

BOOKS

ENGINEERING THE NEW AGE

by John J. O'Neill

Ives Washburn, Inc., New York 320 pp. \$3.50

Reviewed by R. R. Martel
Professor of Structural Engineering

IN *Engineering the New Age*, John J. O'Neill sets out to "survey man's past efforts to set up civilizations and ascertain what happened to them and, if possible, why—to examine, with a constructively critical eye, the existing situation, to draw up a statement of assets and liabilities and ascertain what we may salvage for the new construction."

That's a large order for anybody, and though Mr. O'Neill tackles it with plenty of gusto, he is hardly able to do it justice.

It is Mr. O'Neill's firm belief that, since engineering has contributed so much to human welfare in material ways in the past, the same scientific method can now be successfully applied to the problems of human relations. "Science and engineering," he says, "are the twin giant forces in the world today. Both of them, in their organized aspects, are lacking a social consciousness. Development in them of a social consciousness is the next major step in cultural progress."

As the man who "carries the burden of applying

knowledge to the solution of human problems," the engineer is the one who is expected to develop this social consciousness which will permit him to "evaluate impartially and efficiently, the desirable direction of human energy in the same way as he now does with mechanical energy."

This assumes that the engineer of the future will know which are the best targets for human endeavor. It also assumes that human affairs are subject to rational treatment, and that the engineer will be able to evaluate the long-range effect of present-day actions. This is highly flattering to the engineering profession—though it might be noted here that Mr. O'Neill's definition of "engineer" is extremely broad; he includes "not only those now designated by that term, but economists, sociologists, anthropologists, business executives, bankers and a host of members of other professions." Even in this broad definition, Mr. O'Neill's engineer of the future sounds more Superman than ordinary mortal.

In general, *Engineering the New Age* consists of a series of sketches, covering a broad field, of the impressive advances of applied science and engineering. As would be expected from his two-score years as a newspaper science editor (for the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, and the New York *Herald Tribune*), the author shows a wide general knowledge of many facets of science and engineering, and avoids highly technical terms. Engineers—even in Mr. O'Neill's expansive definition—ought to find the book provocative, if rambling, and pleasingly complimentary.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

H. B. Lewis '23

SECRETARY

D. S. Clark '29

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

N. A. D'Arcy '28

E. R. Hoge '18

R. M. Lehman '31

R. F. Mettler '44

W. B. Miller '37

W. D. Sellers '23

VICE-PRESIDENT

J. W. Lewis '41

TREASURER

H. R. Freeman '25

G. K. Whitworth '20

ALUMNI CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chicago Chapter:

PRESIDENT

Edward A. Wheeler Ex '39

1045 Chestnut Ave., Wilmette

North Shore Broadcasting Co., Evanston UNiversity 6406

VICE-PRESIDENT

Le Van Griffis '37

Armour Research Foundation

Victory 3300

8421 Indiana Ave., Chicago

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Robert T. Dillon '25

1721 Central Ave., Wilmette

San Francisco Chapter:

PRESIDENT

1431 Alameda De Las Pulgas

Standard of California

VICE-PRESIDENT

936 Filmore Street, Albany 6

Electro-Engineering Works, Oakland

SECRETARY-TREASURER

101 Arroyo Way, San José

General Electric Co., San José

Robert P. Jones '35

San Mateo 3-7634

Sutter 7700

James J. Halloran '35

Landscape 5-0791

Olympic 3-1588

L. Dean Fowler '23

The San Francisco Chapter meets for lunch at the Fraternity Club, 345 Bush Street, every Thursday.

New York Chapter:

PRESIDENT

Clifford C. Burton '40

25 W. 16th St., New York 11, N. Y.

CA 4-4595

C. F. Braun & Co., 630 5th Ave., N. Y. C.

CI 5-6380

32 N. Woods Rd., Manhasset, N. Y.

Manhasset 3206

VICE-PRESIDENT

Charles K. Stipp '31

Metallizing Engineering Co., Inc.

38-14 30th St., Long Island City 1, N. Y.

STilwell 4-6708

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Richard T. Brice '37

106 N. Walnut St., East Orange, N. J.

ORange 2-5353

Otis Elevator Co., 260 Eleventh Ave., N. Y. C.

CH 4-8000

Washington, D. C., Chapter:

PRESIDENT

Donald H. Loughridge

Department of the Army

Office of the Assistant Secretary, Pentagon Bldg.

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Charles E. Fitch

9214 Long Branch Pkwy., Silver Spring, Md.