

**The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University**  
**Ohio State Engineer**

**Title:** Editorial

**Issue Date:** Jan-1926

**Publisher:** Ohio State University, College of Engineering

**Citation:** Ohio State Engineer, vol. 9, no. 2 (January, 1926), 22-23.

**URI:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/33770>

**Appears in Collections:** [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 9, no. 2 \(January, 1926\)](#)

# EDITORIAL

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One representative from each student engineering society  
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## NEXT YEAR

The OHIO STATE ENGINEER *is growing*. Progress has been made in more ways than one. This issue, a third larger than the last, is the work of more than thirty contributors—besides more than a score of men who by their efforts on the business staff have made this growth possible. We take the present size of our staff as symptomatic of added interest in the magazine and a greater degree of acceptance by the engineering students. There is still much to be done in circulation, but indications lead us to believe that increased campus sale can be expected.

That brings us to the subject. It is not too early to begin plans for expansion into a monthly magazine. There are many arguments in favor of such a step, but perhaps the most important of all is the fact that the OHIO STATE ENGINEER can hardly expect to gain universal popularity with its present infrequent appearance. Then, too, it would have a greater usefulness to the student body, and particularly the technical society.

The advisability of monthly publication has been recognized for some time, but there has been one almost insurmountable difficulty. When the move was contemplated last spring, it was shown that its financial success was assured, and that the only obstacle was the smallness of the editorial staff. Now even that cloud has disappeared and the problem is only one of organization. Heavy schedules carried by engineering students make our problems far different from those of other campus magazines. Ours is not the problem of finding a capable editor, but rather the problem of finding a staff of capable editors. The major duties must be divided so that they will not interfere with any classes. That, briefly, is our problem, but with so many men selecting the Engineer as one of their activities, its solution seems in sight.

## OVERESTIMATED?

The study of English is a subject which may scarcely be overemphasized for Engineers. It is natural that the importance of the matter is little realized by the stu-

dents of our engineering schools. While in school, a student is supposed to receive instruction. His time is occupied with lectures and explanations from professors and instructors. The opportunities he does have to practice in the use of language generally involve reports and papers presented to some one who knows more about the subject than he does himself.

In industry this condition is exactly reversed. Instead of being taught, the Engineer in industry must teach. He must give instruction. And moreover, he must often present his reports to those entirely unacquainted with the subject or the nomenclature of it. It is perhaps not too much to say that the progress of an Engineer depends to a great extent on how clearly, coherently and emphatically he can present his viewpoint both orally and in writing.

One would hesitate to guess how many good ideas have been lost in "conference" because the man who proposed the scheme fluttered around in his speech like a butterfly over a clover blossom. Poetically, brevity is said to be the "Soul of Wit," but for the Engineer, brevity is the "Key to Action." No busy executive is going to force his way thru ten pages to find out what the engineering department wants. If he can't find it on the first page, the report will probably drop into oblivion or the desk drawer, which two, by the way, are one and the same so far as immediate action is concerned.

Then this matter of letter writing; it is indeed very important and very much neglected. Present business methods necessitate many letters to superiors, subordinates and inter-departmental notes without end. The Engineer who cannot write a reasonably good letter works under a very real handicap.

Even under most favorable conditions, the Engineer has his difficulties. The well written letter will often smooth his way.

Engineering students would do well to remember that the factories are always largely builded on paper before the pick and shovel gang start to work.

E. ARTHUR, '25.

## OUR ENGINEERING COLLEGE

There appeared in the *Purdue Engineering Review* a short time ago an article that urged a more general participation in activities on the part of engineers. The basis of this article was data from the journal of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education. This Society has the cooperation of one hundred twenty-two institutions in the United States. A grant from the Carnegie Foundation finances the work. Information is being collected on the teachers, students, institutions and on the curricula itself. The information obtained, it is hoped, will point the way to improvements in engineering education.

Present tendencies are to make engineering curricula entirely too technical. Ideal engineering training turns out "potential engineers," men who have the capacity to become engineers. This sort of training is mental training. Too much emphasis has been placed on the mere acquisition of knowledge. A little energy expended on activities as advised by *The Purdue Engineering Review* should be of tangible value.

