

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

PREFECTURAL PRESS, 30 November 1946

No. 92

Politics

That the present Diet should be dissolved in order to give the Japanese people an opportunity to "make a new decision" was the consensus of the prefectural press, but writers continued to express doubt that the Socialists were in a position to head a new Cabinet. Most writers apparently believed that, should a national election be held now, the Socialist Party would emerge dominant -- if for no other reason than that the Liberals and Progressives have been so severely crippled by the purge extension. However, even strongly pro-Socialist journals have not indicated that anything other than a coalition Administration could be formed. Understandable confusion characterized the majority of editorials on politics.

One of the most lucid representative comments was that of AKITA SAKIGAKE SHIMPO (Akita, 19 November), which advocated dissolution of the Diet and has generally been sympathetic toward the Socialists. "Since the formation of the Yoshida Cabinet," the editorialist said, "the Socialists have encouraged the Government, but they have failed to make it bring into practice those policies which they originally entertained. As a result, the people harbor suspicions about the Socialists." The writer then developed a point which has been brought up frequently: that the Socialists -- in this particular case, but more often all parties -- should strengthen their organization in rural areas. "We regret that they are not making efforts to organize and educate the vast number of young men and women (who are sympathetic), nor planning to absorb the intellectual class which sustains their policies." If this were done, the paper thought, it would stimulate those who possess the ambition to aid Japan through the present predicament.

A further indication of the interest which prefectural journals have in strengthening local party organization was an editorial in HYUGA NICHINICHI (Miyazaki, 19 November) which claimed that the refusal of the Socialists to participate in that prefecture's "democratic front" had dealt local democratization "a death blow". (The reason given by the party was that it would not participate in any group which failed to conform to the line of the Democratic League for National Salvation). "The Socialist Party, which is recognized by itself and by others as a 'party of the masses', should respect the special character of our prefecture and take pride in its democratization."

Many other journals also commented on politics, paying particular attention to the effect of the purge extension on the coming local elections. An observation not noticed before was made by OITA GODO SHIMBUN (Oita, 20 November), which said that since the extension had been announced the increased activity of political bosses was "remarkable." The editorial considered it "funny that the extension of the purge, which is aimed at the democratization of local politics, has accelerated such undemocratic activities, but it is probably a temporary phenomenon.* * * When the people have been enlightened and recognize their own sovereignty, there can be no 'boss' politics."

Economy

An unusually large number of prefectural papers gave editorial consideration to various aspects of Japan's present economic plight, as press attention seemed to be focusing on the "economic crisis" expected within the next six months. Discussion of currency stabilization, tax reform, wage policy, budget compilation, export programs, etc., indicated a sharper realization of the specific problems requiring solution if the oft-mentioned goal of "economic stabilization" is to be achieved.

Echoing union demands in current labor disputes, several papers criticized the tax on earned income and the low exemption level on the composite tax as "unfair to the working masses." The Government's announced intention to raise the exemption point and lower the rate on both taxes was given a mixed reception. OSAKA SHIMBUN (Osaka, 17 November) observed, "We think that such action is a step toward the lightening of the heavy burden borne by the workers, although the reform will not bring full relief. It is most unfortunate that it is impossible under present conditions to abolish such taxes." On the other hand, EHIME SHIMBUN (Matsuyama, 20 November) believed that "such a revision would have no effect and it would be better not to carry out any such half-hearted measure." KOCHI SHIMBUN (Kochi, 19 November) joined the above journals in advocating a graduated tax system which would shift the main tax burden to those wealthier classes which are "better able to bear it," and all three demanded stricter tax imposition upon "black-marketeers and the New Yen class."

Prefectural papers greeted with suspicion and skepticism the projected establishment of a Wage Investigation Committee to determine a national wage standard. YUKAN KYOTO (Kyoto, 20 November) and CHUBU NIPPON (Nagoya, 19 November) in particular viewed this move as part of a plot against the labor movement and the former declared, "The Wage Investigation Committee is a symbol of the same Government attitude shown when it refused the mediation plan (of the Central Labor Committee in the electric workers' dispute). We should clearly recognize that the Government intends not only to fight against the labor offensive in cooperation with the capitalists, but also to reduce the standard of the people's livelihood." Willing to credit the Government with having "greatly softened its attitude and shown its intention of solving the problem amicably," TOYAMA SHIMBUN (Takaoka, 18 November) expressed the general fear that labor would be caught under a wage ceiling while prices continued to rise as inflation remained unchecked. The paper saw an unofficial, but actual, solidarity on the labor front and warned, "Although higher wages may have the inevitable result of increasing inflation, the demand for a raise in wages will not be quieted unless the Government takes decisive steps to prevent inflation." Taking a different approach, SHINANO NICHI-NICHI (Ueda, 19 November) feared that pegging wages would be "useless" in countering "the labor offensive which is making the nation incapable of bearing the burden of reconstruction and is bankrupting the national economy." The writer demanded that the wage question be submitted to public opinion through the agency of the Diet and that the whole problem be threshed out on the Diet floor.

