackmarket brokers and barmaids." In the opinion of EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 13 March), teachers' unions should not confine their activities to improving conditions, but should make sincere efforts to improve educational standards.

New Lower Schools

Initiation of the new lower secondary schools was considered by several writers who cited the need for adequate funds to operate the new public school system and deplored the practice of private schools in receiving bribes to admit children. Present lower secondary schools indicate a remarkable decline in quality of teachers and equipment from the standards of the old middle schools, EHIME SHIMBUN (13 March) observed, while SHIN IWATE NIPPO (Morioka, 9 March) recalled that reform similar to the 6:3:3 system had long been sought in Japan. The editorialist added that present difficulties might be attributed in part to the lack of preparation of personnel and materials before initiating the system.

The alleged shortage of textbooks aroused SAGA SHIMBUN (18 March which foresaw no immediate improvement in the situation. Some students were said to be without textbooks at a time when officials complain of a paper shortage, yet book stores reportedly have "immense piles of 'good for nothing' books and magazines." The journal was fearful -- as was NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 13 March) -- that the shortage of physical requirements endangered the future of education. Concern over another situation -- "low moral standards in schools" -- appeared in a TOO NIPPO commentary (Aomori, 16 March). Three "disgraceful" affairs were cited as examples of the "widening gap between teachers and children."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

APR 5 1948

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 26 March 1948 No. 224

POLITICS

Pessimism dominated prefectural press reaction to Premier Ashida's speeches calling for a reconstructed economy, labor stabilization, and foreign financial aid. Twelve of thirteen commenting journals, in surprisingly similar editorials, dismissed the Prime Minister's radio address and press conference as "vague" or "hackneyed," with the majority agreed that they did not share the Prime Minister's optimistic hopes for the future. Generally, commentators expressed weariness with "political speeches," and most writers considered that Ashida's radio address of 10 March was not an enunciation of concrete political measures, but merely a plea for public cooperation. The prevailing reaction was typified by a SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 12 March) editorial, which stated: "Every postwar cabinet promised to put its heart and soul into home affairs. But (we have seen) no government which actually drafted and executed policies to overcome inflation and stabilize the people's livelihood."

In commenting on the address, editors doubted that the new Cabinet had definite anti-inflation measures. This was indicated, according to YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 15 March), by Ashida's failure to announce means of combating inflation, which, the paper felt, was being aggravated by "unreasonable controls and strong brakes against production." Without immediate currency control measures, the writer said, production increases in the near future still will be accompanied by rising prices. Similarly, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 12 March) feared that "unwholesome management of business and industries is hampering economic reconstruction."

The Kochi journal's added argument -- that Ashida cannot stabilize labor without first stabilizing the economy -- was agreed to by YUKAN KYOTO, which, in a 13 March editorial, said the address was as "dull as had been expected" and had failed to give labor any pledged reward for increased efficiency; "The working masses have heard enough of this pledge since the (wartime passage of the) National Mobilization Law." Concurring, SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 12 March) stated that industrial expansion and cooperation between labor and capital were indispensable to economic revival, but were not facilitated by "worn-out remarks." According to the editorial, "the Prime Minister's (radio) address can be construed as mere remarks in passing, for it failed to bring out concrete policies. * * We desire more definite measures."

The only noted encouragement was sounded by SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 13 March). Studying the possibility that the Ashida Cabinet might assume the "most international character of any post-war regime," the editor felt that the present Administration is better equipped, for national and international reasons, to devote itself to economic rehabilitation. "Japan has not reached the stage from where she can build the foundation of her new economy," the writer said, adding that Ashida will be able to play a role more important than Katayama's in introducing foreign capital.

New Conservative Party

Initial reaction to the formation of the Democratic-Liberal Party was similar to that of the Tokyo press (Press Analysis No. 730). Welcoming what was generally regarded as a step toward establishment of a two-party political system in Japan, commentators nevertheless not only refrained from endorsing the new conservative group, but warned that it would have to discard its "reactionary taint" before it would win popular support.

In the opinion of TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 16 March), the organization would be "a contribution to the development of democratic politics," but the writer wondered whether the founders had been brought together by agreement on policies and principles or by a desire to advance their own interests. The writer hoped that the group would become "a strong conservative party aware of the new era," and cautioned the leaders not to interpret dissatisfaction with the Socialists and Democrats as evidence that the nation had suddenly swung behind the Democratic-Liberals. Since the end of the war, according to AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 16 March), conservatives have opposed "progress in any form," but are gradually "turning democratic . . . under public pressure." An opportunity for the new Party to continue this trend was seen if it should encourage "further renovation."

HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 16 March) welcomed the conservative organization for the same reasons, but charged that the "true intention" was to employ its numerical strength in the Diet to win control of the government -- a belief shared by YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 12 March) and SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 12 March). Pointing out that the Liberals (who dissolved their party to lead the formation of the Democratic-Liberals) were widely regarded as "extreme rightists," SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 14 March), urged the new group to "muster new men with advanced ideas in order to be rid of this notoriety."

The only editorial which questioned the advantages of a two-party system appeared in SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 15 March), which maintained that "as a practical matter, it is impossible to walk to the extreme right in the morning and run back to the opposite extreme in the evening."

FOREIGN

In discussing General MacArthur's indication he would accept the Republican nomination, prefectural editorial writers continued to stress the importance of the US presidency in relation to the world situation, the traits which make the General qualified for the post, and the position of Japan if he should become president. CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 12 March) emphasized the "great importance" attached to the November election because this is the "decisive year when the US is obliged to carry out its duty as a controlling power of the world." The writer, considering it likely that the Supreme Commander would be the Republican nominee, regretted that he should leave Japan, but felt that his "political insight and personality will contribute immensely to the administration of the US." It would "greatly benefit" Japan if he wins the presidency, the editorialist believed, for he "knows Japan better than anybody else."

KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 14 March) hoped the General would be elected president because the world needs a man of his "brains and ability" for leadership in a "steadily worsening" situation. The US presidential election is no longer a domestic affair for Americans, the editorialist pointed out, but a matter of concern for the entire world. This view was shared by HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 12 March). GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 12 March) thought the American people, in view of threatening international relations, were calling for a "man of courage and quick decision."

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

Both farmers and prefectural authorities were blamed by three journals for the slow progress in the formation of agricultural cooperative unions. NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 12 March) scored the "idleness" of officials in disseminating information, and the farmers' "long habit of political indifference," which might cause them to be misled by "boss elements." Accusing farmers of having done little for the democratization of Japan, YUKAN FUKUNICHI (Fukuoka, 12 March) criticized their "inactivity" and their tendency to leave decisions to their leaders. IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 13 March) thought that the chief stumbling blocks in the cooperative movement were the authorities who were guilty of "mistaking the meaning of the law and (of) standing by as idle spectators."

LABOR

Continued comment on strikes carried out by government employees' unions again emphasized the necessity for careful reflection before action by labor on the ground that public goodwill may be jeopardized and urged a return to collective bargaining. Citing a recently conducted public opinion poll in Aomori Prefecture, TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 13 March) concluded that, while the public viewed union wage demands with favor and sympathized with their livelihood problems, strike action was opposed as a measure contributing to economic and industrial confusion. The adopting of a "more realistic attitude" was demanded by CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 15 March), which pointed out that, in the light of the nation's stringent financial condition, unions are open to the criticism of "demanding the impossible." ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 15 March) believed strike action unjustified in the case of public utility and monopoly enterprises, and in any case deemed it proper to publish the substance of the mediation plan and the answers to it by both the union and the Government in an effort to familiarize the public with the issues.

Responsibility for the current crisis must be assumed by the Government in the opinion of SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 14 March), KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 15 March), and JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 14 March), and the first-mentioned journal charged management in general with failure to disclose "the actual labor situation." NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 14 March), CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 16 March), and YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 15 March) discussed the labor policies of the Ashida Cabinet, and anticipated an intensification of the labor offensive, which would be met with difficulty by the Government. While admitting that the 2,920-yen wage standard may strain the budget, YAMATO TIMES believed a family of 3 persons to need at least 7,000 yen for basic necessities.

Feudalistic Wage System

Considering in some detail a SCAP spokesman's statement on the "feudalistic character" of Japan's present wage system, SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 10 March) defended union demands for livelihood allowances and other financial remuneration based on living needs rather than volume of work as a "temporary means to cope with soaring prices and high income taxes." As Japan's economy returns to normal, however, the journal believed an approach to the advanced ~~systems~~ of England and the United States might be attempted, and urged the "development of a healthy and democratic relationship" between labor and capital based on "coordination" rather than "dependence."

COAL

Diet establishment of a coal tax was predicted in a KYUSHU TIMES commentary (Fukuoka, 9 March), which pointed out that coal mine districts "have been saddled with incomparably heavier tax burdens" than other regions. Small and medium-sized enterprises have been forced into bankruptcy, the writer said, because coal mines assertedly were given priority to the scarce supply of electric power. With revenue obtained from the coal tax, the editorial proposed the restoration of small industries, as well as the development of educational facilities and welfare services in mining areas.

Enforcement of mine accident prevention measures was urged in two Sapporo papers -- SHIN HOKKAI (12 March) and HOKKAI TIMES (6 March). The former cited statistics to demonstrate that the accident rate in coal mining was appreciably lower than that of railway transportation, but a word of caution was addressed to young workers recently employed in hazardous occupations. The importance of mine safety to production was stressed in the KOKKAI TIMES editorial, which claimed that output was retarded by lack of safety equipment and inadequate mining tools.

ECONOMY

Unpaid taxes continued to be the principal topic discussed in prefectural editorials on economic matters. For example, SHIN IWATE NIPPO (Morioka, 15 March) noted that "since the beginning of this year, tax collection has improved remarkably, with the consequent contraction of the Bank of Japan note issue." Nonetheless, the writer regretted the prevalence of "deliberate delinquencies" -- attributed to the anticipation of decreased currency value. On the other hand, NARA NICHINICHI (Nara, 16 March) stressed the point that tax arrearage was due to the incompetency and negligence of revenue officials.

Tax reform was proposed in a SHINANO MAINICHI editorial (Nagano, 14 March), which recalled that Prime Minister Ashida promised in his first policy speech to take measures to promote labor efficiency. "The most effective measure," in the writer's opinion, would be the reduction of income tax rates on workers' earnings. "It has already been acknowledged by both the Finance Ministry and the Economic Stabilization Board that the income tax is too burdensome for workers, and we believe that its reduction is a minimum demand upon the new Administration," the editorial declared. Similarly, FUKUSHIMA MINYU SHIMBUN (Fukushima, 15 March) maintained that "the masses of people" were suffering from heavy taxation, whereas "the new-yen classes" were virtually unassessed.

The financial plight of prefectural assemblies and other local bodies was "due to the aggravation of inflation" and the institution of the new education and police systems, CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 14 March) asserted. In an effort to meet existing deficits, local agencies were said to be compelled to raise tax rates or establish additional levies. The writer observed that the central Government was preparing to lend aid to local assemblies, but "it will not be in time to meet their urgent needs." Therefore, the journal considered it the responsibility of local agencies to investigate thoroughly current expenditures, "so that the people's tax burden may be alleviated." In view of the fact that 70 percent of local budgets assertedly was allocated to payroll expenses -- and that this proportion would be increased as a result of the new wage standard -- the commentator concluded that the main economy measure at this time should be personnel retrenchment, with improved conditions for retained employees.

Foreign Capital

Editorials in SHIN EHIME SHIMBUN (Imaharu, 15 March) and SHIN HOKKAI SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 13 March) pointed to the Strike Committee's reparations recommendations and to recent dispatches concerning the prospective extension of American credit as indications that Japan's economic rehabilitation would be encouraged. However, apprehension was expressed lest the Cabinet -- anxious to expedite the introduction of foreign credit -- may become "derelict in the enforcement of other urgent policies."

OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 14 March) and CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 14 March) also cautioned against preoccupation with the introduction of foreign capital, and declared that domestic issues required prior consideration. The Osaka paper urged the establishment of sound finance, on the basis of administrative readjustment, while CHIBA SHIMBUN -- claiming that "the Cabinet is not planning how to surmount the crisis, but how to mitigate it by relying upon the importation of foreign capital" -- urged that measures be taken to cope with currency instability.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Comments on the program to increase food production were noted in SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 15 March) and TOKAI MAINICHI (Nagoya, 15 March), with the former journal predicting that quotas will not be met unless farmers are supplied with fertilizer in time for the planting season. The Administration cannot expect farmers to increase their output, the writer maintained, unless it makes provision for adequate distribution of fertilizer. Government estimates of 1,400,000 tons of fertilizer were believed to be "far below" the actual spring requirement, and since import of nitrogenous fertilizer fell below expectations last year, the Administration was urged to provide more vegetable manure this year.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 24 March 1948 No. 223

POLITICS

Economic and labor problems, together with anticipated disharmony between left-wing Socialists and Democrats, were believed by prefectural commentators to be the principal difficulties confronting the new Administration. Several editorials at the time of the installation questioned the Premier's choice of Ministers, and a few journals predicted that the Cabinet would be an "interim" Government until dissolution of the Diet and a general election. Cited as the only conditions favoring the new regime were the increased possibility of foreign financial assistance and the Strike recommendations to the US Department of the Army.

