

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University
Ohio State Engineer

Title: Editorial

Issue Date: Feb-1932

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 15, no. 4 (February, 1932), 10-11.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/34896>

Appears in Collections: [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 15, no. 4 \(February, 1932\)](#)

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL STAFF

ROBERT M. EWING, M. E. 4—Editor

Associate Editors

FRED H. TRIMMER, E. E. 3

EDWARD M. SCHOENBORN, Ch.E. 4

Assistant Editors

Harry Cooper, Ch.E. 2

Clarence N. Fisher, Ch.E. 2

John E. Batterson, M. E. 2

John Timberlake, E. E. 2

William B. Bucher, C. E. 2

Thorold Friedley, E. E. 2

Lester Woodford, M. E. 2

H. M. MacFarland, Jr., M. E. 2

BUSINESS STAFF

EDWARD R. BILLINGS, M. E. 4—Business Manager

Associate Business Managers

LEWIS H. MUSSMAN, M. E. 3

CHARLES TILTON, M. E. 2

Assistant Business Managers

ROBERT DERRY, C. E. 2

ROBERT CLEVINGER, E. E. 2

ADVISORY BOARD

DEAN E. A. HITCHCOCK

PROF. JOHN YOUNGER

ASST. PROF. SADA HARBARGER

Managing Board and one Representative from Each Departmental Student Society

WHAT IS AN ENGINEER?

IN THE agitation that has been raised during the last few years to provide laws requiring state or federal licensing of engineers, the question arises as to just what an engineer is. Who of all the men employed daily would be subject to this law?

One man, a technical graduate, sells copper wire and insists that he is an engineer. Yet it would hardly be right to force him to take an exam similar to one given another man who builds bridges.

One definition says that the engineer "makes available the forces of nature for the benefit of mankind." That certainly covers a multitude of different kinds of work, yet it is not too comprehensive.

The farther we look, the more hopeless seems the task of defining specifically the term "engineer." When it is defined, will it then be possible to license engineers? As yet no one seems to be very near a clear understanding on the subject.

ENGINEERING RESEARCH

By F. O. CLEMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Mr. F. O. Clements, Ph.D., President of the American Society for Testing Materials, received his M.Sc. from Ohio State in 1899.

MR. EDISON is said to have intimated that "if one were to work tirelessly on any problem for a lifetime, he would know only 1/1,000,000 of 1 per cent of all that was to be known about the subject under investigation." I like to think of our accumulation of knowledge in the terms of a high mountain. The higher we climb, the wider the horizon and the farther we can see. But what we can see is infinitesimal, compared to the vast world of unknown and unexplored territory all around us. We can explain light only by forms of motion. We have always been compelled to travel in our thought from what we can see to something we cannot see at all, and we have found it difficult to form mental images of invisible waves whose undulations are propagated with in-

credible swiftness all around us. The mystery of Nature is its seemingly limitless Energy, much of which is invisible to our physical senses. The average human being is an "eye-minded" person, given to believing what he can see and doubting what he cannot see. About one octave of the energy relationships of the Universe are visible to our sense of sight, the eye. The balance of the unseen world surrounds us on all sides, yet we know that these unseen manifestations exist, and furthermore we can weigh them, determine their speed, and measure their charge of electricity. So, you will find in every Research Laboratory worthy of the name, a determined effort to develop new Instrumentation, so that new knowledge may be available. Engineering Research applies the means and the methods that our Sciences have developed to observe, experiment, measure and verify this new knowledge which spells progress.

A BELOVED ENGINEER IS GONE

GENERAL EDWARD ORTON, JR., has passed away leaving a host of friends and admirers to mourn the end of an extraordinarily useful life.

He was the son of the University's first president, a member of its seventh graduating class, twice Dean of the College of Engineering, and for twenty-six years a member of its faculty. He founded here the first school of ceramics in the country, the basis of one which is still rated among the nation's finest.

The Edward Orton Memorial Library of Geology, which he founded in memory of his father, was the thing which gave him the greatest satisfaction of all his work at Ohio State. For years he had dreamed of this, but on account of the war was not able to dedicate it until 1920. It is now considered the finest collection of works on geology in the United States.

