LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Chief Editor,

After reading the President's Corner of the June 2004 issue of Jurutera, I felt compelled to respond to his article on "Fragmented Engineering Fraternity – IEM versus BEM where he mentioned several matters that concerned the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM). I would like to correct the apparent misconceptions that were made on the role of ACEM and put them in their proper prospective.

Firstly, ACEM was never formed to rival IEM or to compete in its function. We are already in existence for 41 years for the prime purpose of looking after the interests of practising engineers. Only directors, partners or sole proprietors of engineering practices are eligible for membership. IEM being a learned society cannot really fulfill the role of championing the rights of practising engineers as being carried out by ACEM, which essentially functions as a trade association. IEM, comprising engineers from various sectors basically cannot take on a stand for a particular group of engineers such as consulting engineers and must be seen to be neutral. IEM can only take on a stand when it encompasses the interest of the general engineering fraternity as a whole. Hence on many issues that ACEM fight for, IEM is unable to do so or if it does, it may take ages for IEM to come out even with such a stand, having to deal with the varied interest groups within IEM itself. ACEM's objectives and direction are very clear – throughout the years we have pursued the goal of promoting the advancement of the profession of consulting engineering. We have always regarded ACEM as complementing the role and functions of IEM within the engineering fraternity.

ACEM members being IEM members ourselves are not divorced from the activities of IEM. We have participated and engaged in IEM activities such as working in various IEM task forces and presenting papers in IEM seminars and conferences. We have cooperated together to service the community with the setting up of the ACEM-IEM panel of experts.

On policy issues affecting the engineering profession, I would like to point out that ACEM is always at the forefront having dialogues with various Ministries and Authorities. We have submitted many position papers to the government on policy issues related to engineering practice and the construction industry as a whole.

Although ACEM's prime concern is professional practice, we have never lost sight of other issues such as engineering education and training as well as research and development (R&D). It was two years back when ACEM wrote to the Board of Engineers, Malaysia (BEM) on our concern of the declining standards of engineering graduates from local universities. We had worked through the Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB) and had advocated industry driven R&D and many other R&D issues to be incorporated into the Construction Industry Master Plan. In our 41st AGM held on 19 June 2004, we had passed a resolution urging BEM to raise the standards for practising engineers in order to maintain the engineering standards in our country. IEM being the learned society is the natural champion for engineering education and R&D and there is no confusion about this on our part. Please take the lead and you can count on our support.

The merger movement in UK involving ICE, IMechE, IEE and IStructE are all within the ambit of the "Learned Society" circle having very similar objectives. It is good for them to merge for the sake of not duplicating resources and it makes economic sense. However the merger movement has never advocated bringing ACE UK into this enlarged engineering fraternity. Both ACE UK and ACEM are Member Associations of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) and we are committed to the development of consulting engineering in our respective countries.

We recognise and share your President's concern for a common engineering fraternity moving forward in the same direction. His suggestion to dissolve ACEM is unacceptable to us as ACEM has been nurtured and developed by its selfless and untiring members over the years to such a fully reliable, efficient and strong body in catering for the needs of its members. Furthermore its opinions and representations have been eagerly sought after by government bodies and allied professions. IEM should in fact encourage its growth and development further instead of advocating its dissolution.

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Editor's Note:

The Editorial Board thanks Ir. Wong for an insightful letter. We appreciate the breadth and clarity of the words. We welcome the discussion of ideas and different points of view; we note that enforcement was not implied in the parent piece. We hope all voices can be heard so that a stronger engineering community can be fashioned. ■

ERRATA

Please note on the flyer in the May 2004 issue, the 'One Day Course on Concrete Strength Compliance and in-site Strength Assessment for Concrete Structures' was supposed to be announced by Ir. M.C. Hee, Chairman of Civil & Structural Engineering Technical Division instead of Ir. V. Jeewa, Chairman of Electrical Engineering Technical Division.
We regret the error.

Thank you.