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General Survey

1993 White paper on the Economy

On July 20, the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) published its annual economic report for fiscal 1993 (the 1993 White Paper on the Economy) which was endorsed at a Cabinet meeting. Subtitled "Lessons from the Bubble Economy and Tasks for New Development," the white paper analyzes the mechanism of the speculative bubble which expanded in the late 1980s and collapsed in the early 1990s, as well as its effects on the Japanese economy. The economic report concludes that "the bubble had no economic merits." Furthermore, it states that "policies of fiscal stimulus and monetary appeasement were the undeniable causes of fluctuations in the prices of such assets as stocks and land," thus acknowledging that incorrect policies resulted in the speculative bubble. Moreover, it stresses the future need to chart an economic course that will not have such results.

The white paper consists of four chapters. In Chapter 1, which deals with the "Japanese economy that continues to be sluggish," the paper describes the recent domestic economy from a short-term perspective. Citing signs of slow recovery in durable consumption goods and housing starts, corporate inventory adjustment which is almost complete, the emerging effects economic stimulus measures particularly in public works investment and recovering stock prices, the paper expects that the nation's economy will be on its way to recovery in the latter half of fiscal 1993.

Chapter 2, titled "The Expansion and Collapse of the Bubble and the Japanese Economy," discusses the effects and lessons learned from the bubble from a mid-term perspective. After the 1985 Plaza Accord which sought international cooperation to rectify the strong dollar, Japan adopted a policy of "restructuring its economy to be more dependent on domestic demand in order to achieve the goal of remedying external imbalance." The paper concludes that under the policy, implemented cuts in fiscal expenditures and official discount rates with some visible results resulted in the development of the economic bubble. Pointing out the detrimental effects of the exceptional hike in land and stock prices which deviated from economic fundamentals, the paper concludes that the "bubble" left the nation's economy with an extremely negative legacy. Its rise and fall created the inequality of asset allocation and income distribution, triggered excessive land development, and forced many citizens to give up the idea of buying homes, thus leading to the warped economic resource distribution. Furthermore, the bursting of the bubble resulted in faulty assets, which weakened both corporate and household balance sheets and made the financial system unstable.

In Chapter 3, titled "Expanding Current Account Surpluses and Japan's Tasks," the paper analyzes the issue of the surge in current account surplus. Clearly expressing opposition to measures advocated by the U.S. to correct current account surpluses through managed trade, the paper notes that the nation should promote an international cooperation policy through expansion of domestic demand, opening of the Japanese market through relaxed regulations, and a smooth recycling of the nation's current account surplus.

Chapter 4 deals with "Economic Restructuring toward Affluence." Projecting changes in the structure of the Japanese economy from a long-term perspective, the paper recommends that traditional production and consumption behavior be improved. Corporations should promote waste-free development of products and review the system of producing in small-lot, multiple-item batches to move away from side-by-side competition management which stresses market share toward profits-first management and individuality. Meanwhile, the paper concludes that individual households should abandon throwaway-type consumption behavior for that which shows concern for the environment.

Working Conditions and the Labor Market

Slow Speed of Recovery in Economy and Corporate Employment Adjustment

Despite the EPA's declaration that "the economy has reached its bottom," the nation is still in a rainy season with no clear breakthroughs. Uncertain about clear signs of recovery in private sector demand, businesses are unable to step-up production, and business activity is at a standstill.

The EPA released May's key economic indicators on July 20. The economic indicators represent the percentage of key indicators pointing toward economic expansion compared with the previous three months. Of coincident indicators, which show the current state of the economy, only 10.0 percent were positive, while the leading index, which casts the state of the economy two months ahead, stood at 30 percent. The former and the latter index dropped below the "boom-or-bust" threshold of 50 percent for the first time in four months and five months, respectively.

As if to symbolize the slow recovery of the economy, larger corporations in particular are notably curbing new graduate recruitment. Plans to curb employment of new graduates are particularly harsh on prospective college and university graduates who are women. According to a survey on employee-recruitment plans of firms listed on stock exchanges, unveiled on July 21 by Recruit Research Co., recruitment of college and university students who will

graduate in March 1994, including graduate school students, will drop 20.8 percent for males and 39.8 percent for females. In almost all sectors the recruitment of new employees is being curbed. Thus, those who will be able to find positions in listed companies are expected to account for 27.3 percent of the total prospective graduates, far below the 38.1 percent for 1992.

