

Memoir.

Omer Lepreux.

Honorary President of the Royal Association of Belgian Actuaries.
Honorary President of the Permanent Committee of International Actuarial
Congresses.
Corresponding Member of the Institute of Actuaries.

OMER LEPREUX was born at Leuze, Belgium, on 23 September 1856, and died at Watermael near Brussels on 15 January 1927.

After having followed for three years the courses of study at the University in Brussels (School of Arts, including the Differential and Integral Calculus, Analytical Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, Mechanics, etc.), he entered the Military School, from which he passed out in 1882 as Sub-Lieutenant of the Engineers.

After a few years' service with his regiment, he was appointed Examining Inspector in various courses of study at the Military

School, and was more particularly connected with the course "The Calculus of Probabilities," of which the Professor was Léon Mahillon who later was to become the founder of the Association of Belgian Actuaries, and the organizer of the first International Congress of Actuaries.

In 1891 Mahillon became General Manager of the "Caisse Générale d'Épargne et de Retraite" of Belgium, and obtained the immediate co-operation of Lepreux, by appointing him Manager. and the two together carried through the heavy work involved in reorganizing the Pension Fund.

It was at this time that the actuarial career of Lepreux really commenced. He made a deep study of all the questions involved in the development of the Institution with which he was concerned. Five years afterwards, on 25 March 1896, he became the General Manager on the death of Mahillon, and in this capacity he became a member of the Permanent Commission on Friendly Societies, where he always put forth every effort to eliminate empirical methods, and to secure the adoption of scientific methods in insurance against sickness.

In the "Journal of Thrift" there appeared over his signature various communications to popularise the ideas of efficient thrift, fighting without mercy against false notions which have no scientific basis, and which could lead only to disillusionment.

From 1896 onwards he was Vice-President of the Association of Belgian Actuaries, until 1901, when he became President on the death of Mons. G. Adam.

In 1896 Lepreux was appointed President of the Permanent Committee of International Congresses, and in that capacity it fell to him to take the Chair at the preliminary proceedings of the opening meetings of the Congresses of London 1898, of Paris 1900, and of New York 1903, until the Congresses themselves should have the opportunity of appointing their own executive officers.

On 1 October 1905 Lepreux left the "Caisse d'Épargne," and entered the service of the National Bank of Belgium as Manager. In this new sphere of activities, where purely financial questions take precedence of those that are actuarial, Lepreux was eminently successful. After the great upheaval of 1914, the Belgian Government appointed him Vice-Governor of the Bank, and entrusted to him important missions to London, to Paris, to Genoa, and to Geneva.

In the appreciation which the Belgian Finance Minister delivered at the funeral of Lepreux, he acknowledged that Lepreux in faithfully serving his country had placed it under deep obligation.

In the two great financial institutions with which Lepreux was connected he established on scientific bases Superannuation Funds for the employees, and Widows' and Orphans' Funds, at a time antecedent to any law having been passed; and the benefits guaranteed to the employees of these institutions are still much better than those which the Law of 1925 provides for industries in general.

The various Associations of Actuaries were proud to include Lepreux among their Corresponding Members, and it is in this capacity that he was associated with the French Institute of Actuaries, the Actuarial Society of America, and the Institute of Actuaries.

NOTE.—We are sure that the readers of the *Journal* will appreciate an obituary notice of the late Mons. Omer Lepreux of Brussels. Mons. A. Bégault is the only person with full knowledge of Mons. Lepreux's career and work, and an invitation was addressed to him to set out the particulars in French, an invitation which he accepted with great cordiality. For this we owe M. Bégault many thanks. The foregoing is a very free translation of M. Bégault's notes made by Mr. George King, and supplemented to a small extent from his own knowledge.
