

X. GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE PEOPLE

On the basis of the growth of production, the Chinese people's living standard has risen greatly in the past decade.

Wages for workers and other employees have been increasing steadily. During the period of the rehabilitation of the national economy, from 1949 to 1952, the average wage increase for workers and other employees throughout the country was as high as 70 per cent. In the First Five-Year Plan period the increase was 42.8 per cent. Average wages in 1958, not including wages for new workers and other employees, registered a further increase of 3 per cent over 1957. At the same time family incomes of the workers and other employees were higher in 1958 than in 1957 as a result of increased employment.

In addition to raising wages the state has shown great concern for the daily needs and welfare of the workers and employees. Shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China labour insurance was introduced for workers in factories and mining enterprises throughout the country. Free medical services were extended to government functionaries and personnel in people's organizations and schools, thus eliminating their difficulties caused by child-birth, old age, sickness, disablement and death, problems which could hardly be avoided in old China. In 1958, 13,780,000 workers and other employees were covered by labour insurance, 4.2 times the 3,300,000 people covered in 1952. Again in 1958, 6,880,000 workers and other employees were entitled to free medical services as against 4,000,000 in 1952, a 72 per cent increase. To further raise the incomes of the workers and other employees and improve their welfare, the state spent 14,100 million yuan in the seven years from 1952 to 1958 for labour insurance, free medical services, subsidies for culture and education, bonuses and other welfare services.

The living conditions of the workers and other employees improved markedly in the past decade. In the seven years from 1952 to 1958 alone, the investment by the state on housing for workers and other employees amounted to 6,300 million yuan for 128 million square metres of floor space. In other words, on the basis of the average number of workers and other employees over the seven-year period, the state spent more than 290 yuan per worker for an average of six square metres of new housing. This is unprecedented in the history of old China, nor has this ever happened or can it possibly happen in capitalist countries.

In comparison with pre-liberation days the standard of living of the Chinese workers and other employees has risen a great deal.

According to statistics, in 1936, the year before the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, the per capita annual consumption expenditures of workers and other employees (including their family members) amounted to 140 yuan.* It rose to 189.5 yuan* in 1952 and again rose to 227 yuan* in 1958. The 1952 figure was 35 per cent higher and the 1958 figure was 62 per cent higher than that of 1936, proof of the outstanding material improvements socialism has brought to the Chinese workers.

China's peasants, numbering over 500 million, have also enjoyed a marked improvement in their standard of living as a result of the continued rise of agricultural output. During the period of the rehabilitation of the national economy, from 1949 to 1952, the income of peasants throughout China increased more than 30 per cent in general. During the First Five-Year Plan period it again increased almost another 30 per cent. During the great leap forward of agricultural production in 1958 the peasants' lives improved even more. Their 1958 incomes showed an increase of more than 10 per cent over 1957. Total rural purchasing power reached about 30,000 million, an increase of 20 per cent over 1957 and 80 per cent over 1952. Compared with 1952, the increases in per capita purchases of major consumer goods by peasants in 1958 were as follows: grain, 18 per cent; edible vegetable oil, 62 per cent; aquatic products, 180 per cent; table salt, 18 per cent; sugar, 100 per cent; cigarettes, 82 per cent; cotton cloth, 25 per cent; cotton knitwear, 100 per cent; rubber shoes, 240 per cent; soap, 160 per cent; water flasks, 680 per cent; machine-made paper, 130 per cent; kerosene, 170 per cent; and coal, 150 per cent. A rising level of consumption by peasants on such a scale is unparalleled in China's history; it would have been impossible in the past.

With the rise in income, bank deposits in the cities and in rural areas have multiplied.

