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AIEE EXPLORATORY GROUP TO REVIEW THE ENGINEERING UNITY ACHIEVED
THROUGH ENGINEERS JOINT COUNCIL

On November 30th, 1953 President Robertson appointed an ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors to review the progress that has been made toward the unification of the engineering profession through the Engineers Joint Council as now organized and constituted. He also asked this committee, if practical, to bring a report to the Board of Directors at the Meeting of January 21, 1954.

In compliance with the above requests, the following report is submitted:

Since the Engineers Joint Council has modified and adopted the "Report of the Exploratory Group to Consider the Increased Unity of the Engineering Profession" submitted in December 1951, invitations to join the Council were extended to eight of the ten engineering societies, outside of EJC, that participated in the Exploratory Group. The societies receiving invitations were the following:

- American Association of Engineers
- American Society for Engineering Education
- American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers
- American Water Works Association
- Institute of Aeronautical Sciences
- Institute of Radio Engineers
- National Society of Professional Engineers
- The Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers

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Three of these engineering societies have elected to accept the invitations to join the Council and have been admitted. These societies are:

American Society for Engineering Education

American Water Works Association

The Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers

Two societies have rejected the invitation and they are:

Institute of Radio Engineers

National Society of Professional Engineers

Three of the engineering societies invited to join the Council allowed the time limit of the invitation period, which was December 31, 1953, to expire without accepting the invitation. These societies are the following:

American Association of Engineers

American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers

Institute of Aeronautical Sciences

The total membership of Engineers Joint Council is now eight societies and the prospect of increasing this number in the near future is not good. The most likely potential new member societies have allowed their invitations to lapse without acting upon them as indicated above and in the future it will be necessary for them to apply for membership.

In view of the record it appears that the Engineers Joint Council as now organized and constituted is not developing into the form of unity organization desired generally by engineers.

Over the past seven years the American Institute of Electrical Engineers has conducted four separate investigations to determine the wishes of its

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membership regarding various forms of unity organizations. The results of these investigations have been reported as follows:

- (1) "Professional Activities Sub-committee Reports for 1946 on Organization of Engineering Profession."

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, May, 1947 - Pages 496 to 501

- (2) "1949 Membership Opinion Poll on Institute Policy"

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, March 1950, Page 194

- (3) "1950 Membership Opinion Poll on Institute Policy."

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, August, 1950, Page 669

- (4) Survey of Sections on Proposed Plans A, B, C and D of

the Exploratory Group. Reported in a letter by James

F. Fairman, April 17, 1951 addressed to the Exploratory

Group Members and to the AIEE Board of Directors.

The results of each of these surveys favored the general form of organization known as Plan C ("Merger Plan") outlined in the "Report of the Exploratory Group to Consider the Increased Unity of the Engineering Profession" December, 1950. The most important basic requirements in the preferred form of organization were the following. It should be based upon individual membership rather than a council of societies; it should be clothed with power to act promptly when required; and it should be adequately financed.

In voting for the changes in the EJC Constitution to provide for the expansion of the Council, the AIEE Board of Directors did not consider the modified EJC to be the desired unity organization. Rather it was looked upon as a possible vehicle through which a suitable organization might be developed.

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The studies made to determine the wishes of our members have indicated that they do not believe the Council type of organization has any chance of serving as a satisfactory permanent unity organization and in the past the Board has supported that view. The soundness of this position is indicated by the following observations:

- (1) Thirty years of experience both in the United States and Canada show that the top level federation or council type of organization has been inadequate to meet the requirements of the engineering profession especially in non-technical activities. Some examples of the experience with these organizations and the changes that have been made in attempting to meet the demands are the following:

(a) The Engineering Council of the National Technical Societies of America was organized in 1917

(b) The American Engineering Council was formed in 1920 to supersede the Engineering Council of the National Technical Societies of America and was dissolved sometime prior to 1940.

- (c) The Engineering Institute of Canada was formed following World War I out of what was then the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers. This Institute proposed that it should be the National Engineering Institute to which all Canadian engineers of all branches should belong. This objective never has been reached.

