

Key note Speech A few Hot Issues of Water Supply in Japan

Hiroataka TACHIKAWA*

Director, Office of Drinking Water Quality Management,
Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare (MHLW)

1. Introduction

One hundred and twenty years have passed since the first modern water supply system in Japan started to supply at Yokohama City in 1887. Fifty years have passed since the Waterworks Law was enacted in 1957 as the basic law to control water suppliers, replacing the Waterworks Clauses Act(1890).. The MHLW developed the Waterworks Vision in June 2004. It comprehensively provides specific measures and steps concerning the future directions of waterworks.

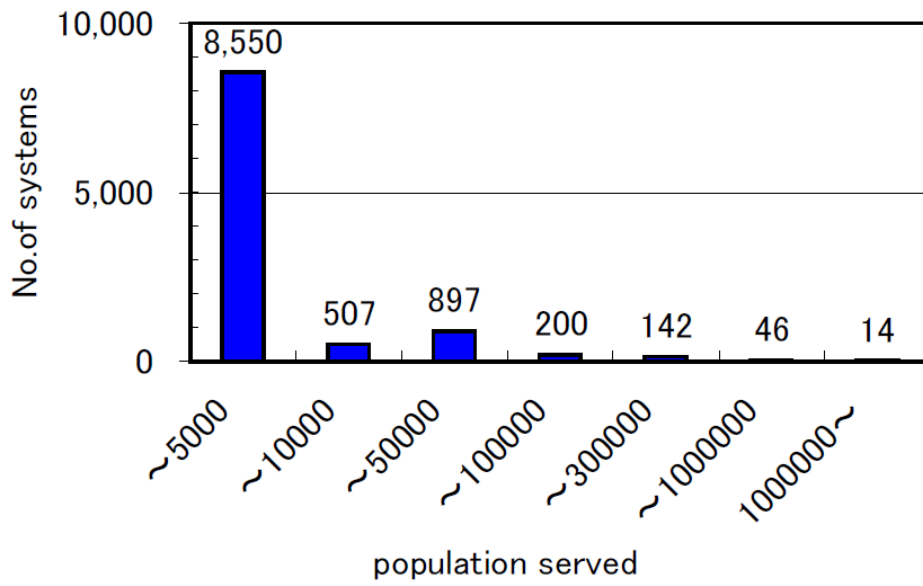
Today, the author will introduce a few hot issues of water supply in Japan.

2. System of Waterworks in Japan

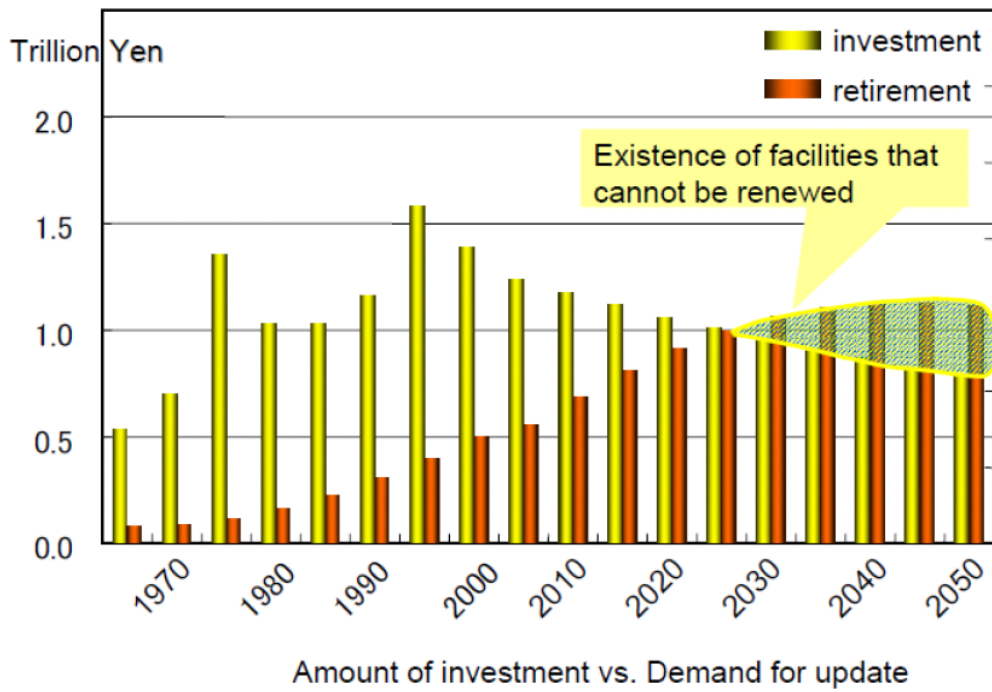
There are many waterworks in Japan. The number of systems is about 10,200, though the number of cities, towns and villages which mainly undertake water supply in Japan, is about 1,800. And there are big and various differences among waterworks in Japan. A lot of small waterworks are in serious situations to manage water supply services because of shortage of fare income, staff, etc.

