

JUL 18 1912

CARL HERING
CONSULTING ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
929 CHESTNUT STREET

2591

PHILADELPHIA, PA. July 17, 1912.

Mr. F. L. Hutchinson, Secretary,
33 West 39th Street,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Hutchinson:-

I am at loss to know what to do in certain cases like the enclosed, and would therefore be pleased if you would kindly ask the Committee on Membership, or whoever else may be in authority, for advice for me.

I have been asked by quite a number of members to sign such papers of certification for transfers, and as it is very embarrassing for me to decline doing so, and as, on the other hand, I do not wish to sign such certifications when I cannot do so conscientiously,- I would be greatly obliged if someone in authority on this matter would kindly instruct me as I have several such pending cases now.

Before this change in the Constitution I felt less hesitancy in signing applications in cases in which the applicant was a personal friend, but nevertheless I knew very little about his past experience, ~~and~~ because I could explain matters to the Committee when I received the usual blank form.

As I understand it, the case is now different and that those who sign such applications for transfer to Fellow, actually "certify" that the applicant has to the signer's own personal knowledge had the experience required, and had done the work required. That is, that no further inquiry will be made by the Committee, the certification of the certifiers being deemed sufficient. This makes me much more cautious.

Formerly I used to answer such requests by saying that I was willing to sign, but that it would do no good as I did not have the necessary personal knowledge. In the present case however, I understand that my signature is considered to be an actual certification that to my own personal knowledge the required work was done; hence no matter how good a friend the applicant is, and no matter how high an opinion I have of him, if I do not know of his past work personally insted of by hearsay, I could not conscientiously sign such papers.

Will someone in authority kindly describe this matter to me, as I am in a very embarrassing position. Some of my friends seem to think that because I am a past President, that therefore my signature would have more weight than someone who has not held such a high office, but who really has a better personal knowledge of the applicant's work. In this I think they are entirely wrong, and I have had to write them this frequently.

Suppose I know from a man's history, as distinguished from personal knowledge, that he had done very creditable work which in my opinion fitted him to become a Fellow, would I be justified in signing such papers; my opinion is that as I thereby sign the clause "I hereby certify, etc.", I must have direct personal knowledge. If I am mistaken in this please let me know, as it would be a great relief to me.

In the present case of Mr. Cowles for instance, I have never been personally associated with him, and could not vouch for the fact that he personally did the very creditable and valuable work which history credits to the Cowles Brothers. That this pioneering work was valuable, no one questions, but personally I do not know whether it was he or his brother that deserved the credit. I know of nothing done by him in the later years, and from personal conversations with him I personally do not consider that he has a very clear understanding of certain things that he talks about. (Please consider this remark as strictly confidential) As he is inclined to show this deficiency (a deficiency, in my opinion) in his public discussions, I naturally have considerable hesitancy in being on record as a certifier of his abilities to be a Fellow, as from his public utterances his listeners might seriously question his present abilities to be a Fellow. On the other hand, the very valuable and creditable pioneering work done by him and his brother many years ago might entitle him to such distinction, even tho at present he may not have kept up with modern developments.

I am also anxious to know the opinions of the Committee on account of my own transfer, as I have great hesitancy to ask anyone to sign my papers, as many of my good friends know of my work only thru my publications, as distinguished from a personal knowledge of my engineering work. I should dislike to put them in the same embarrassing position that some of my friends have put me into, in asking me to sign their papers.

Thanking you in advance for taking this trouble to instruct me as to the understanding of the authorities on this matter, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Carl Haring

CH:AR.

2591
July 31st, 1912.

Mr. Carl Hering,
#929 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Hering:-

I have been expecting that the Board of Examiners would hold a final meeting for the administrative year during the early part of this week, at which time it was my purpose to submit your letter of July 17th relating to the transfer of Institute Members under the Special Section of the Constitution. The Board has just decided that a meeting will not be necessary, owing to the small volume of business to come before it, and as its term of office expires to-day, I do not think it advisable to delay further in replying to your letter, especially in view of the fact that the new Board, which will be appointed by President Mershon, may not meet until September.

The difficulty which has presented itself to you was anticipated by the committee which framed the constitutional amendments, and also by the Board of Directors, which discussed the certification feature at length at their May meeting. It was realized that this clause might entail something of a hardship upon a number of applicants, and, in some cases, cause embarrassment to the members referred to, but the Board recognized the importance of safeguarding in some way admission to the higher grades of membership, and it was felt by inserting the clause requiring certification by the references of an applicant's

eligibility for transfer to the grade applied for, and the publication of the names of the certifiers in the Institute Proceedings, applicants not qualified for transfer would be excluded from the higher grades. The attitude of the Board we think is clearly indicated by its approval of the reference forms which we are using in connection with transfer applications under the Special Sections, such as the form forwarded to you in Mr. Cowle's application. This form was recommended by the Board of Examiners, to which it was first submitted. The Board in the course of its discussion on the subject called special attention to the desirability of so wording the form as to permit of no reply other than a positive certification of the applicant's fitness for transfer, it being assumed of course that the person referred to would not sign the form if he could not so certify.

Possibly you were not aware that in applications for transfer made under the Special Section the Board of Examiners has not before it the record of the applicant, or any other information that will enable it to judge as to the applicant's qualifications for transfer, which makes it all the more necessary why we should have a definite statement from the gentlemen referred to, who practically act as a Board of Examiners.

It is plain that the Special Sections of the Constitution providing for the transfer of present Members and Associates can admit of but one construction; namely, members referred to must certify that an applicant meets the requirements of the grade applied for, if he is to be transferred. Such certification, I think, should be made from personal knowledge.

