

SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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EDITORIAL

WANDERING ACTUARY

It is, naturally, a pleasure to print this message from our Edinburgh Correspondent:

In case your editor is too modest to mention it, J think it should be known that in a very hard working spell in the United Kingdom in October-November he gave addresses to eight actuarial societies in Scotland and England. In a wide ranging talk—or talks, as I am told that he changed his material a bit depending on the mix of his audience, e.g., proportions of students and consultants—he covered such topics as the early history of the actuarial profession in North America and its connection with the Institute and the Faculty, the education and examination system (where some of us were astonished by the prevalence of multiple choice questions) and various current topics including unisex mortality tables (are not they an abuse of democracy?)

I would think that all his audiences much appreciated Jack's efforts to further Anglo-American understanding, and hope he enjoyed his hard working holiday.

Alistair Neill

In recent years many U.K. insurance companies have moved away from London so that now there are perhaps three times as many major insurance centres as before World War II. This has given rise to substantial congregations of actuaries and actuarial students elsewhere than in London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Norwich and other longtime insurance cities, and has caused actuarial societies (akin to our actuarial clubs) to spring up. The trip which Mr. Neill describes in such generous terms was to six of these newer groups as well as to the Students' Societies in London and Edinburgh.

FIASCO's editor has been asked kindly to print the following comments by the two Moorheads who made the figure-eight journey by British Rail to all those delight-ful places:

My wife and I would like actuaries in the United Kingdom to know how greatly we enjoyed our visits to so many of you. The welcomes accorded us were heartwarming, and the thoughfulness towards us shown at every city made us feel indeed pampered. To the extent that time permitted we were "shown the sights", and have returned home with memories to treasure.

The trip was conceived—and then so excellently planned by Mr. Gary Chamberlin and the Hon. Sees. of the host societies—in the belief that actuaries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean stand to benefit by increased awareness of the similarities as well as the contrasts between what we are doing and how we are trying to fulfill our responsibilities and grasp our opportunities. The impression that the similarities ontweigh the differences was heightened by conversations with you.

And it was again the Moorheads' privilege to be guests at the Institute's Biennial Dinner a glittering occasion, unmatched by any actuarial gathering over here, at which 1,400 actuaries and guests were accommodated with nary a delay or a hitch. It seems safe to speak for the representatives present from American and other actuarial bodies in congratulating the Institute upon that memorable evening, and thanking Tillinghast & Co. for their reception the next afternoon.

We boldly suggest that our actuarial clubs over here, especially the large regional ones, would be glad if from time to time they might be hosts to actuaries from overseas willing to speak to them about their experiences, triumphs and disasters.

LETTERS

USSR Social Security System Sir:

In the Soviet Union last summer, I came across an article, "Our Social Security System Is Free", in their English. language newspaper, *Moscow News*, reading thus:

"In this country 124.2 million people benefit from social security, or practically all the industrial workers. collective farmers and office employees ... A characteristic trait of social security in the USSR is its emphasis on preventive care. Each branch of the national economy devises and implements complex plans for the improvement of working conditions and labour safety, and also for sanitation and health measures. In 1982, over 55million people made use of the vouchers provided by the trade unions to take treatment and to go on holiday. Of this number 21 million received accommodation free of charge or at a discount, the difference being made up from the social security funds.

The trade unions in the Soviet Union have been in charge of social security for more than fifty years. They have at their disposal a special fund composed partly of contributions from industrial enterprises, offices and other organizations, and partly of a state budget grant, equal to half of the entire fund. The fund is used to pay sickleave, pregnancy and child bearing benefits, and to make the relevant payments in cases of loss of ability. The workers themselves contribute nothing towards the benefits. In the USSR, the retirement age is among the lowest in the world-60 for men and 55 for women, with some sections of the workfolk retiring at an even earlier age."

It's most interesting to see what can be accomplished through socialism, hard work, sex discrimination, and perhaps some help from elements peculiar to their authoritarian system.

Michael Pikelny

A. & H. Experience Sir:

Gerald A. Fryer's observation (Oct. issue) that in most cells in the 1978-79 Experience under Individual Loss of Time Policies, claim costs in the first five durations are higher than thereafter, has