Moreover, there are many small waterworks which are short of income for maintaining their asset properly; many of them have not introduced sustainable financial management system. Consequently, their internal reserves are very little and their depreciation in accounting is insufficient. The sustainability of their service, and even their existence itself, is quite questionable, as their facilities cannot be renewed to prevent assets from deterioration in the future. With these problems in mind, the Waterworks Vision insisted that the government should take measures to improve financial and operational basis of small waterworks, particularly.

*Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda, Tokyo100-8916 Japan e-mail: tachikawa-hiroataka@mhlw.go.jp



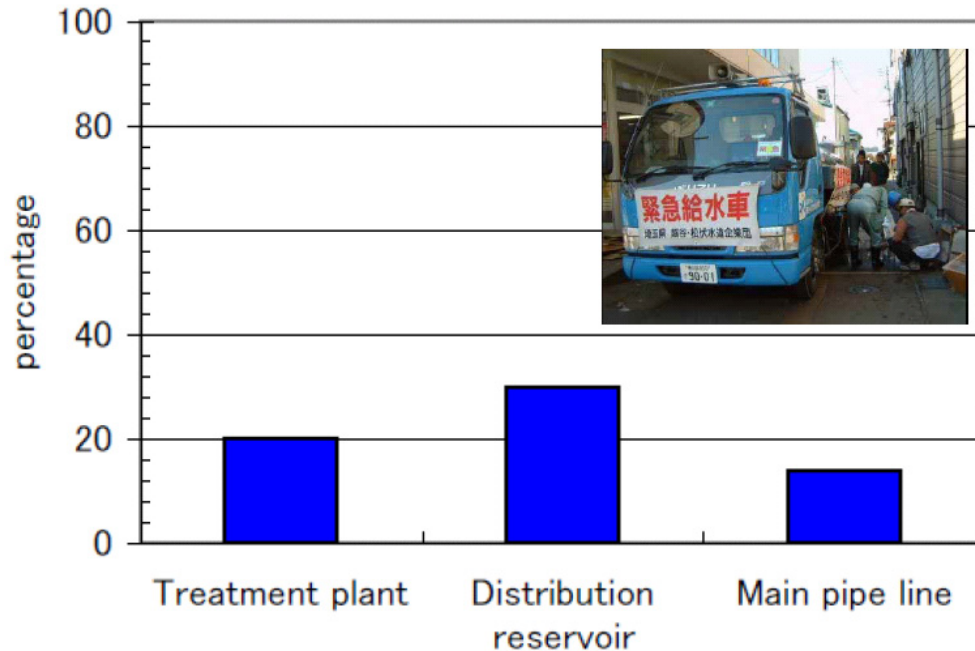
Numbers of Water Supply Systems in Japan
(Mar.2004)



Amount of investment vs. Demand for update

3. Renovation of Water Supply Facilities

Earthquakes are reported frequently in Japan every year, and supplying water is often suspended for more than a few months after big earthquakes. The Waterworks Vision reported that the measures already taken by waterworks against earthquakes were insufficient.



Percentage of earthquake-proof facilities

In Aug.2006, Hiroshima Pref's Bulk Water Supply System experienced a roof-fall accident in their main aqueduct tunnel and the water supply for 72,100 people (Max) were suspended for 17days.

The Waterworks Vision insisted that the government should take measures for water supply facilities to improve their earthquake-resistance and to accelerate renovation of aged facilities.

4. Conclusions

In Japan, with the spread of reliable water supply system in these days, most population take it granted to enjoy steady public water service with reasonable charges. However, sustainability of water service cannot be assured for the following generations, if proper investments are not maintained for water service systems.

Opening Remarks

~Hot Issues of Water Supply in Japan~

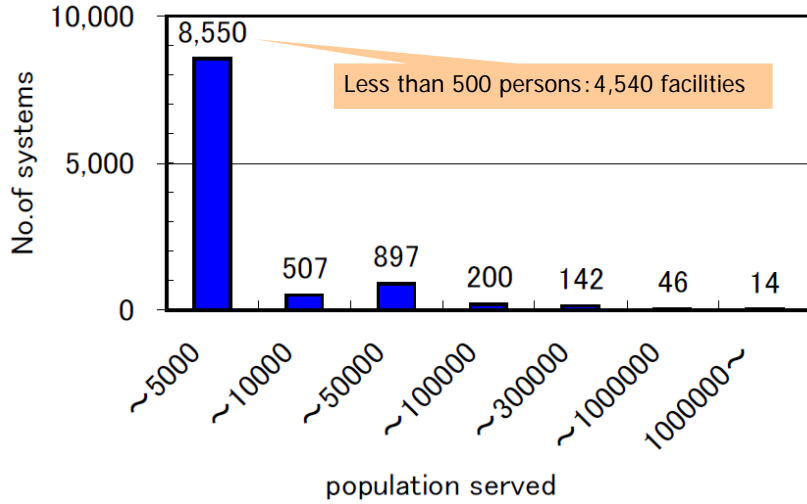
Hiroataka TACHIKAWA

Office of Drinking Water Quality Management,
Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare (MHLW)

