

# Editorial

## THE FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ETHIOPIAN ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS

Thanks to the inspiration, dedication and tenacity of some of its members, the Ethiopian Association of Engineers and Architects finally came around to hold its First National Conference in Addis Ababa. On the afternoon of June 23, 1971 the conference was formally opened by H.E. Lij Endalkatchew Makonnen, Minister of Communications, Telecommunications, and Posts in the presence of guests and conference participants at the Wabe Shebelli Hotel. After the formal opening of the conference, H.E. Ato Abdella Abdulrahman, Vice Mayor of Addis Ababa, presented prizes to the winners of the Addis Ababa Bus Terminal competition. The first prize of \$3000.00 was awarded to Messrs Techno-exportstroy (a Bulgarian Firm of Consultants and Architects), the second prize of \$2000.00 went to Messrs Enav & M. Tedros (Architects and Town Planners) and the third prize of \$1000.00 was presented to the Ethiopian branch of Yugoslav Firm of Centroproject. It was felt fitting to honour members of the architectural profession on this occasion.

The organizing committee of the First National Conference was faced with the monumental task of finding funds, technical papers and willing members to give helping hands. Originally the conference was scheduled for November 1970, but due to the lack of the necessary ingredients for the conference, it was postponed for April 1971. Again the organizing committee was forced to swallow its pride and announced a second postponement to June 23, 1971. On this final date nervous officials awaited the arrival of the conference participants without being sure of the alternatives. With minor disappointments the conference rolled to the last day which was June 26, 1971. The interests that developed in the papers presented and in general the attendance finally erased the gloomy picture which was painted in the minds of many before the conference started.

It is more than becoming that people of like professions should come together from time to time to share their experiences and thereby satisfy their appetite for more knowledge and experience. The slow erosion of professional knowledge can be steamed by coming together and reasoning together. The boundaries of knowledge can also be pushed farther by mutual exchange of ideas. Engineering and archi-

ture which are in the forefront in serving mankind can not grow by the disjointed efforts of individuals.

One may ask why it took so long for engineers and architects in Ethiopia to remember their responsibilities to themselves and the society at large to hold a conference of the kind. Of course, the first excuse that may be given is the lack of finance. A simple calculation shows, however, that at present there are about 677 engineers and architects in the country. If 400 of them pay their yearly dues of \$20.00 each this would amount to \$8000.00. Furthermore if 500 of the professionals pay the conference registration fee of \$30.00 each, an additional \$15,000.00 would be collected. The second excuse to follow lack of finance, is the lack of time. Here again if 500 engineers and architects contribute three hours per month each, the yearly total would be 18,000 engineer and architect hours. As efficient as engineers and architects are, the total man-hours indicated above can more than meet the need to organize a conference. The two points, finance and time, may not be the limiting factors if there is the will to discipline oneself in order to grow professionally.

It can not be denied that an individual engineer and architect joins an association in order to derive some benefit. One way by which an individual can benefit from a professional association is the protection and safeguard that are due to him so that he may bargain from strength as he markets his professional experiences. In Ethiopia today, membership in a professional association is not taken as a merit in order to gain employment or advancement in one's profession. This might have possibly caused the lonesome trudging of each engineer and architect in Ethiopia. Of course, this aspect of the problem was discussed at length during the First National Conference of the Ethiopian Association of Engineers and Architects. This discussion was only possible through the exchange of ideas at the forum that this conference provided. By coming together and reasoning together, engineers and architects can positively grow in more than one dimension.

Zede takes off its hat to the brave engineers and architects who made the birth of the First National Conference possible and thereby paved the way for the succeeding generations of conferences.



*Lij Endalkatchew Opening The First National Conference of EAEA.*



*Conference Participants Visiting Lega Dadi Dam.*