

## THE ENGINEERING ASSOCIATION AND ITS EFFORTS REGARDING AMALGAMATION OF COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERING SOCIETIES.

Although the actual start of the present Institution of Engineers, Australia, emanated from a letter sent out to all Australian bodies by the South Australian Institute of Engineers in November, 1917, the matter had been frequently discussed at many of our Council meetings from time to time. As evidence of the thought of the members of the Engineering Association regarding this important matter, and the earnest manner in which the Council decided to co-operate with the other societies who were interested in the formation of a Commonwealth Institution, we see the number of meetings devoted to what might be termed the inaugural work of the Institution, and the time and labour given to this work by the members of our Council from 1917 till the Institution was finalised in 1919 deserves recognition. It is worthy of note that many other societies were thinking along the same lines with regard to amalgamation, for in reply to two letters, one already referred to from the South Australian Institute of Engineers and the other from the Electrical Association of Australia (N.S.W. Section), the following resolution was read by Mr. James Vicars, and seconded by Mr. J. G. McEwin, at the Council meeting held December 6th, 1917, viz. :—

“That this Council considers the time is appropriate for the Engineering Association of N.S.W. to enter into negotiations with the other engineering societies of Australia with a view to the formation of a body truly representative of the engineering profession throughout the Commonwealth, and that all necessary steps be taken to facilitate the carrying into effect of this proposition.”

It was proposed that the following members act as delegates to the proposed conference as set forth in the letter from the Electrical Association of Australia (N.S.W. Section), viz.:—

Mr. D. F. J. Harricks (President),  
 Mr. James Vicars,  
 Mr. J. G. McEwin, and  
 Mr. A. W. Tournay-Hinde.

And that the four delegates referred to select a member as representative to go to Melbourne.

It was decided that letters be forwarded to all the interstate Institutions and the Sydney University Engineering Society advising them of the passage of the foregoing resolution.

The first meeting of the delegates was set down for Tuesday, December 11th, 1917, at which the following resolutions were passed:—

“1. That this meeting of delegates is in favour of the establishment of a Federal body to conserve the interests of the engineers of the Commonwealth of Australia.

“2. It is agreed that the existing engineering bodies in the Commonwealth shall join to form a Federal body, the status of the members to be determined by a Council to be elected.

“3. Federal control to be exercised by a Federal Council of delegates from each State; each State to have its governing Council.”

Mr. Harricks, the President of this Association, announced at the meeting of Council held February 7th, 1918, that the Conference of delegates from the whole of the States to be held in Melbourne had been definitely fixed for Tuesday, February 12th, 1918. It was agreed at this meeting that our delegates should not be asked to defray their expenses, so the sum of £25 was placed at their disposal.

Upon the return of the delegates to Sydney the President outlined the work undertaken at the Conference previously referred to. The members of Council selected to represent this Association on the Provisional Council of the amalgamated bodies of Australia were Mr. D. F. J. Harricks and Mr. James Vicars. In order to help the delegates from distant Associations to attend the Provisional Council meeting, Mr. Sinclair moved: "That in order to further the interests of engineering in Australia the sum of £50 be granted the Provisional Council from the interest of the P. N. Russell bequest." The motion was carried unanimously, and it was resolved to place the motion before the next general meeting of the Association for acceptance.

The draft constitution of the proposed Institution of Engineers of Australia having been presented to the Council at the meeting held September 12th, 1918, it was carefully perused, and after much discussion a number of modifications were recommended for the consideration of the Executive Committee, many of which we are pleased to state appear in the present constitution.

The work of drawing up the necessary regulations for the early formation of the new Institution was carefully and quickly done, so that we were asked to consider at the Council meeting held May 1st, 1919, whether this Association should become a Foundation Society of the new Institution of Engineers of Australia, and that a special meeting be called to consider the matter on May 13th, 1919, at which it was unanimously decided that the Engineering Association of N.S.W. become a Foundation Society of the new Institution. The President at the meeting of Council held June 12th, 1919, read the following resolution, which had been adopted at a joint meeting of Engineering Associations held May 30th, 1919:—

“That this meeting formally recommends acceptance of the constitution to the members out of a firm desire to see the new Institution successfully inaugurated, but regards certain modifications of the proposed constitution absolutely essential, and considers it imperative that at the earliest possible opportunity the first Council of the Institution shall further revise the draft constitution with a view to its amendment and simplification.”

It was resolved to place the foregoing before two general meetings for approval. At these meetings, held June 24th and July 16th, 1919, the three following resolutions were put forward and confirmed.

