

*from the President*  
An Open Letter to ~~IRE~~ Section Chairman

*The following letter from Lloyd V. Berkner, President of the IRE, is self-explanatory with reference to the actions of the two Boards concerning the possible consolidation of the IRE and AIEE. This letter is published to provide full information to the IRE members.—The Editor*

October 20, 1961

Dear Mr. Section Chairman:

At its meeting on October 18, 1961, the IRE Board of Directors took action which makes possible future joint measures by IRE and AIEE aimed towards consolidation of their resources, membership and activities into a single new professional society dealing with the whole range of radio and electrical engineering and related professional interests. At its meeting on October 20, 1961, the Board of Directors of the AIEE took similar action. The action taken by the two Boards at this time is no more than a preliminary step toward the formulation of specific proposals on which each Board and the membership of each society must act subsequently in accordance with their statutes. Nevertheless, the proposal is now at a stage that the IRE Board desires the broadest possible discussion on the part of IRE membership. The Board has therefore instructed me to communicate with the Sections asking for their views after their careful consideration of the substantive effects of the proposal. The resolution of the Board is appended hereto.

Formation of a single professional radio and electrical engineering society through combination of IRE and AIEE is a matter of major international professional importance. I shall endeavor to outline the reasons that have led the IRE and AIEE Boards to join in discussions that open the potentiality of merger of the two societies into a single professional society in our field of technology. All related factors deserve the most mature consideration. But above all, the decision should be reached primarily on the judgment of that course of action that would lead the radio, electrical and electronic profession to develop in the most healthy and fruitful fashion.

The AIEE was founded as a New York corporation

in 1884 to meet the professional needs represented in a growing power, telephone and telegraph industry. AIEE now has about 65,000 members, headquarters in the new Engineering Building in New York, and resources of about \$1.5 million.

As you well know, the IRE was founded as a New York corporation in 1912 to meet the professional needs represented in radio communications. IRE now has about 92,000 members, its own headquarters in New York and resources of about \$4.5 million.

Because of the basic evolution of each Institute toward the broad methods of electronics, on which both societies are founded, there has been an increasing overlap of interest in the two societies. This overlap has been in evidence in a number of ways.

- 1) Between 5000 and 6000 engineers are members of both AIEE and IRE.
- 2) Some technical standards committees of the two societies deal with similar standards problems that have produced conflicts. This has led to establishment of joint AIEE-IRE standards committees. Both societies deal with overlapping standards in the international field through ASA and IEC.
- 3) Standards for admission in the two societies are generally equivalent and by agreement members in a given grade of one society are admitted, upon application, to the corresponding grade in the other without further examination.
- 4) AIEE and IRE have formed joint student branches at many universities (and technical institutes) to avoid the obvious conflicts of common interest that arise from similar student interests in the same university departments.
- 5) Both IRE and AIEE are members of the Engineers' Council for Professional Development (ECPD), where their interests are very similar.



Moreover, the rapid evolution of training in radio, electrical and electronic engineering and in applied physics, in the universities and in industry is toward an identical curriculum for members of the two societies.

- 6) There is a broad overlap of much of the material published by the two societies.
- 7) A large number of local and U. S. national meetings are jointly sponsored by IRE and AIEE. The two societies have a major problem in avoiding the duplication and unnecessary proliferation of meetings on similar subjects.
- 8) AIEE is evolving toward formation of technical groups, very similar in purpose to the Professional Groups of IRE. This evolution promises a great increase in the area of conflict and duplication between the two societies.

The administration of these joint activities is complex and necessarily incomplete and consuming of major time and effort of the profession. Equivalent time on positive professional programs would greatly strengthen the profession.

Moreover, the areas of conflict are steadily enlarging as the advance of electronics brings both societies ever more into the same areas of interest. Typical examples of the problems that could be avoided by synthesis of the two societies are mentioned below:

- 1) Under one society and one Editorial Board, the publications of the two societies could be tailored for much better coverage of our professional field. Members would have a wider choice of the type of publications individually desired.
- 2) Meetings in the whole field could be simplified and duplication automatically avoided. Attendance would be improved.
- 3) The danger of increasing overlap and conflict of the IRE's professional groups and AIEE's technical groups could be avoided. The whole field of professional specialized technical societies could be more rationally covered by 35 to 40 professional groups of the new society.
- 4) The administration of student sections would be simplified, and one publication, such as the IRE STUDENT QUARTERLY, would serve the combined student needs.
- 5) Sectional activities would be simplified, the strengths of small sections enhanced, and activities in professional group chapters would become more rational.
- 6) Standards activities would be simplified, and dangers of conflict entirely removed, especially in view of IRE's vigorous participation in international standardization.
- 7) The new society would enjoy the international character of IRE with its attendant advantages.

Likewise, it would carry the mantle of a "founder" society brought to it by AIEE.

- 8) The combined headquarters staffs could provide a much broadened service to our membership, our section organization, our professional group structure, our regional, national and international meetings, our technical committees and our publication structure through reduction in duplication.

The synthesis of the new society would create an international professional institute with a membership of more than 150,000, an annual budget of about \$6,000,000, and publications of great breadth and depth with wider opportunity for choice. The opportunities of its membership would be substantially increased within the new framework that is promised. The present office space controlled by IRE and AIEE appears sufficient to service the new institute, but with the elimination of obvious elements of duplication the service to the membership by the combined headquarters staffs would be substantially broadened.

Over the years there have been a number of joint committees charged with exploring possible areas of mutual interest, beginning with the attempt (1922) to merge the two societies in which Dr. Alfred N. Goldsmith (Founder IRE) and Professor A. E. Kennelly (then Past President of the IRE and President of the AIEE) were active. In spite of their efforts, the attempt failed because of the then preoccupation of AIEE in nonradio activities. The most recent committee was established in 1960, with Donald G. Fink as Chairman for the IRE, which seriously discussed the possibility of merger.

The emergence of electronics in the broad sense has, since that time, brought the two societies into more intimate juxtaposition. Typical is the growing preoccupation of both societies in the fields of surface and satellite communications, automatic control, computer techniques, magnetohydrodynamics and plasma physics (with its promise of nonrotating and more efficient power generation), solid-state physics, information theory, instrumentation, and a host of other new technical developments which are of common concern to both. Only merger of the two societies can avoid an ever larger scale duplication, overlap, and conflict since the membership of the two societies draw their strength in ever greater measure from the same basic scientific elements and the same educational backgrounds.

Therefore, the future of the radio, electrical and electronic professions would appear to be greatly benefited by synthesis of the two societies into a single institute.

For these reasons, the two Boards have felt that thorough exploration of a possible merger would be in the best interests of our members and of the profession.

The steps in this exploration have been as follows:

- 1) In January, 1961, Junior Past President Ronald L.



McFarlan, acting on my behalf, was invited to meet with the Board of AIEE in New York for discussion of mutual IRE-AIEE problems.

2) On March 20, 1961, the Board of IRE invited President Clarence Linder, AIEE, to join it at a luncheon where the mutual problems of IRE and AIEE and past history of attempts toward merger were discussed fully and frankly. At that meeting it became evident that while mechanical problems of merger stood in the way, the professional interests of our membership should be the primary objective of closer cooperation.

3) At the Executive Committee meeting of April 27, 1961, I reported on a conversation which I had had with President-elect of AIEE Warren Chase, to explore IRE-AIEE cooperation. It was the consensus of the Executive Committee that I be authorized to appoint a suitable member of IRE to a committee, without limitations of scope, to discuss IRE-AIEE relations in conjunction with a suitably appointed delegate selected by AIEE. The Board of Directors of IRE, at their meeting the next day, April 28, concurred with the recommendation of the Executive Committee, whereupon I appointed Dr. Patrick E. Haggerty as the IRE representative to that committee and the AIEE appointed Fellow Richard Teare.

4) Haggerty and Teare met in Pittsburgh, Pa., on May 21, 1961. During their discussion it became apparent that continued cooperation was becoming so complex to administer, and the danger of serious conflict was so rapidly increasing, that the possibilities of merger should be considered without delay. In the view of Haggerty and Teare the profession would be greatly strengthened by synthesis of AIEE and IRE into a single radio, electronic, and electrical engineering institute. They specifically recommended that Warren Chase and I appoint an *ad hoc* committee to explore this possibility more critically.

