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Correspondence should be addressed:

MICHAEL B. McGUINNESS Associate Editors . . FREDERIC SELTZER

Mail Drop 20-7, 1740 Broadway New York, N. Y. 10019

Competition Editor . . CHARLES G. GROESCHELL Tel: (212) 586-4000

Editor Emeritus . . . Andrew C. Webster

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EDITORIAL

VIGILANCE

BAROMETER that helps to measure our members' interest in Society affairs is the size of the response to each of the periodic requests by mail for verdicts and opinions on various matters.

In the past twelve months there have been five such official enquiries—three directed to Fellows, two to Fellows and Associates. Here are the figures:

Balloting By Fellows. (3,700 Potential Responders)

	Responses	
Granting FSA Designation to FFAA's	2,700	73%
Society Election (2nd Ballot)	2,200	59%
Constitutional Amendment on	•	
Resignations & Discipline	2,200	59%
Enquiries To All Members. (6,600 Potential Responders)		

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Questionnaire on Special Interests	2,300	35%	
Futurism Enquiry	1.000	15%	

We omit from this second table the Ninetieth Anniversary Contest of April 1979 which produced a response ratio that possibly set an enduring record—0.08%.

Reasonable inferences from the above evidence are: (1) Responses by Fellows are no better than fairly good; (2) Out there somewhere are about 500 Fellows who exert yourselves when a controversial issue comes your way; (3) Questionnaires haven't been drawing heavily.

Allowance perhaps should be made for the observed fact that the typical actuarial desk is a mess. Intentions may indeed be above reproach, but a paper that is not promptly dealt with disappears into one of the many heaps (T.B.R.L., or P.P.B., or H.I.D.). A noble experiment by the Board of Governors sometime might be to find out what, if any, resurrecting effect a follow-up postcard might have.

Two problems stem directly from the growth in our membership. In the days when the Society had 400 voting members, questions could easily be brought up at a meeting, discussed for half an hour, and immediately voted upon. Now that the number approaches 4,000, that has become impractical.

The second difficulty that comes with growth is this. As we pass successive milestones of size, we tend to regard our own single vote or opinion as of steadily decreasing significance. Logical though this attitude may be, each of us must fight against this point of view. We must make it our business to be informed on what is happening or in prospect. We must resolve to be participants, which we can be only if we steadfastly keep ballots and questionnaires from disappearing into oblivion.

Surely our actuarial clubs have a useful role in all this. They can help by sponsoring discussions of these questions between the time enquiries are received and the deadline for responses approaches. Is it too much to ask that some clubs invite members to bring their questionnaires to a club meeting, and to complete them on the spot as we used to do in junior high school?

Deaths

Joseph L. Moskowitz, A.S.A. 1977 Arthur Pedoe, F.S.A. 1928

Arthur Pedoe 1897-1979

Within a year after he became a Fellow in 1928, Arthur Pedoe had made the first of his major contributions to our literature through a paper with the justifiably broad title, The Actuarial Profession in North America (T.A.S.A. XXX, 14). To read it is to appreciate how firmly, yet courteously, he took issue with practices that he considered inferior, and how many of the reforms he urged have since taken place. In his reply to the discussion, he put forward his idea of Study Circles, a plan that he promptly pioneered in Canada several years before the Society itself adopted it.

Ten years later Mr. Pedoe produced another landmark paper, The Education of the Actuary (T.A.S.A. XL,50). Again the discussion produced vigorous objections to some of his proposals, but the views he expressed and those he elicited were, we suggest, not lost on subsequent Education and Examination Committees.

Throughout his career and after he retired, he wrote essays on many topics. Usually his concern was less with technical matters than with the future of our profession and maintaining high standards of conduct and performance. Always his contributions were well written and interesting, for he was blessed with an orderly and enquiring mind.

Not many years ago (1970) a Society President, conducting a poll as grist for his Presidential Address, sought nominations of actuaries whose outspokenness had most markedly influenced the rest of us. It may now be revealed that the name submitted most often was Arthur Pedoe.

In mourning our loss we cannot improve upon Joseph B. MacLean's crisp comment 41 years ago: "Anything written by Mr. Pedoe is worthy of careful? attention."