Socialist Attitude Predicted

In the opinion of OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 11 March), execution of the triparty policy agreement would be difficult because of the Socialists' "lukewarm" attitude toward the Cabinet. In addition, the writer believed that "unlike the Katayama Government" the Administration would be unable to avoid a labor offensive because Labor Minister Kato's "individual power is too weak." Warning that the situation was too grave to permit inter-party strife, the paper urged Ashida to concentrate on reconstruction of industry, economic stabilization, and the acquirement of foreign capital. Kato's appointment also was discussed by YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 11 March), which warned that labor might not react as expected to the entrance of a left-wing Socialist in the Cabinet.

Political stability is a "mere step" in the direction of what the nation desires most -- social and economic stability, according to SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 11 March). Indicating that outside financial aid would be welcome, the editorialist warned that both the Government and the people "must fully understand that they must be prepared," and revision of price and wage levels and agreement on such policies as nationalization of important industries were recommended. Observing that Ashida appeared to emphasize the rehabilitation of production and foreign help, SHIMOTSUKE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 10 March) cautioned that checking inflation and establishing an orderly flow of commodities also were prerequisites. GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 10 March) agreed that emphasis should be placed on increased production and the introduction of capital, and advised the Administration to reject left-wing Socialist demands for suspension of interest on war bonds and a third land reform.

In the only comment of its type noticed, FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 11 March) explained why "international considerations" were more important now than at any time since the end of the war. All cabinets until the present one, the commentator noted, had been occupied with such tasks as the elimination of militarism, drafting and enforcing the new Constitution, and overhauling the political and economic systems along democratic lines. Now, it was believed that primary attention should be focused on economic rehabilitation particularly in view of the "remarkable change" in US policy toward Japan.

Opposing views on the value of left-wing Socialists to the Democratic-led coalition were presented by CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 11 March) and EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 11 March). Although the latter thought that Ashida might not have assigned "the right men to the right job," it conceded that the Premier had made "some progress" in winning over Leftists Kato and Nomizo to Ministries. But the Nagoya journal doubted that Kato and Nomizo would be supported by fellow left-wing Socialists. Moreover, the writer believed that other appointments were unsatisfactory, and that, consequently, there would be no alternative but a general election. To SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 11 March), it was "incomprehensible" that leftists and Democrats could agree after their conflicts during the preceding coalition.

Contending that party policies had changed considerably since the last general election, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 10 March) declared that it was necessary to "put an end to maneuvers and personal considerations" by holding another election. Therefore, the writer considered the Ashida Government an "interim" regime which should not attempt to "prolong its life." Similarly, AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita 10 March) asserted that "the people are looking forward to the birth of a new government through a general election."

ECONOMY

Renewed appeals for full tax payments were made in prefectural editorials, as the end of the fiscal year (31 March) approached. Japan's rehabilitation cannot be achieved unless taxes were completely paid, KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 12 March) declared, while CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 6 March) maintained that delinquencies could not be excused because of high tax rates. The Nagoya paper pointed out that revenue policy -- "decided by duly elected Diet members" -- must be observed by all the people.

Self-reporting of income taxes has proved a failure, according to YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 7 March), because "the majority of the people have not reported their incomes honestly." Corrected calculations by revenue officers were said to be about 10 times the original estimates, and it was doubted whether taxpayers could meet these revised obligations before the 31 March deadline. An improved tax collection system was demanded in editorials appearing in MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 9 March) and WAKAYAMA SHIMBUN (Wakayama, 6 March) The latter asserted that "tax bureaus should take measures to reconcile differences between taxpayers' reports and official estimates, lest the democratic reporting procedure lose all its meaning."

CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 11 March) attributed tax defaults principally to incompetent and corrupt collectors. On the other hand, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 9 March) emphasized tax evasion of "big black-marketeers" as the chief cause of incomplete returns. Meantime, another Osaka journal -- OSAKA SHIMBUN (10 March) -- called for "a reform of the existing taxation system," in view of increased expenditures expected to be made by the Government during the new fiscal year.

Reparations

The Strike Commission's Reparations Report elicited the approva of two provincial papers -- CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 12 March) and TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 12 March). The former attached consider able significance to the Report's recommendations which were expecte to facilitate Japanese reparations. On the other hand, the Tokushim editorialist pointed to obstacles in the realization of the Commission's proposals, inasmuch as "it is expected that at least four or five of the 11 FEC nations will offer resistance to this set of concrete policies for aiding Japan's independence."

LABOR

Strikes of Government employees' unions, particularly the sporadic wave of walk-outs by regional chapters of the All-Japan Communications Workers Unions, evoked editorial admonitions to both the Government and the workers. In prefectural journals throughout the country the primary demand was for speedy settlement by negotiation of disputes which it was feared would disrupt Government services, cause unnecessary inconvenience and suffering to the general public, and so obstruct economic reconstruction as to redound to the discredit of the trade union movement. The majority of commentators, while careful to define strike action as a legal protest and expressing some sympathy for the workers' demand for increased wages, questioned the efficacy of the means used and the "morality" of work stoppages at a time when the nation's real problems are inflation and under-production. The importance of maintaining public support also was emphasized, and commentators questioned whether labor had gauged accurately the temper of public opinion.

In a typical commentary, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 10 March) doubted 1) whether the Government, the unions, and the Central Labor Committee had "done their utmost in discussing the unions' demands for regional allowances," 2) whether the labor unions' opposition to projected revision of labor legislation and taxation of wages was furthered by resort to strike, and 3) urged union reconsideration of the financial burden which their demands will impose on the people and the State. "Increased distribution of necessary goods at official prices" was the more urgent problem in the opinion of HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 9 March), which warned that "sporadic strikes" leading to "total paralysis" of the economy would jeopardize the workers' livelihood. HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 13 March) questioned the "propriety" of sporadic local strike action, believed this to be evidence of an irresponsible and opportunistic attitude, and advocated negotiation by a central authority as more advantageous.

CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 10 March), SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 10 March), HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 9 March), and NISHI NIPPON SHIMBUN (Fukuoka, 12 March), among others, intimated that the current wave of strikes was characterized by "political" as well as economic motivations, and warned against a recurrence of restrictive action similar to that taken to stop the abortive 1 February general strike in 1947. Unions were advised by the last-mentioned journal to concentrate on negotiation with the Government rather than dissipating their force and public goodwill in strikes. In the same vein, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 10 March) warned that "the reactionary forces will raise their heads" the moment labor unions "go too far." Urging the adoption of a "realistic attitude," TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 8 March) admitted that the "cause of the dispute lies in the fact that things which should be done as a matter of course are not done," and yet pointed out that "the actual situation is neither so peaceful nor so normal as to permit realization of plans which are theoretically right." As summarized by SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 13 March), "our living difficulties originate from inflation; the only way to overcome inflation is to increase production; increased production cannot be achieved by strikes."

Teachers' Unions

Journalists continued to regard strike action by teachers' unions inappropriate to the "dignity" and responsibility of the profession, although there was no tendency to minimize their livelihood difficulties. JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 10 March) believed that teachers' unions should go no further than "clarifying the actual situation of their daily life" in asking for increased wages. Those who teach should maintain their "prestige," the writer said, and those who want an increased income "should and will be able to get it in other jobs." OSAKA NICHINICHI (14 March) and HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 9 March) expressed the same point of view less bluntly, emphasizing rather the advantage of reliance upon negotiation for the solution of admittedly difficult livelihood problems.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The program for increased food production continued to receive much attention in prefectural papers, with all writers agreeing that the seriousness of the food situation in Japan and the world make it imperative that quotas be fulfilled on schedule. BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 11 March) felt that successful completion of delivery depended primarily on the ability of prefectural and central government authorities to distribute fertilizer and equipment in sufficient quantity and to introduce modern methods of farming. Officials have been too concerned with "allotment and incentive goods," the editorialist charged, and they were urged to "revise their attitude" and think more about the "scientific aspect of production." Similarly, IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 7 March) believed that distribution of fertilizer and tools must be "implemented without fail," and furthermore that assignment of quotas must be done in a "practical way, taking actual conditions into consideration." YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 9 March) also emphasized the farmers' urgent need for fertilizer, and expressed impatience over the indifference of prefectural officials "who had to be goaded from higher quarters" to carry out fertilizer distribution last year.

CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 12 March) attacked the type of bonus goods awarded to farmers, and said that if the Government expects completion of food delivery, it must dispense goods that can be readily used, instead of such items as cotton material and rice wine which farmers convert into cash. Commenting on Saitama Prefecture's difficulty in attaining its quota last year, SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 10 March) was inclined to blame farmers rather than the officials for the poor showing. The writer condemned farmers for not realizing the "importance of their responsibility," and charged that they insisted on blaming floods and heavier quotas for their failure instead of their own "lack of effort."

FOREIGN

American-Soviet relations formed the basis for prefectural comment on developments in Europe and the Far East during the first two weeks in March. Thus, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 9 March), speaking of recent events in Europe, observed that the United States did not appear to be gaining in the "dull war" (sic) and that a warning to the Soviet by America might be expected. Similarly, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 12 March) saw the "cold war" developing in the Far East, and SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 9 March) interpreted proposed American assistance for the reconstruction of Japan as the result of increased tension between the US and the USSR, rather than of Japan's successful fulfillment of the demands for democratization.

The potential military character of the alliance of Western European countries was discussed in editorials in KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 9 March) and GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 18 March), with the latter indicating that the Benelux countries probably would concur with the British and French desire for political and military as well as economic relations. The Western European union was regarded as a turning point in European politics by KOBE SHIMBUN which asserted that if the United States enters into closer relations with the five-nation union it will be obliged to make a final decision on possible extension of military aid to those countries. The serious effects of the recent change of government in Czechoslovakia also were evaluated by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (8 March), and FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 12 March), and the last-named paper concluded that "the fewer the anti-Communists in Czechoslovakia, the deeper is Czechoslovakia's tragedy."

Revision of American policy toward Japan was seen by MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 11 March) which offered the opinion that revival of Japan would make "the restoration of Asia and the world possible," and that herein lay Japan's "mission." Approaching solution of China's problem from a different point of view MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 8 March) queried whether internal differences in that country might not be settled "democratically" rather than by prolongation of the Civil War. Also of interest was the SHINKO SHIMBUN (Matsumoto, 13 March) assertion that the USSR is employing a "more progressive" policy in the Far East than in Europe. Sinkiang was cited by the journal as an example of an area in which an improved living standard was being encouraged in contrast to Europe where the USSR was accused of attempting to plant "backward thoughts and cultures."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
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Civil Information and Education Section
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 24 March 1948 No. 223

POLITICS

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Socialist Attitude Predicted

In the opinion of OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 11 March), execution of the triparty policy agreement would be difficult because of the Socialists' "lukewarm" attitude toward the Cabinet. In addition, the writer believed that "unlike the Katayama Government" the Administration would be unable to avoid a labor offensive because Labor Minister Kato's "individual power is too weak." Warning that the situation was too grave to permit inter-party strife, the paper urged Ashida to concentrate on reconstruction of industry, economic stabilization, and the acquirement of foreign capital Kato's appointment also was discussed by YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 11 March), which warned that labor might not react as expected to the entrance of a left-wing Socialist in the Cabinet.

Political stability is a "mere step" in the direction of what the nation desires most -- social and economic stability, according to SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 11 March). Indicating that outside financial aid would be welcome, the editorialist warned that both the Government and the people "must fully understand that they must be prepared," and revision of price and wage levels and agreement on such policies as nationalization of important industries were recommended. Observing that Ashida appeared to emphasize the rehabilitation of production and foreign help, SHIMOTSUKE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 10 March) cautioned that checking inflation and establishing an orderly flow of commodities also were prerequisites. GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 10 March) agreed that emphasis should be placed on increased production and the introduction of capital, and advised the Administration to reject left-wing Socialist demands for suspension of interest on war bonds and a third land reform.

In the only comment of its type noticed, FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 11 March) explained why "international considerations" were more important now than at any time since the end of the war. All cabinets until the present one, the commentator noted, had been occupied with such tasks as the elimination of militarism, drafting and enforcing the new Constitution, and overhauling the political and economic systems along democratic lines. Now, it was believed that primary attention should be focused on economic rehabilitation particularly in view of the "remarkable change" in US policy toward Japan.

Opposing views on the value of left-wing Socialists to the Democratic-led coalition were presented by CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 11 March) and EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 11 March). Although the latter thought that Ashida might not have assigned "the right men to the right job," it conceded that the Premier had made "some progress" in winning over Leftists Kato and Nomizo to Ministries. But the Nagoya journal doubted that Kato and Nomizo would be supported by fellow left-wing Socialists. Moreover, the writer believed that other appointments were unsatisfactory, and that, consequently, there would be no alternative but a general election. To SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 11 March), it was "incomprehensible" that leftists and Democrats could agree after their conflicts during the preceding coalition.

