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## REGISTRATION OF ENGINEERS

*William H. Saylor '32*

The registration of engineers by the State of California has lagged behind the practice of other states. Today thirty-eight states have laws providing for and regulating the registration of professional engineers, which group includes civil, mechanical, mining, electrical and chemical engineers. California provides for the registration of civil engineers alone. Repeated efforts made by various groups to secure the agreement necessary to the passing of a registration law for the other branches of engineering have, to the present, been without success.

The civil engineer registration act was passed by the California legislature in 1929 and is fundamentally the same as the legislation proposed for the registration of other engineers. This act provides that "any person who practices or offers to practice civil engineering . . . in this state . . . shall be registered . . ." Provision is made for a governing board to judge the qualifications of applicants for registration, to issue certificates of registration, and to reprimand or revoke the certificates of registered civil engineers who do not live up to the terms of the act.

While the act provides that no one shall practice civil engineering in the state without being registered, the interpretation of what constitutes the practice of civil engineering is limited enough not to interfere with a civil engineer who works as a subordinate to a registered civil engineer. The act says "Nothing in the act shall be construed as prohibiting a civil engineer from practicing or offering to practice his profession through the medium of or as employe of a partnership or corporation, provided that the plans, specifications, and reports of such partnership or corporation be signed and be stamped with the seal of each registered civil engineer in specific responsible charge of the preparation

of the same." It is the civil engineer who wishes to do responsible work on his own right that must be registered.

The certificate of registration is obtained by written examination. The applicant for examination must be at least 24 years of age, of good character, and have been engaged in the practice of civil engineering for at least six years, one year of this practice being in responsible charge of engineering work as a subordinate to a civil engineer. Graduation from an engineering school or college approved by the board is counted as four years of practice. The written examination falls into two parts, first, a two-day examination in engineering fundamentals, which examination is waived for graduates of accredited engineering schools, and second, a two-day examination in engineering practice and design. Applicants successfully passing these examinations are issued a certificate of registration, authorizing the holder to practice civil engineering under the terms of the act.

At present there are about 4500 registered civil engineers in the State, about 80% of whom entered under the grandfather clause. It is interesting to note that due to the relative difficulty of passing the examination for registration—less than 50% of the applicants succeed—the total number of registered engineers in the State has slightly decreased.

Besides providing for the registration of civil engineers, the act also provides that the authority to use the title "Structural Engineer" may be given to registered civil engineers who are properly qualified. Qualification consists of holding a certificate of registration as civil engineer, of having had responsible charge of structural engineering work for at least three years, and of having satisfactorily passed a written examination given by the board.