To cope with worsening corporate profits stemming from the yen's sharp appreciation, many firms are making rationalization and streamlining efforts through cuts in the work force, such as solicitation of voluntary retirement. On July 13, Alps Electric, a maker of electronic components, said that voluntary retirees, solicited in June, had reached about 1,500, surpassing the planned number by 200. The company experienced a drop in sales and deteriorating corporate earnings due to the rapid rise in the value of the yen, and resorted to rationalization and streamlining efforts by closing down three plants in the Tohoku region, with production to be absorbed into the company's other factories in late April.

Labor Management Relations

Subcontractors and Working Hours -Denkirengo's Survey-

Denkirengo (Japanese Federation of Electrical Machine Workers' Unions) compiled the results of a survey on the actual situation of firms producing general electronic parts and components. The survey, conducted between October and November of 1992, was intended to clarify the state of business conditions between major electrical-machinery makers and their subcontracting firms. The survey covered 63 labor unions of general electronic components firms under the umbrella of Denkirengo, with 48, or 76.3 percent responding.

When asked about parent companies' adjusted orders which are said to result in the shortening of work hours at subcontracting companies, a mere 2.3 percent replied they experienced "practically no change in orders." Forty-three point eight percent said they had a "frequent change in orders" and 52 percent noted they had an "occasional change in orders."

Of those which experienced "frequent" or "occasional" change in orders from parent companies, the highest, or 44.7 percent, said they coped with the changed orders by "making employees work overtime and on holidays," followed by the 27.7 percent which carried a stock to cope adequately with the sudden change. Only 23.4 percent said they could respond properly to changes in orders "within a range of ordinary business activity."

Regarding ordering before a holiday and delivery after, 22.9 percent "often experienced

such orders" and 37.5 percent did "sometimes," bringing the total of those which experienced the practice to over 60 percent. A mere 8.3 percent replied "never." Thus, the survey clearly showed that major firms forced small- and medium-sized subcontracting companies to work on holidays. However, few firms received orders after business hours and made deliveries the following day. To be more specific, 4.2 percent often experienced the practice, and about 20.8 percent did so sometimes. On the other hand, 52.1 percent seldom had such orders and 22.9 percent did not experience in whatsoever. Thus, 70 percent of the surveyed firms hardly received orders after business hours and made a delivery the following day.

Concerning whether parent companies asked them to reduce costs during the past year, over a half, or 52.1 percent said "they were frequently asked to do so" and 43.8 percent answered "they were sometimes asked to." It is fair to say that receiving requests for cost reduction, has become almost an everyday affair.

Public Policy

Small & Medium Enterprise Agency to Help Establish Smaller Firms

It is feared that the declining rate of starting smaller-scale businesses in recent years will adversely affect economic development. In light of this fact, the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency (SMEA) has set forth measures to strengthen financial assistance for the establishment of smaller firms as well as small businesses' branching out into new fields.

In Japan, "small to medium-sized enterprises" are defined according to the range of capital and the number of employees, based on the definition stipulated under the Basic Law for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises. Of smaller firms, those with fewer than 20 employees (those with fewer than five in commerce and services) are called "tiny businesses." In Japan smaller companies account for a little over 99 percent of the total number of establishments while their employees comprise a shade over 80 percent of the total work force. Furthermore, tiny firms account for about 77 percent of all establishments with their employees representing a little more than 31 percent of the total. Thus, smaller firms contribute to a great extent toward the nation's economic development and sustained vitality.

Compared with large companies, small firms are normally weak with regard to credit worthiness and procurement of funds. Financial constraints, therefore, make it difficult for them to introduce equipment for modernization and rationalization efforts. Moreover, financial aid alone does not produce adequate results, as smaller firms may be without professional knowledge and technology to select the proper equipment. To help small

businesses, two programs are provided: one, a system for advancing funds to modernize equipment under which individual prefectural governments advance half of the needed funds on an interest-free basis to smaller firms, and the other, a system for leasing equipment where public corporations funded by local public organizations purchase equipment and lease them to smaller-scale businesses. Starting in fiscal 1993, SMEA inaugurated a loan program for newly-established small businesses, in addition to the above two systems, to assist smaller firms in their efforts to start new business.

The loan system for newly-established smaller firms is intended to advance up to 30 million yen to smaller-scale companies within three years of start-up who have 20 and fewer employees (five employees in commerce services). However, the new system sets strict leasing conditions under which firms within their first year of operation are required to undergo management guidance for about six months before they can apply for such financing. The reason is that newly-established firms often face fund-procurement problems due to their weak security and credit base. In addition, they can borrow only 15 million yen, half of the general quota for smaller firms.

