



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Americans In Japan cont'd.

risky experimental coverages). Having productive discussions with regulators was accordingly problematic, although the many full color posters of female American golfers (such as Laura Baugh) that adorned MOF's walls helped some of us keep things in perspective.

Our involvement in the systems area was primarily in the definition of user requirements and acceptance testing. This portion of the project was performed in conjunction with the Melbourne office of PAXUS — the software affiliate of a New Zealand parent. The ultimate system was a state-of-the-art, real-time, fully integrated, bilingual database management system that had few rivals in Japan — partly because of the decidedly manual orientation of the competition.

With a market share in 1986 of only 0.7% of premium, the foreign life companies have not been seen as a major threat to the controlled, cartelized and concentrated Japanese market. The environment does, however, provide at least one distraction for the domestic companies: Post Office Life Insurance (POLI). In product parameters and delivery, POLI bears some resemblance to U.S. industrial insurance, except that it resides in the public sector. Each concession granted to POLI by MOF, such as increased face amount ceilings and broadened product offerings, is resisted by the private companies and denounced as unfair competition. (One cartoon we saw proposed having life companies commence the sale of postage stamps.) Their concern may be justified. POLI's premium income in the mid-1980s reportedly ranked it as the largest insurance entity in the world.

Because most of our co-workers lived several hours outside Tokyo, their business day did not begin until about 9 a.m. Like many expatriates, we had the good fortune to live in central Tokyo, an enviable 20-minute walk from work. In our office, all management positions were held by men and most clerical positions were held by women (with an exception being made for the most inscrutable life-forms: the foreign professional female). It was interesting to note that reporting relationships revolved to a large degree around age and school details. For example, an older man would rarely be subjected to the indignity of working for a younger man

unless the latter had truly exceptional academic credentials. Our organization chart showed each employee's age below his name. While we maintained what might be considered normal working hours, many of our co-workers would regularly work until well after 7 p.m. — giving them a few hours for snacks and refreshments with colleagues before catching the last trains home.

Our Japanese assignment concluded March 31, 1986. On April 2, 1986, National Life Hoken opened for business, thereby making us the first European company to sell yen-based life products in the Japanese market. Operations would have commenced one day earlier were it not for the date, April 1st, in addition to being the first day of the fiscal year, is not a lucky day in Japan. Any good astrologer would understand.

(Ed. Note: With the increasing internationalization of financial services, many SOA members are being exposed to the actuarial practices in the countries visited by Gary Corbett and others because of their companies' entry into these markets. Val and Clint Myers spent three years in the Netherlands and 15 months in Japan. In the future many FSAs will no doubt have similar experiences. Clint is now Associate Actuary at Life Insurance Company of Georgia and Val is Actuary at Associated Doctors Health and Life Insurance Company, both wholly owned by Nationale-Nederlanden.)

Insurance Catastrophes Conference August 25-27

The theory of insurance catastrophes will be the focus of the 23rd Actuarial Research Conference August 25-27 at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. Particular emphasis will be placed on the AIDS epidemic, which will be examined by actuaries active in this area, statisticians and medical researchers. Also scheduled are sessions for contributed papers on other insurance catastrophes topics.

The registration fee is \$75. For more information and registration forms, contact Conference Coordinator Dr. Charles Vinsonhaler at (203) 486-3944 or SOA Director of Research Mark G. Doherty at (312) 773-3010.

The conference is sponsored by SOA, CAS, Hartford Actuaries Club and the University of Connecticut's Department of Mathematics and Actuarial Science Program.

Fall Exam Preparation Seminars

Three universities are offering fall seminars to help students prepare for the November examinations.

- The University of Toronto will offer seminars for courses 120, 130, 135, 140, and 150. For details, contact Professor Samuel Broverman at his *Yearbook* address.
- Associateship seminars for courses EA2 and 210 will be offered by Georgia State University. For further information, contact Robert W. Batten at his *Yearbook* address.
- The University of Waterloo will sponsor seminars on courses 140 and above, except EA2, from October 15-30. Contact F.G. Reynolds at his *Yearbook* address for further information.

SOA Office to Move This Fall

The SOA office will move this fall to new, larger quarters in Schaumburg, Ill., to better serve the growing membership.

As SOA has grown, the number of staff members has increased to meet the demand for membership services. When SOA moved from Chicago to its present offices in Itasca, Ill., five years ago, the staff numbered 25; there are now 52 staff members and office space is cramped. Staff additions have been necessary, for example, to handle a 61% increase in the number of candidates registered for exams from 1983 to 1987. Other membership services that have required additional staff include continuing education and research.

The Society will occupy the entire eighth floor of a new office tower which is part of a complex called Woodfield Corporate Center, owned by The Prudential Insurance Company of America. The new office is large enough to accommodate further expansion of Society activities. The site selection was approved by the Board of Governors.

SOA Director of Operations Rachel L. Brody is overseeing the move to the new office.

Schaumburg is a suburb northwest of Chicago, about 15-20 minutes from O'Hare International Airport.