Time to think again

Dear Sir—The pursuit for status and professional respect has been long continued and hopefully the title 'Chief Engineer' is an improvement. A still further step forward could be achieved if engineers (electrical and others) had confidence in the role which they have to play in society.

The opinion expressed in the editorial (17th March 1974 E&P, p.133) was that misused and misdirected technology had caused our problems and that engineers would have to solve them. Written at the height of the energy crisis, it was intended to provoke awareness and response.

That Prof. Lindsay has replied is satisfying (16th May 1974 E&P, p.363), but his argument that making comments about human values will be divisive and that the professional skills should be separated is ostrich-like. Surely, if engineers are to be respected, they must be prepared to express opinions and relate social and human values to the output of their professional skills?

Would Prof. Lindsay suggest that the legal profession should refrain from discussing in their journals the merits or otherwise of the death penalty? Or does he reason that to commit murder or drink and drive is no longer a responsibility for bringing the best possible use of electricity?

Members were asked to consider the model proposed by the legal profession and engineers. If readers did find meaningful substance in the words expressed, this is rewarding, for although the original source is unknown by me, it is believed to be very old and yet apparently very relevant to today’s important issues.—Yours faithfully,

K. H. JACKSON
9 Wood Road, Wolverhampton
30th April 1974

Waste not, want not

Dear Sir—Focus in the 16th May 1974 E&P gives greater credence than is warranted to some of the comments and data presented on the subject of energy efficiency in industry. It seems to be implied that an increase in the use of electrical energy is somehow evil or that industrial users are to be subjected to public humiliation. This is not so. As energy costs escalate, industry must look for new and better ways of using existing energy supplies to improve the output of its products. With the development of new energy technologies and the increased use of energy conservation techniques, it is likely that the industrial user will make a positive contribution to the task of increasing overall energy efficiency. Therefore, it is important that the industrial user is not penalised for making attempts to reduce the energy requirements of his plant.

On the subject of energy conservation, it is interesting to note that the industrial use of electricity has increased rapidly in recent years. This is due to the wide range of applications for electrical power, including air conditioning, lighting, and process control. In addition, the development of new energy technologies, such as solar and wind energy, is likely to further increase the industrial use of electricity.

The industrial user is not alone in this task of increasing energy efficiency. The government, through its various agencies, is also involved in promoting energy conservation. The government has set targets for energy conservation and has provided financial incentives to encourage industry to meet these targets. These targets include reducing the amount of energy used per unit of product, reducing the amount of energy used per unit of output, and reducing the amount of energy used per unit of capital.

The government has also provided financial incentives to encourage industry to meet these targets. These incentives include tax breaks, grants, and subsidies. These incentives are designed to encourage industry to make the necessary investments in energy conservation technologies.

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