“1. That the corporate members of the Engineering Association of N.S.W. are of the opinion that the objects of the Association are included in those of the proposed Institution of Engineers of Australia, and that those objects can be more effectively carried out, and the interests and professional status of the engineering profession of Australia more effectively cared for, by a national body, and they therefore desire that the Association should become a Foundation Society of the new Institution.

“2. That the Council of the Association be entrusted to arrange all matters in connection with the transfer of the Engineering Association's property and funds to the new Institution in the manner thought most desirable in the interests of the whole of our members, it being understood that, in accordance with the special provision in the constitution of the new Institution, the retention of the control of such property and funds shall remain in the hands of that Branch of the Institution in N.S.W., of which the Engineering Association of N.S.W. becomes a part; and to take such action in respect of any other matters in connection with the constitution that they deem necessary.

“3. That the Chairman of the Provisional Council of the proposed Institution of Engineers of Australia be notified not later than the first day of August, 1919, that the Engineering Association of N.S.W. will become a Foundation Society of the new Institution, subject to Parliament’s approval of the Association either being dissolved or changing its title so as to conform with that of the new Institution, should the latter course be feasible and in the best interests of the new Institution.”

The final clause having been accepted by the Provisional Council, the Engineering Association of New South Wales definitely became a Foundation Society of the new Institution of Engineers of Australia on August 1st, 1919.

With regard to the property of the Engineering Association and the right to transfer the same to the new Institution, much deliberation was accorded this subject before any finality was reached. Having sought different legal advice relative to this, it was finally arranged at two general meetings held on June 9th and June 17th, 1921:—

“1. That half the funds of the Engineering Association of New South Wales (after all debts have been paid), be given to the Council of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, out of which an amount be set aside to establish a fund, the interest of which will provide a medal, known as the ‘P. N. Russell Memorial Medal,’ to be awarded annually as a recognition of notable contribution to engineering in the Commonwealth of Australia (as a recognition of the life work of an engineer).

“2. That the remaining half of the funds be given to the Sydney Division of the Institution of Engineers, Australia.

“3. That the library, books, documents, furniture and all other property of the Engineering Association of New South Wales be given to the Sydney Division of the Institution of Engineers, Australia.”

It was not till May 4th, 1922, that we were finally able to write to the Secretary, Institution of Engineers of Australia, as per the attached letter:—

The Secretary, May 4th, 1922.

The Institution of Engineers, Australia,  
5 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

Dear Sir,

We have the honour to inform you that in accordance with the resolutions passed at a Special General Meeting held on June 9th, 1921, and confirmed at a further meeting held on June 16th, 1921, and reading as follows:—

“That all the funds and other property of the Engineering Association of New South Wales be paid and transferred to the Institution of Engineers, Australia, unconditionally, or subject only to such conditions (if any) as the Council of the Engineering Association of New South Wales may think fit to impose”;

we have now paid into your account in the Commonwealth Bank the sum of £247/17/7, and have likewise transferred £3,200 worth of Commonwealth Inscribed Stock to the credit of the Institution of Engineers, Australia. Our property, consisting of the library furniture, pictures, etc., as per attached schedule, and valued at £1,554/13/-, we also formally hand over to the Institution of Engineers, Australia, and it can now be considered that upon the receipt of your reply that the transfer cited in the foregoing resolutions is now complete.

We are, Dear Sir, on behalf of the  
Engineering Association of New  
South Wales,

(Signed) JAMES VICARS,

President.

JAMES McNAMARA,

Hon. Secretary.

And to which we received the following reply:—

July 4th, 1922.

The President,  
The Engineering Association of  
New South Wales,  
Sydney.

Dear Sir,

I have to advise you that your letter of May 4th last advising the completion of the transfer of funds and property of the Engineering Association of New South Wales to the Institution of Engineers, Australia, was placed before a meeting of Council held on May 9th and 10th last.

Enclosed please find receipt for Commonwealth Government Inscribed Stock, amounting to £3,200, transfer of which to the Institution has been completed.

Receipt for £247/17/7, dated April 13th, 1922, being balance of current account, Bank of New South Wales—£146/16/3—and balance of Government Savings Bank deposit—£101/1/4—was handed to Mr. Thompson, Hon. Treasurer of the Engineering Association of N.S.W.

The necessary action is now being taken to comply with the conditions attached to the transfer of the above funds and property.

Yours faithfully,

E. S. MacLEAN,  
Secretary.

This letter can be said to have completed the business of the Engineering Association of New South Wales.