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COPY

November 24, 1939.

Mr. F.M. Farmer, President,
American Institute of Electrical Engineers,
c/o Electrical Testing Laboratories,
80 Street & East End Avenue,
New York City.

Standards Activities of the Institute

Dear Mr. Farmer:

Copies of your report to the Directors on the standardization activities of the Institute were sent to the members of the Standards Committee, and it was discussed at the last meeting of the Committee. I have already mentioned to you verbally some of the points discussed, but it may be well to set forth somewhat more fully in this letter some ideas which were brought out in the meeting and others which have evolved through our experience in the revision of AIEE Standard No. 1 by Coordinating Committee No. 4.

It was the consensus of opinion that everything you said in your report was correct and that it was a most logical presentation of the situation existing. There was also very general agreement with the recommendations you made. Only minor points were mentioned with reference to publishing as AIEE standards, standards worked out by other bodies. Such details related to obtaining the permission of such bodies, giving them the proper credit for their work, and also to the printing of such standards without unnecessary duplication and resultant extra expense in typesetting, etc. All of this can of course be worked out by the secretary of the Standards Committee.

In our discussion full cognizance was had of the fact that you have repeatedly stressed the possibilities for the Institute doing a great deal of useful work, regardless of ASA activities, in initiating standards projects, covering the ground work for these projects, and cooperating to the fullest extent with the ASA in their work. Notice was also taken of your suggestion that the Institute initiate some projects entirely its own, such as electrical definitions, review of present reference standards for temperature pressure, humidity, etc. However, it seems that some members of the Institute still feel that there is a good deal of other standards work which the Institute can and should do, and this feeling, although at times not apparent on the surface, has persisted during many discussions over the last two years, regardless of various attempts to clarify the position of the Institute in standards work and its relation to the ASA activities. For example, it was advocated at the last meeting of the Standards Committee that the Institute be very active in formulating certain scientific and basic standards.

Somewhat independent of this general feeling, my own experience with our work in the revision of Standard No. 1 definitely indicates that there is a place for AIEE standards which are not adapted to ASA procedure. Since there are numerous ASA standards covering specific types of apparatus, such standards as No. 1 must by necessity be basic and general in character, and

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therefore should be, essentially, merely guides for the formulation of the more specific apparatus standards. However, regardless of this liberal attitude, there has been a great deal of opposition from some quarters, and various extremes of opinion have been voiced as to what the Institute should or should not do in standardization work, and undoubtedly even greater difficulties would be experienced if an attempt were made to have Standard No. 1 established as an American standard through the ASA. Such a broad and basic standard is subject not only to the usual divergent points of view on the part of the manufacturers, users and various other interests, but also to further differences of opinion by those interested in the many different types of apparatus involved.

Even if it should be possible to obtain ASA approval under these conditions, I am afraid that subsequently it would be next to impossible to make changes for the purpose of keeping step with the progress in the art. As a result, such standards would soon become so obsolete that they would be of no practical use. On the other hand, I feel that these broad standards have a definite value to the industry as guides in the forming of various specific standards and that they should avoid unnecessary differences in such standards. This is true not only of Standard No. 1, but also of other basic standards on which our Coordinating Committees are now working and which relate to reference values, methods of insulation testing, etc. Therefore, it seems that these basic standards should be handled entirely through the Institute, with its less formal and more flexible procedure permitting relatively easy and frequent revisions. Some additional ideas along this line are contained in the enclosed article by Mr. Alger and myself, which will be published in the December issue of *ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING*.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the members of the Standards Committee so as to determine at the next meeting whether I have properly outlined the sentiment of the Committee. If so, I feel that your report should later on be published in our "Standards" column, possibly in a somewhat modified form taking these comments into consideration.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) R.E. Hellmund, Chairman
Standards Committee AIEE

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