5) Upon this recommendation I acted to appoint P. E. Haggerty (now President-elect IRE) and Ron McFarlan (Junior Past President IRE) and Haraden Pratt (Secretary and Past President IRE), while President Warren Chase of AIEE appointed ~~Ernest~~ Linder (Junior Past President AIEE) and Richard Teare (Chairman AIEE Committee on Coordination). Chase and I served as *ex-officio* members.

6) This quasi-official Committee met in New York on September 13, 1961, to explore the problems of merger. The general recommendations were:

- a) That in spite of mechanical problems, the professional advantages outweighed these problems, and that the two Institutes should move actively toward merger into a new professional society.
- b) That the Committee should be voted authority by both Boards to draft statutes for a single society into which IRE and AIEE could be merged.

These statutes could then be considered by the two Boards and, if satisfactory, referred to the membership of the two societies for adoption.

7) On October 18, 1961, and October 20, 1961, respectively, the IRE and AIEE Boards accepted the report. The Committee on formulation of plans for merger of AIEE and IRE into a single society has been activated with the membership shown in the resolution attached. Statutes and bylaws for eventual consideration by the Boards, publication and final action of the membership, will be drawn in the coming weeks.

As these plans have developed, I have consulted personally with many leaders and Section Chairmen of IRE. In the balance I have encountered a most favorable and enthusiastic response to the preliminary proposals. The feeling seems general that so much professional strength could be acquired by suitable action, that the mechanical problems should be appropriately solved in the interest of professional advantage.

I came away from the discussions on September 13 with the feeling that amalgamation could be accomplished without losing the vital aspects of IRE organization that has made it great. Both AIEE and IRE negotiators have approached the problem with a sense of statesmanship that would look to creation of a new institute having the best characteristics of both the IRE and the AIEE, at the same time dropping outmoded procedures. Both sides recognized that evolution of the profession requires changes from time to time that must be clearly foreseen, and undertaken promptly if the profession is to prosper.

I therefore ask you to discuss this whole matter in your next Section meeting, and advise me of your views before December 1, 1961, so that the drafting committee may have the benefit of your thinking.

Sincerely yours,



L. V. BERKNER  
President

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of The Institute of Radio Engineers and the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers have concluded that the advancement of the theory and practice of electrical and radio engineering, and the educational and scientific objectives of both Institutes, may be better served by a merger or consolidation of the two Institutes into one organization in which all present members would be included, and in which they would enjoy the same rights and privileges now conferred upon them



by their separate organizations, and it appearing that such consolidations would not affect the Institutes or their members, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of IRE deems it advisable, in accordance with the stated objectives of IRE, to move actively toward the consolidation of the activities and organization of IRE with those of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE), by consolidation or otherwise, provided that the legal and operational problems incident to such consolidation can be satisfactorily resolved, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Lloyd V. Berkner, Patrick E. Haggerty, Ronald L. McFarlan, and Haraden Pratt, be and they hereby are appointed to join with Warren H. Chase, Clarence H. Linder, B. Richard Teare, Jr., and Elgin Robertson, when appointed by the Board of Directors of AIEE, as members of a committee, which shall be authorized and directed to undertake such studies as they shall deem necessary and appropriate to determine the feasibility, practicability and form of such consolidation, and to make a report thereon to the Boards of the two Institutes not later than February 15, 1962, with a view to submission to a vote of the memberships of the two Institutes, and consummation, if so approved, by January 1, 1963, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that such committee shall

be authorized to meet with the officers, directors and representatives of the two Institutes to consider the proposed amalgamation of the two groups and to make available to such persons such documents and information relating to IRE as such committee deems advisable under the circumstances, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this committee be directed to prepare, in consultation with representatives of IRE and AIEE, a proposed constitution and bylaws and such other documents as counsel may recommend, with a view to submission thereof to the Boards of Directors of the two Institutes on or before February 15, 1962, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proper officers and directors of the Institute of Radio Engineers be and they hereby are authorized and directed to cause a copy of these resolutions to be delivered to the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that these resolutions shall become effective as soon as the President of the Institute of Radio Engineers has been notified in form satisfactory to him and to counsel for the Institute of Radio Engineers that the Board of Directors of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers has adopted resolutions substantially to the effect of these presents.