

M. D. HOOVEN CONSULTING ENGINEER
PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTRIC AND GAS CO.
NEWARK, N. J. 07101

*Mr. Hebbelman — Haven't sent
this yet — What do you think?
December , 1970*

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Mr. Elgin B. Robertson, Director Emeritus, IEEE
Chairman of the Board, Plastics Manufacturing Co.
2700 S. Westmoreland, Dallas, Texas

Dear Elgin:

I find the writing of this letter a painful and disagreeable task. Only a stern sense of duty to the profession of electrical engineering forces me to do it.

Id I have slowly and regretfully come to the unshakable conclusion that the merger of IRE and AIEE has resulted in the complete takeover of AIEE by the IRE forces with almost irreparable damage to the AIEE sector of the profession. This conclusion is in face of the fact that I have devoted almost half of my professional career to the consummation of the merger and the achievement of unification. I do not charge that this usurpation is a result of a planned conspiracy, -- I charge rather that it is a result of a thoughtless assumption of power and command by IRE forces. Looking backwards, I can see that this might have been a result of the adoption of the IRE structure which results in a self-perpetuating group in a continuing IRE-IEEE administration. In making this charge, I realize that I must make a total apology to those of us in AIEE who pointed out that just such a thing would happen; as you remember, I as an individual pooh-poohed this idea and looked forward with unrestrained optimism to happy results from the merger.

I owe you a full explanation of why I have come to my present conclusion. During the past several years, my confidence in the administration of the merged Institutes has been shaken by a series of comparatively minor incidents which, in my small circle of close friends, has resulted in their almost complete divorce from Institute activities. Incidents of this sort include: Loss of staff support in local power activities; division of responsibility among the many professional groups; bias in appointments; the publication policy; withdrawal from national engineering affairs; disregard of talent in the AIEE sector of the prize and honor award field; and almost complete dominance of IRE in all areas. A personal example or so will suffice to illustrate what I am talking about.

Starting all over again after the merger, I served on local awards committees and was distressed to find that the people whose causes I promoted were unknown to my new highly respected but somewhat (to me) provincial confreres.

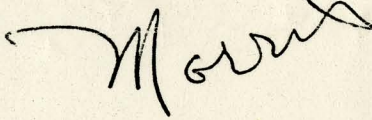
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Gentlemen that they were, my new confreres accepted my word for the worth of some of my recommended individuals and sent their names on to the Fellows Committee, where they failed to make the grade. I then did a very obvious bit of legwork: with the help of some of our young stenographers, I made a census, looking up the names of the present Fellows Committee in the last IRE yearbook issued before the merger and the last AIEE yearbook of the same general period. I was shocked to find that only a comparatively few members of the Committee were members of both Institutes before the merger and that an overwhelming number of Board members had always been IRE and never AIEE. This piqued my curiosity so that I continued with a more general study. Please read carefully the table attached. In general, you will see that in the geographic areas, except for the two coast lines, the favors of the new Institute are rather well distributed. You will see further, however, that in the national administration there is a tremendous IRE bias. All of the above I duly reported to my friends in the present administration, who I must say were much more than nice to me. In the middle of my investigation and discussion I received the Founders Award for which I was more than grateful. The very fact, however, that my AIEE friends learned that I was still active in the Institute brought more frustrations and irritations to the surface. Very few people of any standing in the power field have anything but complaints to register concerning the new set-up. Our sister societies (as you know I am still active in ASME, ASEE, NSPE, EJC, and ECPD) are united in saying that IEEE has become utterly unpredictable, -- that it seems far more interested in exercising its own independence than it is in continuing any of its past work towards unification of the profession. More recently I have heard rumors of a great turbulence presently occurring within the Institute. While at first blush this would seem no one's business but our own, nevertheless the profession as a whole can not help but be greatly affected by provincial dissension within its largest group. Now, being somewhat more than disturbed by this most recent turbulence, I have extended my census type of analysis to the eleven members of the present Nominating Committee, the group which has the greatest influence on IEEE's future. These men average 25 years of service within the Institute. However, a short eight years ago, nine of them belonged to IRE only; one belonged to both Institutes, and one belonged to AIEE only.

The situation has gone too far to reverse itself. We have no choice but to go along with present IRE dominance in spite of our AIEE strength in the heartland. My only suggestion is that we recognize the Enemy as such, acknowledge him as the victor, and that we, as the vanquished, throw ourselves upon his mercy. Every IRE man I have ever met seems to be a nice person, thoughtless perhaps of others, motivated toward promoting his segment of the profession only, but anxious to be fair. Why not face the situation, ask the Enemy to investigate the present condition and enter a plea for a higher rate of courtesy and sportsmanship?

Again please let me say that I am extremely sorry to find that my conscience obligates me to write this kind of a letter to you. I am sending copies of it to past presidents of both Institutes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. Gross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

MDH:PAG

CC: The President, General Manager, and Nominating Committee
Past Presidents