Engineers and defence
Dear Sir — The issue of whether engineers should work on defence projects or not has been well debated on moral and professional grounds. The 'tacky' problem of human behaviour has, however, been studiously avoided. It is a fact that we live in a world where the only thing that may stop anyone from doing something is the consequences.

It is only our known ability to defend ourselves sufficiently well that stops others from attacking, for whatever reason and in whatever way they may do it. The widespread existence of human belligerence resulting from competition, selfishness and the will to dominate are unfortunately with us until the end of time, short of Divine intervention, whether it be in the office or in the arena of international affairs, and it is the very stuff of history.

With this in mind therefore, any serious decision not to work in a particular field of activity should depend not only on our opinion of the country's defence philosophy and its relevance to our work, but also on the ethics of our employer and the hazards our work may impinge on humanity independent of defence considerations, for whatever we do we must remember: did the inventor of the wheel have any control over its subsequent use?

Our opinion though, however solid it looks to us, can only be based on what we know and care about. In certain countries where information is strictly regulated, what chance has anyone of coming to a valid decision? If we do resign or refuse a post, is there always someone eager to fill the gap and the risk we may end up with a poor future. Family responsibilities can weigh heavily in the balance. Of those few concerned enough about the issues to want to pull up their roots, fewer still would do it.

— Yours faithfully,
R. CUSACK (M)
Muhlenstrasse 141, 3096 Koeniz
Switzerland
7th August 1984

Shell life — or death?
Dear Sir — Wrapped bread now bears a 'sell by' date and most packaged food a 'best before' date, but the age of dry batteries is never disclosed. I believe that those skilled in the art can tell the age of a horse simply by looking at its teeth . . . Is it still assumed that battery users are similarly imbued?

— Yours faithfully,
N.W. BERTENSHAW
8 Melstock Road, Kings Heath
Birmingham B14 7ND, England
16th August 1984

Degaussing: the demagnetisation of ships
Dear Sir — I am obliged to J.H. Dean for his letter (August 1984 E&P, p.585) in which he drew attention to the need for second generators to energise the degaussing coils of ships. This was certainly the case on most cargo ships, and an important aspect of degaussing work, not mentioned in my article, was the initial surveying of unprotected ships on entering convey assembly ports in the United Kingdom. This was done so that degaussing coils could be made up and loaded on barges, together with additional generators and other equipment, ready for installation immediately the ship arrived at its next port of call.

In this way unprotected ships were given protection with a minimum of delay before proceeding into waters in which magnetic mines had been laid.

— Yours faithfully,
BOB GORDON (AM)
39 Shirley Way, Shirley
Surrey CR0 8PJ, England
22nd August 1984

Switched and insulated feeder pillars
Dear Sir — J.S. Greenhalgh's letter (June 1984 E&P, p.441) rightly draws attention to the additional care necessary when attending outdoor feeder pillars in wet weather. I cannot, however, share his view that supply undertakings are the only organisations qualified to exercise that care. Much electrical equipment is designed for use out of doors, by a wide variety of users. My own company for example is, as it has for many years, supplying outdoor LV switchgear in quantity for use by a broad section of industry. Concern over the operation of outdoor feeder pillars in darkness can, as is often the case, be largely overcome by equipping them with lights.

However, as appears to have been overlooked by Mr. Greenhalgh, feeder pillars as described in the original article can be installed indoors if preferred. Alternatively, an equally upgraded version of the previous fuseboard can be provided for indoor service, an arrangement which will, in many applications, show considerable savings relative to conventional indoor switchgear.

— Yours faithfully,
T.W. MENNELL (AM)
Electro-Mechanical Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
Eastfield, Scarborough YO11 3DA
England
20th July 1984

The name game
Dear Sir — It is noted that the Engineering Council has made three categories of engineers for the purpose of registration, namely: (i) Chartered Engineers (ii) Technician Engineer and (iii) Engineer. The latter two categories, all depending on the attainment with regard to education, approved training and responsible experience. With regard to the last two categories, the term 'Technician Engineer' and 'Engineering Technician' is rather confusing and clumsy and also does not match with one's qualifications. It is therefore suggested that these titles may be modified as 'Professional Engineers' for the former and 'Graduate Engineers' for the later. Let the Engineering Council consider it once again.

— Yours faithfully,
A.R. KHOKHAR (AM)
Steel Town Bin, Quasim, Karachi-49
Pakistan
3rd August 1984

Addressing engineers
Dear Sir — Having suggested, in a letter published in Electronics & Power a few years ago, but with little expressed support at the time, that professional engineers in the UK should be addressed as C.Eng., I was pleased to read B.D. Egawhary's letter (May 1984 E&P, p.356) raising the matter again and asking the Engineering Council to take note. I support him in that request. The adoption of some such mode of address with its counterpart already in use on the Continent, should quite quickly denote our particular status to the general public, and would have the secondary benefit of eliminating invidious discrimination as between Mr., Mrs., Miss. Ms. and Esq.

Perhaps the Publishing Department and Secretariat of the IEE could make a start: I would be gratified to find myself addressed as — Yours faithfully.
C.Eng. T.I.M. SMITH (F)
2 Springfield Road, Bickley
Bromley, Kent, England
5th July 1984

PS. I would hope that the editing program for the Electronics & Power computer-generated address list is flexible enough to permit, or to be modified to permit, a global replacement of C.Eng. from after to before the addressee's name, accompanied by elimination of Esq. etc.

Engineers' status
Dear Sir — There has been much correspondence in the columns of Electronics & Power concerning the remuneration and social standing of engineers. The consensus seems to be that the average engineer is worth much more than he (she) is paid, and is held in unjustifiably low esteem by both the public and the other professions. Furthermore, there is the suggestion that engineers take too little interest in social and political affairs.

I must disagree. Most engineers are paid just what they are worth and if this compares badly with those in professions such as accounting, it is because engineers spend their lives tinkering with gadgets while the rest are worrying about how to make as much money as possible. Too many engineers have never caught hold of the main reason for the existence of their employers. They think that they are employed to make products, or whatever, and that it is

please turn to p.672