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THE ENGINEER AND HIS RELATION TO GOVERNMENT

By Dr. Vannevar Bush

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Real attention is being given to the professional advancement and the technical interests of the profession. We have an enormously complex system of organization of scientists and engineers in this country, and yet no effective single central organization representing all engineers and expressing their viewpoint on public questions. We have an elaborate mechanism for bringing advice to bear on scientific and engineering problems as they arise in government, and this mechanism is not utilized to the full.

What is to be done about it? Certainly no solution lies in forming one more society to join the throng. Integration is indicated; and since societies now exist for all the express purposes we have considered, a duplication of effort by a newcomer would simply complicate matters. Rather, the existing mechanism should be simplified and strengthened.

Would it be of aid if the great national organizations, such as the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, were to take official and definite positions on public questions involving engineering? I do not think this is their proper function, for reasons I will discuss. This is being done in some such organizations, and the effect so far has not been especially helpful. It is another thing entirely for the American Institute of Electrical Engineers to provide a forum for the frank discussion of important questions by men of all shades of opinion. In this I believe it has a duty to perform. So far it has not been done, and

1 Concluding part of an address delivered at an evening session of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, summer convention, Milwaukee, Wis., June 22, 1937.
Editor's Summary

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