

It's wonderful," says the Competitive Enterprise Secretary Bruce by journalists in, the agenda was buried in defeat, the liberal leader and toxic cleanup.

1970s-style "process re-pressing" few. Freeing from Hatch Act limits on rewarded public employment contrasts with what private unions—noth- couldn't, or wouldn't, Kansas Democratic Sens. and Richard Pryor to s to help pass striker re-

for this ironic record? nts—one political, one e political mistake was entrust his agenda to the al leaders he shunned in e majority for 40 years lead a charge for "re-Bob Byrd could strangle to, and Rep. Vic Fazio reform.

sal blunder was misjudg- hood toward government. took a public desire for lomeestic leadership for a gger government. GOP ristol notes that the Clin- such as it was, ended on e day of his health care l Mr. Clinton's reputation rat and began his unrav-

ostility to government is it even so fine a Beltway CNN's Bill Schneider is 1993 he said Mr. Clinton's ainly to the economy. But es we rethink the old polit- ed in the mid-1960s, that eologically conservative" ily liberal."

s, America is "ideological- t "operationally libertari- y want an activist govern- but they profoundly doubt i do anything well. "The n public opinion in the last collapse of confidence in Mr. Schneider says, "now ll Clinton."

rms Mr. Schneider. By try- government to a skeptical nton has made the country about government. The lat- survey shows that, by ericans agree that "the fed- it controls too much of our the Reagan heyday of 1987, 1st 58% to 37%.

ood it's not surprising that s health plan crashed; or n's one historic legislative rade treaty (Nafta) that cut uriffs; or that something bill nearly lost because it k."

of the National Taxpayers hat in the first nine months one member of Congress e spending cuts than in- s Herbert Bateman, Repub- a. Yet in the first 18 months ngress, some 214 members ore cuts than increases, in- ocrats.

kness of the 1980s, Arthur nsoled fellow liberals with at historical "cycles" in- ed. He probably never linton would make the next e shortest in history.

time in Brazilian history, more people have been leaving the country than immigrating into it.

At the beginning of this year's campaign

to limit expenditures by executive nat. Moreover, outgoing President Itamar Franco favored Mr. Cardoso's candidacy and has not raised rates for government ser-

Mr. Perry is president of the Washington-based Institute for the Study of the Americas.

No Life After Work, Say Babbitts of Tokyo

By KELLY ROSSITER AND KENT ROSSITER

TOKYO — "This is the land of the \$300 golf game," Takeshi Komiya says. "No one can afford to retire early."

And yet many must, just as 60 year-old Mr. Komiya had to hang up his working shoes recently. For the first time in 16 years, the Labor Ministry says, the number of salaried workers in Japan has declined—by 20,000 so far this year. Government estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands more may soon join them in the ranks of the *kibotai shoku*, or voluntarily retired.

It may seem more dignified to be asked, in Japanese fashion, to volunteer to retire than to be dismissed, but to the *salariman* under the knife, it's all the same: "You are the fat, and it's time for trimming," sighs Kosuke Sakigawa, a former accounts manager for Hitachi.

Mr. Komiya, eased out of his post as a trust bank department head early this year, has little good to say about postemployment life in expensive Japan. Sitting amid the clatter and flashing lights of his neighborhood pachinko parlor, he says: "I don't have anything to do, just drinking and sleeping." Four or five nights a week he meets with former colleagues and fellow retirees at a Shinjuku bar.

Mr. Komiya and his friends' inability to secure a pleasant retirement—with golf, hobbies at home, and smelling the roses—is not just a question of money. Most salarimen never had the time to develop serious interests outside of their jobs, and so even those who can afford to leave the work environment are often loath to do so.

For one thing, they're not good at helping around the house. Traditionally, the Japanese *salariman* worked 58 hours in the office and four hours around the home, compared with the 46 and 15 hours worked by his Western counterpart. Japanese wives, used to the solitude the traditional schedule provided, are unhappy with their husbands' intrusion. They call the men *sodai gomi*: oversize garbage.

Susumu Inose, who runs Pacific Rim Services, a job search agency, explains the demoralizing predicament: "There is no such thing as early retirement in Japan. You must find work—for yourself, for your family, for society." Personnel consultant Thomas Nevins adds, "These guys will wake up before sunrise just so they can get the newspaper without being seen."

Some men do try come to terms with their jobless status. Since being cut from his production management job last spring, Hideki Shinju, 56, has sought solace in bonsai gardening. To a degree, he has found it. "I really enjoy the discipline of bonsai,"

Mr. Shinju muses. Then he adds, "It kind of reminds me of my old job."

