

[Readers are invited to write to the editors, giving opinion on any matter of industry interest.]

Dear Sir:

The letter to the editor appearing on Page 8 of the Feb. 19, 1962 issue of Electronic News commented on several aspects of the proposed merger of IRE and AIEE. The undersigned IRE members of the committee considering plans for this possible consolidation offer a few observations concerning the remarks in that letter.

Neglect to Provide for Open Discussion of Pros and Cons.

A possible merger has not been under investigation for 15 years. Until 1961, only the possibility of the two societies agreeing to study such a plan arose several times, but no studied action was ever undertaken until last year. It is true, however, that collaboration has taken place over the years on activities such as technical standards, joint meeting and the like.

Nobody in authority has stated that only two months was to be available for examination and discussion of the proposed merger. The process of initiating such discussion has to be evolutionary. First, the committee had to agree to some basic issues as otherwise there would be nothing to discuss or examine. Then the IRE sections were informed, discussion at section level encouraged and comments solicited. Starting with basic original information to the sections on Oct. 20, 1961, additional information was sent Nov. 28, Dec. 28, and Feb. 5, which latter included a detailed draft of preliminary "Principles of Consolidation."

It was possible to prepare these Principles only because of the groundwork previously done that brought forth many helpful ideas originating from the sections and individual members. The several letters to the sections were reproduced in the Proceedings of the IRE and all of this data is being republished in a special supplement to the March issue. About four months elapsed between Oct. 20 and Feb. 19.

The committee realizes that the process to Feb. 5 has only been introductory, but it seems clear that as proposals evolved they have had wide circulation and members have not been denied the reading of the Proceedings articles and participation in section talks. It felt that at least this much information had to be absorbed before any thoughtful discussions could result.

The next step is to seek support of the two boards of directors on March 8 (Ed. Note: See related story, Page 1), and if that is forthcoming, an open discussion forum at the International Convention March 26 will be held and the pro and con arguments there produced will be reviewed in another supplement attached to the April Proceedings.

Complete material would also accompany the ballot to all voting members with the count to take place in June. Thus, four more months remain for consideration or a total elapsed time of eight months. We think this time is reasonable and adequate.

Polling of Membership.

It has not been the intention of the board of directors to poll the

membership in advance. To do so before giving the members a firm plan would not be sensible. The poll reported taken in Cleveland was at a time when no resolution of the problems existed in adequate quantity. The Cleveland section officials have since then, we are informed, altered their outlook in the light of the planning done meanwhile. We think it unfair to make the "steamroller" charge. Before any plan can be debated it must be prepared and displayed. This involves a positive and affirmative process. After such disclosure, negative views can be, and in this case have been, received and given weight. Many of these have resulted in improvements to the proposed plans.

Key Issues.

It is argued that a change of name would cause loss of IRE identity and that knowledge of the new name is important to have. It would seem on this basis that any change in name would be objectionable and the actual name selected would not be of crucial import. As to the Proceedings, the Principles of Consolidation provide for their continuance.

The letter is correct in its definition of the aims of the IRE. However, fiscal management is quite important and the achieving of the aims can be greatly influenced if the society can establish a healthy budgetary environment. Your committee therefore, became quite "commercially" conscious when it came to studying the financial aspects and its members would surely be remiss if they did not do a careful job here.

Ridiculous.

The letter should have explained this. Over the years, members of the IRE board of directors from the academic world have repeatedly pointed to the existence of dual student membership possibilities as unwise and not in the best interest of the student. We think this information from many eminent educators is worthy of noting and that it constitutes a considered element in the planning.

Ground Rules.

A two-thirds vote of a quorum of the voting members would be

required under the laws of New York State where the IRE is incorporated. The quorum called for 33 1/3 per cent. A simple majority will not suffice. In recent elections many more than 33 1/3 per cent have returned ballots.

In conclusion, we point out that once the basic framework of merger has been adopted, innumerable details that surely will concern many members, will require time to become resolved and that six months will be available from mid-year to January, 1963 for doing this.

The letter of Feb. 19 has been timely and has, we hope, provided a means for diminishing conjecture and establishing a better basis for further membership consideration.

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