History of Waterworks in Japan

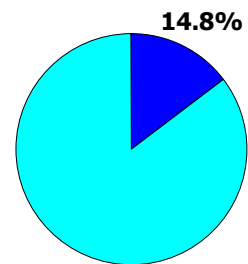
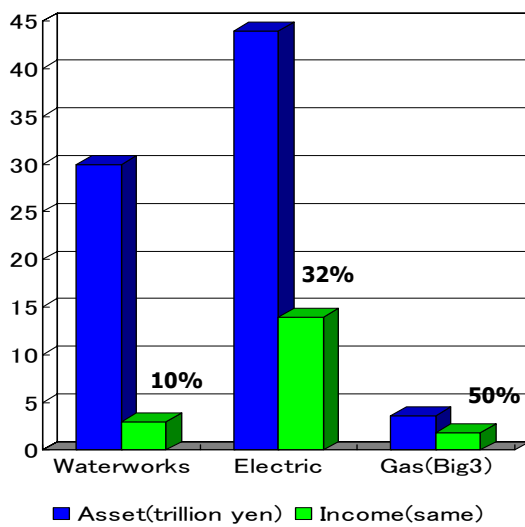
| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 16 th C | Old type waterworks (Waterways) |
| 1887 | 1 st Modern Water Supply System (Supplying purified water, Yokohama City) |
| 1922 | 1 st Chlorination for drinking water (Yokohama, Tokyo Waterworks) |
| 1957 | The Waterworks Law |
| Now | Percentage of Population served:97.1 % (Mar 2005) |

Big Differences between Waterworks



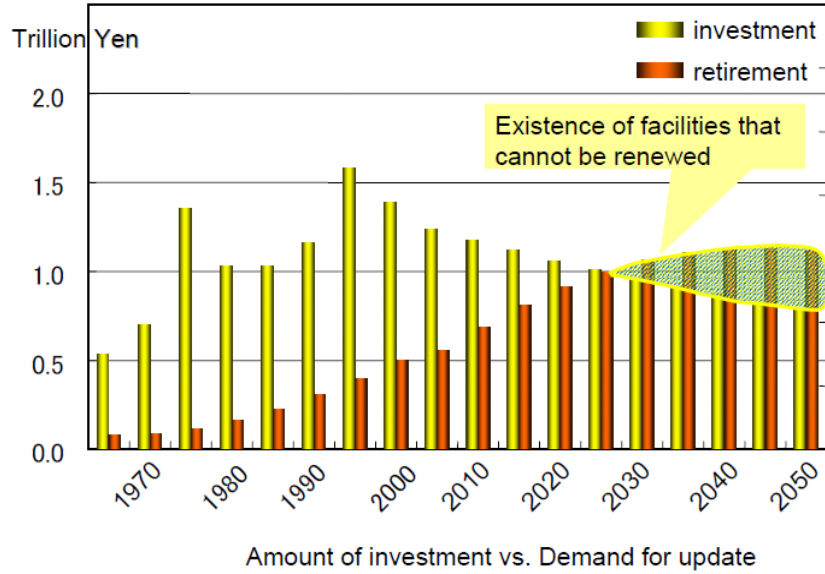
Numbers of Water Supply Systems in Japan
(Mar.2004)

Enough about Income & Internal Reserves?



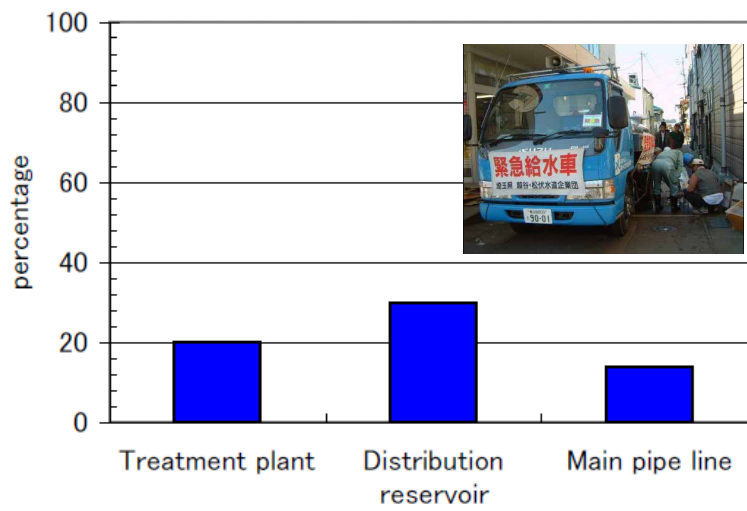
Internal Reserves
/ Sum of Depreciation
(Waterworks)

Big Uneasiness to the renewal of facilities



5

Poor Condition at Disaster (Earthquake etc.)



6

Fall Accident of Main Pipe Line (Aug.2006mHiroshima Pref.)

People couldn't be served
drinking water

72,100 people(Max)

17days



7

しっかり水分、
元気な夏!!

脱水症状による集中眩や脱力感などの
予防には、こまめな水分補給が重要です。
夏は、暑いからといって水分を減らすと、
脱水症状の原因になります。水分補給は、
こまめに、こまめに、こまめに。

主編●水道産業新聞社 後援●厚生労働省

Thank you
for your attention

Take Water
for Healthy Summer

8