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AMERICA'S FIRST CONSULTING ACTUARY

by John C. Angle

John Frederic Entz, born 1796 or 1797 in Switzerland, appears entitled to be recognized as having been this continent's first consulting actuary. His office during a number of mid-19th-century years was at 52 Wall Street, New York City.

Mr. Entz must have come to the U.S.A. at least several years before 1847 when an article of his, "Annuities, Life Insurance, Tontines, Etc." appeared in *Hunt's Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review*. His familiarity, shown therein, with English, French and German practices and mortality tables makes it probable that his early actuarial training and experience were acquired in Europe.

The following are among his other actuarial milestones and contributions:

- 1859 Elected honorary member of the American Life Underwriters' Convention, an organization for home office executives. He was identified as "Mr. John F. Entz (Consulting Actuary) with the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company."
- 1860 Appointed Actuary of Germania, now Guardian Life Insurance Company of America. Occupied that post for several years, and then again became associated, either in a consulting or staff capacity, with the since defunct New York Life Insurance and Trust Company.
- 1871 Presented a paper to the National Insurance Convention, "Suggestions of Reform in the Practice of Life Insurance and Exposure of Some Grave Errors Affecting Its Usefulness."

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A FRESH LOOK AT ELECTION PROCEDURES

by Robert T. Jackson

Ed. Note: Mr. Jackson chaired the second Special Committee to Review the Society's Election Procedures. Its predecessor reported in our February 1978 issue.

This Committee's task was to offer suggestions to future Committees on Elections. We had no authority to institute changes ourselves. We made the following recommendations:

I. *That future ballot counts be supervised by at least three members of the Elections Committee, plus, to provide continuity, the Executive Director.*

We decided not to recommend a CPA audit. CPAs aren't normally used even to audit votes at stockholders' meetings of major corporations where the issues at stake are far likelier to engender temptation than in our case. We note, too, that other professional bodies do not call upon CPAs.

II. *That candidates' biographies be in standard format, and that they include all material reasonably relevant to competence as a Board member (including particulars of education, professional attainments, and activities, other than purely social, in other organizations), and that they reveal the candidate's major field of professional activity.*

These specifications should prevent the biography from developing an electioneering tinge.

III. *That actuaries who have already served on the Board or as an Officer normally not be renominated for the Board within ten years of such service.*

Our 29 Board members are but a fraction of 1% of our Fellows. We think that service on the Board should be

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LATIN WITHOUT TEARS

Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti, si non, his utere
mecum.

This is an account of efforts by three Society Past-Presidents to translate the above lines from Horace, which introduced a paper printed in J.I.A. during the 1850's.

Two of this trio, who have not authorized identification, unashamedly delegated the task to nearby experts, but with sharply differing renderings:

1. If you know anything more appropriate than these ideas of mine, It is up to you to share them; if not, go along with mine.
2. When you have made the right changes, spell it out clearly. If you haven't, then lets you and I work it out together.

We were then advised to put the problem to Benjamin T. Holmes (President 1951-52) and were gratified to receive this response:

My 13th grade room master, hot tempered "Latin Barnes," and I wasted my year on Horace in a personal feud. One of his favorite gambits was to call on me (full of porridge) to translate first. After I had plodded forth-rightly but painfully through two lines, he would say, 'Holmes, sit down! Now we'll have somebody who can translate.'

Horace is tricky. Nearly every second word raises questions, "Is he kidding? If so, whom? There's a good appreciation by Will Durant on pp. 244-250 of his *Caesar and Christ*. No wonder there is, as you say, material disagreement among authorities.

Now Holmes (full of porridge) stands up and translates:

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First Consulting Actuary

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1872 Another paper, "The Mysteries and Blunders of Life Insurance," written while Mr. Entz was terminally ill at his home, printed in *The Insurance Monitor*.

Mr. Entz died at his home in Westchester County, New York, on November 21, 1872. His obituary in *The Insurance Monitor* contains these remarks about his character, influence and work:

John Frederic Entz, the accomplished actuary and estimable gentleman, died on the 21st ult. at the ripe age of seventy-five. He was a gentleman of fine culture and of great mathematical ability, having been for many years connected with life insurance. He was a man of active and vigorous intellect, fond of research, and wielding a graceful and instructive pen.