Another of the very serious failings of the present system that has been disclosed by work of the Society is the lack of vocational guidance. Graduates obtain their first positions in the following manner: Through a teacher or other official of the colleges, 24.7%; through solicitation of an employer, 20.5%; through work done prior to graduation, 15.7%; through personal solicitation or other official of the colleges, 24.7%; through family connections, 9.9%. It will be noted that but 45.2% of all graduates obtained their first positions through the organized efforts of colleges or of employers. It is found that there is a very considerable shifting about from job to job among the recent graduates. The high degree of turnover shows an unwise choice of first positions in altogether too high a percentage of cases. This high percentage of turnover among recent graduates could certainly have been reduced, it is believed, by more effective vocational guidance in the colleges. The faculty of our engineering college is very keenly interested in this work of constructive friendly criticism. I believe that in the near future we can expect changes in the engineering curricula designed to bring about the desired effects.

In every work of genius we see our own neglected thoughts.—*Emerson*.

## AGE AND YOUTH

Recently the editor of the *Engineering News-Record* had occasion to attend two meetings. At one, a number of practicing engineers, all at least twenty years out of college, asserted that engineering education is becoming mechanized, that the recent graduates are too technical and absorbed too greatly in the details of engineering minutiae, that they all stand in need of wider outlook and broader background. The other meeting was a group of the editors and business managers of a score of the magazines published by the undergraduates of engineering schools. Throughout a busy day's session these young men discussed the problems of their avocations. And from a long experience in attending technical meetings this editor can say that never has he heard more direct, confident, precise and clear speech than these same undergraduates used. What each had to say, he said explicitly and stopped; repetition was rare, hesitation was non-existent. Can as much be said of the average engineering meeting? Emphatically, no! And since the ability to think clearly and to express that thought succinctly is one of the best outward evidences

of those qualities the engineers in the mature meeting found lacking in their younger brethren, the thought became inescapable that these gentlemen—who, indeed, were voicing a common enough thought among engineers—are attacking a straw man. \* \* \* \*

The preceding editorial appeared in the *Engineering News-Record* of October 29, 1925, and the convention referred to was that of the Engineering College Magazines, Associated, at Cornell. The staff of every magazine composing the association, was represented by one or more members, and we believe that the staff of an engineering publication is made up of men representative of engineering students as a whole.

Whoever serves his country well, has no need of ancestors.—*Voltaire*.

## DEAN HITCHCOCK

Late in November Dean Hitchcock attended the thirty-ninth annual convention of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges, at the Congress Hotel, Chicago. The Engineering Section, of which the Dean is Chairman, concentrated its discussions upon the value of the engineering experiment stations to the industries. Papers attesting to the enormous saving effected by these stations, were presented, and as a result of the meeting a committee was appointed to perfect plans for the purpose of securing Federal aid for engineering experiment stations. It is well to note that these stations have received no money from this source, while agricultural stations have been receiving Federal aid since 1887, the sum for each station now being \$50,000 annually.

A feature of the convention was the series of inspection trips. One of these was personally directed by D. J. Brumley, '95, who also provided a group of his engineers to explain the extensive terminal improvement work of the Illinois Central Railroad, which project is in the hands of Mr. Brumley.

Choose an author as you choose a friend.—*Wentworth Dillon*.

The OHIO STATE ENGINEER wishes to announce the following elections to the advisory board: Milton Hegler, C. E.; R. H. Croll, M. E.; Harry C. White, Met. E.; Kenneth Buck, Cer. E.; A. J. Breitenstein, Min. E.; C. L. Goodlin, E. E., and F. G. Dickerson, Arch. E. It will be remembered that these men are elected by their respective engineering societies to supply department news to the magazine, but primarily to serve on the advisory board, which staff elects the Business Manager, Editor and others of the managing board of the OHIO STATE ENGINEER.

Every reform was once a private opinion.—*Emerson*.

## ENGINEERS' COUNCIL

Engineering students are not averse to compulsory military training if the feelings of Engineers' Council is at all indicative of general sentiment. At a recent meeting a lengthy discussion of the subject disclosed that the organization was unanimously in favor of the present system.

To make a bank, was a great plot of state.  
Invent a shovel and be a magistrate.

—*Marvell*.