The system for lending equipment to start-up firms allows those in their first three years of operation and with 20 and fewer employees (five and fewer employees in commerce and services) to lease equipment. The upper limit of the value of loaned equipment is 25 million yen for general equipment and 50 million yen for high-technology and information equipment. Additional conditions are given to firms in their first year of operation. They can lease general equipment valued at up to 1.25 million yen and lease high-technology and information equipment valued at up to 2.5 million yen.

Survey on Environment-Friendly Business Behavior-Environment Agency-

Since 1990 when global environment issues began to attract wide public attention, many corporations have taken measures to deal with those issues. In November 1992, the Environment Agency (EA) conducted a survey on corporate efforts to deal with environmental problems, covering 2,080 firms listed on the first and second sections of stock exchanges. Twenty-five point four percent, or 528 of the 2,080 responded to the survey.

Looking at how companies view the environment division in their organizations, 25.7 percent regarded it as an independent organ under the direct control of the president, 19 percent as part of the administration and management divisions and 5.6 percent as part of the planning division, thus accounting for about 50 percent of those responding. This means

that in many corporations the environment division is staff-based. On the other hand, 17 percent replied that the division functions in a manner similar to the manufacturing and sales divisions. In many companies, the environment division is part of the staff-based organization in the head office that coordinates in-house environmental measures. In addition, managing directors or above, including the president and the chairman, headed the environment division at over two-thirds of those firms responding.

Regarding the size of the division, it was staffed by three and fewer members at 33.5 percent of those surveyed and by 10 and fewer at 21.8 percent. Thus, 10 and fewer full-time staffers were in the division at a majority of the firms, indicating that it is not large within the organization.

Regarding the division's influence on in-house decision-making, only 36 percent replied that the environment division exerted some influence over long-term policy formation and overall corporate management. The division's influence was also small in such areas as decision-making on major plant and equipment investment (35.2%), development of and research into new products and new technologies (30.5%), compilation of the annual budget (22.7%), production of new products (20.9%) and formulation of an annual production plan (10.1%).

Special Topic

Transition from School to Work

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1. Introduction

In Japan, high school students find jobs after graduation through vocational guidance at their schools. College students, meanwhile, find employment through their college and university job-placement offices, research labs or seminars. In short, many Japanese youths find jobs through their schools and start to work for corporations immediately after they leave school. This process by which youths find jobs is common in Japan and is not particularly noteworthy. However, this is not necessarily a widespread trend in other nations.

The cultivation and placement of young people into industrial society on part of schools is

not a phenomenon peculiar to Japan. Such fostering and selection of young people are two of the functions of the educational system common to all industrial societies. In Japan, however, the role of schools goes beyond the social functions of education in that they are directly involved in helping students look for work.

What is studied at school is assessed by employers and serves as a passport into the corporate organization. In this sense, it may be said that in Japan, an unstratified, extremely favorable relationship has been established between educational institutions and industry. In addition, the process of transition from school to work contributes significantly to the establishment of this relationship.

In this paper, I will introduce the process of transition from school to work while comparing the realities of the placement process in Japan with those in other countries. Also, I will clarify the functions and dysfunctions of the Japanese mechanism of the transition process from school to work and examine the future tasks to be tackled.

2. Transition Process in Which Schools Act as Job-Placement Channels

In Japan, all young graduates simultaneously leave school at the end of March to enter employment on April 1. Prospective college graduates take a company entrance examination in the summer-to-fall period in the year before graduation, with many receiving an informal acceptance from the firm some time before graduation. Schools play an extremely important role in this process.

A survey on early careers of youths in three countries, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain, clearly reveals the features of Japanese youths' transition process from school to work. (Koyo Shokugyo Sogo Ken-kyuusho 1989)

When do they start looking for their first jobs? Many young Japanese begin their job-search activity six months to one year before graduation. Their American and British counterparts begin job-seeking much later. British youths start looking for work shortly before graduation, while American youths do so immediately after graduation. In other words, what is peculiar about the job-search activity of Japanese youths is that they do so while in schools and in addition, considerably before graduation.