With all his vigor of intellect and all his scholarly erudition, he had the artlessness and purity of a child. Incapable himself of doing evil, he believed others to be possessed of like honesty.

I acknowledge with gratitude the information unearthed for me by Mr. Donald Carson, Librarian at the College of Insurance in New York.

Ed. Note: Was Mr. Entz an earlier consulting actuary than David Parks Fackler, the primary founding father of the Actuarial Society? The answer seems clearly to be Yes. Mr. Fackler was more than 40 years younger than Mr. Entz, and did not enter the consulting field until well into the 1860's; his first client may have been the then fledging Metropolitan Life in 1868.

We plan to print excerpts from the papers of Mr. Entz in a later issue. □

Year Book Editor Wants Your Ideas

Our 1982 Year Book will be changed in several ways designed to make it more useful and more attractive. Your ideas will be more than welcome. Send them to Roland A. Dieter, Year Book Editor, at his Year Book address.

Election Procedures

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available to as many Fellows as possible, but an unfortunate byproduct of the annual requests for suggested nominees is that former Board members, being rather well known, receive a high share of suggestions, and thus their rate of return becomes high. Our word "normally" would permit such renominations when circumstances warrant.

IV. *That Secretary and Treasurer positions as such be eliminated, that two additional Vice-Presidents be elected—an effort being made to assure that at least one of the six Vice-Presidents is a Canadian—and that the duties now performed by the Secretary and Treasurer be assigned to two Vice-Presidents.*

This suggestion has already been unfavorably viewed by our present Executive Committee, but three advantages seemed to warrant its reconsideration: (1) It produces more potential presidential candidates; (2) it makes the two positions on our powerful Executive Committee elective rather than appointive; and (3) it permits better distribution of Vice-Presidents' work. Admittedly, adoption of this plan would require a Constitutional Amendment and might entail transition difficulties.

Our Committee decided against suggesting a Constitutional Amendment to require that at least one Vice-President be a Canadian. We felt that this idea should not be put forward while the structure of Sections is being developed, and we noted that our members have shown excellent sensitivity to needs for representation of particular groups whenever these needs have been brought to their attention.

Topics On Which No Changes Were Suggested

1. *Publishing Candidates' Views on Subjects of Special Moment.* We found this idea intriguing, but doubted the feasibility of devising questions that would give our voters useful insight into a candidate's qualifications for Board service. Some of us foresaw this becoming an electioneering device, and felt that skill displayed in presenting one perhaps emotional topic might weigh too heavily in the election result. Others of us would have liked this to be given a trial.

2. *Identification of Actuaries In The Pension Field.* Pension Actuaries on our Committee pointed out that their specialty is more heavily represented on the present Board than perhaps is generally realized. We decided to content ourselves with pointing out this fact, and to leave any question for consideration after Sections have come into being.

3. *Availability of Candidates for President.* We recognize that the unwillingness of many outstanding actuaries to offer themselves as candidates for President is becoming the Society's most serious election problem. Our only practical suggestion was that some new division of duties among the President, President-Elect and Vice-Presidents be worked out.

Ed. Note: Let it be observed that this author's father, Henry H. Jackson, FSA, wrote the following about election results many years ago:

*I never did believe, and shall not ever,
That truth is ascertained by counting
noses,*

*Or that he's best who polls the biggest
vote.*

*There are rewards in life for high
endeavor,*

*Though unacclaimed and from the
press remote,*

Whatever the majority supposes. □

Latin Without Tears

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If you have concocted something for those exemplary friends of yours,

Shining, I demand my share. If not, it's for this other ruff raff, me too!

Across more than 60 years, the voice of "Latin Barnes" reaches me loud and clear: 'Holmes, sit down! Now we'll have somebody who can translate.' The Loeb Classical Library translation of these, the concluding lines of *Epistles 1, No. 6 to Numicius*, reads thus:

If you know something better than these precepts,

Pass it on, my good fellow. If not, join me in following these.

E.J.M.