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In his letter published by ELECTRICAL WORLD April 16, 1962, Mr. William Brownlee comments with the commendable candor of innocent youth on the unadorned imperfection of plans for the merger of AIEE and IRE. (What Mr. Brownlee overlooked is the little-known unabridged version of his classic reference. . What really happened was that the king lost his golden robe in a poker game the night before the parade. But rather than disappoint his people he courageously marched in his underwear. His mature, understanding subjects responded in the same spirit. The moral is, "Perfection is often the enemy of progress, and its pursuit can hold up the parade".)

The three merger documents so searchingly analysed by Mr. Brownlee are the product of two groups with different backgrounds and experience. That the language and the substance should fall short of a perfect blend is not surprising. The real problems of adapting the new organization to the needs of its future technological environment all lie ahead. They are the problems of IEEE and not of either AIEE or IRE. They must be solved by future Boards of Directors of IEEE. What is important now is that the Constitution of the IEEE give these future Boards the freedom and flexibility to act boldly and decisively in finding these solutions. The two Boards and their Eight-Man Committees were not smart enough to deliver IEEE as a finished job. They were wise enough not to try.

AIEE's "National Technical Committees" have served the profession well for over 60 years. It is by no means decided that they shall be abandoned. However, it should be recalled that when the AIEE Board of Directors approved the Special Task Force Report of 1959, recommending "National Technical Groups", it was provided that the Executive Committees of these groups would, in fact, function as had the Technical Committees but with expanded

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responsibilities and authority. The organization of the technical activities of IEEE has yet to be determined. It will doubtless evolve over a number of years. Under whatever name, I would predict the functions of the Technical Committees would continue, but with the hope that an obvious need for wider participation and greater flexibility in assessing and responding to the expanding technology will characterize more of them.

A soundly integrated publication program for IEEE is no doubt the most critical and urgent need. It will get first priority attention beginning with the expected membership approval of the merger in July. The AIEE Publications Department has already submitted one plan. This overall program must have designed into it a responsiveness to member needs in a rapidly changing technology. Its relation to meetings must be studied critically. If the current ritual of invitation, review, acceptance, announcement, pre-printing, presentation, discussion, and publication best suits current needs of all or part of the membership of IEEE it should be demonstrable on objective examination of the facts.

As for the government of the proposed organization and the distribution of representation in it; the design is for a very large and fast growing organization. That experience had lead IRE better to anticipate such a situation, explains the greater use of its forms and practices.



Bigger Regions, Sections, Groups need and will get greater autonomy and responsibility. The objectives of AIEE, IRE, and IEEE as projected are the same. On June 15, 1950, the Board of Directors of AIEE resolved, "To recognize the fact that the Institute finds its chief reason for existence in the technical field". The responsibility of these organizational units will be to bring the individual member into closer touch with his professed technology. What is needed are broad direct highways of specialization with plenty of cross roads between them.

AIEE and IRE each have about 2500 members outside of North America. They have until recently enjoyed little contact with the parent organizations. IEEE being non-national in character has the opportunity to give representation to and serve these members more effectively.

Unity should begin at home. A unified electrical profession can better support and contribute to the establishment of interdisciplinary connections. The headquarters of IEEE will be in the new United Engineering Center. The merger agreement very properly disclaims an obligation to expand the occupancy of space in the UEC, but does not prohibit it. The question is at the moment academic because there is no adequate space available.

Corporations of the type of AIEE, IRE and the proposed IEEE are chartered in the public interest. By virtue of the valuable privileges and exemptions granted by the state, they are obliged to devote themselves exclusively to the purposes for which they are organized. Direct personal and economic advantages to the individual member must be by-products of his contributions to these same purposes.