

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL LIFE, (Economic Planning
Agency) 1959—Changes in the structure of
national life after the War—

REPORT ON POPULATION, (Population Problems Inquiry
Council) 1959—The Population in Transition—

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I. Both the real national income per person and the real expenditure on consumption were degraded, immediately after the termination of the World War II, as close as fifty percent of those of the pre-war times (the average of the period 1934–36); but the former was restored nearly to the standard of the pre-war days in 1954 and surpassed it by thirty percent or so in 1958, the latter rising above it in 1953 for the first time in the post-war days, came to excel it by twenty-five percent or so in 1958.

However, the above-mentioned illustration shows just the average of all classes of the nation, and from the standpoint of the classified vocations such as peasant, factory worker, salaried man, and the self-employed etc., the relative ratios of these categories to their pre-war standards are considerably uneven. For example, the present salary of the university professor who is going to resign a few years later is not really higher than that of the time when he was appointed an assistant professor more than twenty years ago. Prevalent unbalance among some categories of vocation in the increase of income from the pre-war to post-war times, will lead many people to feel that the present situation of the national life is not better than that of the pre-war times.

As the matter of course, a mere unbalance in the relative magnifications of the post-war incomes to the pre-war ones, will not furnish sufficient reason to decide that unbalance of income existing in the present vocational categories are unreasonable. When we take into consideration the fact that the pre-war incomes of the peasant and other self-employeds were too low, we should understand that the difference of income in the vocational categories has rather decreased on the whole.

But notwithstanding the foregoing fact, there still exist notable differences in the standard of living between the various categories of vocation in Japan; let's see this by the average amount of the consumptive expenditure per household classified according to vocations; taking the "Managements' household" which earns more than any other class as 100, the "Staff of non-governmental enterprise" "Government and public officials" and the "Professional" take 90; "Merchant", "Artisan" and "Regular labourer" do 70; "peasants" lay on 60, and the lowest are "casual or day workers" and "paupers" lying on 45.

Thus, the security of the life of the low income earners left behind appropriate distribution of the fruits of the economic development, will certainly become the first problem

to be solved in regard to the raise of the living standard of the nation.

The second problem to be solved as pointed out by "The Report on the National Life" in its analysis of the structural change of the post-war national life, is the matter of improvement of the public facilities that have notably been left behind the general economic development.

Though it is a fact that the level of consumption has on the whole risen by twenty-five percent above the pre-war days, yet this does not always mean that the said rising has been done at the same ratio in every item of food, clothing, shelter and "miscellaneous". We can see not merely a change in the items of the consumption due to the rising of income in comparison with the pre-war times, but such a structural change as called the revolution of national consumption resulting from the change of the way of life and the philosophy of living after the War; most notable examples will be rapid prevalence of the household assets and the increase of expenditure in education, culture and amusement.

Sewing machines, bicycles and radio etc. had been the major household assets prevailed in the pre-war days, and electric wash-machines, televisions and electric refrigerators etc. which appeared after the war, have made a remarkable prevalence; for example, the percentage of prevalence of television in the urban households in 1957 was only 7.8%, having increased to be 15.9% in 1958, become 33.5% in 1959; to give another instance that of electric wash-machines, being 20.2% in 1957 and 29.3% in 1958, became 36.7% in 1959.

Such being the case, we can say that the post-war national life, excluding the problem of the unbalanced income in different categories of vocation and that of the lowest income earners, generally far surpassed the pre-war level in so far as the individual expenditure is concerned.

Nevertheless, when we turn our eyes to the public facilities, we are surprised at their being left far behind progress; a investigation made out that those households which dwelled with other families or suffered from the narrowness of their dwellings in proportion to the number of their families, occupied 12.5% of the total households of the whole country and large cities had far higher percentage in 1958.

