

quent conferences to consider arrangements for this and other activities.

Presentation of papers and the exchange of professional experience and thought has often been referred to as one of the most important functions of our Society, as it no doubt is. Our shortcomings in this respect have been deplored in annual meeting and have been referred to in several presidential addresses but no substantial improvement is visible; indeed, we have rather deteriorated in the number of papers per member. I think it may be taken as a truism that the value of a paper both to the writer and to the members is very largely enhanced by the discussion thereon and that oftentimes the discussion brings the writer into prominence far more than his original communication, besides giving other members interested a wide range of thought and experience upon the subject. My impression is that by-law No. 48 is seldom lived up to and that with our present haphazard arrangements, interesting and valuable papers are often read at the branches that never reach the publications of the Society, and if they do the discussion that took place on their presentation seldom accompanies them. Even at headquarters the papers are seldom presented sufficiently in advance to get the discussion they deserve.

There have been interesting articles contributed by our members to the engineering press that would have enhanced the value of our transactions had they first been read and discussed before the Society, and still might later have found their way to the wider publicity of the technical press.

We have probably lost these papers through the feeling that papers presented to the Society are frequently long delayed before publication and often are not published until they appear in the semi-annual volume. I think it will be agreed that the present procedure almost consigns a paper to oblivion, because few will read all the transactions en bloc when received in a large volume.

I feel confident that our transactions could be greatly improved by a more prompt observance of the procedure laid down in by-law No. 48, with the addition of arranging that every paper accepted as worthy to be published in the transactions be first issued in time to permit every member interested to submit a written discussion if he is unable to be present at the reading of the paper.

It is easy to suggest improvements in our service where it now falls so far short of what we all feel it should be, but it is difficult to see how any substantial improvement can be accomplished on our present revenues. A consideration of the balance sheets for several years past shows our revenue dangerously near our expenditure. It is true that this year we have an apparent surplus of revenue of about \$3,600, but this includes entrance fees, and it must be considered that an exceptional effort to collect arrears has been made for the past two years, that the reservoir of arrears has been heavily drawn upon and will not always be available to make up what might otherwise be a deficit. Moreover, in anticipation of a lower revenue than was actually received, the Finance Committee pared the appropriations to the very lowest limit and the service to our members has been much curtailed. Again, all expenses are rapidly increasing and, through the growth of that very necessary part of our organization, the branches, the amount returned to the branches is becoming a heavy tax,—last year having amounted to \$2,400.

From an experience gained through an active interest in the Finance Committee for some years past, I believe the Society is being administered economically with the

exception perhaps of the collection of arrears. Arrears has been a subject of serious consideration and is too long to discuss here. I think we may assume, however, that to deal with these too strictly will result in loss of members, in some hardship, and that our average revenues over a period of several years would not be sensibly increased.

In my view the members are now getting practically all of the service they can expect from the funds at the disposal of the Council. In other words, if better service is required, it must be paid for.

If our members realize, as I am sure they will, that increased revenue is necessary to give the service that should be rendered by a national society to its members and to the profession it represents, I am confident means will be found to provide the revenue without asking appreciable sacrifice on the part of the members. Possibly it would mean some reduction in the total roll, but those who could not afford to pay would still benefit by the more rapid elevation of the engineer and the general *esprit de corps* engendered in the profession.

I don't think we should ask students or juniors to pay any increased fees because the benefits these grades receive from the Society probably do not extend beyond its publications and the friendships formed through its meetings; also because as a class they are probably not able to afford a larger subscription. But, as a man rises in his profession to the grade of associate membership, he no doubt receives additional benefits and he should, under ordinary circumstances, be able to afford a larger annual subscription. A full member has, we may assume, attained that position in his profession and in the community where any reasonable increase in his dues would be of little financial embarrassment to him and, if the Society is performing all its functions, he should be realizing in addition to the internal benefits some of the benefits to be expected from the recognition of the engineer by the public both in his profession and in public affairs.

I would therefore suggest that members and associate members resident at headquarters who, from their situation, have the use of the building and library and of the clerical staff in conducting their meetings, should pay larger dues for these privileges—the increase for the associate members to be comparatively small and for full members to be of a very considerable amount, to bring their dues more nearly in accord with those paid by resident members of the American Society of Civil Engineers for equal privileges.

Again, I think the general funds of the Society should not, under the difficulties that now confront us, be devoted to the up-keep of branches beyond the work which is of a general society nature, such as the publication of reports, the actual clerical work of communicating with headquarters, the payment of delegates' expenses and affairs of a similar kind, leaving all local assessments by the branches or divisions to be made as each may determine for itself.

Reference has been made to the important work expected from the Society in the influence it should exert outside its immediate membership. This seems to be our real goal, because until governing bodies, corporations, financiers and promoters can be made to realize that success or failure of an undertaking so often depends on the quality of the engineering advice it receives, the value of that advice will not be properly appreciated; and when the public takes the larger view, to which I have referred, and seeks engineers' advice on other than strictly engineering questions, we will have approached