Contending that party policies had changed considerably since the last general election, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 10 March) declared that it was necessary to "put an end to maneuvers and personal considerations" by holding another election. Therefore, the writer considered the Ashida Government an "interim" regime which should not attempt to "prolong its life." Similarly, AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita 10 March) asserted that "the people are looking forward to the birth of a new government through a general election."

ECONOMY

Renewed appeals for full tax payments were made in prefectural editorials, as the end of the fiscal year (31 March) approached. Japan's rehabilitation cannot be achieved unless taxes were completely paid, KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 12 March) declared, while CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 6 March) maintained that delinquencies could not be excused because of high tax rates. The Nagoya paper pointed out that revenue policy -- "decided by duly elected Diet members" -- must be observed by all the people.

Self-reporting of income taxes has proved a failure, according to YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 7 March), because "the majority of the people have not reported their incomes honestly." Corrected calculations by revenue officers were said to be about 10 times the original estimates, and it was doubted whether taxpayers could meet these revised obligations before the 31 March deadline. An improved tax collection system was demanded in editorials appearing in MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 9 March) and WAKAYAMA SHIMBUN (Wakayama, 6 March) The latter asserted that "tax bureaus should take measures to reconcile differences between taxpayers' reports and official estimates, lest the democratic reporting procedure lose all its meaning."

CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 11 March) attributed tax defaults principally to incompetent and corrupt collectors. On the other hand, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 9 March) emphasized tax evasion of "big black-marketeers" as the chief cause of incomplete returns. Meantime, another Osaka journal -- OSAKA SHIMBUN (10 March) -- called for "a reform of the existing taxation system," in view of increased expenditures expected to be made by the Government during the new fiscal year.

Reparations

The Strike Commission's Reparations Report elicited the approva of two provincial papers -- CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 12 March) and TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 12 March). The former attached consider able significance to the Report's recommendations which were expecte to facilitate Japanese reparations. On the other hand, the Tokushim editorialist pointed to obstacles in the realization of the Commission's proposals, inasmuch as "it is expected that at least four or five of the 11 FEC nations will offer resistance to this set of concrete policies for aiding Japan's independence."

LABOR

Strikes of Government employees' unions, particularly the sporadic wave of walk-outs by regional chapters of the All-Japan Communications Workers Unions, evoked editorial admonitions to both the Government and the workers. In prefectural journals throughout the country the primary demand was for speedy settlement by negotiation of disputes which it was feared would disrupt Government services, cause unnecessary inconvenience and suffering to the general public, and so obstruct economic reconstruction as to redound to the discredit of the trade union movement. The majority of commentators, while careful to define strike action as a legal protest and expressing some sympathy for the workers' demand for increased wages, questioned the efficacy of the means used and the "morality" of work stoppages at a time when the nation's real problems are inflation and under-production. The importance of maintaining public support also was emphasized, and commentators questioned whether labor had gauged accurately the temper of public opinion.

In a typical commentary, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 10 March) doubted 1) whether the Government, the unions, and the Central Labor Committee had "done their utmost in discussing the unions' demands for regional allowances," 2) whether the labor unions' opposition to projected revision of labor legislation and taxation of wages was furthered by resort to strike, and 3) urged union reconsideration of the financial burden which their demands will impose on the people and the State. "Increased distribution of necessary goods at official prices" was the more urgent problem in the opinion of HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 9 March), which warned that "sporadic strikes" leading to "total paralysis" of the economy would jeopardize the workers' livelihood. HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 13 March) questioned the "propriety" of sporadic local strike action, believed this to be evidence of an irresponsible and opportunistic attitude, and advocated negotiation by a central authority as more advantageous.

CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 10 March), SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 10 March), HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 9 March), and NISHI NIPPON SHIMBUN (Fukuoka, 12 March), among others, intimated that the current wave of strikes was characterized by "political" as well as economic motivations, and warned against a recurrence of restrictive action similar to that taken to stop the abortive 1 February general strike in 1947. Unions were advised by the last-mentioned journal to concentrate on negotiation with the Government rather than dissipating their force and public goodwill in strikes. In the same vein, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 10 March) warned that "the reactionary forces will raise their heads" the moment labor unions "go too far." Urging the adoption of a "realistic attitude," TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 8 March) admitted that the "cause of the dispute lies in the fact that things which should be done as a matter of course are not done," and yet pointed out that "the actual situation is neither so peaceful nor so normal as to permit realization of plans which are theoretically right." As summarized by SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 13 March), "our living difficulties originate from inflation; the only way to overcome inflation is to increase production; increased production cannot be achieved by strikes."

Teachers' Unions

Journalists continued to regard strike action by teachers' unions inappropriate to the "dignity" and responsibility of the profession, although there was no tendency to minimize their livelihood difficulties. JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 10 March) believed that teachers' unions should go no further than "clarifying the actual situation of their daily life" in asking for increased wages. Those who teach should maintain their "prestige," the writer said, and those who want an increased income "should and will be able to get it in other jobs." OSAKA NICHINICHI (14 March) and HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 9 March) expressed the same point of view less bluntly, emphasizing rather the advantage of reliance upon negotiation for the solution of admittedly difficult livelihood problems.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The program for increased food production continued to receive much attention in prefectural papers, with all writers agreeing that the seriousness of the food situation in Japan and the world make it imperative that quotas be fulfilled on schedule. BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 11 March) felt that successful completion of delivery depended primarily on the ability of prefectural and central government authorities to distribute fertilizer and equipment in sufficient quantity and to introduce modern methods of farming. Officials have been too concerned with "allotment and incentive goods," the editorialist charged, and they were urged to "revise their attitude" and think more about the "scientific aspect of production." Similarly, IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 7 March) believed that distribution of fertilizer and tools must be "implemented without fail," and furthermore that assignment of quotas must be done in a "practical way, taking actual conditions into consideration." YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 9 March) also emphasized the farmers' urgent need for fertilizer, and expressed impatience over the indifference of prefectural officials "who had to be goaded from higher quarters" to carry out fertilizer distribution last year.

CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 12 March) attacked the type of bonus goods awarded to farmers, and said that if the Government expects completion of food delivery, it must dispense goods that can be readily used, instead of such items as cotton material and rice wine which farmers convert into cash. Commenting on Saitama Prefecture's difficulty in attaining its quota last year, SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 10 March) was inclined to blame farmers rather than the officials for the poor showing. The writer condemned farmers for not realizing the "importance of their responsibility," and charged that they insisted on blaming floods and heavier quotas for their failure instead of their own "lack of effort."

FOREIGN

American-Soviet relations formed the basis for prefectural comment on developments in Europe and the Far East during the first two weeks in March. Thus, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 9 March), speaking of recent events in Europe, observed that the United States did not appear to be gaining in the "dull war" (sic) and that a warning to the Soviet by America might be expected. Similarly, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 12 March) saw the "cold war" developing in the Far East, and SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 9 March) interpreted proposed American assistance for the reconstruction of Japan as the result of increased tension between the US and the USSR, rather than of Japan's successful fulfillment of the demands for democratization.

The potential military character of the alliance of Western European countries was discussed in editorials in KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 9 March) and GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 18 March), with the latter indicating that the Benelux countries probably would concur with the British and French desire for political and military as well as economic relations. The Western European union was regarded as a turning point in European politics by KOBE SHIMBUN which asserted that if the United States enters into closer relations with the five-nation union it will be obliged to make a final decision on possible extension of military aid to those countries. The serious effects of the recent change of government in Czechoslovakia also were evaluated by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (8 March), and FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 12 March), and the last-named paper concluded that "the fewer the anti-Communists in Czechoslovakia, the deeper is Czechoslovakia's tragedy."

Revision of American policy toward Japan was seen by MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 11 March) which offered the opinion that revival of Japan would make "the restoration of Asia and the world possible," and that herein lay Japan's "mission." Approaching solution of China's problem from a different point of view MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 8 March) queried whether internal differences in that country might not be settled "democratically" rather than by prolongation of the Civil War. Also of interest was the SHINKO SHIMBUN (Matsumoto, 13 March) assertion that the USSR is employing a "more progressive" policy in the Far East than in Europe. Sinkiang was cited by the journal as an example of an area in which an improved living standard was being encouraged, in contrast to Europe where the USSR was accused of attempting to plant "backward thoughts and cultures."

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
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Analysis and Research Division

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 19 March 1948 No. 222

POLITICS

Premier-designate Ashida's efforts to secure the broadest possible political base for his new cabinet received widespread consideration in the prefectural press, with commentators disagreeing as to whether the coalition would be strengthened by the participation of Liberals and left-wing Socialists. Some writers maintained that -- since the cabinet probably would be short-lived -- greater political and economic stability would result from a "national" government, while others feared such a regime would be unable to agree on any fundamental policy.

Socialist Policies Advocated

It was "obvious" to KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 6 March) that enforcement of socialistic policies was necessary "in order to save the nation," and the writer urged the incoming premier to announce such a program. Participation of left-wing Socialists was regarded as "most desirable," not only because "the people look to the leftists," but because "this is the only way to save the Democratic Party." Opposing opinions were expressed by SHINANO NICHINICHI (Ueda, 7 March) and TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 2 March), both of which indicated that Ashida should restrict cabinet participation to middle-of-the-road or conservative groups. The Ueda writer thought that Ashida would have "preferred" a coalition with the Liberals and People's Cooperatives, and believed that he could have "avoided the absurdity" of trying to bring ideol gically-opposed groups together. To the Gifu journal, there could be no compromise between socialism and the revised capitalism of the Democrats.

Two reasons for opposing creation of a "national" government were presented by ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 3 March). First, it was argued that such a cabinet would be contrary to parliamentary government, and that the existence of "powerful opposition parties is absolutely necessary," and, second, that an all-party administration would compel participants to renounce "pledges made to the people." It was the belief of SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 5 March) that the premier-designate was mistaken if he thought that inclusion of a left-wing Socialist in the cabinet would placate labor. "The labor offensive cannot be checked or controlled by giving portfolios to the leftists," the editorialist warned, and indicated that solution of economic problems should be the new government's first task.

Cabinet Seen as Temporary

KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 3 March) thought it was "reasonable" to form a cabinet with the Democrats as a nucleus ("and with the participation of parties resembling the Democrats"), but considered such a government as only temporary until the possible dissolution of the Diet. An argument for participation of left-wing Socialists was offered by OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 8 March), which contended that even though Socialist Chairman Katayama had refused to accept a cabinet position, the Party as a whole should "recognize its responsibility." Although fearing that the new coalition had the weakness of the Katayama Administration, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 6 March) said that "there is no alternative," and advised Ashida to "push the policy agreement resolutely and make every possible effort to execute it."

In the only comment of the type observed, MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 5 March) asserted that it was "not enough for a cabinet minister to be a man of character and principles." Assailing the policy of "being Education Minister one day and Welfare Minister the next," the journal urged the incoming administration to select officials possessing "special knowledge and a sense of responsibility."

ECONOMY

Two prefectural newspapers attributed the reported decrease in the January currency issue -- roughly five billion lower than the same period last month -- to tax collections and a decrease in Government disbursements, and warned against construing the figures as a sign of deflation. The journals, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 4 March) and SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 6 March), voiced no optimism over the immediate possibility of declining prices, and pointed out that "slightly downward" currency trends in the past three months indicate a "leveling off" of note issue, rather than the beginning of deflation. The second-named newspaper, for example, held that resumption of Government disbursements would "react in an expanded note issue" by April, to bear out the writer's arguments that deflation is impossible without increased production.

The same approach was taken by the Kochi journal, which, while praising the collection of 70 billion yen in taxes, said that "inflation does not subside in such an easy way." Joining SANGYO KEIZAI in predicting currency increases when disbursements are resumed, the editor urged "currency curtailment" as a necessary part of any deflation program. SANGYO KEIZAI at the same time renewed calls for the creation of a "loan accommodation research committee" to direct Government loans into the "most efficient quarters." The Government should strive to streamline its loan management as soon as possible, the editor said.

Domination over industries by money organs has grown "remarkably" with the climb of inflation, according to NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 8 March) in an editorial calling for a more "socialistic point of view" in bank management. Draft amendments to govern the Bank of Japan were being considered only in the light of "anti-monopoly," according to the commentator, instead of from a standpoint of democratic rehabilitation of national economy.

Strike Committee

Strike Committee recommendations that Japanese reparations be reduced drew mention in three rural editorials, but optimism was tempered by reminders that such a plan may be opposed by Far Eastern Commission representatives from China and the Philippines. In view of this, KOCHI SHIMBUN called for some means to convince these nations that Japan has "neither the intention nor the power to rearm," and only hopes to use her productive facilities to bring about "peace and prosperity in the Far East." In the opinion of ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 7 March), this must be done, as Japan cannot survive without trade among the Pacific nations. However, the nation must do everything possible to help herself if she would take full advantage of America's new "positive aid" policy toward Japan, according to SHIMOTSUKE SHIMBUN (Utsunomiya, 7 March).