And the centre of the national economy lying in the large cities, population greatly increased in the surrounding areas of the cities to have brought about a great increase of workers commuting to the centre of a large city from its satellite cities and towns. On account of this, congestion of the transport has little been mitigated despite the fact that the traffic facilities have been augmented these several years; therefore the time and expense for commuting, indicates the tendency of gradual increase, and commuters are having more and more both mental and material burdens.

Further, the facilities of water service, sewage and the garbage disposal are also still in poor condition.

The improvement of the aforesaid public facilities is beyond individual effort and has gradually to be made only with joint responsibility of the whole community. While these phenomena have been caused as the result of excessive concentration of population in large cities in recent years, it is necessary to take up scattering of the urban population into the country side as a problem to be settled from the point of view of raising the national standard of living. This is the third problem submitted by the Report on the National Life.

Thus many problems have been left unsolved in the process of restoration and development of the national life during the post-war fifteen years. Hence the structural observation of the national life are required; this was the aim of the "Report on the National Life"; and this aim was attained, though not satisfactorily, by taking avail of many statistics and other sources.

II. The "Report on the National Life" presented these problems to be settled with regard to the raise of the national life, but could not give prospect for dealing with the said three problems, for it could not have come to the analysis of the social structure of the national life.

The Population Problems Inquiry Council that was set up as an agency attached to the ministry of welfare in 1949, has the duties to consider and investigate the matters of the living standard, the industrial structure, the natural resources, birth control and other population problems in compliance with inquiries forwarded from the ministers concerned and deliver its views to the ministers concerned about any item of the afore-said matters whenever necessary. And this council has its special committee regarding the Report on Population that is to make review concerning the present and future situation of Japanese population and nuclear problems of population of the country and further to make up the annual report relating to the population problems. The Report on Population which is going to be introduced here is the first one of its kind in this country.

As the subject matter of this report, the population problems of Japan at turning period, signifies, Japan is now seeking for the way of the solution of her population problems at the turning period which is of important nature; the pre-war population's dynamic situation of many birth-many death type—she had high death rate and higher birth rate—has turned into the type of few birth-few death common in the Western countries, after elapse of ten years or so posterior to the World War II.

After the War, birth rate for three years from 1947 to 1949 unusually rose far above the pre-war level to have shown 33.6 per 1,000 persons, but beginning to fall below the pre-war level in 1950, keeping up remarkable decline in the subsequent years, come to show as low as 17.2 per 1,000 persons in 1957.

On the other hand, death rate, by the post-war further improvement of various systems pertaining to the national health policy which had already been powerfully put into practice in the War time and by immediate adoption of advanced medical technique of foreign countries, had successfully got as low as seventy percent of the pre-war one even when the birth rate was shown above the pre-war (1933-7) level. The present death rate of Japanese indicating around 8 per 1,000 persons, is one of the lowest one in the world.

Thus only in a little over ten years after the War, Japan succeeded in modernization of the dynamic situation of population, transiting from many birth-many death type to few birth-few death type, which took several decades in the western countries, but this decrease of death rate on the other hand is to create a peculiar pressure of population in the transitory period; Japan is henceforth going to face the period of extraordinary change of the structure of population in the form of decreasing children and enormously increasing workable adults.

It is presumed that more than ten years will be needed before the modernization of the dynamic situation of the post-war population begins to have its effect to mitigate the

increase of population of the productive age, and Japan won't be able to evade from enormous increase of the workers' population and ingravescient employment problems for the time being.

On the other hand, population of the family plan is none the less serious from the viewpoint of making the present birth-control stable as modern and rational behaviour.

These two problems suggest the effort to attain a rational reorganization of population from the viewpoints both of the structure of maintenance of population and of the reproductive structure. But this effort will naturally aggravate the social tension and strengthen the process of the social selection. This is a problem of importance, too.

The Report on population takes the analysis of the present situation concerning these three problems.

In regard to the first problem, the Report analyzes the structure of the employment as a social structure to take the population of the productive age into the labour force, and concludes that the solution of the present pressure of population is impossible without a qualitative improvement as well as quantitative expansion of the economic ground.