To attempt to enumerate all of his activities, both in the school and elsewhere, would take columns of space. His work with the pyrometric cone, his service as an officer

during the World War, his leadership of the local community fund drive all point to a life that was full and richly useful. Not every generation produces a man of this caliber, but all unite in paying tribute at his death. May his life of service be a shining example to the young men who are now preparing for an engineering career and may they go forth endeavoring to live up, in some small measure, to the high standards he has set.

LAISSEZ-FAIRE or—

CAN AMERICA's policy of *laissez-faire* continue to exist in the face of today's economic condition? Will we remain "rugged individualists" simply because it was this policy which enabled us to grow and develop into the powerful nation we are today?

Conditions have changed. No longer is the demand for skilled labor greater than the supply. Quite the contrary, instead. Many highly skilled workers are being reduced to pauperism, yet we do nothing but offer them a meager and grudging charity. Our economic system remains the same. "What was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us." History shows this to have been a fallacy many times in the past.

The "domestic system" of manufacture served its purpose very adequately, yet in a comparatively short time it had to be replaced by better methods. *Laissez-faire*, or the "let alone" policy, was ideal for us in our youthful stage. Now we are a full-grown nation and it is becoming unwieldy. No thinking person wants communism in our land, but surely we must come to see the necessity of some form of social or economic control.

MACHINE vs. MAN

IT is believed by many who have not scrutinized the circumstances carefully, that the machine is the enemy of the laborer. They also believe that the engineer and all others who invent and design new machines are the enemy of the average workingman. A casual examination would tend to support these fallacies. When a machine replacing 50 men is invented, 47 will be thrown out of work temporarily. But digging deeper and regarding the situation with a wider contemplation, we find that the average worker has really been benefited by the invention of the better machinery. To wit: the better machinery produces more and finer articles, the manufacturer can cut costs because of cheaper production costs, more articles are sold because of the cost, and more men will be needed to run the machines to keep up with increased sales. In times such as we are now enduring such a plan does not seem to work but, in truth, it is only being held in check—a check which we can positively assert is purely temporary. In times of international readjustment the proposition is slowed to a minimum, but with the stabilization of finances production will climb anew. It is a fact that ever since the introduction of machinery, workers' hours have dropped and wages have risen, proving that the policy does work.

—H. M. McF.

THE TRANSATLANTIC TELEPHONE

A FEW weeks ago an American bishop telephoned Mahatma Gandhi in London and talked with him to the extent of \$120. Having known him while serving as a missionary in India, the bishop desired to renew the acquaintanceship. Needless to say the Mahatma was shocked by this expenditure. He said a bishop should have more sense than to drop so much money into the ocean.

A few days later Signora Grandi, wife of the Italian foreign minister, availed herself of the transatlantic telephone to have a short conversation with her two small children. This extravagance cost \$36, the call lasting for three minutes. No doubt the conversation was worth every cent of that to her.

This is another example of engineering achievement affecting daily life. Although the transoceanic telephone is not new at all, its popularity is steadily growing. Many difficulties had to be surmounted before it was finally successful, but the designer and the installing engineer can be happy in the thought that they have contributed something to the happiness of others.

BEAUX-ARTS BALL

R. C. Binkley, a senior in the Department of Fine Arts, won the competition for the best design of the decorations for the Beaux-Arts Ball.

The competition was open to all students in the departments of Fine Arts, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture. The entire problem was to be in the style of the Latin Quarter of Paris.

Binkley's design was chosen over about twentyfive other drawings, ranging from gorgeous ball rooms with gay colors and figures down to the lowest of Paris dives, with sombre colors and obscene pictures.

Binkley gained his effect by the use of blacks, bluish reds, and yellows forming modernistic figures on the walls. His colors were unique, even gorgeous, but held strictly to the feeling of the Latin Quarter.

Mr. Creed of the Department of Landscape Architecture placed second, with a gay, rather modernistic design.

Nelson Thal of the Department of Architecture placed third. Mr. Thal used many familiar street scenes of Paris for his wall decoration, and all in all his design was probably more pleasing than his award might indicate.

Mr. Munter of the Department of Architecture presented a very playful but unique design, using a snake dance of the students winding through the familiar streets of Paris.

The Beaux-Arts Ball is to be given at the Arlington Country Club, March 4, by the students of the departments of Architecture, Fine Arts, and Landscape Architecture.

The work on the decorations will be supervised by Mr. Binkley and will be done by the students of the three departments.

The Ball is to be a costume affair in the Latin Quarter Style and is open only to Fine Arts, Landscape, and Architecture students and their guests.