EMPEROR

The Emperor's projected trip to southern Japan prompted TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 9 March) to suggest that every possible effort be made to remove all barriers between the common people of Japan and their sovereign, as it is necessary, according to the editorialist, that each see the other in a "vivid, human light." The writer doubted that reverence of the Emperor had diminished seriously since the end of the war, and urged that the people use this sentiment as a source of inspiration to speed the nation's recovery. Similarly, NAGASAKI NICHINICHI (Nagasaki, 3 March) asked for the removal of all hindrances between the Emperor and the people -- that the latter may explain their difficulties in person.

LABOR

Editorialists in OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 7 March), OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 7 March), CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 8 March), EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 5 March), and YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 9 March) expressed concern over the consequences to the Japanese economy of the current wave of strikes in government offices. In a typical commentary, the last-named journal cautioned communications workers against "reckless" use of strike rights and warned that the real opponent and chief sufferer in these instances is the general public. Both the Government and the unions were urged to exert themselves to the utmost in an attempt to settle their disputes peacefully by negotiation and compromise. While attributing the present crisis development to the hiatus in responsible government between the en bloc resignation of the Katayama Cabinet and the formation of the Ashida Administration, SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 28 February) observed that any disruption in transportation facilities would void the advantages of increased coal production in Hokkaido. Referring specifically to the 24-hour "piston" strike tactics of the communications workers, CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 7 March) believed the chief fault to be on the side of the Government and felt that the Central Labor Committee recommendations should have been followed more closely. In like vein, KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 16 March) maintained that establishment of a minimum wage was essential to stabilize the labor situation and placed responsibility with the Government. Unless workers are guaranteed a "decent livelihood," economic rehabilitation will be impossible in any case, the writer concluded.

CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 9 March) discussed the revision of basic labor legislation and pointed out that change does not necessarily mean "deterioration." However, with "unreasonable application of the right to strike," workers may expect restrictive measures to be taken, the writer added, and urged "self-reflection" on the part of "labor agitators."

Teachers' Strike Threatened

The threatened teachers' union strike action in Fukuoka Prefecture was considered by KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 7 March). Admitting that teachers were subject to the same "trials and tribulations" over livelihood as other workers and pointing out that the situation was aggravated by "incomplete and insufficient" educational facilities and a shortage of qualified instructors, the writer still believed that teachers must consider first their responsibilities as guides and mentors of the nation's youth. Both sides were urged to use all means to effect a compromise.

FOREIGN

There was widespread editorial interest in General MacArthur's indication that he would accept the Republican nomination, with nearly all journals predicting that his chances of being elected president were favorable. Writers felt that in this "decisive year," when anti-Communist states are looking to the US for leadership, a man with the General's "understanding and ability" was needed to direct US foreign policy. The Japanese people would regret SCAP's departure, papers said, but understood his inability to refuse the call to enter politics, and felt that his administrative record in Japan made him eligible for the nomination.

Declaring that the Republicans are "seriously handicapped" by "lack of positive diplomacy," SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 13 March) believes that General MacArthur's recent statement dealing with aid to China "means that the Republicans have pointed to the weakness in the Democratic foreign policy," which has not shown "much concern" for Asiatic problems. Due to the General's "anti-Communist leanings," he is gaining "even among Democrats," according to NIPPONKAI (Tottori, 12 March).

CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 12 March) was of the opinion that it would be profitable for Japan to have a man "who knows Japan most" as president of the US, while MAINICHI (Osaka, 13 March) believed the General would aid the reconstruction of Japan "no matter what post he held." TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 10 March) felt that General MacArthur merited support because of his "extraordinary understanding" of Far Eastern problems, solution of which "has a great bearing on the future of Japan." Whether the General leaves Japan or not, HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 10 March) felt that his statement on China had emphasized the importance of Asiatic issues and given the Japanese a "stable feeling." Hope that the Supreme Commander would remain in Japan until conclusion of the peace treaty was voiced, but the writer nevertheless believed that his "political ability must be used to settle the complicated international situation."

KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 10 March) praised General MacArthur for his efforts to "realize world peace," and was convinced that he could remove "obstacles to peace" if he was able to "display his ability to the fullest as President of the US." SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 10 March) suggested that the outcome of the presidential election would be "largely affected by development of international events by that date."

EDUCATION

Comment on education in the prefectural press, while continuing to stress questions of students' and teachers' livelihood and educational budgets, also included discussion of the opening of the new lower secondary schools and plans for establishment of prefectural universities. As previously, offering of government scholarships to needy students, or provision of appropriate outside jobs for those otherwise unable to continue higher education was urged by SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 3 March), while YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 6 March) urged better pay for teachers in order to secure a better class of instructors and to retain them in the face of rising prices. In the same vein, TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 2 March) felt that shifting of teachers from post to post should be done with great care, and argued that competent teachers employed as educational office workers should be returned to teaching positions.

Prefectural appropriations for education were regarded as inadequate by several journals, with such publications as TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 4 March) accusing prefectural authorities of having "no zeal" for improving the educational system and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 5 March) questioning whether those responsible were sincerely attempting to carry out the new system, and asserting that the educational budget in Niigata had been cut while other items had been increased.

The new lower secondary schools are suffering primarily from lack of school buildings, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 7 March) and SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 6 March) concurred, and suggested consolidation of schools in order to overcome this difficulty. Because of the shortage of public secondary schools, SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 7 March) reported that parents were seeking to enroll their children in private schools by bribery, and the recent stand of the teachers' union against furnishing school reports was regarded by this journal as "voicing a strong objection against the corruption of the educational world." (Press Analysis No. 704 et seq.) (Other activities of teachers' unions were discussed by SAITAMA SHIMBUN, Urawa, 9 March and MIYAKO SHIMBUN, Kyoto, 6 March -- the former condemning teachers' recent polls on the popularity of headmasters, and the latter expressing the belief that teachers form the intelligentsia group in the labor movement, and that leaders in the teachers' unions are now following a socialist rather than a communist line.)

* It is better to use neighboring university facilities for the time being, rather than to establish an inferior local university, TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 7 March) believed, while NIPPON KAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 3 March) feared that a new university system could not be realized easily under present conditions. Good professors and adequate equipment would be essential to the establishment of an independent university or expansion of a higher school into a college, the Toyama journal noted, and felt that prefectural finance were incapable of meeting such a burden at this time.

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 17 March 1948 No. 221

POLITICS

Completion of a policy agreement by the Democratic, Socialist, and People's Cooperative Parties received widespread attention in prefectural editorial columns, with most writers reiterating assertions that -- because of antagonism between Ministerial groups -- the pact would be difficult of fulfillment. Primary interest was focused on economic aspects of the accord, particularly the decision to defer announcement of policy on left-wing Socialist demands for suspension of interest on war bonds. Most commentators avoided commitment on this issue, but emphasized that the new administration's chief aim should be to check inflation.

'Vagueness' Explained

The problem of reconciling socialism, revised capitalism, and cooperativism (the basic ideologies of the three Government parties) was believed by GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 3 March) to explain the reason for the agreement's "vagueness." But the editorialist argued that this situation did not excuse the Democrats for having "played second fiddle" to the Socialists in the negotiations, and criticized the policy-makers for having offered no plan for combatting inflation other than to urge the nation to "endure a life of poverty." HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 4 March) also charged that the pact ignored the inflation question, and maintained that the only solution was administrative adjustment. "The three parties should remember," the journal declared, "that the policy agreement is not for them only, but is a pledge to the people."

In the opinion of KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 5 March), the triparty agreement placed too much emphasis on State controls, and had not dealt with the relation between commodity prices and wages. Contending that "authorities" were mistaken to believe that socialism was "more progressive and efficient than capitalism," the editorialist urged that planks relating to government controls be re-examined, "because, frankly speaking, economic controls are totally ignored by the people." Although conceding that the policies of the incoming administration might be "a step ahead of the program of the Katayama Cabinet," EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 4 March) was not satisfied with the agreement to consider State management of key industries "in accordance with the actual situation," and called for a plan of "gradual reformation."

Belief that the nation would "spare no effort" to cooperate with the new cabinet was expressed by NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 5 March), which added, however, that conclusion of a policy agreement which "ended in a mere arrangement of abstract terms" had created the impression that the new regime "lacks political power." Describing the policies agreed upon as "out of focus," another Nagoya paper, CHUKYO SHIMBUN (5 March), thought that the pact might result in a "farce," and YUKAN MIE (Yokkaichi, 6 March) feared that the policy-makers were without the "courage" to execute the accord.

The views of prefectural financial journals were presented by CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 6 March) and SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 5 March). The first-named paper foresaw continuing conflict between Socialists and Democrats because the revised capitalism advocated by the latter "is nothing but the maintenance of the old capitalism," while the Osaka commentator claimed that the agreement was "hackneyed and lacks vitality."

Participation of the Socialists in the incoming administration won comment in several journals, including EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 6 March), which warned leftists not to repeat the tactics which "rocked the foundations" of the Katayama Government. YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 5 March), however, urged left-wing Socialists not to join Premier-designate Ashida's cabinet, but to "muster their efforts to serve the interests of the workers."

ECONOMY

Deflationary trends which some prefectural writers claimed to perceive in the January note issue -- despite contrary statements by the Finance Ministry -- found segments of the rural press hopeful of arresting inflation and establishing a foreign exchange rate. Two newspapers, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 29 February) and SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 3 March), claimed that the January note issue of roughly 210 billion yen represented a nine billion decline under the same period in December. Simultaneously, said the first-named journal, a "blackmarket index" showed prices in the same period gained only seven percent. "Thus we have arrived at an important stage of curbing inflation," stated the writer, "as these figures contain features quite different from the accelerating trends of last year." (Apparently these editors based their arguments on one of the lowest currency levels of January. Finance Ministry statements announced that the 210 billion yen issue was reached on 14 January, but by the end of the same month had climbed to approximately 218 billion yen.)

This financial development was viewed more cautiously by other journals which interpreted the January figures as indicating a "leveling off" of currency without, necessarily, deflating the yen. For example, FUKUSHIMA MINPO (Fukushima, 2 March) and HYUGA NICHI-NICHI (Miyazaki, 4 March) referred to the figures as "indicating an alleviation of currency unrest," but did not read deflationary meanings into them.

Rumors that a "leveling off" of currency would be followed by yen devaluation stirred opposition of four newspapers. Generally, devaluation was described as "nonsense," especially in view of Japan's lack of an exchange par and, according to FUKUSHIMA MINPO, the country's present attempts to stabilize and restore the value of the yen both at home and abroad. "Devaluation in the light of Japan's present economy is sheer nonsense," the writer said, and joined the Miyazaki paper in pleas not to "thoughtlessly adopt" France's procedure in devaluing the franc. But although its editor believed that something "more revolutionary than devaluation or currency reissue" was required, HYUGA NICHINICHI, like most other commenting journals, failed to advance detailed suggestions as to how the currency situation might be stabilized. Typical of these generally abstract suggestions was that of KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 5 March), which counseled politicians to "contemplate financial and production stabilization jointly." Similarly, SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 4 March) demanded that the Ashida Cabinet devise "strong counter-measures to insure that projected production increases are not hampered by inflation."

PEACE TREATY

Acceptance of the possibility that a Japanese peace conference will not be held this year was noted in seven prefectural papers, some of which maintained that Japan's position as an occupied country was not necessarily disadvantageous. Most optimistic of this group was CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 29 February) which believed that Japan had escaped economic bankruptcy "only because we are a controlled nation," and that dependence on other powers had given Japan a measure of international stability. Similarly, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 28 February) compared the favorable state of Japan today with troubled areas elsewhere in the world and saw the delay "not necessarily as a source of pessimism." Like the Nagoya journal, EHIME SHIMBUN urged independent efforts to settle Japan's internal problems prior to the opening of the Peace Conference, while the former further reminded readers that economic rehabilitation is not dependent on the conclusion of a treaty. In contrast, YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 29 February) expressed belief that conclusion of the peace would determine the time of Japan's independence and the rapidity or the slowness of reconstruction.

LABOR

While a minority of prefectural commentators interpreted the current outbreak of regional strikes broadly as manifestations of a deep undercurrent of uncertainty and conflict in the relations between capital and labor, the majority were inclined to censure union action from the standpoint of public inconvenience.

In the first group, SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 5 March) blamed both sides; neither the Government nor the workers have shown sufficient enthusiasm for settling disputes by negotiation, the writer said. With specific reference to a teachers' strike in Kochi Prefecture, KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 5 March) similarly expressed belief that the local labor committee had given up prematurely in its efforts to settle the dispute between the union and the local authorities. KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 4 March) anticipated a labor offensive in Japan which will assume the proportions of that in France and Italy and reflect the "international labor situation."

