THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF PUBLIC UTILITY ECONOMICS

The Japan Society of Public Utility Economics was founded in 1949 with the aim of fostering studies and investigations into public utilities from the political, economic and technical standpoints. We also hope to improve the general understanding of public service, so that we can ourselves contribute to public welfare.

The main activities of the Society are to publish The Journal of Public Utility Economics, (three times a year) and to hold, in addition to several regional meetings, national annual conference. In this issue, activities of the regional sections are introduced as special topics.

The Society has 396 regular members and 40 institutional members, the Kanto and Kansai Sections were established in 1975, the Kanto Section has 290 regular members and the Kansai Section about 106 members. Each Section holds research meetings and study tours several times a year.

This year's national annual conference at Senshu University from May 26-28, 1989 is a celebration because this year is our 40th anniversary. The main theme of the conference is “Public Utilities Under Conditions of Deregulation and Competition.” Under this heading the reports were as follows.

Nobuyuki SATOH (Asia University) read a paper entitled “A Reasonable Way to Cover the Cost of Improved Public Service.” “The Bus Traffic Rules” (Noriai Jidosha Eigyo Torishimari Kisoku) issued in 1903 by Aichi Prefecture, is regarded as the first attempt at car traffic regulation in Japan. It succeeded the previous rules for the stagecoach and the major purpose was to ensure the safety of both passengers and pedestrians. Granting a route licence, seems to have been a casual affair; But all this changed when the Road Traffic Law (Jidosha Kotsu Jigyo Ho) was enacted in 1933. This required a strict enquiry considering the protection of existing bus, railroad, and streetcar companies, before a new route permission was granted. It is clear that this legislation reflected the interests of the railroad and streetcar companies even when the bus services were running parallel with the railroad and streetcar lines.

Masato SHIKANO (Osaka Municipal Water Works Bureau) read a paper, entitled “A Reasonable Way to Cover the Cost of Improved Public Services.” Increasing public awareness demands high quality services from utilities whether private enterprise or public corporations.

Since both private and public enterprises must make ends meet, and better service usually means greater cost, the question arises—how should these costs be covered? Who should share the burden of greater costs? Many factors need to be considered, including the nature of the service, do the improvements benefit, everyone? What are the roles of the public service and the government, and the needs of the average citizen?

This paper discussed the water supply system from the managements point of view. If high quality water is supplied what are reasonable water rates and are government
subsidies necessary?

Jinjian QIAO (University of Tsukuba) “Management Problems and Authority in Chinese National Enterprise”: The first problem concerns the identification of the entrepreneur. Then, what is the relationship between him and the Communist Party leadership? And what about labour’s participation in management?

In recent years, economic reform in China has progressed both in relation to the separation of ownership and management, and in relation to ownership and control. In the process, however, other problems have developed which must themselves be solved.

(Ichiro MATASHIRO)