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- (d) The idea of a "Unity" organization in Canada was reborn during World War II largely to prevent engineers from being included within the scope of certain labor legislation that would have had the effect of including them in overall collective bargaining units. First the "Committee of Fourteen" was organized. This committee was composed of the then Presidents of the major professional or technical organizations in Canada. This Committee attained its original objective and it was proposed to organize a permanent organization on this basis. The Engineering Institute of Canada took exception to the organization, contending that it already existed in EIC.
- (e) An organization, the "Canadian Council of Professional Engineers and Scientists," was completed in immediate post-war years without the cooperation of EIC. This Council continued until February 28, 1950 when it was disbanded. An engineer who participated in this organization reports it's failure as follows: "Unfortunately the Council 'ran aground' on the twin rocks of - (a) insufficient financial support, and (b) its impotence in that nothing could be done without reference back to its supporting societies."

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- (f) The Engineers Joint Conference was organized in the United States in 1941 and was composed of the Presidents and Secretaries of the five participating societies.
 - (g) The Engineers Joint Council evolved from the Engineers Joint Conference in 1945 when the representation from the constituent societies was increased.
 - (h) In 1949 the Engineers Joint Council invited 16 major engineering societies to participate in an Exploratory Group to consider the Unity of the Engineering Profession.
- (2) The Council type organization is less secure than an organization founded upon individual membership because of the ability of an entire society of several thousands of members to withdraw at one time.
 - (3) The financial support of a Council type organization is less secure than for one founded upon individual membership for the same reasons cited in (2) above.

The Committee, after reviewing the present status of unity in the engineering profession under EJC as now organized and constituted, feels that progress is not satisfactory. It is the further belief of this Committee that there is a critical need for an effective, adequately supported unity organization and that the time is rapidly running out in which the engineering profession can forestall the serious encroachment of unionization unless one is formed.

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Institute members through their Sections and in other ways are asking the AIEE to take action that will expedite and implement unified action on the part of the engineering profession. These requests emphasize the importance and urgency of this matter.

The Pittsfield Section has addressed a letter, dated January 4, 1954, to the Board of Directors expressing the concern of their membership about lack of unity and requesting the Board to take action to establish an appropriate unity organization based upon individual membership. This letter was also sent to all Sections in District No. 1.

One Unity Plan is outlined in an article "A New Unity Plan Proposal" by J. C. Dutton, W. J. Degan and J. L. Oprisch, Electrical Engineering, April, 1953, pages 349-351. This Plan is proposed by the General Electric Engineers' Association which includes a large number of AIEE members.

The Denver Section has forwarded a letter to the President and all of the Sections of the Institute in which ~~the~~ definite action toward unity is urged.

The Schenectady Section has transmitted a letter to the Board of Directors asking that it take positive, prompt action toward establishing a unity organization.

The AIEE Section's Committee at its meeting on January 19, 1954 unanimously passed the following resolution:

"Resolved, that since it is the policy of the Institute, as affirmed by the Board of Directors' statement of June 15, 1950, to work continually for the unification of the profession and

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since actions are pending in National and State Legislatures which may restrict the development and unification of the engineering profession, we, the sections representatives, urge the Board of Directors to vigorously continue efforts to find an acceptable basis for unity of the profession."

This Committee recommends that the Board of Directors should insist that EJC immediately take steps toward the development of a unity organization based upon individual membership as we ~~HAD HOPED~~ would be done when the present Council expansion plan was launched in 1951.

To initiate and implement the formation of a unity organization to meet the present needs, the Committee recommends that the Engineers Joint Council be asked to appoint a committee instructed to develop a plan for the unification of the engineering profession based upon individual membership, vested with power to act promptly and provided with a sound plan for financing.

New York, N. Y. - January 20, 1954.

Committee:

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R. F. Danner
L. F. Hickernell
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F. O. McMillan, Chairman

*Unable to participate in final draft due to inability to attend the Winter General Meeting.