



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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**Actuarial Notation**

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For

$$\begin{aligned} n P_x & \text{ write } npx \\ Ax:\overline{n} & \text{ " } Ax:n\overline{\quad} \\ t|\overline{a}_x|y & \text{ " } t|a-x|y \end{aligned}$$

When numeric values occur, these are substituted out by appropriate letters (x, y, n, etc.), and then reappear in brackets at the end:

$$\begin{aligned} A_{10:\overline{20}} & \text{ becomes } Ax:n\overline{\quad}(10,20) \\ {}_5P_{25} & \text{ " } npx(5,25) \\ \overline{a}_{65|60} & \text{ " } a-x|y(65,60) \\ & \text{ and so on.} \end{aligned}$$

The rules are simple: as far as possible, follow the left-to-right ordering of the IAN symbols; and without discarding any, bring them into line. Because the familiar A's, a's, p's and q's, etc. remain, together with the usual punctuation strokes such as : - and  $\overline{\quad}$ , the resulting formula is still quite readable, though it has well and truly lost its halo.

**Falling From Grace**

This apostasy won't please the holy men; it is a good question whether it will even please the actuaries, a conservative breed at heart. Our group has put the work forward in a spirit of experimentation—If we want to linearise, what can we do? And having seen what is possible, is it then desirable? These are questions which the profession must answer as we progress into the age of the all-accomplishing but all-demanding computer.

Interesting and germane comments from actuaries in England tend to suggest that we are not yet ready to abandon our traditional notation; indeed, intelligent adaptation of IAN to modern needs may be the best approach. The question remains open: Should actuaries keep our haloes, or find some other sign of our devotion to the chosen path?  $\square$

**Welcome**

... to more than 100 students who have recently decided to become readers by the subscription route. We hope all of them will quickly become Associates and begin to get their copies gratis.

**PUBLICATION NOTE**

by Charles A. Siegfried

A. Haeworth Robertson, *The Coming Revolution in Social Security*, 1981, pp. 376, Security Press, McLean VA 22101, \$19.75.

Several years ago, our profession's Social Insurance Committees concluded that actuaries could perform a useful public service by spreading information about Social Security through programs sponsored by local actuarial clubs. Experience since then indicates, however, that there is no widespread burning desire for such information, and that providing it in an exciting way is no easy matter. Nevertheless, it is somewhat startling, at a time when national policy is so much affected by the "red menace" of the U.S.S.R., to see our distinguished colleague, A. Haeworth Robertson, use "Revolution" in his book's title and use bright red for its cover and dust jacket. And he uses the label "Freedom Plan" for the proposals he favors as improvements on the current program. Whether such devices will attract the attention the subject deserves remains to be seen.

One of the author's major themes is that there is dangerous lack of information about the current program. He demonstrates much skill in providing enlightenment but he seems convinced that with enlightenment will come demand for basic changes — "revolutionary" changes, it would seem.

Another major theme is that there have been many significant changes in the U.S. economy and society since the present system was adopted, that a new situation exists today, and that likelihood of further important changes calls for something fundamentally different from, and more flexible than, the system we now have.

Perhaps the most fundamental question the author raises is whether the current program is so deficient and incapable of acceptable correction that a revolutionary new approach is either necessary or desirable. His "Freedom Plan" is certainly revolutionary; whether it is an improvement is far from clear.

The Social Security program must of course be responsive to changes in our social and economic life, and must be capable of being adjusted in acceptable ways. But it is likely that the nature of the adjustments that will be most appro-

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**NON-ROUTINE BUSINESS OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, December 1980 to May 1981**

*Ed. Note: We hope readers will find this account (composed from the Minutes by one who wasn't there) so inadequate that they will complain to the Secretary at his Ontario address.*

1. A Year Book Editor was appointed. (See his message elsewhere in this issue).

2. Rules for expressions of opinion by Society committees were drafted.

3. A task force was appointed to explore new guidelines for professional conduct. (See its message in our March issue).

4. The year 1981 is reportedly viewed by the Education & Examination Committee as one of consolidating what has been accomplished.

5. The Canadian Institute's special examination may henceforth be used as an alternative to one of the Society Fellowship parts as one of the Society Association requirements for students of the Institute or Faculty.

6. The Executive Committee devoted a study session to the following broad topics: Supply of and Demand for Actuaries; Inflation and our Profession; Our Election Process; What Is the Society of Actuaries?; Society Meetings; Administrative Services.

7. The Board endorsed, by majority vote, the terminology recommended by the Joint Committee on Pension Terminology.

8. The Board expressed general agreement with our profession's broad requirements set forth in the Academy Committee's Report on Long Range Planning.

9. A Health Insurance Section was authorized.

10. Increases in examination fees for 1982 and annual meeting registration fee for 1981 were adopted.

E.J.M.