How do they start looking for jobs? Table 1 shows the results of a survey on the methods they utilized to find their first job (multiple replies). In Japan, an overwhelmingly high percentage of young people find work with the help of schools and only a small segment find employment through other means. In the U.S., on the other hand, a high proportion of young

persons ask their family members, relatives, friends and acquaintances to help them find work. Alternatively, they rely on help-wanted ads to find their prospective positions. Thus, informal recommendations from influential persons constitute means for finding jobs in the U.S. At the same time, many American young people look at wanted ads and directly apply to corporations for employment. The job-search activity of American students, it is fair to say, is characteristically personal and is not dependent on institutions. The way British young persons do their job-seeking activities, meanwhile, is broad-based. They utilize a wide variety of job-search methods ranging from schools, families, relatives, acquaintances to public job-placement offices and wanted ads. Thus, schools are only one means for finding employment. In contrast, most Japanese youth characteristically find work using schools as the main channel.

Table 1 How One Attempted to Find First Job (Multiple Replies) (Unit : %)

	Family relative	Friend or acquaintance	Job-placement information magazine	Wanted ad	Public employment office	School	Private job-placement office	Other	N
Japan									
Elementary and secondary education	22.4	11.7	4.9	6.6	4.5	62.6	0.9	3.7	647
Higher education	25.1	15.8	19.5	13.0	4.0	59.6	3.4	11.6	354
U.S.									
Elementary and secondary education	41.1	35.5	0.0	45.8	15.7	13.8	8.4	30.1	773
Higher education	38.4	36.1	0.0	56.2	16.4	46.6	14.6	27.4	219
Britain									
Elementary and secondary education	37.6	29.8	0.0	48.7	15.2	42.3	25.9	12.1	873
Higher education	18.1	25.0	0.0	68.1	14.7	36.2	21.6	11.2	116

Source : National Institutes of Employment and Vocational Research, A comparative study on youth employment in Japan, the U.S. and Great Britain (1987)

High schools help students find work as part of vocational guidance efforts in the following manner.

Employers provide a certain quota of job offers to individual high schools through public employment security offices. High schools, on the other hand, select and recommend students in such a manner as to fill the quota. Companies, as a rule, employ those students recommended by the schools as long as no special problems arise. A stable relationship has been established between high schools and corporations located in their regional areas, and each year a certain number of graduates are sent from high schools to individual firms (Amano 1982). In colleges and universities, there is no systematized process of helping students find work as practiced in high schools; however, many students find employment through job-placement offices, research labs and seminars (Nihon Rodo Kenkyuu Kiko 1992).

The abovementioned features of the job-search process make Japanese youths apply to a relatively small number of predetermined businesses. In contrast, British and American youths apply to an average of eight companies, showing the gap in comparison with Japanese

graduates.

When do they start working? Japanese young people graduate from school around March 25 and many begin working around April 1. By comparison, Western youth begin to work some time after graduation, usually not entering their careers immediately after graduation, as do Japanese counterparts. In the U.S. only 49.4 percent of high school graduates have obtained jobs by graduation. Also, 58 percent of these are continuing part-time jobs which they had in high school (Nolfi et al 1978).

In summary, Japanese students begin their job-seeking activities while at school as part of their education under career guidance in high schools and in a similar manner in colleges and universities. They apply for employment at a limited number of firms and many enter their careers immediately after school. The process of transition from school to work, it is safe to say, is quite different from that of American and British students.

3. Coveted Young Work Force: Its Social Background

Why do Japanese youths go through the process to find jobs?

What should be noted first is the demand for a young labor force, or to be more exact, increasing demand for young people without any work experience. In Japan, what may be called "new school graduates" is a term used apart from youth labor force. Employers recruit new school graduates once a year—a large number of youths graduating in March, as stated earlier, to let them begin work at the start of the fiscal year in April. What is important is that employers consider recruitment of new school graduates as the main method for accepting people into their organizations. Thus, a sharp line is drawn between new graduates and persons employed in midcareer. Based on the practice called "hiring the bulk of employees as new school graduates," young workers are incorporated into the labor market through schools. Western common sense is that young people have no work experience and are thus unskilled. Therefore, they are not necessarily valued highly. Japanese employers too are well aware that young persons have academic knowledge but no vocational abilities. Yet, they evaluate these people highly. Here lies the key in taking into consideration the Japanese work-entry system.

Why does corporate society value new school graduates so strongly? Four features involving young workers should be noted. First are low wages, and second, physical strength. Young persons are physically strong and can be highly efficient. They constitute a highly-efficient and low-wage pool of labor and are naturally valued highly by employers for such reasons. The third feature is that young persons are resilient and obedient and are thus highly adaptable to acquiring new skills and knowledge. The last characteristic is that they

are usually single and are easily transferrable.

