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A PHILOSOPHER COMMENTS ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION

"I confess that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions which I once thought right, therefore, the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others.

"In these sentiments, sir, I agree to this Constitution, with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a General Government necessary for us."

The sentiments above were not written about the constitution under which AIEE and IRE would operate as a merged group, but they do seem to apply. They were written in 1787 by Benjamin Franklin about the Constitution of the United States.

Today some AIEE members feel that the plans for merger should be rejected because they call for substantial changes from the existing AIEE Constitution. The same feeling was held by some in 1787 about scrapping Articles of Confederation.

The question though, today, as then, seems to be not "What changes will there be?" but, rather "Will the new instrument be an improvement over the old. "Is it the best possible?" The men who have studied the situation in detail answer with an overwhelming "Yes."

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If man demanded perfection and absolute unity of thought and procedures, it is to be doubted if any organization could ever be formed.

The burning desire for perfection can road-block progress. Even the marriage ceremony clearly recognizes this when it warns the uniting couples that they take each other for better or for worse. Nor can all the ground rules of marriage be spelled out before the knot is tied.

So it would seem, too, with the proposed merger of AIEE and IRE. The encouraging aspect is that these organizations have finally agreed on broad principles, after all these years. This is the first time leaders of both societies have agreed that a single organization representing the entire electrical engineering profession should be formed. For the first time in the history of AIEE and IRE the memberships will have an opportunity to vote on such a proposition.

The 1961-1962 AIEE Organization Manual lists a total of 167 Student Branches in as many engineering colleges. Of these 127 are joint AIEE-IRE Branches. If unity can be achieved on the student-level certainly it also is possible on the professional level. Also, it would appear that unity of the two groups would eventually be inevitable when the present and future students, accustomed to cooperation between the Societies at college, take over control of AIEE and IRE in the future.

There seems to be no valid reason for believing that any segment of the engineering discipline would be neglected in the new organization.

Electronics could not exist without power and the profession and power itself would be set back half a century without electronics. All parts of the electrical engineering profession are interdependent. It is hard to believe that IEEE would neglect any section of the Profession.

In any event, the merger has reached the voting stage -- the democratic stage where the will of the majority will prevail, if the majority of members of IRE and AIEE want the merger. So be it. If the vote is in the negative, both societies will accept that decision.

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