

To Serve Technically And Professionally



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In the February issue of the JOURNAL, President Grant reviewed the progress we have made in solving some of the major problems that our Society has faced in the last two years. Real progress has been made, but more work still remains for your officers, the Board of Directors, the national committees, and the local Chapter officers.

This continuing task will be carried on during my term of office by the same team that has been serving the Society for the last several months. At the beginning of this year, President Grant and I collaborated in all of the committee appointments so that they could carry through both our terms. Thus my term as President will be in effect an extension of his, and we shall continue and hope to complete the program initiated last June.

The period between now and June brings to close the interim, half-term, assignments of the officers who had been elected prior to the merger. This means that by June we should have all phases of the merger completed and be operating smoothly as one of the great American engineering societies, serving our sector of industry, our profession, and the general public.

By June we may confidently expect a membership of 18,500, which will make ASHRAE the sixth largest engineering society in point of membership. But the size of its membership roll alone is not what makes a great or important engineering society.

Perhaps a better gauge of a society's importance is the scope of its activities and the activities and interests of its members. The scope of the engineering activities covered by ASHRAE was indicated clearly by the displays and exhibits at the Heating and Air Conditioning Exposition held at Chicago at the time of the Semiannual Meeting. As I toured this outstanding Exposition, I was overwhelmed by the number and variety of businesses, large and small, which serve and are served by the engineers of this Society.

We may take pride in the fact that through the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning activities of our members, ASHRAE brings within its scope

every domestic dwelling, every industrial activity, every type of institutional and commercial structure. No new housing project, no new school, hospital, church, hotel, auditorium, super market, or any commercial, industrial, or institutional building can be planned without the services of the engineers of this Society.

Through the activities of the refrigerating engineers, the scope of ASHRAE extends to the fresh and processed food supplies of all the world, including the preparation, processing, wholesale and retail storage, distribution, and finally the domestic storage in the home refrigerator and freezer. The beverage industry, the hotel and restaurant business, the dairy industry, the meat packing industry — these great industrial activities and many, many more could not have developed to their present importance in our economy without the contribution of the engineers of our Society. The activities and interests of our members are woven into the very fabric of our economy and way of life. This is a measure of the importance of our profession to the general welfare of all our people.

This in and of itself does not make ours a great engineering society. The importance of our profession provides the opportunity and the challenge to build a great engineering society. But its greatness will be determined by how well it serves the interests of its members and the general public. To become great, it must stimulate and advance the growth of engineering knowledge. To become great, it must provide leadership in the publication of this knowledge. To become great, it must encourage and inspire its members to seek out and develop new applications of this knowledge for the benefit of the public welfare. To become great, ASHRAE must encourage among its members a sense of professional pride, unity, and responsibility which measures up to the importance of their contribution to our economy and way of living. Whether or not ASHRAE becomes a great engineering society depends entirely on its members — on you — because you, collectively, are the Society.

It is the function of ASHRAE to serve its members primarily in two ways. First, technically, by advancing the arts and sciences of engineering. Second, professionally, by furthering those professional attitudes of unity and responsibility which stimulate and encourage the professional development of each member.

Our service in the technical area is through the media of technical programs and publications, re-

search activities, technical committees, and engineering standards. These are our primary and obvious services. In the last two years we have properly spent much of our efforts in developing these activities to suit the new requirements of ASHRAE. How well this has proceeded is shown by the outstanding program of this Semiannual Meeting; by the improving quality and breadth of coverage of the JOURNAL; by the new ASHRAE GUIDE AND DATA BOOK, soon to be off the press; by the forthright approach to our research program; and by our outstanding and comprehensive standards activity. By careful planning and diligent, hard work on the part of those responsible for these activities, the technical activities of the Society will, I feel confident, be operating in good shape on an ASHRAE basis by June.

Our service to the members in the professional area is less obvious to us as engineers, but it is also important. In this area we have need for considerable improvement before we measure up to our full capability as a great engineering Society. There is a great need for us to develop a sense of professional unity within our membership. I am sure that many of our members think of themselves as salesmen, managers, or business executives rather than as engineers. Perhaps the fact that much of our day-to-day effort is more directly related to business activity than to engineering design or research causes many of our members to lose their sense of being a part of the engineering profession. The other day an executive of our company somewhat humorously remarked to me, "I was an engineer once." And he was, too — a good engineer — he still is — I can vouch for that. But the point is, he doesn't think of himself as an engineer any more. This attitude, in my opinion, is most unfortunate since it deprives the profession and this Society of the active support of high caliber engineers who could contribute much to the advancement of the profession.

This is an area where we need some real creative thinking. We need to develop programs to encourage these engineers to return to the fold and take an active part in the affairs of their profession and of this Society. This is a problem of professional development.

The fact that many of our members do feel so little sense of unity with or responsibility to the engineering profession is indicated by the low level of participation of our members in the building fund campaign for the United Engineering Center Building in New York. While the other major engineering societies have exceeded their quotas and are still receiving contributions, our members have very largely failed to accept a responsibility for ASHRAE's share in this united engineering program. This project, incidentally, is one of the activities on which we must concentrate in the months ahead.

Another non-technical, professional, area that gives me concern is the weakness that exists in the relationship between the national organization and the local chapters. It sometimes seems to me that these parts of our Society are two separate organizations with little in common except the JOURNAL. Part of this problem is the result of poor internal communications; our failure to keep the local chap-

ters and the individual members vitally in touch with and concerned about the national activities of the Society. This problem has already been recognized by the Public Relations Committee. A start has been made to solve it by urging all committee chairmen to report on the significant goings-on in their committee so the full membership can be kept informed. But this is not the whole answer. We need to convince every member that first and foremost he is a member of an important national engineering society, in an active and vital profession, and that the local activities of his section are a part and parcel of the total activities of the Society. This is a problem in membership development on which we must concentrate.

To help bridge the gap between the local member and the national activities of the Society, we need to actively encourage and promote the program of Regional Technical Conferences. The Regional Technical Conference provides opportunities for the stimulation and recognition of worthwhile technical accomplishments in the presentation of technical papers and talks. The inclusion of technical papers on the Conference program increases the attendance at these Conferences and brings more of the local members into contact with the wider activities of the Society. Possibly most important of all, it permits younger engineers, who may not be able to attend the national meetings, to take an active part in a Society program of worthwhile dimensions, greatly stimulating his professional development and accomplishment.

Several times in the above I mentioned the idea of "stimulating and encouraging" as challenges and opportunities for a great engineering society. It seems to me this is the very essence of Society membership. As members we can do things in the name of the Society which we cannot do separately, thus we can stimulate and encourage one another to higher levels of achievement. As a Society we can give recognition to outstanding engineering activities and accomplishments. As a Society we can undertake ambitious programs of research and study aimed at benefiting the public welfare or further advancing our engineering knowledge. As a Society we can carry on a public relations program aimed at gaining recognition for our field of activity and attracting capable young engineering students to it.

These are some of the professional development activities to which we must begin to give our attention as we conclude the merger phase of ASHRAE. During this phase we have faced and solved many of our major technical and operating problems. Some still remain to be solved in the months ahead. We have built an important Society serving an important branch of the engineering profession. Let us now undertake the longer task of building a truly great and vital engineering society dedicated to the technical and professional service of all our members and the general public.

As a part of this undertaking, I consider it a great honor and privilege to serve as your President. I shall do all in my power to further these aims and purposes of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers.