Book Reviews

Siddayao, Corazon Morales, ed., Criteria for Energy Pricing Policy, London: Graham & Trotman, 1985, 224 pp., \$37.00.

This is a collection of articles commissioned for the Energy Pricing Policy Workshop, Regional Energy Development Program, Bangkok, May 1984. The articles cover a number of issues related to energy pricing in developing countries. Overall the book provides a good background into the issues surrounding energy pricing and presents a diversity of opinions. This divergence shows how important pricing issues have become, and it provides avenues for continued debate. The book also contains a summary of the workshop as well as two short country papers (People's Republic of China and Nepal).

The first article in the book is by Mohan Munasinghe, a well-known author on energy pricing theory. Dr. Munasinghe begins with a summary of the general issues of energy pricing and the theory behind long-run marginal cost (LRMC) pricing, in a fashion similar to his previous works. This article, however, also includes discussions linking pricing issues to national energy planning and is a good, succinct discussion. He develops a two-step process for determining energy prices:

In the first stage, a set of prices that strictly meets the economic efficiency objective is determined . . . The second stage consists of adjusting these efficient prices to meet all other objectives [to meet minimum energy needs and cover financial objectives].

The adjustment to LRMC is the key to the discussion. It is followed by an example that shows how pricing policy can be integrated with conservation policies. The example is clear, straightforward, and helpful in understanding the concepts presented.

The second article, by Manmohan Kumar, is a qualitative discussion of how pricing policies affect the socio-economic goals of developing countries in Asia. The author relates the issues of marginal costs to the possible effects pricing has on a whole range of goals including equity, employment, industrialization, and rural development. This is the only paper that addresses the "traditional" fuels sector in some depth. Most of the other discussions pertain only to commercially traded fuels.

Dr. Kumar argues that direct pricing policies, especially those that attempt to promote commercial fuel use, may have little effect on traditional fuel use. "In the long run, the solutions may appear to lie with increasing the availability of firewood by public reforestation programmes." A major reason is that a sizeable portion of wood fuels is not bought and sold and has no market price. Kumar ends the article noting that pricing is not an isolated issue and that there is a need to undertake detailed empirical analyses because "still very little is known."

David Newberry provides a differing viewpoint on the issue of marginal cost pricing. He states that "the efficient price of electricity is the short-run marginal cost of producing . . ." He backs this up briefly by stating that 1) SRMC is well-defined, 2) that SRMC = LRMC under conditions of constant yearly demand and optimal investment, and 3) that the arguments against SRMC can be corrected by developing

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proper contracts. It is disappointing that the discussion justifying his position is so short. His paper does not adequately address the arguments given by proponents of LRMC pricing.

Dr. Newberry also presents some empirical evidence of the impacts of fuel taxes on the distribution of income. The applications are quite interesting, but the reader will need to refer to some other articles to fully understand the work presented.

The paper by the editor focuses on the issue of shadow pricing for indigenous resources and presents a good overview of alternative shadow pricing schemes for commercially-traded resources. Dr. Siddayao looks at the reasons behind using shadow pricing and at the various methods of developing shadow prices including export prices, import prices, and opportunity costs. She stresses that shadow prices different from market prices should only be used if they (a) will lead the economy to increasing efficiency and (b) the demand-supply forces in the market are not working properly.

While it is easy to agree with the last statement, in reality there are not many cases in developing countries where demand-supply forces are working properly. Therefore, shadow pricing will amost always become an issue because markets tend to be distorted and alternative pricing scenarios are important.

The other articles, by Drs. Bhatia and Gunter Schramm provide more background and some empirical evidence on two other pricing aspects. Dr. Bhatia introduces the role of pricing in the allocation of investments and the need for revenues to cover investment costs. Dr. Schramm provides some approaches to calculating "efficiency" prices and develops straightforward case-studies.

In sum, the book provides a good overview of the issues surrounding energy pricing policies in developing countries. It focuses on pricing issues related to commercial fuels. As with many volumes containing papers from workshops, there is some repetition of the major ideas. The strong point of this volume is that not all the authors agree on the "proper" development of energy prices nor on the necessary solutions. These different viewpoints are helpful in understanding the problems associated with pricing policy.

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Saltzman, Sidney and Richard E. Schuler, eds., The Future of Electrical Energy: A Regional Perspective of an Industry in Transition, Praeger, 1986, \$47.95.

