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PRESENTATION OF AN INSTITUTE FINLAISON MEDAL TO MR LEONARD JOHN MARTIN

[The Institute of Actuaries, 28 October 1991]

The President (Mr H. H. Scurfield): I have the rewarding task of commending a Fellow of the Institute to his peers for the second time in only a month. On the earlier occasion it was to announce his election as our next President; this evening it is to present him with a Finlaison Medal. I believe this to be a unique double.

John Martin's career began at the National Mutual Assurance Company in 1947. He became a Fellow of the Institute in 1954 after moving to R. Watson & Sons, where he has remained. He became a partner in 1958 and a senior partner in 1983. His work has covered the provision of actuarial advice here in the U.K., in Africa, in the West Indies and in Europe. He also acts as honorary advisor to the United Nations joint staff pension fund.

His contributions to the profession rely both on his work for the Institute in this country and further afield. He has been a tutor, an examiner, and is now in his second term on Council. He has been the member for personnel, a Vice President, and since 1979, the actuary of the staff pension fund. John is also Deputy Chairman of the U.K. Occupational Pensions Board and has served as Chairman of the Occupational Pension Schemes Joint Working Group. He is the immediate Past President of the Association of Consulting Actuaries.

In the international actuarial field his efforts have been just as conspicuous. He joined the Groupe Consultatif at its inception in 1978 as the Membre Suppléant and subsequently became the Membre Titulaire, representing the Institute in the European Communities. In 1982 he became the Vice Chairman of the Groupe and he was elected Chairman in 1988. His commitment to European affairs is also shown in his role as advisor on staff pensions for the European Commission in Brussels. During his long association with the Groupe he has taken to heart another of the admonitions of Francis Bacon that, "in all negotiations of difficulty a man may not look to sow and to reap at once, but must prepare business and so ripen it by degrees". It is a mark of his skills in negotiating the complexities of international interests that his colleagues regard him with such respect and affection.

His professionalism and quiet but firm direction are very much admired by many inside the profession and beyond. His influence on the Groupe Consultatif has been instrumental in broadening its scope, and through his support for such fora as colloquia and summer schools he has raised the profile of the European actuary. During this period he has seen the Groupe move from a responsive to a proactive role. At a time of increasing integration of the professions in the communities, he has ensured that actuarial interests have always been well represented. It is worth noting that, during his chairmanship of the Groupe, it

has been able to submit various unanimous recommendations to the European Commission, a very unusual occurrence for European bodies. Some of those recommendations were passed *en bloc* into the Third Life Directive.

Nor have his overseas travels been limited to professional activities. His ability to steer committees through difficult passages can only have been sharpened by his experience of navigation, both at sea and in the air. It may have surprised some delegates at the Sydney Congress in 1984 to discover that he had flown himself from Reigate to Sydney, and that he also managed the return journey. Given that ability to direct and navigate, we can, and do, all look forward to his presidency from 1992 to 1994.

John, your contribution to the profession in Europe has been profound. It gives me great pleasure, acting with the authority of the Institute's Council, to award you this Finlaison Medal.

Mr L. J. Martin: President, guests and colleagues, I feel most honoured to have been awarded a Finlaison Medal, and I thank you for your kind words and for making the presentation to me this evening. The award came as a great surprise, but I believe in this particular case it is the result of the efforts of a group of people working for the Groupe Consultatif. I happen to have been in the fortunate position of having been Chairman of the Groupe Consultatif at a time when the affairs of Europe have been developing apace, and when there has been a real need and a desire for communication between all the fourteen Actuarial Associations in the twelve countries of the European Community.

I cannot let this moment pass without thanking and commending John Henty, the Secretary of the Institute, for the enormous amount of work he has done with great enthusiasm for the Groupe. He has been its energetic Secretary for more than twelve years. Without him the Groupe would today still be somewhat of a frail child. I should also like to refer to the positive encouragement and work done by the Institute's Membre Suppléant—Peter Clark, who has been full of ideas and a most cheerful colleague—again for many years. The British members—who include Eric Robertson and David Wilkie representing the Faculty—have all been able to take a positive and leading role in the work of the Groupe Consultatif, largely because of the supportive backing of Council and the Institute as a whole. I am most keen that this leading role should continue, but in making the British case and pressing our points, we must always be sensitive to the position and standing of our professional colleagues in the other Associations in Europe, and also see matters from their many different standpoints.

Mr President, I have much enjoyed my involvement in our European affairs—the work is interesting and stimulating, the different people varied in outlook and background—and what is more, the food is good as well. To have received this medal working with these friends and colleagues from so many different lands is a considerable honour. I am much indebted to yourself, to Council, and to our members as a whole for this recognition of the importance of a progressively cohesive European actuarial profession. Thank you.