

Merger

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cc: Messrs. Hendley Blackmon  
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Gentlemen:

Following the meeting of the Executive Committee earlier this month, at which time the progress of the AIEE and IRE merger was discussed in some detail, I have given considerable thought to what was discussed at that meeting. I think it was quite unfortunate that copies of the constitution were not available for those present to study before coming to the meeting but I realize that the time schedule was such that this was not possible. However, I had hoped by now that a constitution would be available for study and am looking forward to receiving same early next year. In any event, I think the AIEE should take steps to insure that the constitution is not frozen, but remains in a state of flux until the proper members of AIEE have had a chance to review it in detail. In my opinion, those who should review the constitution are the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors (in its entirety) and the Past Presidents of the Institute. I think that if we fail to bring into the picture some of our Past Presidents we are overlooking a very valuable source of help in assuring that we have a constitution which will serve the needs of the new organization. I suggest that the Past Presidents be specifically invited to attend the Forum where the AIEE-IRE merger plans are discussed at the General Winter Meeting and that they also specifically be invited to attend the AIEE Board Meeting where action is taken on the merger plan.

I also suggest it would be advisable to immediately bring our recent Past President, Mr. L. F. Hickernell, into the picture more than he has been at the present time because there are very few members of the AIEE who have as complete a knowledge of AIEE background, constitution and by-laws as does Mr. Hickernell.

In reviewing the discussions at the December meeting of what will probably be incorporated into the new constitution, it seemed to me that we



are throwing away almost entirely the recent ideas which had been incorporated into the AIEE constitution since 1956, and that we are basing our constitution almost entirely on the IRE concept. I would like to call to your attention that when the AIEE first considered revamping their organization the Board decided that it would be wise to call in the services of consultants who were foremost authorities in the field of organization of businesses. To this end, the services of Stevenson, Jordan and Harrison, Inc. were acquired, with the specific purpose in mind to conduct an over all study of the present organization of the Institute, including its finances, with a view to arriving at a more efficient and comprehensive plan of organization designed to operate within the available finances of the Institute and to provide for such subdivisions as may be needed for the efficient administration of the affairs of the Institute of the future.

After a very comprehensive study of the situation, Stevenson, Jordan and Harrison made their recommendations for changes in the organization as it then existed in 1956. A large number of the important recommendations which they made have by now been incorporated in our Institute. Some of the changes were made almost immediately - others took more time. I should point out at this time that some of the members of the Institute had thoughts for reorganization of the Institute which were not unlike those proposed by Stevenson, Jordan and Harrison. I should also point out that the recommendations of the report of the consultants were very carefully studied by several committees of the Institute before they were adopted. I should also point out that the changes made in the AIEE organization occurred over several years and that the membership of the Board which acted on the changes was continuously changing throughout those years. This meant that no one group of people in AIEE put through these changes in organization, but that the changes proposed were very carefully studied and accepted by several Boards over a period of time. The decision to change the constitution of the AIEE was not a "hit or miss" decision.

Generally speaking, I think the changes which have been made in organization within the past six or seven years have been highly beneficial to the operation of the Institute. It is true that some of the changes have not been quite as successful as hoped for but, generally speaking, the operation of the Institute has improved. Generally speaking, the department-type of operation has been successful. This is particularly true in the case of GAD and TOD. I think it is a big mistake to throw over this type of operation without a more careful consideration of its merits. To be perfectly frank about it, in my own opinion I think the IRE-type of organization is out-dated and compares quite favorably with the organization that the AIEE had back before 1956.

I do not believe that we have any more levels of management in AIEE than would be utilized in an engineering company of a comparable size (55,000 people). Generally speaking, the larger the company the more levels of management are required. Since the proposed merger will make an organization of over 100,000 members, I do not see how we can successfully operate with fewer levels of management than AIEE has at the present time. We must not overlook the fact that the main reason why IRE has been successful is that it has been operating almost since the start of its existence in a field which is very glamorous, new and rapidly expanding. In my opinion, the IRE would have been a successful organization with almost any organization. I believe we should compare our type of operation to the type employed by big businesses because with our expected membership we are big business.



I am also quite concerned over the Board having so much control over the election of its own members. I don't think that this is fundamentally sound. I also do not think it good policy to continue to keep Past Presidents forever and ever members of the Board as has occurred on numerous occasions in the IRE. I do think it is desirable to insure that incoming Presidents have a sound background of experience in Institute activities to enable them to perform their functions as Presidents efficiently and effectively at the start of their administration. Steps should be taken to insure this.

Another question which I think deserves additional study is whether or not we should have Regional-type Vice Presidents, such as employed by the IRE, or District-type Vice Presidents, as employed by the AIEE. The two types of operation are entirely different. We cannot ask a Regional Vice President to serve the Sections in his region as well as a District Vice President has been doing. The AIEE District-type of operation may provide more service to Sections than is warranted but, nevertheless, in my opinion, it has brought the Section more closely in contact with the Institute than what has been done in IRE by the Regional-type of operation. The big question is: "Can we abandon this District-type of operation as far as our AIEE members are concerned and still maintain member interest in all fields of engineering?" Some of the fields which will be served by the new organization, it must be recognized, are not the glamour-type of fields which the IRE has served in its years of existence. Perhaps these fields need the District-type of operation to sustain membership in those areas. The question to be answered here is: "If we use the Regional-type of operation, will we lose members?" I don't believe using a District-type operation in place of Regional-type, employed by IRE, will cause us to lose any of the existing IRE members. I recognize that such a type of operation is more costly than the Regional-type operation; therefore, the problem that has to be solved is: "Is it worth the difference in expenditure?" Perhaps a compromise scheme is indicated.

I think the idea of having a publication similar to "Electrical Engineering" is good. The idea of having a second publication to contain transaction papers is going to present problems because a single publication cannot possibly contain all the transaction papers of all the fields of the two societies. I suggest you give consideration to having five or six technical publications to contain transaction papers of the new Institute. These would correspond to our Bi-monthlies. I don't think it will be a good idea to have transaction papers distributed over a large number of publications, which would be the case if we published them in the publications of each Professional Group. It would be too hard to assemble them for a permanent transaction record.

I hope these comments will be of assistance to you. The establishment of a constitution of an organization as complex as this is not a simple undertaking. There are many facets which must be studied and the problem must be approached from various angles. We have to satisfy approximately 70,000 people with the organization which we propose in order to bring the new organization into existence. This is going to be a difficult task. One question these people will be raising will be: "What am I going to get out of this joining of forces?" If it is not made perfectly clear to them what the benefits are, I suspect there will be difficulty in getting the required majority vote in favor of the organization. My own feeling is we can't leave things to happenstance; we have to spell out the constitution in fairly complete form to get it accepted



by a sufficient number of people. I also think it would be a very serious mistake to try to rush things through before they have been carefully thought out and before people have had a chance to let the idea "sink in".

I again remind you that it took almost six years to get approval for the recent changes that have been made in the AIEE constitution. We must keep our finger on the pulse of the progress we are making in the merging program and not bring it up for vote or consideration until the members have been properly conditioned and educated and have been convinced that the organization proposed is the best for their own interest.

In closing, permit me to wish all of you a Very Happy New Year and I hope that each of you will find a little bit of time to enjoy some of the New Year, although I suspect you are going to be pretty busy getting this new organization underway.

Yours sincerely,



W. R. Clark

WRC:vw