Writers in NANKAI TIMES (Uwajima, 1 March), SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 6 March), and SHINANO NICHINICHI (Ueda, 12 March), however, dealt with the "unbearable suffering" of the general public because of sporadic lapses of service in communications, railway transportation, and electric power. The last-mentioned journal questione whether it was legal for communications workers to handle "private mail matters, telegrams and telephone calls" at their own "option," simply because these functions were carried on by government offices while NANKAI TIMES warned that without public sympathy and understanding strike action lacks the basis for achieving its announced aims. Commenting on labor resentment of the Government decision to suspend wages during strikes, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 3 March) pointed out that when workers fail to render their "labor or knowledge of technique" to their employers, payment should not be expected. Another Osaka journal -- OSAKA JIJI SHIMPO (2 March) -- questioned the intelligence of labor's implementing wage demands with strike action at a time when the Government -- between two administrations -- is unable to negotiate on a responsible basis. If the unions are only "playing with disputes," they place themselve in the position of being "enemies of the people," the writer warned.

Union Autonomy and Anti-Communist Moves

Continuing commentaries on "democratization" within the labor unions stressed the importance of rank-and-file understanding of and participation in determination of union policy. Maintaining a clear distinction between "democratization" and anti-Communism, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 1 March) pointed out that "democratization" must stem from a positive feeling for the democratic idea, rather than from hatred of Communist tactics. No real danger exists as long as union automony is protected by "free discussion" of union action, the writer concluded. Similarly, YUKAN FUKUNICHI (Fukuoka, 4 March) was of the opinion that only by a display of "deep interest and earnestness in the daily affairs of their union" could the workers be ensured against "bondage" to an outside interest. Editorialists in YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 5 March), GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 3 March), YUKAN MIYAKO (Kyoto, 1 March), and YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 1 March), commemorating the second anniversary of the Labor Union Law, were agreed that neither labor nor management had adequate knowledge or understanding of the legislation. The last-mentioned journal regretted that in Yamagata Prefecture few written collective bargaining agreements had been concluded, and further pointed out that the local labor committee was so incapacitated by lack of funds as to be unable to attempt on-the-spot conciliation or mediation in a number of instances.

Ashida Labor Policy Criticized

Arguing that the three-party policy agreement which formed the basis for formation of the Ashida Cabinet "blurred" the problems of labor administration and enterprise adjustment, GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 5 March) complained that the agreement was so ambiguous as to give management ground to interpret it as "leftist," while labor believed it to be a reflection of the "reactionary policies of the Democrats." No more satisfied was CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 5 March), although here the new labor policy was criticized as being a mere carry-over of methods proven unsuccessful during the Katayama Administration.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Prefectural editors generally agreed that the pre-planting food allocation program for 1948 was an improvement over the former plan, but felt that the farmers' full cooperation was contingent on the Government's ability to carry out its promises to facilitate production. Most papers maintained that the allocation goal could not be achieved through Administration "encouragement" alone, and contended that the Government, in implementing positive measures to spur the farmers' will to produce, should give prime consideration to the adequate distribution of fertilizer. In addition, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 2 March) warned that more bonus goods must be awarded, while four journals -- CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 4 March), SHIN IWATE (Morioka, 3 March), YUKAN NAGOYA TIMES (Nagoya, 4 March), and DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 4 March) -- believed the success of the program depended to a large extent upon the Government's capacity to supply agricultural equipment. GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 4 March) admonished the Administration to be "impartial" in allotting quotas to farmers, and suggested that officials make accurate surveys of arable acreage and soil fertility before making allocations.

POLICE

The first editorial comment observed on inauguration of the new police system appeared in HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 6 March) and KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 6 March). The first-named journal praised the system as being "essentially democratic," but stressed that its success depends upon the people's "understanding and cooperation" as well as the "sincerity and industry" of public safety commissioners and police. KOBE SHIMBUN was doubtful whether small communities could support such a set-up financially, and suggested a "public peace tax" to raise revenue.

FOREIGN

Although foreign commentaries in recent prefectural papers were somewhat scanty, interest in the issue of American aid to China continued. OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 4 March) confined its observations largely to a recapitulation of recent events in Asia and called on the Japanese people to follow such developments carefully. The writer observed that if Japan had previously been well acquainted with the world situation or even that of the Far East "we would not have participated in such a foolish war." Dealing more specifically with the situation in China was SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 2 March) which appeared to believe that American aid would continue to be limited because of the troubled internal conditions of China. Conversely, GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 6 March) hoped that the United States would recognize the importance to the Far East of giving assistance to settle China's problems.

While expressing the opinion that a worsening of American-Soviet relations might develop, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 2 March) believed that although competition might continue, actual conflict was unlikely. HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 28 February), on the other hand, saw the recent Czechoslovakian crisis as another step toward division of the world into opposing camps.

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Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 12 March 1948 No. 220

POLITICS

Comment on policy agreement negotiations appeared in several papers, as efforts to organize a new coalition government again dominated prefectural editorial columns (Prefectural Press Analysis No. 219). Acknowledging fundamental differences between Democrats and left-wing Socialists, most writers appeared to regard compromises as inevitable, but -- on the basis of information available -- thought that the accord would be "abstract." Consequently, party leaders were advised to formulate policies (particularly in the field of economy) which would deal with Japan's reconstruction problems "realistically."

Coalition Attacked

Dissatisfied not only with the Ministerial Parties' proposed pact ("which is not attractive to the people"), but with the Liberals' "abstract theories," NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 1 March) maintained that both groups were acting in "utter defiance of the economic crisis," and that this was the reason for the apparent "immaturity" of current Japanese politics. Similarly, MINAMI NIPPON (Kagoshima, 2 March) hoped for "the speedy establishment of a policy agreement which would stabilize the people's livelihood," and indicated that Premier-designate Ashida's "realism" might result in such a pact. The need for "stability" also was emphasized by TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 28 February), which defended Ashida's attempts to obtain the cooperation of the Liberals and other opposition elements.

In another commentary on possible Liberal participation in the new administration, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 2 March) thought that Ashida's conciliatory attitude would result in a "vague" inter-party agreement. "The unprecedented national crisis which confronts this country," the writer declared, "requires that patriotic, conscientious statesmen serve for the benefit of all the people."

Observing that Socialist leftists seemed to be "poisonous" to other political groups, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 27 February) appeared to defend the faction by claiming that "no political regime will be established without the support of the working people and farmers." Another endorsement was expressed by CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 28 February), which contended that leftist participation in the cabinet would dispel the idea that the incoming administration was an extension of the Katayama Government. It would be "a misfortune for the laboring class," the editorialist added, if the leftists should split over whether to join the administration.

The nation may expect "progressive" policies if the Socialists and Democrats reach an agreement which is not "accidental," in the opinion of JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 29 February), but the journal warned that failure to arrive at such a pact would mean that neither party "would be able to stand against the opposition at a general election." An election was considered by NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 29 February) to be the "most suitable measure to the times," but it was believed that even if the Liberals should become the first party, they would be unable to form a single-party cabinet. "No conservative power," the paper argued, "seems to be able to tide over the labor offensive . . . during this period of reconstruction." Inclusion of the leftists in the incoming cabinet would mean the submission of "progressive" policies to the Diet, according to FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 27 February), but would also signal a "blistering attack" by the Liberals which might cause the Diet to lose its "essential character." In contrast, IBARAGI SHIMBUN (Mito, 29 February) appeared to welcome Socialist-Democratic cooperation "if it can be carried out in a spirit of mutual concessions and friendship."

LABOR

Rural editors commenting on the 1 March anniversary of the two-year-old Labor Union Law urged union leaders to concentrate first on production rehabilitation, and stated that a sound economy was the best insurance against the collapse of the workers' movement in Japan. Strife for strife's sake, especially in these times of "prostrated industry," was deplored by writers as the result of "miscalculations and misjudgments of the nation's condition." Some editors felt that alleged muscle-flexing disputes had been caused by misinterpreting labor's role in democracy as "political, rather than social."

Typifying prefectural reaction was a KYOTO SHIMBUN editorial (Kyoto, 1 March) which warned that the national economy was in no condition to grant immediately all the demands of the workers. "We must not think that livelihood stabilization can be achieved on the basis of Japan's prevailing economy. Right now, unions will actually get less by striking. Therefore, it is important that they work together for the rehabilitation of industry. This will lead to the building of even stronger unions. * * * The 'strife first' principle should be thrown overboard." Some progress toward this end already has been made, the paper said. The Democratization League of the NCIO "repudiated Communists (who) put Party expansion before union business," thus lifting a restriction from union development, the writer believed.

Two other journals -- YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 1 March) and AKITA SAKIGAKE (Akita, 2 March) -- agreed that unions should be more "contemplative" in calling disputes, but warned organizations against yielding too much as penance for past mistakes. Suggested revision of labor laws should be strongly opposed, said the Kyoto newspaper, as "limitations which eventually would deny laborers' basic rights and frustrate the workers' movement." Thus, the writer concluded, 1 March should become a day of "ceremonial protection" of the Labor Union Law by unified force. In the opinion of AKITA SAKIGAKE, this "protection" should take the form of close, constructive cooperation between unions and the Government. "It is encouraging that the labor movement has regained its true nature (since the failure of the scheduled general strike in February 1947). But to maintain this nature, the Government must evolve a strong understanding labor policy, while unions must develop more democratic management."

Newspapers felt in general that previous administrations had been "lax" in handling the labor problem, and DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 1 March) called upon the Ashida Cabinet to speed the end of "warfare between capitalists and laborers." However, ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 28 February) feared that Ashida might hope to check a labor offensive merely by appointing a Socialist to the labor post in the Cabinet, without making tangible moves to resolve workers' problems.

ECONOMY

Reflecting the sentiment of Tokyo papers, OSAKA JIJI SHIMPO (Osaka, 28 February) advised against suspension of war bond interest payments, and believed that the measure would cause "a loss of the public's confidence in the Government." Furthermore, the journal said, public bond holders, who have suffered from currency devaluation, would be required to make additional sacrifices. Financial institutions also would be confronted with a loss of revenue caused by discouragement of savings, as well as discontinued interest payments.

Price Structure

Revision of the existing price system was imminent, KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 29 February) declared, in consideration of the projected raise of the Government wage standard from 1,800 to 2,900 yen. "Price changes always correspond with wage fluctuations, the demand and supply of commodities, and the value of currency," the writer explained. For these reasons, an attempt to establish price stabilization based essentially upon balanced relationships among commodity prices assertedly would not succeed.

SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 29 February) urged "strict control" of blackmarkets, and pointed out that "Japan is able to produce only 80 percent of her food requirements." The failure of the government to eradicate blackmarkets does not justify the contention that "relaxation of regulations would stimulate a commodity distribution," the journal maintained. Consumers were, therefore, asked to comply with the price control program, and the Government was urged to assure effective rationing so as to retain "the people's cooperation."

Reparations

An OSAKA NICHINICHI editorial (Osaka, 29 February) considered as highly encouraging to the nation's economic rehabilitation China's reported concurrence with the FEC decision to pare down Japanese reparation demands. The writer asserted that fear of Japanese aggression no longer was warranted, because the country's democratization was progressing rapidly under the guidance of Occupation authorities. However, a warning was sounded against "excessive reparations," lest "Japan become a hotbed for extreme leftists and Fascists" and the maintenance of peace in the Far East be disturbed.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The 10-percent increase in food production recently planned by the conference of governors drew editorial comment from two provincial journals. Both agreed that success of the program hinges on the Administration's ability to carry out its promise to give bonus goods to farmers who exceed their quotas. CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 2 March) believed that "farmers surely will deliver rice" if the Government lives up to its pledge. However, the writer urged farmers to make "voluntary deliveries" to help overcome the food crisis and not rely only on import of agricultural products from the US. Believing the crux of the food delivery problem "lies in the farmers' confidence in the Government," OITA GODO SHIMBUN (Oita, 2 March) declared that farmers' faith must be regained by prompt and sufficient award of bonus goods and by "purchase of all excess rice at adequate prices." Unless this is done, the writer felt that farmers would be "obliged to deal with the blackmarket."

Perishable Food Control

Improvement in the strengthened control of perishable food was hailed by HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 1 March) and KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 29 February). The first-named journal declared that while provincial authorities deserve much credit for improved controls, Military Government officials also merit commendation for their "continual encouragement." The writer felt the problem now is whether control can be maintained, and to this end suggested that farmers and fishermen be adequately supplied with much-needed equipment. KYOTO NICHINICHI believed "weather conditions and temporary increase in official prices" were influential factors in the improved situation. The paper warned, however, that unless prices are increased and controls rigidly enforced, farmers will deliver their products into illegal channels.

Farm Land Reform

SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 29 February) urged greater speed in carrying out farm land reforms by empowering committees to "execute exchange of land" and by more expeditious "readjustment of rice fields, improvement of irrigation, and construction of roads." On the other hand, the writer declared that unless farmers "cast aside conservative thoughts," farm villages will not make any progress.

FOREIGN

Political division of Korea -- by the creation of a "People's Republic" in the northern half of the country -- eventually may deprive that nation of its chance for an integrated economy, according to OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 28 February). "We cannot be indifferent to the emergence of an indepehdent state in North Korea," the journal stated, "as the lack of Korean unification will have a bad influence on the future of Japan."

President Truman's recommendation that 570 million dollars be advanced to China was regarded by TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 29 February) as the "extension of the Marshall Plan to Asia." Success or failure of China's reconstruction will be determined by how the Republic's leaders employ this sum to "realize domestic peace," the editor said.

POLICE

Democratization of the police was believed by HOKKAI TIMES to have been impeded by "the feudalistic practice" of keeping matters secret. "We believe that the purpose of police reform will never be attained so long as the evils of bureaucracy are not thoroughly eliminated," the editorial concluded.

SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 28 February) claimed that the police were ignoring violations of economic controls. The writer also noted antagonism between Public Safety Committees and Prefectural Councils regarding the selection of local police chiefs, and said that some police stations were without proper leadership. Prefectural Councils assertedly had been able to block appointment of police chiefs by their control over local finance.

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Socialists and Liberals

Commentators were doubtful that Socialists and Democrats could blend economic philosophies to the satisfaction of either party. Few writers expected a cabinet "rearrangement" to eliminate the problems which brought on the en bloc resignation of the Katayama Administration. To most editors, the only hope for a comparatively stable cabinet lay in continuing Democratic concessions to the left-wing Socialists, to the possible aggravation of right-wing unrest in the former party. The main obstacle to a cabinet formation, writers said, was the Socialist problem of whether to consider "practical politics" as momentarily more important than economic policy.

For example, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 27 February) wondered whether enough Democrats would accept the "drastically socialistic" economic platform adopted by left-wingers in charge of Socialist policy-making. Here, the editor believed, the majority of the Socialists was "markedly unified" in outlook. In contrast to Democrats' desires, the Socialists were in favor of nationalization of banking institutions, electrical, iron, steel, and fertilizer enterprises. In the opinion of GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 25 February), however, the Ashida "cabinet makers" already had accepted some of these demands -- even though the selfsame policies had provoked a political battle which had caused the Katayama Cabinet's downfall. This was "a mysterious feature" of Democratic policies, the writer observed.

Democratic reliance on Socialist support -- especially in view of right-wing agitation -- boded ill for Ashida's "revised capitalism," said SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 25 February). TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 26 February) was one of the few journals which expected Socialist participation in the coming cabinet, and even then for "political reasons only." The paper explained that the "pro-participation" faction favored joining as a chance to develop "strategy and leadership," while "anti-participationists" were still campaigning for an Opposition status. ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 25 February) stated that "a sense of responsibility" should motivate Socialist participation in the new cabinet. Socialists did not live up to people's expectation, the writer said, hence it was their new duty to "join and cooperate with the Ashida-led cabinet."

Two papers commenting on the Liberal Party's role in the coming administration agreed that growing conservative popularity was not "positive," but a result of sharp Socialist decline in public regard. YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 24 February) held that "the people do not think that the recent political change was induced by the merits of the Liberal Party," while SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 27 February) doubted that the majority of voters would accept the Liberals until the latter "cast off its old skin both in policy and personnel." Skeptical of the Liberals' "constitutional argument" -- that the premiership should have passed to the Opposition in this case -- the writer asserted that "incomplete Party organization" had rendered the Liberals incapable of any other stand in the premiership issue.

LABOR

Prefectural commentators on NCIO "democratization" interpreted the movement as one necessary to insure the independence of labor unions. MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 28 February) declared that Socialist Party control of Sodomei (JFL) and Communist Party control of Sanbetsu (NCIO) hindered the normal development of trade unionism and prevented unions from becoming "schools for democracy." SHIN NIPPON SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 29 February) and HOKKAI NICHINICHI (Asahigawa, 29 February) looked forward to a "complete unification" of the labor front through a merger of pro-democratization elements in the major unions. The last-mentioned journal claimed that the NCIO Democratization League was gaining ground day-by-day and aimed at a "middle-of-the-road" organization which would eliminate "ultra-leftists" in the NCIO and "ultra-rightists" in the JFL.

Referring to current labor unrest over anticipated Government pressure for revision of labor legislation, SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 25 February) believed that unnecessary friction and suspicions had arisen because of the failure of "authorities" to give sufficient information to the public. For instance, the writer said that contemplated extension of the power and authority of the labor committees was intended to facilitate the peaceful solution of disputes and need not necessarily be regarded as hostile to labor. YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 25 February) regretted that the local labor committee had refused to advise on settlement of the prefectural teachers' union dispute because of the absence of an arbitration clause in the labor contract. The committee was said to be shirking responsibility.

Enforcement of Labor Standards Law

SHIN NIPPON SHIMBUN (28 February) reviewed changes in working conditions to be expected with enforcement of the Labor Standards Law. Most drastic, the writer said, were provisions with regard to the treatment of women workers, previously "shackled to the feudalistic employment system," and children, formerly driven to work under the pretext of apprenticeship. On the other hand, YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 28 February) was far from hopeful about the speed with which the system may be changed, and pointed out that only three percent (in north Kyoto) and 0.5 percent (in south Kyoto) of the industries supposedly affected by the law had met the deadline for submitting working regulation drafts to the local authorities. The writer attributed this lag to lack of understanding on the part of the laborers and the desire of operators to "sabotage" the law.

ECONOMY

Approval of anti-trust legislation was expressed in several prefectural journals which gave particular attention to the enforcement of the Economic Decentralization Act. In a typical editorial, CHUBU KEIZAI (Nagoya, 24 February) declared that "the law aims to eliminate the economic potential of aggressive warfare, as well as to rationalize the economy and promote efficiency through the encouragement of fair competition." But the paper warned against "excessive deconcentration" which might throttle Japan's industrial capacity. Such a development would be regrettable, the writer said, because the successful reorganization of monopolistic enterprises would benefit both Japan and the United States. The writer maintained that "if the country democratizes its enterprises and recovers its former productive capacity," Japan will cease being a liability to US taxpayers, and may become an asset to American interests as "a bulwark in the Far East against Communism."

Cautious enforcement of the Economic Decentralization Act also was stressed in a MINAMI NIPPON editorial (Kagoshima, 27 February), which described the purpose of the law to be "increased production and the progress of business." For example, subdivision of Kyushu transportation and electric companies would impede the economic growth of that area, the commentator maintained, inasmuch as efficiency of these services assertedly would decrease while operating costs increased.

Taxation

Appeals for completion of tax payments continued to appear in the editorial columns of rural papers. AKITA MINPO (Omagari, 25 February) attributed "the fundamental reason" for tax delinquency to the public's failure to understand their obligations. Basic conditions for improved tax collections were said to be "thorough understanding of the purpose of taxation, strong measures against delinquents, and an equitable tax structure."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Apprehension among farmers over an "agricultural panic" was noted by three provincial journals. Declaring that concern over a panic was the "greatest topic" in the Iwate district, IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 25 February) attributed this fear to improvement in the world economic situation "which will encourage import of cheap agricultural products" and cause a drop in domestic farm prices. KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 28 February) stated that Japanese farmers realize only a small margin of profit on their produce but make up for this by blackmarket operations. Thus the import of farm products, the editorialist pointed out, will considerably reduce farmers' earnings as "blackmarket profits will be the first to disappear." SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 26 February) accused farmers of "valuing convention more than progress" and warned that if they are to compete on the world market they must "reform agriculture by employing scientific methods."

Agricultural Cooperatives

Editorialists continued to deplore the sluggish progress in the formation of cooperatives in some prefectures, and ascribed this to indifference and ignorance among farmers. OITA GODO (Oita, 25 February) warned farmers that the current agricultural "stabilization" is only temporary and that they must be prepared through cooperative management to meet competition when conditions improve in other parts of the world. SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 25 February) also cautioned that in a world steadily moving toward "collective production," Japanese farmers must rid themselves of "feudalistic self-assertion and selfishness." ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, 29 February) doubted whether the aims and functions of cooperatives were fully understood by farmers, and criticism was directed at an Agriculture Ministry pamphlet for not outlining clearly the benefits farmers would derive from cooperatives.

Perishable Food Control

HOKURIKU YUKAN (Toyama, 26 February) disclosed that in a poll of Takaoka City consumers on the strengthened control of perishable foods, 89 percent thought the system was not effective because control was "nominal." The paper felt that residents of other areas shared this opinion; the people reportedly were not opposed to the system in principle but to the method of enforcement. The Government was urged by the journal to take notice of this situation and conduct an investigation. On the other hand, SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 28 February) noted general improvement in controls, but believed that marketing of fish needed more stringent supervision.

FOREIGN

Comment on the creation of a "People's Republic" in North Korea and the effect that this development might have on Japan again drew the attention of prefectural writers (Prefectural Press Analysis No. 217). The difficulties of the divided Korean administration were regarded by MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 21 February) as unfortunate both for Korea and the United Nations, while DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 26 February) saw creation of the "People's Republic" at this time as an effort to confront the recommendations of the UN investigators with a fait accompli. CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 26 February), after reviewing attempts of UN committees to solve the Korean issue, predicted that more difficulties might be expected with the creation of the "Republic." The DAILY TOHOKU editorial foresaw possibilities of civil war between North and South Korea, and -- noting that Korea is the only place in the Far East where the US and the USSR have direct contact -- joined with other journals in remarking tenseness of relations between the two major powers. Progress of the Chinese civil war, and the significance of the China aid program also drew some comment.

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Civil Information and Education Section
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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 5 March 1948 No. 218

POLITICS

Comment on the designation of Hitoshi Ashida as premier dominated prefectural editorial columns, with virtually all journals predicting that the new government would be short-lived. Regarding the projected administration as a re-shuffling of the Katayama coalition, most writers expected Ashida to be confronted not only with the problems of his predecessor, but to be unable to fulfill promises assertedly made to left-wing Socialists in return for their support. There was strong criticism of the leftists for their action, and numerous papers again denounced "blackmarket politics" which had returned the former Ministerial Parties to power.

Concern Over 'Constitutional Government'

Describing the incoming government as "the Katayama Cabinet with a new leader," CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 23 February) praised the out-going Premier for not seeking re-election, but "lamented" the decision of the Socialist Party to participate. From the standpoint of developing "democratic politics," the editorial argued that there should be "serious discussion" of the Liberals' claim that formation of a new regime should be entrusted to the leading opposition party. "The Liberals were right," the writer contended, "in adhering to the theory of constitutional government." A parallel view was presented by NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 22 February), which asserted that the majority of people were "astonished that the Liberals, and other opposition parties which had been fighting for constitutional government, were defeated." Designation of Ashida might have been "inevitable under present circumstances," the journal acknowledged, but "we must say that it was an undesirable precedent." Several other commentators were of the same opinion, but NISHI NIPPON(Fukuoka, 22 February) believed that the Liberals "have only themselves to blame because they failed to offer any positive policies."

The "unprincipled" left-wing Socialists who voted for Ashida have caused the "entire nation" to believe that the Socialist Party no longer advocated socialism, according to YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 22 February). Similar denunciation of the leftists appeared in TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 22 February), which pointed out that the leftists "are the very ones who emphasized the unreasonableness of the Socialist-Democratic coalition," and in OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 24 February), which observed "the people's surprise and disappointment." Foreseeing Democratic concessions to the leftists, the last-named paper thought that Ashida "will suffer more than Katayama," while KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 23 February) maintained that the leftist program could not be accepted by the Democrats.

"Just as Katayama had to listen to the Democrats to retain their support, so will Ashida have to please the Socialists," in the opinion of TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 24 February), and -- for the same reason -- SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 23 February) regarded the incoming premier's position as "delicate." YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 23 February) felt that Socialist-Democratic differences would result in "difficult sailing" for the new coalition, but indicated that harmony might be forthcoming if the Democrats "would go nearer the Socialist policies."

Diet Dissolution Urged

Anticipating insurmountable difficulties for Ashida, some journals recommended dissolution of the Diet and a general election to "learn the will of the people." For instance, YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 23 February) contended that this course should be the "mission" of the new government, and HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 23 February) maintained that only an election would bring "stability." Another argument was offered by EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 23 February), which feared that failure to dissolve the Diet would result in a "labor offensive."

Pre-nomination Comment

Prefectural editorial comment preceding Ashida's designation consisted mainly of abstract attacks on "political maneuverings," histories of inter-party relations since the formation of the Katayama Cabinet, and studies of Government and Opposition arguments regarding the method of choosing the new premier. Partisanship in a positive sense was absent from virtually all editorials; support of Ashida seemed entirely lacking, while Yoshida was favored for procedural, rather than political reasons. Throughout the provincial press, the one-time cabinet chief and present Liberal leader was believed the man most likely to dissolve the Diet and order a general election. In this connection, sentiment for a general election was widespread, apparently because of the narrow pluralities among the Democrats, Socialists, and Liberals.

