Try try again

Dear Sir—Congratulations on your leader, 'Does Britain have a death wish'. I hope it will do something to promote a lively constructive interchange of our fellow members views and that these views will be voiced in this our Journal.

I can assure you that engineers do realise this enormous responsibility they carry for the future survival of Great Britain, indeed of the world, but their voices must be heard and it is up to the Journal to encourage and not suppress.

As engineers they will individually accept the responsibility for what they say and the blame for what they say will not be attached to the Council, so the Council's image will not be at stake.

W. H. Telling (Fellow)
21 Darnick Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
Warwickshire.

Depressing situation

Dear Sir—I have just received my copy of *Production Engineer* for July/August and was extremely interested and encouraged by your editorial.

I should perhaps point out that I have not lived in England for four years and that during this period I have spent three years in France and one in America. I have therefore seen England from a more objective viewpoint, and although I have of course been subjected to French and American news media, I have continued to follow the British Press. I think I can reasonably answer your question by saying YES, Britains do have a death wish. Why do I say this? Quite simply because Britain seems incapable of solving its problems, whether internal or imposed by the changing world environment. In this pole, socially, economically, and socially unstable situation, Britain offers no incentive or encouragement to domestic or foreign investment, and the long-term effects of this are predictable. Unfortunately, the correction of this depressing situation will not happen on its own and the positive action to change it is conspicuous by its absence. Whatever the result the recent election had been, it would not have made much difference. We've seen them all before and they don't change. The unions will continue to monopolise labour, industry will continue to do its best under conditions of uncertainty and the British people will continue to 'enjoy' a lower standard of living. Do people realise where they are going and what is at stake? If so, attitudes must change and industrial sense of responsibility must prevail. With more realistic sense of values and longer term time horizons, Britian can and must face and solve its problems in the changing world. This implies an acceptance rather than a resistance to change and a willingness to act.

Your editorial in attempting to bring about a realisation of what is happening, shows a responsible and needed initiative. I probably sound even more pessimistic than your editorial. This pessimism is, I believe, justified in the present situation and a healthy exspression on the subject leading to greater awareness and action by all concerned can only be a good thing.

Peter W. Wilson (Member)
26 Desmond Avenue,
Watertown,
Massachusetts 2172,
USA.

Future of CEI

Dear Sir—Having been inundated for the past few months or so with letters, articles and papers regarding the future structure of the individual chartered institutions and the CEI, I feel bound to make some comment.

Firstly, there seems to be a great deal of hesitancy on the part of those attempting to take the current problem of the future of the CEI by the horns and to actually take some decisive action. Of course, one appreciates the administrative problems involved but it seems reasonable interest and activity to wane if the furthest we ever get at arriving at a solution is a barrage of articles discussing the problem. I think, by now, that most interested engineers will fully appreciate the situation. Therefore, I would urge that a good deal more attention be given to a final resolution, because I feel that the present situation does not impress recent members (such as myself) very much.

There also appears to be quite a wide division of opinion regarding the formation of the proposed, all-embracing 'Institution of Engineers' and the status of individuals within it. Many contributors have expressed the view that 'new CEI' should be based on the lives of the medical profession which would thus ensure professional and ethical standing and ultimately be the body for the registration of chartered engineers who have joined the 'new CEI' by virtue of corporate membership of their own institution.

I would personally favour the retention of the essential anatomy of the member institutions because there may be areas of common interest, the bulk of material published in the various journals is of specialised nature. It is therefore no argument to say that engineers such as production engineers should be based on their knowledge of say, gas engineering, by an amalgamation of interests. After all, we have gas and civil engineers who are qualified to work in this field. I also feel that great care must be taken to ensure that the emerging institution is not a CEI under another name, but a body with real powers to put the public and the Government in the picture regarding the nation's policy in industry, technology and research and to enable correct decisions to be made in respect of them.

One final point which has emerged in discussions is the question of the engineer's status in comparison to the doctor, surgeon or lawyer. It should, however, be realised that no profession except medicine or law can really put itself on a pedestal, because it commands the obedience of those who require its services i.e.—submit to its decisions and get well or choose to ignore it and stay ill. Human nature being what it is is always more interested in self and the effect on self by medical treatment always arouses our interest if not respect. I don't believe the engineering profession in this country will ever know such respect because of our pre-university education system and the traditional position of the engineer in our society. However, our brand new institution must at least enlighten the public as to our rôle in society and be prepared not only to defend individual engineers if situations demand it, but also to discipline malpractises which bring any chartered body into disrepute e.g.—the poor public image of work study engineers.

To satisfy the need of those engineers who want status and need to prove their professionalism, our new institution could be named the 'Institution of Professional Engineers' (as suggested by a contributor in the IMechE News) as this would at least indicate that the engineer possessing such a set of letters was not a fitters' mate.

John K. Stafford (Member)
22 Paisley Avenue,
Edinburgh,
EH8 7LE.

Urine

Dear Sir—May I refer to the letters in the September *Production Engineer* from Mr G. T. Cooper and a member of the Nottingham Section. In October 1973 I had the pleasure of seeing Dr Wolff and his team in action in the Clinical Research Centre at Harrow and came away very impressed indeed with the work being done there. In particular a young production engineer (possibly the first to be appointed to such a centre) was obviously doing an enjoyable and rewarding job—and unpaid.

Having spent many years back and in a very small way—worked with an MOH to produce for example, double-cranked spoons, clip-on shields for dinner plates and lazy-tongs I believe I know what Dr Wolff means by 'VR'. It meant to me that handicapped people could drink soup, eat peas and pick up a shining hopefully destined for the gas meter. It was pleasurable and rewarding to me and exciting to the great majority. I doubt my own excitement lay primarily in the progress in industry of my students from the Chance Technical College.

I must admit that on being directed to Dr Wolff's room and seeing the two doors labelled 'URINE' led me to wonder whether the outfall from the hospitals Department of Urology was not excessive. The key lay in the not too skilful signwriting of this cognomen—evidently a 'badge of endeavour' and appreciated as...