Many of the early retirees wind up, resume in hand, on the doorstep of job search agencies like Mr. Inose's. The greeting is bittersweet. "These men sneak in, their shoulders slumped. They look scared," Mr. Inose says. "I help them. I tell them, 'You will get a job. Maybe you will take a big pay cut, but you will get a job.'" Some salarimen say they will take up to a 50% pay cut just to keep on working.

And a loss in pay is just the beginning. In Japan's rigidly hierarchical business world, moving from a major corporation to a subsidiary or small business means losing a tremendous amount of prestige.

"If I don't find a job soon, I will become sick—physically and mentally," says Takeshi Komiya.

After Hitachi's Mr. Sakigawa was told by his superior, "I'm going to retire soon, and so should you,"—typical of the polite advice that carries the impact of a jackhammer—he began looking for a second career. At first he limited his search to only big-name businesses. Since April he has interviewed at some 35 smaller companies. And still there's nothing: "They all want me for 'assistant this' or 'assistant that.' At my old job I was the boss. People respected me."

Now, Mr. Sakigawa says, the staff in the offices of former business contacts say, "Everyone is so very busy. You should leave."

"A lot of these men have too much ego" to slide down in prestige, explains Mr. Nevins, who heads TMT Personnel Policy Consulting, responsible for outplacement at 80 Tokyo corporations. "While that's a great asset in the business world, it doesn't make finding a job easy."

Indeed, some cling to their old jobs. Japan's famed lifetime employment system in effect prohibits companies from demanding retirement. But very little effort is spared in making it obvious to the men that they are no longer wanted. Former Mazda sales director Toshi Yamagi, 54, says, "A few weeks ago I took a couple of days vacation for my daughter's wedding. [Mazda] told me, 'It's all right if you don't come back.'"

Those destined for this extended vacation can easily read the signs. While a Western businessman's status is determined by the view his desk affords, in

Japan those targeted for cuts are moved to the windows, the symbolic periphery of the office. There, they are given menial assignments and pine away as *madogiwazoku*, or window-watchers.

"I avoid those men," a secretary at Nihon Electric Company confides. "Some of them will tap on their desks and stare out the window for hours. They all seem very nervous."

Some attempt to hang themselves with their own neckties. "It's fortunate that thinner ties are in fashion," a volunteer at a Tokyo counselling hotline wryly observes.

"Some of the stories sound funny, but the situation is really quite severe," says Fumitaka Noda, Supervisor of Clinical Psychiatry at Tokyo Musashino Hospital. He adds the "Ministry of Health is not so keen on establishing a mental health program. If a man is suffering from psychological problems, he is advised to *gamman*, to 'have guts and endure.'"

A Ministry of Health official says the Japanese have an aversion to Western therapeutic techniques: "To seek counselling is to single yourself as someone special, someone with an especially heavy burden. This just isn't done in Japan." That leaves the early retirees like Mr. Komiya to find sympathy among his drinking partners at the Shinjuku bar.

"I used to think retirement might suit me, but after realizing the financial reality and doing this for a few weeks I started looking again," Mr. Komiya says in the Pachinko parlor. "If I don't find a job soon, I will become sick—physically and mentally."

Recently, over sake, Mr. Komiya learned that a colleague had become a *madogiwazoku*, one step away from his own fate. "I told him to enjoy the view," Mr. Komiya says. Unfortunately, for many Japanese men the view is bleak indeed.

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AWSJ

Notable & Quotable

The following is excerpted from an open letter by Xu Xiying, wife of Bi Yimin, a businessman arrested in October 1993 on charges of misappropriation of public funds. He is still in custody. Asia Watch contends Mr. Bi was arrested because he had the money to support jailed pro-democracy colleagues.

Beginning in the summer of 1991, Mr. Bi started a binder factory in cooperation with the township of Sucun in Fangshan district. Sucun provided the land on which the factory was to be built, but did not contribute a single *ku* of money. Mr. Bi provided every-

thing, from capital to technology. After several years of hard work on the part of Mr. Bi, the factory was very successful economically. His cooperators from Sucun, forgetting all moral principles at the sight of money, tried to take over the factory Mr. Bi had worked hard to build. But they could not think of an excuse. So they tried to level false charges against Mr. Bi for providing funds to the sensitive prisoners. . . . [They had] the connivance of some people in the organs of justice in Fangshan district. That is the real reason why the case has dragged on for so long without a solution.