

26th International Congress of Actuaries
Opening Ceremony - André Lamens
8th June 1998

Mister President of the Faculty of Actuaries,

I want to thank you for the kind and hearty words of welcome you have just uttered.

According to the tradition of our International Congress of Actuaries, it belongs to the President of the International Actuarial Association to open the Congress officially and I am particularly honoured to have the privilege of doing it today in the presence of the official personalities who have accepted to enhance this Opening Ceremony with their presence.

Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands,

Your presence among us today is in our eyes a real testimony of the interest that yourself, and the authority that you represent, show to the works of the actuaries, and so it is also a proof of the credibility of our profession. And it is still more for us a precious encouragement to continue these works and to develop them in the public interest, and we are sincerely grateful to you for it.

Lord Mayor of Birmingham.

We are your guests in your beautiful City of Birmingham, of which we will have leisure to discover all the charm during the coming week, and we are all the more proud of it since we have the real feeling of belonging to a memorable trilogy from flow on. Indeed, only in a few weeks' time, Birmingham has welcome successively the Eurovision Song Contest, the summit of the G8 heads of State, and now, last but not least the 26th International Congress of Actuaries. So from now on our celebrity is guaranteed forever and we owe it undoubtedly to the dynamism of the City over whose destiny you are ruling.

Lord Lieutenant, Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once more the great international family of actuaries has come together according to a tradition that is more than a hundred years old.

An International Congress of Actuaries is always an extraordinary event, offering to a fellowship embracing all the practitioners of actuarial science an opportunity of helpful relationship.

In spite of our attachment to our long traditions, each International Congress is always different from those which have come before, but the one that is opening today takes on a quite exceptional

character, and this on more than one account. I let you be the judges of it.

Quite exceptional because, just one hundred and fifty years ago, the actuarial profession was organized in this good old country of England.

In a few minutes I will leave to the Secretary General of the IAA to take care of saying "Happy Birthday" to the President and to all the members of this very venerable institution called the Institute of Actuaries.

But as to me, I would like to insist particularly on the feeling of very deep respect with which this hundred and fiftieth anniversary inspires me: respect for the pioneers who first broke the new ground which was uncultivated; respect also for the settlers who printed their indelible marks on a field of investigation which has grown continuously; finally respect for all those who have consolidated what others initiated and who have developed it largely beyond the imagination of the first creators.

There is another reason for which this 26th Congress takes on a very exceptional character: it has been planned that we are going to have a General Assembly this afternoon in order to give the International Actuarial Association new bases — very ambitious ones, so, equal to our ambitions — new bases of functioning and development.

These ones will sanction above all the unity of our profession at an international level, that unity which for long has been so happily one of the features of our profession and which is still going to be strengthened at the level of our International Association.

And we have a lot on our plate! Like the prospect of a common education syllabus for example, which is a very tricky task, considering the existence of so very various forms of education and cultures.

Another important concern: the statutory role of the actuary. In the field of life insurance business it is already an established fact in many countries, but in the field of non-life insurance business, of reinsurance and others, everything or nearly everything still remains to be done.

Lord Lieutenant, Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The moment has come now to open this Congress which will have required years of very hard work of all those — and they are very numerous — who have prepared it.

On the proposal of the Institute of Actuaries and of the Faculty of Actuaries, accepted unanimously by the Council of the International Actuarial Association, have been designated:

as President of the 26th I.C.A.: Mr. Hugh Scurfield

as Deputy Presidents : Mr. Roy Brimblecombe and Mr. Malcolm Murray

as Secretaries General : Mr. Kevin McBrien, Chairman of the Organizing Committee and Mr. David Wilkie, Chairman of the Scientific Committee.

Under the conduct of these five distinguished colleagues, the Congress is definitely in excellent hands, and now, I transfer the presidency of it to Mr. Scurfield.

Je déclare officiellement ouvert le 26^e Congrès International des Actuaires. I declare the 26th International Congress of Actuaries officially open and I invite the Secretary General of the International Actuarial Association to follow me to this platform.