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March 29, 1956

Mr. Thomas H. Chilton  
President, Engineers Joint Council  
29 West 39th Street  
New York 18, New York

Dear Mr. Chilton:

I have your letter of March 21 inviting me to serve on the committee being organized under the chairmanship of Mr. Hooven to lay the groundwork for a broad scale survey of the engineering profession.

Unfortunately my commitments for the balance of this year are so heavy that I cannot possibly undertake any new ones, and I must therefore decline.

Since you have done me the courtesy of inviting me to serve on this committee, and since the general subject is of course one of deep interest to all of us, may I make one or two comments regarding the project proposed in Dean Hollister's address.

The most serious problem confronting the engineering profession today is the lack of enough engineers. The consequence of this shortage has been the drastic increase in starting rates for all technically trained graduates. This initial step toward the improvement of the financial status of engineers and scientists, which is the first essential to increasing the supply, is the result of the law of supply and demand. It may be expected that it will have a powerful influence in attracting more young men into the engineering and scientific professions. The realization of this effect can be accelerated by continuing the programs of bringing these professions to the attention of high school students--which has been carried on for the past few years.

A problem of importance equal to the economic one is the growing inadequacy of high school preparation for engineering and the sciences. One of the essential factors in education is discipline, which includes the mastery of subjects which are not attractive to a particular individual but are essential to his proper education. The effect of the cult spearheaded by John Dewey and Columbia Teachers College, which in the past generation has so effectively minimized discipline as an element of education, is now evident in the quality of our high school education. Every



survey of technical education which has come to my notice has emphasized the seriousness of this problem.

I therefore raise the question of whether the substantial amount of thought which has been given to the engineering profession and its problems in recent years has not already defined the key problems, and whether the effort which it is now proposed to devote to a resurvey of the subject would not be better spent in looking for solutions to the well known problems confronting us.

I realize that proponents of the contemplated survey will draw attention to another objective; namely, the matter of professional recognition. It has been my observation that recognition, professional or otherwise, is a thing earned by the individual and not acquired by virtue of membership in any organization or profession, and I personally would not contribute one minute of time or one penny of cash to any project aimed at trying to attain "recognition" for engineers. The engineers who deserve it are fully capable of earning their own recognition.

Sincerely yours,



W. M. Peirce/ja

cc--Mr. Morris D. Hooven, Pres., AIEE  
Dean Thorndike Saville, Pres., ECPD  
Mr. E. Paul Lange  
Mr. E. O. Kirkendall