

# THE INSTITUTE OF RADIO ENGINEERS

INCORPORATED

PROFESSIONAL GROUP CORRESPONDENCE

December 15, 1961

PLEASE ADDRESS  
REPLY TO

Herbert H. Heller  
1769 Middlehurst Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Subject: The Proposed AIEE - IRE Merger


201-549

Dear Mr. Section Chairman:

The following is a pre-print of a column scheduled for publication in the January issue of the "CLEVELAND IRE SECTION NEWS". Since all the promotional material from headquarters is one-sided, we would like to know if any other significant segment of the membership shares our concern over the basic question of merger, as well as over HQ's methods in proceeding with the proposals without informing the members of the pitfalls. To this end, we solicit your section's comments.

Permission is granted, of course, to reprint all or part of this column, if you feel it would be of interest to the readers of your publication. Conversely, we should like to publish your comments -- pro or con -- with your permission.

Best regards,



Herbert H. Heller  
Contributing Editor  
CLEVELAND SECTION NEWS

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OF SOUND AND SUCH

by Herb (H<sup>3</sup>) Heller

On October 23, an otherwise uneventful, ordinary Monday, front-page headlines in ELECTRONIC NEWS broke the story of a joint resolution by the boards of directors of AIEE and IRE to determine the feasibility and form of a merged professional society of about 150,000 members. That was the first notice most of us had that our elected directors were engaged in a move destined to affect us all, without prior consultation. The same day our chairman received a letter from IRE President Berkner (excerpted in last month's Section News), asking that the Section's sentiment be submitted in short order to a committee charged solely with the mechanics of merger, not with the basic question of the desirability of such a move. Lacking time to inform the membership of the approaching steam-roller, we took a straw-vote of the executive committee and found no one in favor of merger. A month later - past the deadline set by HQ for comments from the hinterland - at our last Section meeting, the issues were discussed at some length. In spite of our chairman's efforts to solicit suggestions for smooth consolidation, the discussion drifted into

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pros and cons of merger, an area no one except the forgotten rank and file member seems to be interested in. A vote taken at this meeting showed two to one opposition to the merger, with six members undecided at this stage.

The discussion provided some interesting insight into the thinking and motivation of votes on both sides of the issue: Engineers concerned with industrial electronics, and instrumentation serving both electrical and electronic industry already belong to both societies and generally favor consolidation. Out of a total membership of about 150,000, four (4) per cent are co-members who would benefit from elimination of double dues. On the other hand, active IRE members in predominantly electronic fields, for whom local meetings are a way of life and who are, therefore, getting the most out of our organization in accordance with its statement of purpose (Article I, IRE Constitution), are generally opposed to merging with a society predominantly, though not exclusively, concerned with power generation and distribution. A third segment in corporate management feels that all these considerations are minor compared to the dangers inherent in creating a mammoth pressure group, which a single professional society would represent. Size, beyond a point, is not beneficial. The madhouse of IRE international conventions already attests to this and doubling the attendance at annual meetings by combining the two, would surely choke off their usefulness completely. On a small scale, the joint IRE-AIEE student chapter at the University of Dayton found that out fast. At a recent meeting, the students voted unanimously to separate IRE and AIEE, because the "group was too large, making it impossible to function properly." Joint student chapters were one of the eight areas of overlap cited by President Berkner.

Investigation into the structure of parallel professional societies in England disclosed another interesting fact. Not only are there two institutions (the I.E.E. and the B.I.R.E.), but the British Institution of Radio Engineers has just been granted a separate Royal Charter of Incorporation by the Queen in apparent recognition of the facts of life that "electronic engineering fundamentally derived as a separate branch of engineering and will continue as a distinct engineering practice."

The argument that many technical meetings are co-sponsored by IRE and AIEE also does not hold water. Many more meetings are co-sponsored with ISA, AES, ASA, APS, SMPTE, ARA, ASME, AMA and others. Why, then, not merge all these societies into one supercolossal regime of eggheads to avoid occasional duplication and publish one telephone-book sized magazine a month?

The discussion will go on until the issue is settled, one way or the other. We shall go into other aspects next month. The greatest danger lies in possible scars a division of IRE into two camps could leave. Let us not forget, in the heat of argument, that all of us have the same objects in mind, we only differ in our concept of the best way to attain them.