ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS AND THE PUBLIC

Members of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers are pleased to refer to electrical engineering as a profession, and to the Institute itself as a professional society. When this occurs as a thoughtless repetition of fine-sounding words, it has little meaning, since mere repetition of an alleged truth does not make it a real truth, and it can be established as a real truth only by tracing it to some adequate foundation. But when those statements arise from a ripe understanding that the word profession means more than a mere organized vocation for earning one's bread, it has a high and commendable meaning. The word profession "implies professed attainments in special knowledge, as distinguished from mere skill; a practical dealing with affairs, as distinguished from mere study or investigation; and an application of such knowledge to uses for others, as a vocation, as distinguished from its pursuit for one's own purposes." This sets the professional man in a position which demands from him an attitude of service and of leadership. He must have a masterly knowledge, in addition to skill in a vocation. He must deal practically in the affairs or needs of men. His duties must be performed with a touch of disinterested spirit in addition to the vocational spirit of earning his livelihood. Such men have a duty to the public; and in the performance of that duty they must exert their influence on that thought and practise of the day.