

PRESENTATION OF INSTITUTE SILVER MEDAL TO MR MAURICE EDWARD OGBORN

[The Institute of Actuaries, 24 October 1966]

The President (Dr B. Benjamin): It is my very pleasant duty to present a Silver Medal to Mr Maurice Edward Ogborn in recognition of services of especial importance to the actuarial profession.

Maurice Ogborn became a Fellow of the Institute in 1932, but he did not have much freedom, because he became a tutor in 1934 and remained a tutor until 1939. He joined the Council of the Institute in 1945 and, with two short breaks, remained on the Council until June, 1965. He has been Assistant Editor of the *Journal*, Joint Editor of the *Journal*, and an Honorary Librarian. Also, from 1955 to 1958 he was a Vice-President. He has been the chairman of a number of committees—of the C.M.I. section of the Examination Committee, the Library Committee, the Manpower Committee, the Committee on Notation, and the Research Committee.

This is not all that he has done for the Institute. In such spare time as he may have had from all these activities, he has not only written a number of contributions to actuarial science but has also found time to do a good deal of original historical work. In 1947 he read a paper on the taxation of annuities, in 1953 a paper entitled 'On the nature of the function specified in the law of human mortality' and in 1955 a paper dealing with participation in profits. Other contributions, which were not papers read to the Institute, have been numerous. They include a paper on an eighteenth century manuscript, and papers entitled 'The capital letters of actuarial notation' and 'The professional name of the actuary'. There was also a paper about mortality experience, a paper in the Students' Society *Journal* on the subject of reserve valuations, and a paper to the centenary assembly.

One might think that there was not much left for Mr Ogborn to write about, but that was only just the beginning, because he has written books too. He wrote a book about paid-up policy values jointly with H. S. Freeman and G. M. Menzies, a book on the practice of life assurance jointly with L. E. Coe, which has been a standard textbook for many years, and, much more recently, a book entitled *Equitable Assurances*. He has written a booklet about Staple Inn itself. He has also contributed a paper to the International Congress on participation in profits as a means to securing stability for life assurance funds. There was another booklet which I remember very much, because it took my notice as a student, entitled *The official universal notation adopted by the Second International Actuarial Congress in 1898*. Lastly, Mr Ogborn is a Corresponding Member of the *Association Royale des Actuaire Belge*, to which he was elected in 1949.

I have known Maurice Ogborn for many years, and my experience, I am sure, is typical of the experience of every other member of the pro-

fession. Whenever I have needed any help, he has always been extremely quick to give it, and unstintingly. What I have noticed about him more than anything else is that, whatever he has decided to do, he has done extremely thoroughly and with his whole heart behind it.

I wish personally to thank Mr Ogborn for all that he has done for the Institute and, on behalf of the Institute, to ask him to accept this Silver Medal.

The presentation of the Silver Medal was accompanied by prolonged applause. Mr Ogborn responded in the following terms:

Mr M. E. Ogborn: The President has been overkind. He has spoken of me rather as one sees the world on a clear morning after a night of rain, when vision is heightened and everything seems larger than life.

If I were to try to describe my feelings at this moment, I think I would have to do it in terms of a game of chess. Those present will recollect that when Alice jumped lightly through the looking glass she found herself taking part in a game as a white pawn. In the course of her adventures across the board she came to the eighth square, and there she was made a queen. I feel rather like a pawn in a game of chess which has worked its way across the board, has come to the end and is being promoted into a major piece. It is rather overwhelming. I am very conscious of the honour that the Institute has done me, and grateful for the very kind remarks made by the President.

It is good that those who have shared my journey across the chess board should share the pleasure at the end, and I am especially pleased that, by the kindness of the President, my wife is here tonight.

The hall stands on a site which has been inhabited for some 700 years. We are meeting in the presence of a great cloud of witnesses, some few of whom have their likenesses here in portrait or in bust. William Morgan (on the wall) thought that it was an affectation for people to call themselves actuaries; but I am sure that he would approve of the profession built on his sound foundations. Another, who did a wonderful job in Government statistics, is John Finlaison, the first President. Then there is Sprague, a great man in his day, who would have thoroughly approved of our proceedings, though not of our spelling!

Perhaps I might apply to myself a verse by Southey, which has in it sufficient of poetry to be included in the Golden Treasury.

My days among the Dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where're these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

My colleagues might think there is too much truth in the last line.

The study of history has been an abiding interest with me. There is a wonderful metaphor for the unfolding pattern of history, a tapestry. To some it could merely be a quaint record of what had happened, like the Bayeux tapestry, a picture of a dead past. I think that one should look at it as something living, because that tapestry was made by living men to serve their own occasions. One needs to live with them and share their joys and their fears, and then the past comes alive. We ourselves are weaving a tapestry, and I hope that the tapestry that we are creating will be of interest and value to future generations.