

Food Prop

Responsibility for the Delayed Food Rationing.

- NIMON KEIZAI - Dec. 29, 1946

Editorial

The delayed distribution of major foodstuffs is now nationwide. The rice crop this year was far more abundant than it had been anticipated, but it was only for a little while that the consumers rejoiced at the reported of major rations believing that they would now be relieved from the worries of delayed rations. They are again suffering from the delay of distribution while we cannot tell when such a situation could be improved. Who then are responsible for it? There is the end if we say that the responsibility rests with the Government. As long as we speak as roughly as that the question will probably remain ~~xxx~~ unsolved forever. If we question the Agriculture Ministry which is directly in charge of distribution, it says that it is due to the unsmoothness of transportation. But the Transportation Ministry says that it cannot afford freighters because of the coal shortage. Yet again the shortage of coal is ascribed to the shortage of steel and iron. If we continue to pursue the whereabouts of responsibility in this way we find the existence of the responsibility gradually obscured or ramified till it comes impossible to locate the responsibility or till we find as if no one is responsible for it. The structure is so made as it is possible, if one purposely so tries, to shift the responsibility upon any one of the people.

Therefore, the question lies in the structure of Government organization and the bureaucrats who shift their responsibilities on others or avoid their responsibility taking advantage of such structure. There is a popular saying to the effect that "if it blows the coopers proper". The structure of the present day Government offices is the best-suited for shifting the responsibility along the logic of this popular saying and the bureaucrats are best accustomed to the greatest use of such structure. And bureaucratic politics or administration is founded upon none other than such structure. The uncertainty of responsibility not only let the bureaucrats shirk responsibility after the event but make them be slow in assuming of event, laying irresponsible plans and failing to endeavor to promote them and levading to take responsibility once their plans failed. The delay in the distribution of major foodstuffs is not only an example but there are numerous similar instances where the bureaucratic administrators are irresponsible, such as the case of the coupon system of steel and iron. Official issued coupons for steel and iron but they made no efforts to back them with materials.

It is always the people that make up for the failures of bureaucratic administration. People have to ride on congested train to forage in order to make up the deficit created by delayed delivery of major ration. It is a question whether the bureaucrats, who know such fact but would feel no responsibility, possess the sense of responsibility, possess the sense of responsibility. Most of the wartime control organs are now disorganized but we hear no instance where the bureaucrats who made them on their authority took the responsibility. So long are the rationing of major foodstuffs is left in the hands of the officials as such the security of major foodstuffs will be impossible, till con-

ditions to enable it naturally mature. Until then the officials will only perplex us by shifting their plans, rejoicing at the arrival of rice for a few days consumption and worrying at the delay of a few days. The tour of the Agriculture Minister to the producing district for soliciting for the delivery of rice is not necessarily wrong but his duty must lie elsewhere. The responsibility for the delay of food rations is, though paradoxical it may sound, in the Government structure where apparently nobody is in responsible position or where there is no one that work with responsibility. Unless such is remedied it must be said that not only the question of major foodstuff but the economic operation in the hand of the officials are to be worried.