This volume contains the edited versions of papers presented at a conference entitled "New York's Electrical Future," held in November of 1984. The participants spanned the spectrum from regulators and legislators to public interest agents and utility personnel. Most of the contributions are transcripts of rather short talks; however, a few chapters are journal-length pieces. The topics covered include regional electricity demand forecasting, alternate supply sources and future generation technologies, environmental and public health issues of electricity generation and transmission, public perceptions of the electric utility industry, the future financial environment for utilities, and the evolving institutional and regulation atmosphere.

In the first two chapters, Richard E. Schuler and Lawrence R. Klein epitomize the history of electric power generation in New York state and discuss the impact of the oil price rise on New York. Chapter 3 in this introductory section is by James R. Schlesinger who predicts that future world energy prices will be highly sensitive to increasing politically-generated shocks.

Section II consists of shorter papers on electricity demand forecasting for New York state. They provide a glimpse at the results of some complex regional economic models. However, due to the presentation format, the nature of these models is difficult to judge. An exception is the more extensive treatment by Timothy D. Mount and William J. Deehan. Unlike most of the other sections of this book, there is some redundancy in these chapters. Furthermore, I think the lack of any econometric demand models would be a disappointment to many readers of *The Energy Journal*. The last chapter in this section, by Douglas R. Bohi and Joel Darmstadter, has more the flavor of the introductory section and provides an optimistic alternative to Schlesinger's outlook on the world energy market. The authors predict stability due to the existence of a more orderly market mechanism for the setting of world oil prices.

Several papers in Section III discuss alternative electricity supply issues. The papers by William E. Davis and Lester M. Stuzin point out the limited options available to New York utilities in shifting away from a major use of oil fired generators. Robert H. Hiney's paper deals with the importation of Canadian electricity that may take on a different light in the wake of the potential advances in super-conductor transmission technology. Robert V. Percival's chapter on the issue of conservation versus construction is an extensive overview of the recent history of this national debate in the context of New York's recent experience. The two concluding chapters of this section deal with alternative generation technology and the resurrection of nuclear power as a viable technology by Frank L. Hubard and Alvin M. Weinberg, respectively.

Section IV concerns the environmental and public health issues relating to coal, oil and nuclear generation technologies and the transmission of hydroelectric power from northern New York and Canada. Robert T. Stafford writes from the perspective of a U.S. Senator dealing with the issue of acid rain. Harry H. Hovey, Jr. provides details on the costs of various pollution control equipment. William N. Stasiuk's paper surveys some recent public health literature on hazards generated by the electric power industry. Alan T. Crane closes this section with a piece that discusses risks from nuclear power.

In Section V methods to analyze the public perception of electric utilities are discussed. Donald R. Deluca furnishes an overview of survey methods in general and examines the results of a particular survey concerning the public perception of the risk from nuclear power. Using methods employed in anthropology, Steve Barnett analyzes a series of interviews conducted in New York to establish a "Consumer Energy Mindset". Howard Axelrod's concluding chapter in this section predicts some

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future issues of interest in the regulatory setting employing a matrix of future issues and their relative importance to public opinion.

The future of the electric utility industry is strongly influenced by its financial environment, and in Section VI a number of trends in financial issues are discussed in the context of the New York utilities. Leonard S. Hyman, Doris A. Kelley, and Richard C. Toole analyze the financial futures of the major New York utilities. Philip C. Kron considers the damaging side effects of a bankruptcy by any of the utilities weakened by problems with the nuclear plants still under construction. In the most detailed chapter of this section Ronald Forbes provides a detailed discussion of the bond issue difficulties in the financing of New York Power Authority.

In treating the institutional and regulatory climate of the electric utility industry, the final section of the book deals with the opinions of former members of regulatory commissions in New York and elsewhere. Richard E. Schuler foresees the emerging competitive climate for utilities causing new changes in regulatory actions in the wake of the recent energy price rise and nuclear power plant moratorium. Charles G. Stalon reports on changes he observed in Illinois with the advent of "open meetings" and the emergence of citizen's utility boards. In this section's concluding chapter, Alfred E. Kahn focuses on the effects of changes in cost accounting and smaller scale generating plant construction on future rate designs.

Recommendation of this volume as a general compendium on the future of electric power in the state of New York, or for any state, must be made with some reservation. The overall concept of the book is marred by the uneven nature of the contributions. Many lack the depth to serve as references for further research. The sections dealing with regulatory change, issues in the financial markets, and the public perceptions of electricity generation are potentially the most fruitful. Although the editors have provided some useful transitional passages, the potential buyer of this book should be aware of the "papers and proceedings" nature of the volume.

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