

## **26<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Actuaries**

### **Opening Ceremony - Yves Guérard**

### **8<sup>th</sup> June 1998**

Merci Monsieur le Président,  
Distingués Invités, chers collègues

It is customary for the Secretary General to present the Vice Presidents and the Secretaries of the Congress. Thanks to the better technology put at work by our British colleagues, I need not impose on you the reading of these two lists but merely direct your attention to the screen where they will all appear, better spelled than I could pronounce them.

While technology is working on my behalf, I would like to use my slot in the program to share with you a few actuarial thoughts. Seven years ago, we were in Montréal for the 24th International Congress and I still recall how nervous but also how proud we, Canadian actuaries, were to host it. Then we were in Belgium for the 25th Congress which coincided with the Centenary of the International Actuarial Association founded in 1895 in Brussels. This year, our Congress coincide also with a very important anniversary, the sesquicentenary of the oldest actuarial body in the world, for the Institute of Actuaries was founded in London on July 8, 1848.

On behalf of the IAA, I have the honour to congratulate the Institute of Actuaries on this sesquicentenary and wish them in advance of July 8th, a very happy birthday. The IAA has also delivered its anniversary gift in advance, last Thursday, directly to Staple Inn, in the form of a bust of George King, a prominent member of the Institute born in 1846 who left us in 1932. We had selected George King amongst other meritorious actuaries and prolific authors in the actuarial field, because as a participant at the 2nd International Congress held in London exactly 100 years ago, he successfully promoted the adoption of the universal actuarial notation which has served us well until this day.

We are indebted to the Institute for many other significant contributions. We all know how important the legal recognition of the profession is; we enjoy that status in Canada but it is the UK that created the precedent. The Institute is clearly a pro-active voice trusted by its Government. As early as 1853, Actuary Finlaison argued the case in front of a Commons Select Committee. This led to the Life Insurance Companies Act of 1870 and a series of Laws that enhanced the legal recognition of the actuarial profession, with the Pension Act of 1995 closing the gap in the pension field.

There was a body of actuarial science before 1848 with contributors from many countries in addition to the UK and Scotland: France, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark to name a few. But the creation of the Institute helped unite pioneering works and create a dedicated literature. With the Institute came an educational system and an examination model was created as early as 1850. This education and examination system has enjoyed wide recognition with the FIA or FFA designations becoming recognised in many countries around the world as the mark of a well qualified actuary. The

Institute has generously supported overseas actuarial education programs in less actuarially developed countries.

Amongst other initiatives of our British colleagues which have advanced the actuarial science, I will mention the Mortality investigations launched in 1923, the Investment Indices analysis since 1928 and the FT-Actuaries indices since 1962. The rich intellectual contribution of the Institute has not only enriched the body of knowledge of the profession in the UK but has inspired initiatives in other countries thus contributing to the quality and the credibility of actuarial advice around the world.

The UK pioneered another concept central to the professional role of the Actuary, that of Appointed Actuary, introduced in the Insurance Companies Act of 1974. This concept has spread to Canada and I believe to a few other countries. I refer you to the national reports submitted to this Congress and published in Volume 2 of the Transactions, for a more complete inventory of the seminal influence of many successes of the British actuaries.

The UK is one of the founding countries of the IAA and has played continuously a leadership role in the international actuarial organisations be it ASTIN, AFIR, Le Groupe Consultatif or more recently the Forum. This leadership has been obvious in the quality and the dedication of so many actuaries from the UK that have devoted number of hours, I should say days and weeks, to the advancement of the profession, its recognition by other professions and by international organisations.

But I wish to offer you another challenge: I remain disappointed by the low level of recognition of the need for actuaries by major international lending institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and others who spend billions around the world to help resolve what has been called "the old age crisis". They need to be convinced that Actuaries are THE professional managers of the financial consequences of uncertainty, experts in dynamic solvency who could guide them towards better solutions, adapted to each country economic and demographic balance, designed to be sustainable in the long term.

This 26th Congress is the 4th IAA International Congress to be organised by our British colleagues, 100 years after the one they hosted in 1898. Thank you for hosting this Congress here this year and thank you for having given so much, for so long, to our profession.