In line with the necessity for stabilizing prices in order to stabilize wages, HOKKOKU TIMES (Kanazawa, 21 November), HOKKOKU MAINICHI (Kanazawa, 20 November) and CHUKYO SHIMBUN (Nagoya, 20 November) discussed Government control over the staple foods and important industrial items -- coal, fertilizer, etc.. None of the papers were enthusiastic over the prospect of control due to "eight years of experience with bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency, and the first-named urged that as few items as possible be put under control.

Reparations

Publication of the Pauley report on reparations brought forth considerable editorial discussion of the reparations plan as outlined thus far and of the future of Japanese industry. The plan was described as "fair but strict" by SHIKOKU SHIMBUN (Takamatsu, 20 November) and the general reaction was typified by NIPPONKAI (Tottori, 20 November): "The report clearly sets forth the categories of all munitions, wartime and other related fields of industry, and leaves us with adequate hope for the reconstruction of our peace-time industry centering around the spinning and textile industries." The constantly expressed desire for an early conclusion of the Japanese peace treaty was found in HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN (Sapporo, 20 November) and NIIGATA NIPPO (Niigata, 20 November), which regarded determination of reparations as the main prerequisite sites for the treaty. The latter was the only prefectural paper to express any doubts that the Pauley report might not be the final word on the reparations program. "It makes us anxious that this report did not touch on the equipment removed from Manchuria by the Soviet, and also that information in the press indicates that the Soviet representatives were absent." HOKKOKU TIMES (20 November) had no such doubts, apparently, for the writer asserted that the "adequacy of the proposal will be decided by British and American public opinion."

Food

Rice delivery remained a favored topic in prefectural editorials, though the volume of comments seemed to be diminishing. There was primary interest in the administration of rice delivery and writers in both YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (Yamagata, 18 November) and TOKAI YUKAN (Gifu, 17 November), mentioning the difficulties involved in obtaining farm equipment and fertilizer, urged the Government to strike a fair balance for the farmers by taking the shortages of such necessities into consideration when setting the quotas and prices. (The latter paper also mentioned that a decrease in income tax is one of the farmers' chief desires.) CHUGOKU SHIMBUN (Hiroshima, 19 November) complained that the prefectural government of that area uses "unscientific methods" in setting rice quotas, but SHIN HOKKAI (Sapporo, 19 November) reported that the Hiroshima government had an excellent surplus rice collection plan and advocated its introduction into Hokkaido. A quota-setting plan to be administered by people outside the government was suggested by HOKKOKU MAINICHI (16 November).

The world food situation was an increasingly popular subject as prefectural editors seem to be growing more conscious of international conditions. BOCHO SHIMBUN (Yamaguchi, 19 November) and SHINANO MAINICHI (Nagano, 19 November) surveyed the world cereal supply, the latter stating that Japan must have either cash or credit in order to import food. An answer to this problem was given by ISE SHIMBUN (Tsu, Mie, 20 November) which urged the stimulation of tea-growing for export. A change of diet for Japan was advocated by TOO NIPPO (Aomori, 18 November), which urged that powdered foods be imported to supplement the usual staples and suggested that one wheat meal a day become a national custom, and b MINAMI NIPPON SHIMBUN (Kagoshima, 21 November), which advocated the increased raising of livestock and poultry.

Emperor System

Discussing the statement made by Prince Takamatsu at a youth rally in Yamagata Prefecture, YAMAGATA SHIMBUN (12 November) took the unusual attitude of criticizing a member of the Imperial Family. Using such terms as "forced sale of military glory" and "infatuation with narrow traditionalism," the writer compared Takamatsu with the Emperor, "who with his own hand took off the veil of feudalism." The journal cautioned youth not to be blinded by high titles, but to search for the truth behind the words of public speakers.

1 lb. 15¢

Sugar

1933

4¢

1941

5¢

1945

6¢

Tax on off. 18 yen

30¢

90 yen

4

291 Yen to 1-US Dollar

official

26¢ yen 1

291 → 100 US
340 " 100 US

12000 - 1 ENC

IXIWAY

340 - 1

320,000 ENC

12,000 /

40 - 1

30 - 1