Before the War, annual additional labour force was about three hundred thousands and something; after the War, it increased as more than two times as that of the pre-war times in the period from 1950 to 1955, being seven hundred thousands and something, two and seven-tenth times in the 1955-60 period to be eight hundred fifty thousands, and it is presumed that it will grow as more than three times as the pre-war level to be over one million in the 1960-65 period.

The post-war additional labour force has been absorbed mostly in the second and third industrial sections at the ratio of three to seven.

Among the manufacturing industry which is the nucleus of the second industrial section, large firms with more than one thousand workers decreased the number of their workers and the new employment in this field was taken mostly by medium, small and tiny firms. This is important, because the difference of the size of enterprises means the difference of productivity and wage; the difference of wages between the large enterprise with more than one thousand workers and the small enterprise with less than thirty workers is so great as to be approximately two to one ratio. The ratio of distribution to labour, viz., the percentage of wage in the value attached to commodities, is higher in small enterprises than large ones; therefore the gradual decline of wage seen according to the size of enterprises is due to the decline of productivity, and the enterprise with low productivity is brought up by excessive supply of labour.

Thus, the low productivity in accordance with the smallness of scale, indivisibly combines with cheap labour, and the demand for cheap labour naturally leads to the demand for the labour of younger age; this means that despite the fact that the enterprises of medium and small size, particularly tiny enterprises, have enormous additional employment annually, they are not stabilized as life-long working places. Therefore workers at these enterprises have to find a new jobs outside as they get older.

But large enterprises close their doors to these workers and so they often have to have tiny enterprises run by themselves.

However, among self-employing enterprises, "agriculture, forestry and fishery" are not available any more, for these enterprises are now gradually cutting off their labour and furthermore the labourers shut out from these fields of enterprises, coming into large

cities for finding jobs, are becoming a bottleneck for improvement of the cheap labour in medium and small enterprises in cities.

Self-employing enterprises open to the labour force excluded from other labour markets, are mostly in the third industrial section, in which tiny commerce and service business occupy overwhelming parts.

In this way, the poor peasants, the employees of medium, small and tiny enterprises and the self-employeds, belonging to the same sort of class, make up a labour market on the country-wide as organisation of an organic demand and supply of labour. This labour market operates on different ground from that of large enterprises. And this class is concentrating in large cities and forming the large lower stratum of population in them. Thus they accelerate the tendency of concentration of population in large cities.

As long as such social structure as described above is the foundation to keep up the difference of the living standard according to vocational categories, its solution would be possible only by straightening the crooked part of the employment structure as above-mentioned and will not be feasible without changing the structure of the national economy in order to absorb the relatively excessive population.

The second point, taken up by the Report, is as follows; the remarkable decrease of birth rate in the post-war Japan is caused a great deal by the enormous increase of artificial cessation of conception. The spread of birth control by means of artificial cessation of conception in the post-war Japan was due to the situation of the national life which was not enough matured to have prevalence of prevention of conception, and also to keen necessity of birth control for the national fight against the post-war difficulty of life; in other words, the decline of the birth-rate in the post-war Japan was caused not necessarily through modernization of the national life.

But the rate of prevalence of prevention of conception became notably upward around 1957 when the national life began to regain the pre-war living standard in some way or other. The ratio of prevention of conception and artificial cessation of conception in birth control seems to be about one to one.

Birth rate which has continued to decline after the War, seems recently to have stopped to decline. So it is of urgent necessity to establish a reasonable "Family Plan" as the national behaviour in order to avoid excessive increase on population which would hamper the development of the national economy in future and converting the present cessation of conception into the prevention of conception which is a sound method.

But, the higher standard of national life is required for prevalence of the family plan; otherwise, the Report points out, the family plan will not have its root in the national life.

In the last place, the Report notes that the vicious cycle of poverty and illness are specially remarkable in tuberculosis and the percentage of generation of the mental diseases is higher in the lower-income class; and points out that the problem of quality of population will become more and more grave in future.