



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# The Actuary

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## EDITORIAL

### ARE WE TWO PROFESSIONS?

There are two items in recent issues of this newsletter that remind us that the actuarial profession in North America, rightfully or otherwise, treats itself as if it were two. The September outline of the examination syllabus for the British Institute indicates that there is but one actuarial profession in the United Kingdom, with non-life insurance treated as a subject that all actuaries should know something about, and some actuaries choose as a specialty area. Fred Kilbourne's Random Sampler article in this issue gives us a bit of the history of the formation of the Casualty Actuarial Society, and indicates that, so far as Mr. Kilbourne (FSA and FCAS) is concerned, the actuarial profession is better viewed as one.

Actuaries working with employee benefit plans, most of whom are affiliated with the "life" rather than the "casualty" branch of actuarial endeavor, may be surprised to learn that the impetus for the formation of the Casualty Actuarial Society came from the beginnings of employee benefit plans in the early part of this century, and that the early CAS concentration was largely on Workmen's Compensation. Workmen's Comp is an employee benefit form that has much in common with liability, disability, and medical insurance lines, the last two of which have come to be the province of the life actuary as well.

Looking objectively at the different emphases of the life and casualty branches, one may well come to the conclusion that the risk elements are more complex in the casualty lines, while the life or pension actuary has more involvement with the investment element. These differences are only a matter of degree, however, since both insurance and investment elements work into all kinds of plans for financial security.

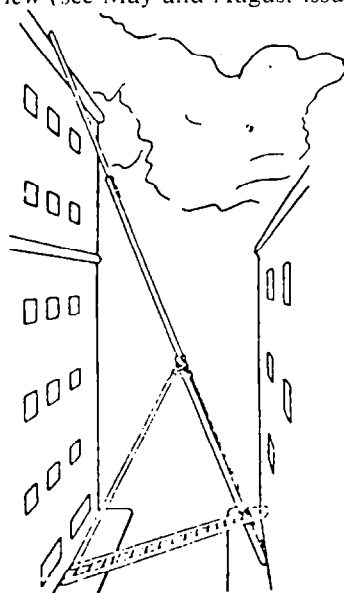
Mr. Kilbourne suggests that life and casualty actuaries have acted as if the other did not exist, and in many ways he seems to be right. We cannot be too pessimistic on this score, however, if we note the several ways in which the two Societies have cooperated in recent years. The American Academy of Actuaries, the Actuarial Education and Research Fund, the Council of Presidents, and the preliminary examinations of both Societies are good examples of how the two professional bodies can work together.

Despite these encouraging signs, most actuaries view themselves as life or casualty, but not both. The SOA and CAS remain as two separate professional organizations serving distinct clienteles. Eventually actuaries must face up to the fundamental question. Are we *really* two professions?

C.L.T.

## MATH ODDITIES

This month we offer a puzzle, appearing originally in *Mathematical Puzzles* by Geoffrey Mott-Smith, but more recently posed by Wayne H. Fisher, puzzle editor of *The Actuarial Review* (see May and August issues).



Imagine yourself at the scene of the Mayfield Building fire. At this spectacular event, persons trapped on the roof of the burning structure were rescued by firemen via a three-section 70-foot extension ladder in the alley behind the Mayfield Building. The lower end of the extension ladder was against the face of the building across the alley; the upper end rested against the cornice of the Mayfield Building, and projected 2 feet 2 inches above its point of contact.

A shorter ladder was placed against the base of the Mayfield Building, and its upper end was lashed to the extension ladder (at the top of the lowermost section) to brace it.

A third ladder was laid nearly horizontally across the alley, and beside the other two, as a traffic barrier. Because this barrier ladder was 22 feet 11 inches long, a little longer than the width of the alley, one end wedged a few feet above the alley against the face of the opposite building. The traffic barrier ladder was also lashed to the extension ladder, and from the fact that a man of average height could just walk under the point where the ladders crossed, we may estimate that this point was 5 feet 10 inches above the alley.

Determine the height of the Mayfield Building and the width of the alley. □