Typifying prefectural comment was a GIFU TIMES editorial (Gifu, 21 February) which mirrored the general belief that mere designation of Yoshida would not in itself stabilize the political situation. "In this connection," the writer said, "the practical view held by Ashida (that majority Diet vote should decide the premiership) gains favor. But this indicates secret maneuverings and thus takes on a fascistic tinge." The constitutional argument that the leader of the Opposition should take the initiative to form a new cabinet -- as advanced by the Liberals -- was taken up by SANYO CHOHO (Okayama, 22 February), but the paper nevertheless felt that "politics in many cases cannot be settled by conventional theory." KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 19 February) also yielded to these considerations, declaring: "It cannot be imagined that a smaller party can maintain the cabinet without carrying out dissolution of the Diet, especially in the case of the Liberals." An identical belief was held by SHIN OSAKA (Osaka, 18 February), in an editorial stating that dissolution naturally would follow a Liberal ascension to the premiership.

An illustration of the manner in which rural papers supported "constitutionalism," and yet withheld support of Yoshida himself, was best shown by YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 13 February). "We do not consider the leaders of the Liberal Party to be absolutely the best," the editorial stated, "but we think (Yoshida's designation) is the best course for Japan." For proof of this argument, the writer alluded to Katayama's decision to disband the Cabinet -- instead of dissolving the Diet -- as "the wisest way to avoid consternation." (However, DAILY TOHOKU -- Hachinoe, 21 February -- attacked Katayama's decision, charging that it checked the redetermination of public sentiment by leaving the Diet intact.) Only one journal, CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 21 February) thought that Ashida might dissolve the Diet in the face of heavy Socialist and Liberal opposition.

According to KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 12 February), the people themselves -- while desirous of a single-party cabinet -- were politically apathetic toward the Liberals even though the editorialist stated that "the public wants a free society, not one restricted within the narrow framework of controlled economics." In this vein, KAHOKU SHIMPO contended that public support did not tend toward the conservatives so much as away from the leftist groups. "Popularity of the Liberal Party is only temporary; reaction is inevitable," the commentator believed. Elsewhere in the press, editors scored Democratic-Socialists moves toward reunion, with KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 21 February) describing the Democrats' tactics as "senseless" and HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 21 February) likening them to "cats who shut their eyes and steal cream."

LAND REFORM

Editorialists in SHIN EHIME (Imahara, 19 February), SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 19 February), JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 20 February), KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 19 February), NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 19 February), and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 14 February) endorsed the Government's stand on acceleration of land reform, and joined in warning against the conception that the land reform is a transitory or temporary measure, or that transfer of land under the program is in any sense unconstitutional. "Unreasonable interference by reactionary influences" was said to have been sponsored by "certain conservative elements" both within and without the Administration, and was condemned as calculated to retard the development of democracy in Japan. Commentators in IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 19 February) and KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 20 February) delivered the same message with certain reservations, the first-mentioned journal finding ground for "sympathy" with landlords who are deprived of "their ancestors' possessions," and the last-mentioned paper implying that some initial economic sacrifice (through independent cultivation of small holdings) must be expected in the interests of democracy.

WAR CRIMES

The Japanese people's responsibility for the war in permitting usurpation of power by military leaders was emphasized in prefectural commentaries on Chief Prosecutor Keenan's closing arguments before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. Almost unanimously, journals throughout Japan refused to absolve the Japanese people from war guilt (Press Analyses Nos. 703-705), and made observations such as that of KITA NIPPON (Toyama, 14 February), which remarked that "it is we who are being judged at the Tokyo Tribunal."

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Slow progress in the formation of Farmers' Cooperative Unions was attributed by three journals to indifference among farmers. SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 22 February) reported that attendance at meetings to discuss dissolution of the old agricultural associations was extremely low, and feared that this apparent lack of interest might give rise to "corrupt dealings" and allow opportunity for conniving among village political bosses. The paper warned farmers that successful establishment of unions depends solely upon their "self-awakening." GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 19 February) -- also deploring the poor turnout at meetings -- cited a district where gatherings were cancelled three times due to scanty attendance, and attributed this to the possibility that cooperative unions might not be the "true organizations" for farmers. The farmers' attitude toward formation of unions "makes the future very pessimistic," NISHI NIPPON (Fukuoka, 21 February) declared. The journal regretted the absence of efforts to educate farmers on the need for unions.

Food Corporation

In comments on the inauguration of the Food Corporation, OSAKA NICHINICHI (Osaka, 21 February) and TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN (Tokushima, 22 February) expressed concern over the qualifications of the personnel who will administer the new governmental body. The attitude of the employees -- many of whom formerly were associated with the old private organizations -- will determine the success of the new corporation, the first-named paper stated, while TOKUSHIMA SHIMBUN feared that if the employees do not correct their former profit-seeking ways, the people will suffer hardships.

SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 21 February), referring to the strengthened control of perishable foods, pointed out that not only must producers, shippers, and distributors strictly observe regulations but that consumers also must bear responsibility. In order to help build a stable economy, the paper urged that consumers "must endure hardships of living . . . and stamp out business at the back door of shops."

LABOR

Significance of the "democratization" movement within the labor unions -- which recently attracted considerable attention in the metropolitan press (Press Analyses Nos. 705 - 716) -- was examined by several prefectural editorialists. HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 19 February) interpreted the controversy in the NCIO, where the argument had centered on the prohibition of so-called "fractional activities" by Communist Party members, as an indication of the immaturity of the trade union movement in Japan. Despite the spectacular growth of unionism in the post-war period, the writer maintained that few individuals had either training or experience in democratic conduct, and that this resulted in a lack of "autonomous strength" and put the unions at the mercy of any aggressive minority.

While regarding the struggle for the independence of the union movement with like favor, YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 21 February) stressed the dangers of emasculating union strength by "ideological or political struggles," claimed that a number of able men had been called "pro-Communist" merely for exhibiting an energetic and independent spirit, and warned that the "real motives" of active anti-Communists must be carefully scrutinized. Furthermore, the journal maintained that resurgence of the "feudal . . . narrow-mindedness" and "fear of Communist ideology" which heretofore caused the Japanese to ally themselves with Nazi Germany must be prevented. CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 22 February) believed the struggle between pro- and anti-democratization factions to be evidence of a "weakening" of labor power, and stated categorically that the proposed revision of labor legislation was intended to contribute further to that end. Although organized labor, particularly the NCIO unions, were said to have launched a powerful opposition, the writer feared that the labor movement suffered in part from having had rights and privileges conferred upon it too easily, and that individual workers were not sufficiently conscious of their proper role within organizations.

Commenting on a local election for membership in the prefectural labor committee, SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 22 February) criticized the voters for having allowed themselves to be unduly influenced by the will of union executives in choosing committeemen, and neglecting to make a "conscious and over-all examination" of the qualifications of all the candidates. At the same time, the journal expressed fear that in the name of cooperation between labor and capital the labor committee might degenerate into a "government-sponsored organization," and cease to reflect public opinion or serve the public interest.

ECONOMY

Tax collection difficulties were discussed in prefectural editorials which stressed the huge sum of assessments still overdue in the closing months of the present fiscal year. YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 20 February) attributed the poor collection record to the fact that "the number of tax officials has been reduced to half of the pre-war level, while taxpayers have increased ten-fold." MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 21 February) thought that tax delinquency was due largely to the public's unfamiliarity with the new registration system. Meanwhile, TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 22 February) pointed out that "taxpayers must be convinced that tax payments were instrumental in checking inflation, saving national finance from collapse, and in promoting social welfare."

Foreign Capital

Four rural papers -- SHIN EHIME SHIMBUN (Imaharu, 22 February), JOMO SHIMBUN (Maebashi, 22 February), BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 21 February), and YUKAN OKAYAMA (Okayama, 23 February) -- pointed to the introduction of foreign capital as the pivotal factor in the rehabilitation of the nation's economy. But the editorials expressed concern that the public was not yet fully aware of the importance of investments from abroad.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 3 March 1948 No. 217

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Although editorialists in KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 17 February), YAMATO TIMES (Nara, 19 February), and GODO SHIMBUN (Okayama, 19 February) reported favorably on distribution of fish and vegetables in their areas since the institution of intensified perishable food controls in December, writers in several other journals complained of shortages or ineffective execution of controls.

In Akita Prefecture the amount of distribution was said to have been very small, but AKITA SAKIGAKE SHIMBUN (Akita, 17 February) hoped for relief through measures to be undertaken by a newly formed community committee. TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 17 February) complained that the blackmarket there was flourishing and reported that large quantities of vegetables were being siphoned off into the Osaka and Kobe districts through illegal channels. Fish were said to be scarce because of the failure of the Government to provide fishermen with sufficient oil, rope, and nets for their work, thus necessitating non-official sales in order to acquire enough yen to buy production materials on the blackmarket. Housewives in Nagoya were told at a mass rally that foraging activities only stimulated price raises, according to TOKAI MAINICHI SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 21 February), but the paper observed that stricter government control would be necessary to supplement popular efforts to restrict illegal transactions. The system whereby vegetables are both received and distributed by the same agency was said by KANAGAWA SHIMBUN (Yokohama, 19 February) to result in unequal distribution between areas, and the writer recommended standardization of the procedure so that vegetables, like fish, would be allocated equally to distribution stations from a central receiving unit.

Completion of 1947 Rice Deliveries

Amid generally congratulatory comments on successful completion of quota deliveries of rice for 1947, journals published in still lagging prefectures attempted to explain delinquencies in those areas. YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 19 February) attributed difficulties to a lack of scientific basis for estimates, and to the alleged interference of "private considerations" in the allocation of quotas. Influential county councils were said to have been able to reduce the original local quota, thus placing an unfair burden on other counties, while in some villages the split between the NFU and the JFU was said to have favored farmers belonging to the more powerful group. CHIBA SHIMBUN (Chiba, 19 February) maintained that the farmers' anxiety over a coming "agricultural panic" -- stimulated by predictions of an end to the inflation which currently bolsters rural prosperity -- had contributed to a tendency to avoid controls and sell products on the blackmarket.

Criticism of a "prize system" which distributes radios, sake, or tobacco instead of the fertilizer and agricultural implements most needed by the farmers was voiced by SAITAMA SHIMBUN (Urawa, 20 February). Similar feelings apparently prompted TOYAMA SHIMBUN's (Takaoka, 20 February) observations on the drive for a 10 percent increase in production. Unless the Government takes steps to alleviate the shortage of fertilizer and chemicals for pest control, and also to instruct farmers in proper use of these materials on an individual level, the plan could not be expected to develop, the paper said. YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 19 February) also maintained that the real question was not the program, but its "materialization."

Agricultural Cooperatives

While reporting in detail formal dissolution of the Agricultural Associations and development of Agricultural Cooperative Unions in each prefecture, commentators continued to voice misgivings on the reality of a transfer in control. General ignorance of the purpose and functions of the new organizations, plus lack of sustained enthusiasm on the part of small landowners and ordinary farmers, was believed to facilitate the continuation of control by former "feudalistic farm bosses." NIPPON KAI SHIMBUN (Tottori, 19 February) accused the representatives of the General Federation of Farmers and spokesmen of the former Agricultural Association (who were said to dominate the Prefectural Assembly) of having conspired to place the Agricultural Cooperatives under the control of the conservative Economic Department of the Prefectural Office, instead of under the more progressive Farmland Department. The situation was said to have reached the stage where exercise of the people's recall right against the Governor was "inevitable." Both NOOBI SHIMBUN (Tajimi, 18 February) and TOKUSHIMA MINPO (Tokushima, 19 February) were inclined to blame the farmers for not assuming responsibility for the protection of their own rights, though writers in both papers believed lack of information to be the crucial deterrent. AKITA MINPO (Omagara, 20 February) expressed concern for the same reason, adding that the struggle for control between the JFU and the NFU had further complicated the issue. NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 17 February) alleged that preparations for the transfer of control were inadequate in that prefecture, and that in the case of the silk, cattle, and tea industries, loopholes had been left for the interference of commercial and industrial capital against the interests of the producing farmers. Farmers were urged to "translate their zeal (for reform) into deeds" and actively combat the entrenched interests.

POLITICS

Discussion of the change in government appeared in numerous editorials in mid-February, with a majority of commentators reiterating belief that the Liberals should assume leadership. As in the past, however (Prefectural Press Analysis No. 216), writers evinced little support for Liberal policies, and appeared to regard such an administration as temporary until the anticipated dissolution of the Diet. A few journals advocated a second coalition centering around the Democrats and Socialists, while others confined recommendations to establishment of a "strong" cabinet which would emphasize economic reconstruction.

'Political Suicide' Predicted

It would be "political suicide" for the Democrats to lead the government as a result of compromise with the Socialists, according to YAMANASHI NICHINICHI (Kofu, 18 February). Denouncing the Democrats' "lack of political morality," the editorialist argued that the Party should assume partial responsibility for the collapse of the Katayama Cabinet, and contended that it was in keeping with "parliamentary politics" to permit the opposition (Liberals) to organize the new government. In the opinion of GIFU TIMES (Gifu, 17 February), "the people deeply resent the unconstitutional attitude of certain leaders who intend to gain a majority in the Diet and to take the reins of political power without resorting to dissolution. * * * We hope that the new cabinet will be formed as early as possible . . . and that there will be a repudiation of the political blackmarketeering."

