WHEN DOES A MAN BECOME AN ENGINEER?

Some extended discussion has been raised by a recent suggestion of William Keynes, now president of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, that in order to become an engineer one should not be granted until there is sufficient evidence of professional ability. The suggestion is based upon the variance among college graduates in the amount of work required to obtain a degree and the too prevalent public misunderstanding that the possession of such a degree alone is indicative of professional ability.

The purpose of Mr. Keynes, it seems, is to make a man prove that he has the talent and the ability to be an engineer before he is permitted to take his place as a member of the profession. It is obvious that such a step would place the cost of the college as a step beyond their means. A degree represents a completed college course, and regardless of the work it has behind it, it is the cemented by the particular college for finishing a predetermined amount of work. A technical degree should not carry any more weight as an engineer; that is not its purpose. It does represent training and preparation—the recognition of the college that such prescribed work has been conducted. A great many college degrees represent technical degrees, never enter the profession, and many enter the profession after which they are earned. Such a plan would not only fail to provide a determination of engineering proficiency, but would result in confusion and dissatisfaction to many graduates.

The best solution of the problem seems to lie in the granting of licenses by the state. Not until a man has proved his professional ability should he be legally recognized as an engineer. Such a method would certainly be more effective and less troublesome than delayed action in degree granting. There is no doubt that the existing confusion in the amount of work required for specific technical degrees needs remedying. A student, for instance, may go to Columbia and spend six years getting a degree that can be obtained at some colleges in two years, and under the same degree the work in completely different amount of work and such a situation is regrettable. Step by step, the college degree is ever becoming a standard. But neither the college degree nor the amount of schooling makes an engineer, and it seems somewhat extreme to attempt to make it a recognition of professional ability.

DR. CHARLES W. ELOTT

TRIBUTE was paid yesterday all over the world to Dr. Charles W. Eliott, who is celebrated on his ninetieth birthday. Fifteen years ago Dr. Eliott resigned the executive chair at Harvard and held for forty years, to become a leader in the realm of public opinion.

Today, at his advanced age, he is still active, and is one of the foremost citizens of the country. It is not surprising that Harvard men all over the world sent greetings yesterday to such a distinguished man, of whom Theodore Roosevelt once said, "he is the only man I ever envied!

Dr. Eliott has not only done more for education than any other American. He is principally responsible for the great increase in the number of young men and women who enjoy the advantages of a college education, since he has given his life to broadening the opportunities for higher education in this country.

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