

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

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Dear Merve:

Thank you for your long letter of February 27 on Institute policy. I am taking the liberty of sending a photo copy of it to Secretary Hibshman with a copy of this letter.

Everything in this world seems to serve some good. In attempting to cover the unfortunate hiatus in your AIEE activity, I have shown to myself that some progress has been made since the '40's in spite of the fact that my offhand feelings might say, "No."

I, of course, very well remember the LeClair P&C subcommittee on which you served. You will recall that I was Chairman of the sister Subcommittee on Internal Operations, both subcommittees having been established under the direction of the imaginative Wickenden and hard-driving Fairman. The Subcommittee on Technical Activities eventually developed the present divisional organization of technical committees. The Subcommittee on Professional Activities, while its accomplishments were many, did not consummate a similar arrangement in its field. Under Scott Hill's chairmanship the Board eventually disbanded the Committee on Professional Activities.

I well remember the four plans which your subcommittee evolved; Plan "A" was a merger of electrical societies (AIEE, IRE, and IES); Plan "B" was the building up of NSPE on a separate basis as the society that would be representative of the profession as a whole; Plan "C" was a federation of engineering societies; Plan "D" was an overall society with individual membership. As I remember, Plan "A" was backed largely by one M. S. Coover, Plan "B" by J. F. Fairman. I cannot remember

the stand taken by other individuals. In any event, AIEE opinion, after much discussion and expression of opinion, favored Plan "D" which later became the Plan "C" of the EJC exploratory group. It is much like the plan discussed by Walter Morton in the recent issue of ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING. What was the Plan "C", however, later became the EJC Plan "A" and is closer to the plan on which EJC now operates. Therefore, one might well say that EJC is a development of that original plan.

Also, your subcommittee's recommendation on uniform grades of membership has come close to consummation. It was taken up and implemented by the Old Singstadt Committee in ECPD. It was adopted in toto by AIEE and ASME, not adopted by ASCE on the grounds that their membership requirements were already higher than the ECPD recommendation, and not adopted by AIME and AICHE because of inconvenience. It is, however, one of the criteria applied to applicants in EJC. At least two of the new members of EJC were held up pending their adoption of the uniform grades of membership.

So you see, some progress has been made after all. My concern at the present moment is over the fact that we have recently seemed to have mounted our horse and to have driven off in several different directions. I am concerned because most of my friends, like you, have no concurrent suggestions on the next move to be made within the broad AIEE policy. NSPE has refused to budge from its position of membership for licensed engineers only. IRE refused invitation into EJC. EJC has refused to develop into a body with voting individual membership. AIEE has refused an EJC compromise where individual membership without voting could have been established. The only individual contribution to thinking during the past year has been made by Walter Morton in his attempt to push a variant of old Plan "D" (EJC Plan "C"). Unless things change considerably, however, in the immediate future, I see no likelihood of its acceptance by the other societies. Please let me say in passing that I praise Walter's courage and perseverance in backing this plan.

As for myself, I am ashamed to say that I have become a defeatist. My close friends do not appear even to wish to discuss these matters while on the other hand there is continual pressure from individuals and some sections to pursue the subject further.

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At one time in my thinking I had some hope for original Plan "A", the merger of electrical societies. This was during the time when Bill Everitt was on the Board of IRE and AIRE and everything seemed for the moment to be sweetness and light. I had a brief revival of hope when Jack Ryder became President of IRE. However, I have finally come to the conclusion that nothing but a kind of cold war is possible between the two organizations because of the purely personal fact that people who get into the top structure of either organization all desire unification of the electrical engineering profession and become interested only in the furtherance of the aims of the particular society of their choice. I find that that has happened to me, and I forecast that it will happen to you.

While I support EJC and its extraordinary expansion, I am distressed by trying to form a picture of its operation on a federation basis when it grows to its ultimate. There is even some hope here however. You indicate concern with how to integrate state engineering societies or councils. I have been assured that NSPE while not wishing to join EJC as a national body will tell its state engineering societies that it has no objection, however, to their affiliation with EJC.

ECPD, at the moment in a state of quietude while Thorndike Saville is on the West Coast, has always done a good job and should continue to do so. It could not, however, afford to become a duplicate of EJC as a top structure because its present strength seems to me to lie in the fact that it is controlled largely by the major disciplines and does not include a long series of fractionated bodies.

Your letter spoke of the many levers and pedals to be operated. I suppose the only thing that a man of good intent can do is to push each move toward cooperation among the technical societies and hope for the best.

I have no grand solution. The only thing that occurs to me as an overall policy that one could adopt with consistency would be the recognition of the fact that we have an informal alliance among the founder societies and perhaps a similar informal alliance among the fragmented parts of the major disciplines.

Yours very truly,

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M. D. Hooven

~~CC~~ Mr. N. S. Hibshman