Mr. Carl Haring,

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7/31/12.

I understand from some prominent members that they have in some cases written applicants who referred to them to the effect that they regret their inability to certify, but that they do not feel that they are sufficiently familiar with the applicant's work and experience to testify of their own personal knowledge, and therefore they suggest that the applicant send to Institute headquarters some additional references to Members who are in a position to make the required certification.

The Special Sections, as you probably know, have been incorporated in the amendments only for the purpose of taking care of present Members and Associates. Regular applications for transfer will be treated as formerly, and not require certification on the part of references. In these cases the applicant must submit his record, and give the names of references who will be asked for certain information, and the Board of Examiners will then pass judgment upon the application.

Trusting that this will give you the desired information and enable you to act intelligently, I am,

Very truly yours,

Secretary.

P.S. - The form relating to Mr. A. H. Cowles is returned to you herewith for such action as you decide to take.

CARL HERING
CONSULTING ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
929 CHESTNUT STREET

SEP 30 1912

25-91

PHILADELPHIA, PA. September 28, 1912.

Mr. F. L. Hutchinson,
American Institute of Electrical Engineers,
33 West 39th Street,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Hutchinson:-

It looks from the enclosed that the system has been changed and that the references of applicants are no longer asked to vouch for the applicants' eligibility, but are merely asked to give their knowledge of their past work, as was formerly the case.

This is a very important change and as I receive quite a number of these blanks to fill out, I would be obliged to you if you would kindly confirm my understanding of this change. The reason is that I have been placed in very embarrassing positions by personal friends who have asked me for permission to use my name in this transfer to Fellow, when I really had no direct personal knowledge of their work altho I had known them socially for many years; and in such cases I have had to make lengthy apologetic replies for asking to be excused.

If the other system however is again in vogue, as appears from the enclosed, I would not have to make these unpleasant apologies as the Committee will then see from my replies that I have no direct personal knowledge; and in such cases I can write the applicant (as I have done in many cases prior to the recent Amendment) that he is welcome to use my name but that it would do him more good to refer to someone better acquainted with his work. This relieves me of embarrassment.

This brings me back to the case of Alfred Cowles about which I wrote you several months ago. I would be very glad to sign a paper like the enclosed for Mr. Cowles, altho I could not conscientiously sign the original one sent me. If it is not too late to make this change in the blank forms in Mr. Cowles' case I would be glad to sign a paper like the enclosed, as I felt quite badly not to be able to sign the first paper.

Personally I think the present form is by far the better as it eliminates the possibility of an unworthy applicant getting five personal friends to put him thru automatically, and sometimes it saves the references, in a genuine case, considerable embarrassment.

Regretting to trouble you in this matter, I remain,

Very truly yours,

CH:AR.

Carl Hering

Ans'd 9/30/12

23-91

September 30, 1912.

Mr. Carl Hering,
929 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dear Sir:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 28th inst., enclosing the reference form sent you in connection with the application of Mr. W. Monroe Hopkins, and raising certain questions in regard to transfers.

The form which you returned is the form used in connection with applications for transfer to the grade of Fellow made under the regular sections of the constitution. It is the "old" form, and has not been superseded.

The other form to which you refer, i.e., the one sent you in connection with the application for transfer made by Mr. Cowles, is also in force. It is used in connection with transfers under the special section of the constitution which was adopted last Spring, and it will be in force until May 1, 1913. This special section provides that members who were in good standing at the time the amendments were adopted would have the right to be transferred to the next higher grade without complying with all the regular sections of the constitution, but simply by referring to the required number of Member or Fellows, who upon inquiry from this office certify that the appli-

cant meets the requirements for the grade desired.

The purpose of the special section was to provide a simple way for the transfer to the next higher grade of all members who were on the list at the time the amendments were adopted. In other words, this special section was an important part of the plan to have three grades of membership, i. e., Associates, Members and Fellows, instead of the former two grades, namely, Associates and Members.

A number of other prominent members have been placed in the same position that you speak of, namely, their names have been used as references by members applying for transfer under the special section, and in many cases they do not feel that they know enough about the applicant's engineering record to certify that he meets the requirements. In such cases, perhaps the simplest way is not to return the form to this office, in which case after a reasonable time has elapsed we will simply notify the applicant that the required number of certifications has not been received, and therefore we will suggest that he send the names of a few more references. In such case we will not give the names of the original references who have failed to reply, so that no embarrassment need be caused. This method will avoid the necessity of you and other references writing to the applicant and explaining that you do not feel qualified to make the required certification, although there is, of course, no objection to your doing this if desired.

Very truly yours,

Secretary.

CARL HERING
CONSULTING ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
929 CHESTNUT STREET

OCT 5 1912

PHILADELPHIA, PA. October 4, 1912.

2591

Mr. F. L. Hutchinson, Secretary,
American Institute of Electrical Engineers,
33 West 39th Street,
New York City, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Hutchinson:-

Thanks for your kind and very full reply of September 30th concerning my inquiries. I was very glad that you explained it to me and that you made the suggestions which you did.

I will do as you suggest and not return the papers concerning Mr. Cowles. I will say nothing about it and he will not know that I did not sign them. I wish to repeat however that I have nothing against Mr. Cowles but simply that I have no knowledge personally of his particular work, altho of course I have heard of the excellent work which he and his brother did together; but whether it was he or his brother (now deceased) who deserves the credit for it, I do not know.

Thanking you again for your full reply, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Carl Hering

CH:AR.