These features of young people understandably work in favor of employers. But this applies to the employers of any country. Thus, there must be other reasons why these were of particular importance in Japan.

First, it must be noted that it was extremely important in Japan to get external knowledge. In opening its doors to the world, the nation realized that it had fallen far behind the West. Furthermore, through its defeat in World War II, Japan learned it lagged behind its West in science and technology. Thus, an urgent task confronting Japan was to take in foreign knowledge and technology and thereby reconstruct its industry. Learning and adapting foreign knowledge, rather than adhering to skills and knowledge indigenously accumulated, took on a more significant meaning. Businesses were extremely aggressive in their efforts toward technological innovation. From the Meiji Era to the postwar era and on to the present day, getting foreign knowledge and technology was considered important for industry, where the resilience and flexibility of young workers were held in high esteem.

Second is the mechanism in which Japanese workers acquire skills. Workers acquire skills primarily through on-the-job training rather than at schools and vocational training institutions. They learn and acquire skills by watching their superiors and through rotations from easy to gradually more difficult tasks. The mechanism of skill development has been established in Japan's large manufacturing businesses. No workers with skills sufficient to meet the immediate needs of their new jobs are required at these firms. Rather, the flexibility and adaptability that allow for job transfers are required. Knowledge and skills which are general rather than specialized are more suitable. Thus, the potential for training, rather than a wealth of acquired knowledge, is what is desired. Young workers fulfill this requirement.

Last is a factor involving the school system. In Japan, helping students find jobs is recognized as an important role played by the schools at the final stage of education. Articles 25-3 and 33-2 of the Employment Stability Law, revised in 1949, legally allows schools to provide vocational guidance and help students find jobs, thus entrusting these institutions with a role in maintaining stable employment. Schools educate students, offer them vocational guidance and prepare letters of recommendation to employers as well as supplying academic records. In selecting prospective workers, such information that is provided to employers is worthwhile both in terms of costs and reliability. In short, recognition of the role of schools in assisting graduates to find jobs has created a stable relationship between educational institutions and business. This in turn has contributed to the high value of new

school graduates.

4. Merits and Demerits of the Japanese System

Amidst a worker shortage following the high-growth period, the process of transition from school to work aided by schools acting as job-placement channels, has taken firm root. The system has advantages, but this is not to say that there are no disadvantages.

One of the advantages is the smooth transition into corporate society. Pursuing school work diligently assures students good jobs, which means no gap between the education and the professional world. A gap between the two, if observable, would require young persons to make an extra effort beyond school work in order to develop the capability demanded by firms. Japanese youths utilize education as a passport to a career path and make smooth the transition to the working world.

Schools also enjoy the significant benefits from the system. Students in vocational courses are in a sense those who have dropped out of the race for going on to institutions for higher learning. Those who have no goal of advancing to institutions of higher education tend to cut themselves off from schools. However, the system of schools acting as job-placement channels enables them to get these students involved in school work. Knowing that academic performance counts when finding employment as well as when going on to institutions of higher education, students steer themselves toward school.

For employers, the system is extremely advantageous in that they can secure a qualitatively and quantitatively stable pool of labor at low costs as was pointed out earlier. High-quality Japanese workers, it is said, are the products of a skills training system at firms. Underlying this is the fact that employers could secure a stable reservoir of school graduates in terms of quality and quantity.

Alternatively stated, the mechanism of transition from school to work in Japan works to the significant advantage of students, schools, businesses and society as a whole. It does present problems, however.

One problem is the disparity in ranking among schools. Through schools, students flow into segments of the professional world. Accordingly, when finding work, they are affected by a gap in ranking between the schools irrelevant to their ability and endeavor. An entrance examination taken for admission to higher education is free competition where the battle is determined by academic performance. In contrast, finding work through schools occurs within a quota set by firms. Thus, the closed nature of employment examinations poses a problem. In

other words, this problem violates the principle of equal opportunity.

The second problem is that job-search, being conducted as part of education while students are in schools, affects education itself. Employers want to get first bids on the most talented students, while students would like to find positions at top-notch firms. They thus move up the peak of the job-seeking and job-offer season, leading to earlier recruitment of newcomers. This is called *aotagai* in Japanese, which originally meant "reaping rice before the harvest." Attempts have been made to control the period of job-search activity by concluding a gentleman's agreement among firms and schools, yet each year, colleges and universities see graduating students unable to concentrate on classes from the spring. Students are supposed to finish their courses of study by the time they graduate, yet their curriculums are interrupted by job-seeking activity.

