

## MINIMUM WAGE RATE AND THE NATION'S WELFARE

—falsity of the theory of the nation-wide uniform minimum wage rate—

TAISHIRO SHIRAI

(Vol. 12, No. 1)

To introduce a nation-wide minimum wage law has been one of the main demands of the National Spring Offensives of 1975 and 1976 organized by the trade unions. Four groups of trade unions altogether worked out a unified proposal for its implementation, and four opposition parties in the Diet also produced a common bill on the grounds that the problems of low wages in the Japanese wage structure system can only be overcome by the introduction of a compulsory nation-wide minimum wage scheme.

However, if we are to expect an effective nation-wide minimum wage scheme with a reasonable level of minimum wage, first we must take into consideration the following three conditions which might hamper its effective working. They are, firstly the social situations which circumscribe the present (industrial and regional) minimum wage scheme, espe-

cially that of regional wage disparities, secondly the impact that compulsory minimum wage scheme might induce upon employment, and thirdly the technical conditions which are inherent in the decision making process and in the administration of the scheme.

In this article each of the three conditions are analyzed carefully to show that the functional limitations of the present industrial and regional minimum wage scheme are themselves the limitations of the effective working of a nation-wide minimum wage scheme. It concludes that the problem of the structural low wages of Japan can not be overcome by political struggle as such exercised by the National Spring Offensive for a nation-wide minimum wage rate, and that it can only be overcome through more grass-root and multiple struggles by the trade unions.

## AN ESSAY ON HOMES FOR THE AGED

MIKIO MORI

(Vol. 12, No. 1)

Thirteen years have passed since the Law for the Welfare of the Aged was enacted. In the recent budgets, over 90% of the allocation for the Division of the Welfare of the Aged in the Department of Health and Welfare has been for homes for the aged. And again, a half of that money is devoted to old people's nursing homes, amounting to 45,000 million yen. Then, how is it that old people's nursing homes presently use up so much money, and in what way should they be changed in the near future?

As can be seen in their definition set by the Law

as well as in the results of the surveys conducted about them, old people's nursing homes are residential facilities for low income groups, which compensate for the poor pension and housing policies. But as the Japanese pension and housing policies gradually improve, the need for residential care for the healthy aged will be minimized and we can very well expect these nursing homes to become exclusively for the sick aged. Therefore, the whole system of old people's nursing homes should be remodeled in the future to become what we now call "special

nursing homes", nursing homes for the sick aged.

Moreover, it is important to note that more and more inmates of these nursing homes have recently come to receive such public pensions, of non-negligible amount, as the old age welfare pension or the

survivor's assistance pension. This has raised the question of the duplication of benefit in kind and benefit in cash. In order to avoid this contradiction, there seems no other way than to collect a part of the cost from these public pensions of the inmates.

## RECENT MOVEMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN GREAT BRITAIN

—present situation of community care for the mentally handicapped—

ICHIRO HAMANO

(Vol. 12, No. 2)

### (1) The Concept of Community Care in Great Britain

In Great Britain, the expression "community care" is used as a concept that implies a certain aim or policy of social welfare services. In other words, the implication of the expression is a transformation from institutional care to community care. The actual policy embodying the idea started as early as the latter half of the 1920s and by the 1959 Mental Health Act community care became the duty of local governments.

### (2) Present Situation of Community Care

Building of training centres and residential homes in each community has developed considerably, but there are still some areas that lack them because of financial difficulties of local governments. On the other hand, when we look at the situation of social

workers who are in charge of home visit, the core of community care, many of them are unqualified and with heavy case loads. Their situation is still not attractive.

### (3) Voluntary Services

What the public services lack is compensated for by the voluntary services. The voluntary activities are based on the idea of mutual help mainly by parents, and in addition they have also taken on the role of pressure groups in pursuing greater public responsibility for welfare.

### (4) Community Care as of Right

Community care in British terminology is never used as an excuse for irresponsible administration. Parents continuously pursue and demand public responsibility in promoting community care.

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION ON THE STATE OF WOMEN IN SOCIAL SECURITY

ATSUKO TSUMURA

(Vol. 12, No. 2)

People's needs for social security differ at different stages of their life cycle. Women's life cycle is different from men's and women's needs for social security are different from men's. Their needs may also change as the demographic, social and economic

conditions change. Is the present social security system well prepared to meet the changing needs of women? The purpose of this article is to throw light upon the state of women in social security, by reviewing the historical process of how women's

needs came to be recognized in the field of welfare policy.

The development process of women's treatment in social security may be divided into three assumptive stages. At the first stage, women's needs were treated within the framework of the existing system, for example as insured, being herself an employee, or as dependant, being the wife of the insured husband. At the second stage, the general principle of equal treatment for all came to be recognized and social security was extended to cover every citizen, which for the first time raised the question of women's

needs for social security as distinct from men's. At the third stage, the need to implement women's independent and equal rights to benefits in social security came to be recognized, and from this standpoint the present system came to be reviewed and reexamined.

The change of women's social position has raised a new and crucial theme which social policy has to face. In order to attain equality, we must now establish social standards for women and reform social security so as to better women's position in it.

## REFORMATION OF JAPANESE PENSION SYSTEM

KIYOSHI MURAKAMI

(Vol. 12, No. 3)

The Japanese pension system is composed of several independent schemes and the benefit levels and qualifying conditions of these pension schemes are different from each other. This is the reason why there have been strong calls for these schemes to be unified. In recent years, however, as the financial difficulties of some of the schemes have become apparent, it has become inevitable and much more urgent to review the whole system of Japanese pensions.

The peculiarity of the Japanese pension system lies in the fact that there are two types of schemes with different principles of coverage, namely that of the employee's pension insurances with the aim to cover the needs of the family through the insured employee's pension entitlement and that of the self-employed pension insurance (i.e. the National Pension Insurance) to meet the needs of the individual. The system as a whole becomes more and more complex as many wives of employees come to apply voluntarily for the National Pension Insurance.

When we think of reforming of the whole system, it would be of some help to study foreign experiences. Some countries use a basic pension scheme to cover every citizen and some try to unify coordinate

different schemes financially though they still allow separate organization of the schemes. In Japan, a reasonable way seems to be to set up a basic pension scheme to cover every citizen with a certain level of benefit and to build upon it different income-related pension schemes to meet the needs above that level.

In practice, this can be done by extending the National Pension Insurance to all the wives of employees. Then this pension for wives and the present basic part of the employee's pension would constitute a new basic pension for all. Above this basic pension, employees and the self-employed may make full use of the income-related part of the present employee's pension insurances or the National Insurance respectively.

In the new basic scheme, the contributions of the insured would not be enough to pay the full cost. Therefore, it may well become necessary for this purpose to utilize not only the contribution from the general revenue as in the case of the present non-contributory welfare pension, but also a new device using some ear-marked tax.