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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MINING & METALLURGICAL ENGINEERS

29 West 39th Street
New York 18, N. Y.

Office of the President

December 21, 1954

Mr. Leo F. Reinartz, President
American Institute of Mining & Metallurgical Engineers
29 West 39th Street
New York 18, New York

Dear Leo:

I attended my last Engineers Joint Council executive meeting as representative of A.I.M.E. and I feel that I should summarize the developments that have taken place during the past year. Because of the nature of these developments, I wish to suggest a positive action by our Board of Directors defining our policy concerning E.J.C.

As the reorganization of E.J.C. has progressed it has become clear that, among the several societies involved, there are two distinct concepts of the ultimate purposes and functions of E.J.C. The first of these is the one to which A.I.M.E. adheres. In this view, E.J.C. has a limited but important function in representing the engineering profession as a whole on matters where there is a common interest, and where the welfare of the profession is involved or where the profession can serve the public good by expressing itself.

The second view of E.J.C. is that it should involve itself in the problems of the individual engineer, specifically in matters relating to conditions of employment. The proponents of this viewpoint believe that individual membership and control of the organization by directly elected representatives of the individual members is essential. The most urgent advocates of this view are the A.I.E.E., who have among their younger members a militant group demanding that A.I.E.E. continue its efforts to transform E.J.C. into an individual membership society. The representatives of A.I.E.E. have at times denied that their intent was to change E.J.C. into an organization controlled by individual members or involving itself in such matters as employment conditions; yet they have repeatedly referred to the demands of their membership, which have been the subject of published statements in which these purposes are unmistakably clear.

There has been much discussion of a society (the so-called "unity organization") in which there would be an "upper house" made up of representatives of the present engineering societies, and more or less identical with the present E.J.C. board. There would be a "lower house" of representatives elected by the individual membership through local and state societies. The practicability of such a plan may be seriously questioned, but a more basic objection exists in my mind and in those of some other members of the E.J.C. board; namely, that the two objectives or purposes set forth above are not compatible in a single organization.

Proposals for dues-paying, non-voting, individual memberships in the present E.J.C., which have been advocated as a means of helping to finance E.J.C., are, I am convinced, merely an entering wedge for individual voting membership and ultimate control of E.J.C. by the individual members.

At the last meeting of the executive committee, the representative of the A.I.E.E. endeavored to reopen the subject of individual membership, which had only recently been laid aside by the council after many months of prolonged study and discussion. It is evident that the A.I.E.E. intend to exert every effort to impose their ideas on E.J.C.

If the board concurs, I believe that at this juncture it would serve a useful purpose if they were formally to notify the Board of Directors of E.J.C. that, while A.I.M.E. takes no position as to the need for a society based on individual membership to deal with problems relating to the economic status of individual engineers, it believes that such an organization would lose its effectiveness in serving the important and necessary purposes for which E.J.C. has been constituted. I think they could add that, while the present board cannot commit any future board as to policy, it seems proper to point out to E.J.C. that, in our present view, it would be undesirable to maintain A.I.M.E.'s membership in a society controlled by individual members or involving itself in the economic problems of engineers as individuals.

Sincerely yours,

Original signed W. M. Peirce

W. M. Peirce/ja

cc _____ Messrs. H. DeWitt Smith
Theodore B. Counselman
E. H. Robie