

A WINTER OF DISCONTENT...OR A PROMISING FUTURE?

Using Shakespeare's words, will this be a "winter of your discontent" or a promising future for you? To answer this question, by popular request, I am writing to you an abridged message delivered to 108 newly licensed engineers and their families from the Mississauga Chapter and to the 40 more residing in the Penta group of chapters.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you tonight at your licence certificate presentation ceremony. I have taken the pleasure of meeting many of you individually already this evening and you really are an outstanding group. This is indeed an auspicious occasion for you and your families and I wish to extend my sincerest congratulations to each of you who will receive your P.Eng. licence tonight.

I'm always delighted to be involved in ceremonies that recognize newly licensed engineering practitioners.

Tonight's recipients have taken an important and worthwhile step in their professional careers. Attaining the P.Eng. designation indicates that the licensed practitioner appreciates the importance of work that is not only technically competent, but is also based on sound professional ethics.

As professional engineers, you adhere to standards of practice set by your association—standards that have become the hallmark of professional practice.

As you may know, the engineering profession in Ontario is governed by self-regulation, a privilege granted by the provincial government under the *Professional Engineers Act*. This privilege is granted to only a select group of professions, including law, accounting and medicine. By empowering us with this privilege, government recognizes the commitment made by professional engineers to regulate our



David Adams, P.Eng.
President

practice of engineering to maintain public safety.

Now, on a personal note, may I take this opportunity to talk to you for a few moments about your new role in the workplace as professionals, your aspirations and your concerns.

It may interest you to know that much has been written over the years on your particular relationship, how the "new" works with the "old," whether it be from the Bible, in Greek philosophy, or the Qur'an.

Since I am personally most familiar with the New Testament of all these sources, I will quote from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 9, verses 16 and 17.

"No one sews a patch of un-shrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved."

How does this parable have meaning for us in the context of new and old engineers, new and old technologies, new ways and old ways of doing things?

You are new engineers, whose purpose it is to bring your new learning to

the equation, not just to patch up the old, but also to add new thinking and a new dimension to the solution.

You are the new wine, filled to the brim with knowledge and energy, just beginning your practice of applying science for the betterment of society, offering a new message, new truth, providing a fresh start, new ways to live, new ways to look at people and new ways to serve. This message will always remain "new," because it must be accepted and applied in every generation.

You in particular, though, will be beginning your careers as professionals under the most difficult of economic circumstances. The financing of our free market system has run amuck, creating widespread economic insecurity.

However, on the flip side of this record, never has there been a greater clamour to produce new ideas, new technologies and new designs to fill the gaps in society created by the decline in traditional industries.

Indeed, your hope and our hope will hinge on entrepreneurial innovation, for this alone must produce the promising future new employment, with the upward mobility we all desire.

However, we all know that new investment will be guided to the most competitive location in the global marketplace. You must make that happen here in Ontario.

Fortunately, our provincial government is well aware of this fiscal dilemma and as a growth guideline has focused on three areas requiring intensive engineering in their development:

1. Conquering disease through life sciences;
2. Advancing/expanding digital technology; and
3. The environment and alternative energy.

[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

These three development areas, together with the previously announced intention to renew infrastructure, will hopefully replace lost employment and tax revenue from traditional manufacturing.

This innovation, if successful to the full extent, will permit a continuation of our much-prized social benefit programs.

A lot depends on you, and others like yourselves, for you will be counted on to provide not only the new wine, but in many instances, the new wine-skins as well. Remember, every new venture has always begun with the thoughts of one man or woman. You are what you think!

Your new professional association, PEO, has also anticipated this decline in manufacturing income and has very recently established the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy, here in Toronto.

We have hired an executive director to address these new replacement technologies. Our centre will research position papers on technical issues related to promising initiatives, making full use of our members' expertise, including you, as of this evening.

We plan, in this way, to assist government decision makers, by providing technical analysis of the most promising investment opportunities in Ontario. What an exciting time to be a PEO member.

Tonight, we are challenging you individually, and collectively, through your chapter, to come up with the new promising ideas we all seek, to generate employment, income and savings, particularly in the areas designated by government.

This Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy was one of my proposals for development in my year as president. I shall take time to speak of two others briefly.

First, we are progressing a new comprehensive licensing model that will

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involve participation of all those engaged in the profession of engineering, from the student, through graduation to internship and finally to the P.Eng., each with their own specified academic and experience requirements.

In this way, we will be able to identify all who practise engineering, license them according to their competency, and thereby hold them publicly accountable for their work and conduct.

We expect all engineering activities, services and products will be more effectively regulated within Canada under this system and that all members and licence holders will enjoy full mobility across Canada when adopted by all regions.

PEO is leading the charge on this initiative, which now has the support of several provinces and is being championed by our national organization, Engineers Canada.

This comprehensive licence will ensure our province and Canada is positioned to compete and win in an increasingly globalized economy.

You will also remember from my election platform, I promised a more structured, measurable internship program with "Wiki"-style mentorship, linking experienced practitioners with interns in the same field of practice. This, too, will be undertaken and become part of the new comprehensive licence.

Further, we are addressing another point, the production of more professional practice standards, similar to the new one recently introduced on the demolition of buildings. This standard has been welcomed by both government and industry.

My friends, without doubt you have made the right decision to obtain your PEO licence tonight and join this dynamic organization!

Lastly, we are proceeding to purchase a new headquarters building, one you will be proud of, one that will have space for lecture theatres, exam rooms, etc., as well as provide office space for you, should you need the use of a Toronto meeting place with your clients.

Please keep up with all the current developments in the offing in your organization, join and participate in your chapter, and while reading your copy of *Engineering Dimensions*, don't forget to submit your proposals and comments.

All the very best in your new careers as professional engineers. You can help by keeping the new wine flowing! Σ