The past decade witnessed rapid progress in public health service. The health of the labouring people has improved. In 1958 there were more than 5,600 hospitals and sanatoria throughout the country with 440,000-odd beds, an increase of 2.1 times and an increase of 5.2 times respectively in comparison with 1949. In addition, there were established a large number of medical centres and clinics, health stations for women and children, anti-epidemic stations, mobile anti-epidemic teams, medical centres and stations for special purposes as well as other health institutes. The people's communes in the countryside set up many health centres in 1958 during the big leap forward. Now every commune has a hospital and each production brigade has a clinic and a maternity station.

As a result of the extensive promotion of the mass movement

*At 1957 prices.

for sanitation and the campaign to wipe out the four "evils," the number of flies, mosquitoes, rats, grain-eating sparrows and other pests has been greatly reduced and hygiene in towns and in the countryside has improved. Smallpox, bubonic plague and other serious contagious diseases, which in the past jeopardized the people's health, have been eradicated in the main. Before liberation cholera was prevalent in China, but not a single case occurred in the past ten years. Kalaazar has been practically wiped out in the area north of the Yangtse River where it used to be rampant and schistosomiasis is under control in many areas where it had been common.

In 1958, the technical personnel in public health service throughout the nation totalled 2,160,000, more than double the 1952 figure. Among them were 75,000 doctors trained in Western medical science, a 46 per cent increase over 1952, and about 500,000 doctors trained in Chinese traditional medicine. The medical heritage of China has developed greatly in recent years, thanks to the unity and co-operation of Western-trained and traditional doctors. The level of our medical science has improved.

Public health services in the national minority areas have made considerable progress in the past ten years. Up to the end of 1958 there were 750 hospitals with more than 31,900 beds and 25 sanatoria with more than 2,300 beds. There were 15,000 medical centres, clinics, anti-epidemic stations and mobile anti-epidemic teams staffed by 179,000 health workers and technical personnel. Due to the development of the economy, culture, education and public health, the population of the national minorities has increased and their health needs are taken care of. The common progress and prosperity of the nationalities in China and their fraternal unity present a striking contrast to the national oppression and racial discrimination in capitalist countries. This further demonstrates the superiority of socialism.

From the above figures and simple facts, we can see clearly that while China is carrying on large-scale economic construction, the people's living standard has risen continuously. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China, the 650 million Chinese people have expressed their joy at the brilliant success achieved in socialist revolution and socialist construction and the great improvement in their lives. High in spirits and firm in determination, they work hard and are advancing towards a further fundamental change of the "poverty and blankness" left over from the past, towards a beautiful future and a peaceful and happy life.

INCREASE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE OF WORKERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES

	<u>Average annual wage (yuan)</u>	<u>Index numbers</u>	
		<u>1952=100</u>	<u>Preceding year=100</u>
1952	446	100	-
1953	496	111.2	111.2
1954	519	116.4	104.6
1955	534	119.7	102.9
1956	610	136.8	114.2
1957	637	142.8	104.4
1958	656	147.1	103.0

Note: The figures for the 1958 average wage is calculated on the basis of the number of workers and other employees employed in 1957. It does not include those newly employed in 1958.

RAPID INCREASE IN INCOME OF PEASANTS (index numbers, 1952=100)

1953	- - - - -	106.9
1954	- - - - -	110.7
1955	- - - - -	120.7
1956	- - - - -	124.3
1957	- - - - -	127.9
1958	- - - - -	142.9

HOUSING FLOOR SPACE FOR WORKERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES BUILT BY THE STATE (thousand square metres)

	<u>Floor space of new housing built each year</u>	<u>Accumulated total floor space of new housing</u>
1950	2,510	2,510
1951	4,600	7,110
1952	7,510	14,620
1953	13,420	28,040
1954	13,270	41,310
1955	14,460	55,770
1956	25,230	81,000
1957	28,160	109,160
1958	26,420	135,580

NUMBER OF WORKERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES COVERED
BY LABOUR INSURANCE

	Absolute figures (thousand persons)	Index numbers	
		1949=100	Preceding year=100
1949	600	100	-
1950	1,400	233.3	233.3
1951	2,600	433.3	185.7
1952	3,300	550.0	126.9
1953	4,830	805.0	146.4
1954	5,380	896.7	111.4
1955	5,710	951.7	106.1
1956	7,417	1,236.2	129.9
1957	11,500	1,916.7	155.0
1958	13,779	2,296.5	119.8

Note: Data do not include those covered by collective agreements.

