The New Technical Journalism

EVERY READER must be aware of the fact that POWER is *never* satisfied to stand still. We hope you see many evidences of constant pioneering—for example, radically new types of special sections, such as last year's on "Water" and Jim O'Connor's "Today's Electrical Practice," last month.

Yet, despite all the progress made to date, and despite the constant shucking of hoary traditions in our editorial pages, neither we nor anybody else has said the last word in technical journalism or found the best way to tell a practical engineering story. So experimentation and development must proceed endlessly in this field, just as it will in factory and power plant. We will find still faster and better ways to convey useful engineering information to our readers.

Yet rapid progress poses its own problems because we all have an important parallel stake in continuity. Neither the readers nor the editors want to see POWER turned upside down every month while this or that bright idea is tried out. So here's the practical problem: on the one hand, to be as progressive and creative as possible—on the other, to keep POWER always plowing ahead on an even keel.

We think we have found the answer to this problem. Each month now, in our editorial planning meeting, we pick out one outstanding article for radical experimentation. The editor handling the chosen article consults with the rest of us to get everybody's thinking on ways to put his story over. The aim is to give his article "the works," to spare nothing in money, time, space or effort to make it click in a super way.

We figure this will accomplish four things: First, it will add to the interest and usefulness of every issue. Second, it will give us a continuing opportunity to let our readers tell us how well they like various advanced ways of telling an engineering story. Third, it will give our editors valuable experience with new techniques. Fourth, it will do all this without endangering the enduring values that have been built into POWER through many decades of constant endeavor.

In addition to our regular monthly tests of reader interest, we shall welcome your special comments on these pioneer articles. For a starter, if you have a little time to spare, turn back to page 71 of August POWER and quickly review "Modernization Has to Be Sold." Note the complete break from the usual humdrum way of telling an engineering story. Do you like this particular departure from tradition? Does the unusual arrangement of writing and sketches make your reading quicker, more pleasant and more profitable?

Quite different, and a particularly tough assignment, was project No. 2—Ben Skrotzki's article on page 80 in September, on superpressure power plants. Here was a far more technical subject, requiring thermodynamic diagrams. Here again we ask you, the reader, whether the unusual treatment makes it easier for you to understand the peculiar nature and commercial potential of steam at pressures above 3206 psi absolute.

And now, finally, we hope you will turn to page 106 of this issue for project No. 3 and then follow through the most elaborate "Operators' Notebook" Steve Elonka has yet attempted—eight fast-moving pages of step-by-step picture instructions for overhauling a turbine.

It's my personal feeling, after studying the article very carefully in proof, that Steve's intensely practical slant on maintenance has here achieved a new high, but the final judgment is up to you, not to me. You are the customer for our editorial services. Is every step in this turbine overhaul perfectly clear to you? Is anything missing? Can you think of anything further that would have saved your time or increased your interest? Your comments will be appreciated.

We are lining up lots of interesting ideas for future issues of POWER—still other new ways to weave plain talk and plain pictures into still better service for engineers on the job. If you have suggestions, don't be bashful—*PWS*