The third problem, which deserves special emphasis, is that the Japanese system, under which students are sent into the professional world through schools, leaves little room for students to discover what job really suits them. Moreover, it provides little opportunity for experience in determining the suitability of different jobs. American and British students look for work in a diverse and aggressive manner. In contrast, Japanese students do so through schools and in a somewhat passive fashion. In the process of career guidance, advice is given to students regarding jobs and adaptability, but to a limited extent. With scanty information about the professional world at hand and little trial-and-error career experience, they plunge into the job market immediately after graduation but remain uncertain about job suitability. However, they are expected to stay with their first job for life.

The process of transition from school to work with little room for trial-and-error career experience poses a more serious problem to those who are thrown off the main career track. For instance, when compared to new school graduates, those who dropped out of school and those who left school and found jobs but later quit work are offered extremely perfunctory assistance in their job-seeking efforts. This makes it difficult for them to start over and retrieve the "damage" from having been thrown off the right track. The Japanese work-entry system allows those who are "on the right track" to receive considerable assistance from schools and businesses. However, it offers scanty aid to those who are "off the right track," making it difficult for them to restart their careers.

5. Concluding Remarks

Japanese youths begin their working lives with a smoother transition to jobs than their Western counterparts. This transition process is based on Japanese career system. Under the system, as part of career guidance the school helps the student find a job based on the results

of his or her tests. After entering the job market, he or she continues to work until the mandatory retirement age. This type of career does not provide for much opportunity for an individual's trial-and-error experience or for gaining job-search knowhow.

In reality, however, careers based upon the system of lifetime employment and seniority-based wages are directed toward male workers at large companies and do not really characterize career conditions for workers at smaller-scale firms or for women and elderly persons. Furthermore, even at large firms seniority-based wages and promotion as well as lifetime employment are undergoing changes. These changes will progress at an accelerating pace amidst of the growing weight of services in the economy, sophisticated information exchange and globalization. In this situation, overhauling the existing-career system is inevitably necessary. The possibility is strong that there will be fewer merits and more demerits to the existing Japanese-style process of transition from school to work.

Excessive dependence on schools in the job-seeking process must be averted. What is important is a person's willingness to develop one's own career and the fostering of job-search knowhow. Toward this end, it is vital to systematically consolidate assistance measures inside as well as outside the schools.

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General Survey

Recent Labor Economy Indices

	June 1993	May 1993	Change from previous year
Labor force	6,696 (10 thousand)	6,696 (10 thousand)	43 (10 thousand)
Employed	6,537	6,527	17
Employees	5,233	5,213	94
Unemployed	165	168	26
Unemployment rate	2.5%	2.5%	0.4
Active opening rate	0.74	0.81	-0.32
Total hours worked	164.6 (hours)	151.6 (hours)	-4.9*
Total wages of regular employees	273.2 (¥thousand)	269.7 (¥thousand)	0.8*

Source : Management and Coordination Agency, Ministry of Labour.

Notes : 1. *denotes annual percent change.

2. From January 1991, date of "Total hours worked" and "Total wages of regular employees" are for firms with 5 to 30 employees.

**Home Ownership Ratio, Commuting Time
and Active Job Openings-to-Job Applicants Ratio by Prefecture**



Prefecture	Home owner- ship ratio (%)	Commuting time (minute)	Active job openings-to-job applicants ratio
Hokkaido	53.3	50	0.6
Miyagi	61.6	55	1.1
Tokyo	41.4	86	1.1
Ishikawa	72.3	49	1.4
Aichi	59.9	62	1.7
Osaka	49.5	78	0.8
Hiroshima	61.0	59	1.5
Kagawa	71.2	51	1.7
Fukuoka	55.0	62	0.7
Okinawa	57.7	58	0.3

Source: Statistics Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency, *Social Life Statistical Indicators(1992)*, NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *NHK Survey on Nation's Living Time (1991)* and Policy Research Department, Labour Minister's Secretariat, *Labour Statistics Survey (1993)*

Notes: 1) Home Ownership rates are figures for 1988.

2) Commuting time is the mean value of time required for the commuter to go back and forth daily between home and work on a weekday.

3) Active job openings-to-job applicants ratios are mean values for 1992 and exclude part-timers.