NUMBER OF WORKERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES COVERED
BY FREE MEDICAL CARE

	Absolute figures (thousand persons)	Index numbers	
		1952=100	Preceding year=100
1952	4,000	100	-
1957	6,572	164.3	-
1958	6,877	171.9	104.6

INCREASE IN URBAN SAVINGS DEPOSITS

	1950=100	Preceding year=100
1950	100	-
1951	416.5	416.5
1952	655.0	157.3
1953	925.4	141.3
1954	1,082.4	117.0
1955	1,286.7	118.9
1956	1,697.0	131.9
1957	2,119.4	124.9

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF BEDS IN HOSPITALS AND SANATORIA

	<u>Absolute numbers</u> (thousand beds)	<u>Index numbers</u>	
		<u>1949=100</u>	<u>Preceding year=100</u>
Pre-liberation			
peak year	66	-	-
1949	84	100	-
1950	106	126.1	126.1
1951	134	159.1	126.2
1952	180	214.7	134.9
1953	215	256.4	119.4
1954	250	297.7	116.1
1955	279	332.2	111.6
1956	328	390.9	117.7
1957	364	433.4	110.9
1958	440	524.4	121.0

Note: Data do not include the 922,000 second grade beds which were available in 1958 in various public health institutions throughout the country, more than ten times the number in 1957.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES FOR
WOMEN AND CHILDREN

	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Pre-libera- tion peak year</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>
Maternity hospitals ¹	number	81	80	98	96	230
No. of beds	do	1,736	1,762	4,052	6,794	7,557
Children's hospitals	do	3	5	6	16	27
No. of beds	do	173	139	258	2,295	3,682
Health stations for women and children	do	9	9	2,379	4,599	4,315
Permanent child-care organiza- tions ²	thou- sands	0.1	0.3	2.7	17.7	3,186.3
Children under care ³	do	-	13	99	488	47,140

¹Excluding maternity clinics established in the countryside by the people's communes. By the end of 1958 their number reached 134,000 with 416,000 beds.

^{2,3}1958 figures includes the people's communes.

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PERSONS WORKING IN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

	<u>Total number</u>	<u>Of which</u>			
		<u>Western- trained doctors</u>	<u>Doctor's assistants</u>	<u>Nurses</u>	<u>Midwives</u>
1. Absolute figures (thousand persons)					
1950	780	41	53	38	16
1952	1,040	52	67	61	22
1957	1,908	74	136	128	36
1958	2,160	75	131	138	35
2. Index numbers					
(1950=100)	100	100	100	100	100
1952	133.3	125.0	124.5	161.1	142.7
1957	244.7	177.7	254.1	339.1	227.9
1958	276.9	182.0	245.5	364.8	224.8
(1952=100)	100	100	100	100	100
1957	183.5	142.2	204.1	210.5	159.7
1958	207.7	145.6	197.1	226.4	157.5

Note: Doctors of Chinese traditional medicine, totalling about half a million throughout the country, are not included.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES IN NATIONAL
MINORITY AREAS

	<u>Unit</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1958</u> (1954=100)	<u>1958</u> (1957=100)
Hospitals	number	443	603	750	169.3	124.4
Beds	do	9,428	20,773	31,983	339.2	154.0
Sanatoria	do	7	17	25	357.1	147.1
Beds	do	403	1,277	2,302	571.2	180.3
Clinics and health stations	do	1,453	5,541	14,230	979.4	256.8
Anti-epidemic stations and teams	do	24	175	281	1,170.8	160.6
Mobile anti- epidemic teams	do	44	60	70	159.1	116.7