If none of the Ministerial Parties is able to command a majority, OSAKA TIMES (Osaka, 20 February) thought that Liberal President Yoshida should be designated premier, and that he should then dissolve the Diet. Similarly, NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 20 February) endorsed dissolution, and KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 20 February) maintained that such action was necessary "to save the nation from further political uneasiness." The paper agreed with TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 18 February) that "we do not necessarily approve the Liberals' policies or their campaign to form a new conservative party," but saw no alternative to a "short-range" Yoshida cabinet while preparations were made for an election. In contrast, SHINANO NICHINICHI (Ueda, 20 February) wanted a conservative administration and declared that "this is a good opportunity for the Liberals, Democrats, and People's Cooperatives to unite."

ECONOMY

Editorials emphasizing "the duty of tax payment" appeared in several provincial papers. SHIMANE SHIMBUN (Matsue, 18 February) declared that "our economic rehabilitation and the people's welfare, as well as the cultural reconstruction of Japan, depend upon complete tax collection." Inflation could be checked, and economic stabilization achieved, through tax payments, this writer believed. In contrast, CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 17 February) observed that inflation already had subsided during recent months due to "the absorption of purchasing power by tax collection." The editorialist feared, however, that the change of Administration might contribute to a higher cost of living, resulting from increased railway and postal rates and an upward revision of the commodity price system.

US Price Slump

Although the Japanese economy under Occupation controls was believed to be isolated from the immediate effects of the American price decline, KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 18 February) thought that "the report on the slump of US agricultural prices will stimulate and encourage sound and vigorous organization of farmers' cooperative unions." Two Osaka papers -- YUKAN SHIN OSAKA (19 February) and OSAKA NICHINICHI (18 February) -- considered the price decline as a transitory phenomenon, rather than "the first stage of a world-wide depression."

Meanwhile, HAKODATE SHIMBUN (Hakodate, 20 February) stressed the importance of Japanese trade with Far Eastern countries. "Our greatest efforts should be directed to the establishment of commerce with Asia," the journal maintained, because "the Japanese economy depends entirely upon the development of Asia's economic rehabilitation."

Administrative Readjustment

Union opposition to administrative readjustment plans was scored in a SHINANO MAINICHI editorial (Nagano, 18 February), which claimed that efficient government was the desire of all groups, including working people. The writer was of the opinion that "the present inflation could not be resolved without personnel readjustment measures." In a commentary on the Government's retrenchment program, SAGA SHIMBUN (Saga, 18 February) advised prefectural authorities to make dismissals impartially and objectively, and to find productive occupations for the disemployed.

FOREIGN

Still the chief topic of foreign news commentaries, the establishment of the "People's Republic" north of the 38th parallel resigned prefectural editors to continuing unrest in Korea. Four of the 12 canvassed journals considered the possibility of a civil war -- in view of a reported army of 200,000 men in North Korea -- while others saw creation of the "provisional government" as a violation of international agreements brought on by ideological friction between the United States and Russia. Pessimistic of the United Nations Committee's chances of reconciling US-USSR differences, editors felt restricted to comment on the "explosiveness" of the situation and its pertinence to Japan.

To KOKUSAI TIMES (Osaka, 21 February), the erection of a People's Republic was "not surprising." Declaring that the action will bring unhappiness to all Koreans and lead to civil war, the commentator held that Korea could be unified only by Koreans. "A puppet government of another nation cannot bring forth the real solution," according to the writer. The report that some of the new government's officials also were members of the Northwest Administrative Committee -- established in October in Manchuria -- was considered to indicate some connection between the recently announced North Korean body and the civil war in China. Similarly, KYOTO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 19 February) noted that the leader of the "Republic" had been in Soviet Russia for many years and was an officer in the North Korean Communist Party. "Thus we can guess the

character of the Government. * * * With a standing army of 200,000 the group seems to intend to include South Korea in its scheme. If this happens, Korea will go red, and Japan will be seriously affected."

This prediction was echoed by KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 19 February), which described the "independence of North Korea (as) a clear violation of United Nations treaties and the Moscow Agreement." Seen as proof that Russia had opened its anti-US offensive in earnest, the "Republic" was expected to convert South Korea into an arena of struggle between the two major powers. "Asia, culturally lower than western Europe, is thus more susceptible to Communism. And as Japan is the only industrialized nation in the Orient, we must watch ourselves." Possibility of serious US-USSR "confrontation" in the southern half of the country also was seen by TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 19 February), which prophesied that the "USSR intends to take positive action toward South Korea in the future, as this new political power declares itself."

SHIN NIPPON (Kyoto, 19 February) saw no signs of "positive activity on the American side," and, in the opinion of SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (Takamatsu, 19 February), opposition encountered by the United Nations Advisory Committee and the emergence of the "People's Republic" had "broken the last hope of unifying Korea." Furthermore, the first-named journal felt that the "Republic," with its own army and currency, represented a revolution surpassing similar developments in Europe.

EDUCATION

Initiation on 1 April of new higher secondary schools under the 6:3:3 system drew the attention of prefectural writers, with FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 21 February) and KAHOKU SHIMPO (Sendai, 17 February) urging that quality rather than quantity should be emphasized in establishing these institutions, and HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 19 February) cautioning against merely superficial changes in the old middle school system. Indiscriminate construction of schools by politically-minded prefectural education committees, and elevation of inadequately trained elementary school teachers to positions in the new secondary schools also were regarded by the journals as possible impediments to successful implementation of the new school system.

The question of co-education also appeared, as WAKAYAMA SHIMBUN (Wakayama, 19 February) summarized arguments for and against immediate initiation of co-education in higher secondary schools. Concluding that opposition arose from mistrust of co-education, the journal saw the familiar conflict between the old and the new over this issue. Meantime YUKAN MIE (Yokkaichi, 21 February) noted eagerness among young women to enter colleges and higher secondary schools, while MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 18 February) asserted that recent surveys in Kyoto had indicated that girls failed to realize the need for higher education for themselves.

POLICE

Success of the autonomous police system now being instituted throughout the prefectures depends upon the integrity and diligence of "public peace committees," NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 18 February) maintained. Condemning the traditional police system as oppressive, the Suwa journal reminded the committees that their purpose was "the protection of the rights and freedom of the people Meanwhile, FUKUI SHIMBUN (Fukui, 19 February) recommended improved treatment of policemen, proposing salaries which would be commensurate with the new responsibilities.

PRESS

Liquidation of "racketeer newspapers and magazines" was demanded in a YUKAN MIE SHIMBUN editorial (Yokkaichi, 20 February) which held that biased news reporting was inimical to the democratization of Japan. Meanwhile, IWATE SHIMPO (Morioka, 16 February) sounded an editorial warning against "the vulgarization of the press." Publishers were asked "to be faithful to their conscience," and the public was urged to be more selective in the purchase of current literature.

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS
Civil Information and Education Section
Analysis and Research Division

MAR 3 1948

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PREFECTURAL PRESS ANALYSIS, 27 February 1948 No. 216

POLITICS

Numerous prefectural comments on the Katayama Government's resignation echoed the opinion of some Tokyo journals (Press Analyses Nos. 701, 702) that the Liberal Party should form the next administration for "constitutional" reasons. Although there was little support for the policies of ex-Premier Yoshida's Party, most writers contended that the position of the Liberals as the largest opposition group entitled them to succeed the Socialist-led coalition. Papers which advocated such a procedure joined other papers in recommending dissolution of the Diet and a general election.

Public Support for Liberals Claimed

The nation supports the view that the Liberals should "take charge" of the next cabinet, according to HOKKAI TIMES (Sapporo, 14 February), "because the Socialists and Democrats resigned owing to their failure." Therefore, the writer maintained that it was desirable for the next government to be a conservative coalition, but added that voters should be given the ultimate choice of choosing between "conservative" and "progressive" groups. KOCHI NIPPO (Kochi, 17 February) also claimed that public opinion favored giving the Liberals the initiative, and warned that the Democrats would "bring anger on themelves if they ignore this general trend." Similarly, KYOTO NICHINICHI (Kyoto, 17 February) -- after acknowledging that Yoshida "may not be the best man" -- wanted the former premier to head the next cabinet, "whether it is composed of the Liberals alone or is a coalition."

Endorsement of a Liberal-led regime also was forthcoming from FUKUSHIMA MINYU (Fukushima, 14 February), which indicated, however, that it should be regarded as a temporary administration until a general election. Virtually the same opinion was presented by KOKUSAI SHIMBUN (Osaka, 15 February), which maintained that conferences of "big four" party chiefs could not resolve political problems.

Other Views on Political Change

It was the opinion of KUMAMOTO NICHINICHI (Kumamoto, 16 February) that, even if Yoshida should become premier, the nation could expect no change in government policy "because the motives of all parties are based upon mere ambition to assume power." Asserting that the Liberals were "too weak" to form a single-party administration, SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (Takamatsu, 15 February) believed that "actual circumstances" favored a Democratic or a second Katayama cabinet. In the event an election should be necessary, the editorialist urged "public management to guarantee fairness." Assumption of office by the Liberals was rejected by KOBE SHIMBUN (Kobe, 16 February) because the Katayama Cabinet "did not resign due to conservative pressure," and an election was considered the only solution.

Reasons for the resignation again drew comment, with some editorials placing the blame upon the Socialists. HOKKOKU MAINICH (Kanazawa, 16 February), for instance, said that voters were "bitterly disappointed" over the Socialists' record, and advised them to "streamline" their policies as an opposition group. Left-wing Socialist Suzuki's policies as Lower House Budget Committee Chairman were believed by CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 15 February) to have precipitated the collapse, and, consequently, "severe censure" was called for. In contrast, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 14 February) praised Suzuki's later action as having prevented

the Party's "disintegration." To YAMANASHI JIJI (Kofu, 16 February), the reason for resignation was an "uncontrollable split in politics" which could be settled only by establishing a "democratic front."

LABOR

Prefectural editorialists, commenting on a variety of problems confronting labor, could recommend no certain course for either the Government or the unions beyond agreeing that both face tremendous difficulties because of the unstabilized economic situation. OITA GODO SHIMBUN (Oita, 9 February) and SHIN NIPPON SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 12 February) stressed the primary role of the working classes in Japan's industrial rehabilitation. Hailing the proposed formation of a prefectural labor council in Oita, the first-mentioned journal advised the organization of its dual function as the "protector of the worker's livelihood" and the "propelling force" in economic recovery. SHIN NIPPON referred to the present split in the labor unions between pro- and anti-Communist factions as a "cold war," while MIYAKO SHIMBUN (Kyoto, 17 February), commenting on the "democratization" movement within the NCIO, said that, regardless of the high motives of its sponsors, any threat to the unity of the labor front must be treated with the greatest circumspection.

According to BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 17 February), a recent labor youth convention in Bofu City indicated an increasing tendency toward "self-criticism" and rationality. Noting that the "antipathy of these young people against war" -- derived from their own "bitter experience" -- was most strong, the writer anticipated that the energies of this group would give tremendous impetus to the drive for democracy within the unions and the nation.

Both NANSHIN NICHINICHI (Suwa, 13 February) and HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 9 February) remarked on the growing influence of the local labor committees as mediating organs in a period of intensified industrial strife. SHIKOKU KEIZAI (Takamatsu, 9 February) and KYUSHU TIMES (Fukuoka, 13 February) discussed the question of a new minimum wage, noting that the setting of an acceptable monetary standard had become increasingly complicated by constantly inflated living costs and the prevalence of black-market transactions. CHUBU MINPO (Nagoya, 15 February) expected the extension of working hours (proposed in connection with a higher pay scale for government communication workers) to pose the problem of personnel cuts and believed serious tension would develop on this point.

ECONOMY

Recent editions of prefectural journals published several proposals for retardation of inflationary trends. Whereas SHIN EHIME (Imaharu, 15 February) recommended administrative readjustment and completed tax payments, SHINKO YUKAN (Kobe, 15 February) and SANGYO KEIZAI (Osaka, 14 February) strpssed increased production. The last-named paper pointed out that "with the easing of the food situation, inflation seems to have passed its peak," but a new wage scale of 10,000 yen per month -- reportedly requested from private railway companies -- was denounced as definitely inflationary.

CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 17 February) -- referring to boosted prices of government monopoly goods, higher State enterprise charges, projected revision of the price structure, and prospects of an enormous budget for the 1948-49 fiscal year -- blamed Administration policy for aggravating monetary instability. Disclosure of illegally procured and hoarded war materials and the imposition of a new tax on personal property were suggested as counter-inflationary measures. Meanwhile, DAILY TOHOKU (Hachinoe, 14 February) -- while acknowledging the Cabinet's budget-making prerogative -- pointed out that the Diet was empowered to make necessary revisio(in the interest of sound (nance.