

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I rise on behalf of the Reception Committee of this First All-India Engineers' Conference to welcome all of you, who have come from far and near, to take part in the proceedings of this Conference, either as speakers and advisers, or as quiet, but no less valuable, contributors of constructive thought to the deliberations of this Conference, or even as spectators to lend weight, grace and encouragement to this Conference.

In extending a special welcome to His Excellency, Shri Dharma Vira, the Governor of West Bengal, I know I am voicing the sentiment of all present here. Everybody knows how busy he is in governing the problem State of West Bengal, and therefore we are all the more beholden to him for squeezing time from his multifarious activities to come to inaugurate this Conference and encourage us with his presence and his words of wisdom.

We are highly grateful to Prof. M. S. Thacker, Padma Bhushan, for acceding to our request to preside over this Conference. A pre-eminent engineer of India, he has done great service to the cause of Engineering and Engineers in India, and always taken leading parts in a number of Engineering Institutions for many years. He has taken great trouble in coming from long distance to give this Conference the benefit of his guidance and advice, which, we all know, will be of inestimable value to us. We are also grateful to Mr. B. P. Kapadia, President, Institution of Engineers, for his keen personal interest in this Conference.

It is befitting and noteworthy, ladies and gentlemen, that this First All-India Engineers' Conference should have been sponsored jointly by the largest number of professional engineering bodies with various descriptions and various allegiances. These include, in random order, Institution of Engineers, Association of Engineers, Mechanical Engineers' Association, Institution of Industrial Engineers, Institution of Consulting Engineers, India Society of Engineers, India Society of Agricultural Engineers, Engineers' Guild, Engineers' Club, and Institute of Arbitrators.

It is also in the fitness of things that this First All-India Engineers' Conference should be held in Calcutta, this premier city of India, which gave birth to and still nurtures most of the leading professional bodies of engineers of various categories.

Although the holding of such a Conference would be a good idea at any time as it would provide a forum for exchange of ideas on Engineering and Engineer's problems, today's conference is being held under particularly pressing circumstances. It is common knowledge that for quite some time past the causes of engineering and engineers have been plagued with various maladies, and it is high time that Indian Engineers, who have been voicing their grievances from several different platforms in the past with almost negligible effect, got together and all spoke from the same platform. At least the din they thus raise will be louder and may have a greater chance of getting into relatively deaf ears.

Ladies and gentleman ! Today in India we are witnessing a most absurd paradox. While on the one hand this developing country is supposed to be building up its Industry and Agriculture for self-sufficiency and export, on the other hand we have the sad spectacle of thousands and thousands of unemployed and under-employed qualified engineers in the country. According to one estimate recently published in the Press, the number of unemployed qualified engineers in the country today is about 40,500. We are told that the Government are conscious of this problem and are thinking in terms of or are taking certain remedial measures. However, this Conference must endeavour to focus public attention on this burning problem, and should diagnose its causes and suggest remedies for it. I would suggest that to allocate blames for this pathetic situation would be a completely infructuous effort. What we should really concern ourselves with, is to suggest short-term and long-term solutions for the problems facing us.

There are also various other points agitating the minds of Indian engineers, for example, raising the standard of our University education in Engineering both in theoretical and in practical knowledge, introducing a system whereby examinations for engineering degrees in Indian Universities are held by an external technical body and not by the Universities themselves, formation of an Indian Engineering Council on the pattern of British and American Engineering Councils, official recognition of selected professional engineering bodies in the country, status and emoluments of engineers in Industry both in the public and the private sectors, the continued holding of engineering management jobs by non-engineers, the continued neglect of indigenous consultancy services, etc. I have no doubt that all these points will be discussed by this Conference in a spirit of constructive approach and not merely infructuous criticism.

I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your patient hearing of this preamble to today's Conference.

And, now, on behalf of all of you and myself, I request his excellency Shri Dharma Vira to formally inaugurate this First All-India Engineers' Conference by uncovering the banner of this Conference and by giving us his inspirational words to put us all in a mood for doing solid constructive work of which he is such an outstanding practical exponent.

H. C. VIJH
Chairman, Reception Committee

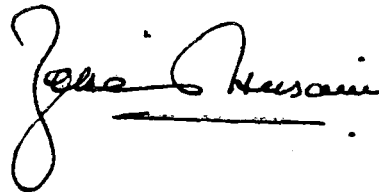


राष्ट्रपति भवन, नई दिल्ली-४

RASTRAPATI BHAVAN,
NEW DELHI-4

December 12, 1968.

I am glad to learn that as a result of the co-operative efforts of several Engineering Institutions the First All India Engineers' Conference will be held at Calcutta from the 27th December, 1968, to discuss the role, function and duties of our Engineers in modern times. I send my best wishes for the success of the Conference.





VICE-PRESIDENT
INDIA
NEW DELHI

16th December, 1968.

Dear Shri Kothari,

Thank you for your letter of the
13th instant.

I send my best wishes for the success
of inaugural ceremony of the First All
India Engineers' Conference to be held on
27th instant.

Yours sincerely,


(V.V.Giri)

Shri H. Kothari,
Convenor,
First All India Engineers' Conference,
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24, Netaji Subhash Road,
Calcutta-1.