Mr. Blood of Stone & Webster Speaks Of The Habit Of Observation.

At the meeting of the Electrical Engineering Society last night in the Union, about 40 men listened to a talk by Mr. Blood on Examinations and Reports. Mr. Blood is a graduate of the Institute in the class of 1885, and is employed by the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation to look up plants to consider their value. In this line he has had a very wide experience, and has traveled extensively in this country.

Mr. Blood began his talk by giving the men an examination he has uncovered an exhibit of common mechanical and household goods on a blackboard for thirty seconds; and then asked the men to tell the dimensions of the board, the material and color of the mount; and to state whether the mount bore any distinguishing marks, and if so what, and to give a list of the objects on the mount. The examinations were handed in at the close of the speech. Out of twenty-five objects on the mount, the men who saw the most saw sixteen; the two next were thirteen each. Mr. Blood then said that apt pupils are not good observers but that the habit of observation improves greatly with practice. He asked how many know how many steps there are on a passenger coach; or whether the even numbers are on the south or northerly side of Boylston Street. Such trivial matters are often of the greatest importance in law-suits, he said, and gave a number of instances. In one case an electric light company was charged with corroding the water pipes by electricity by an alternating circuit; but in the course of the investigation it was shown that the corrosion was started by little pockets on the inside of the pipes, so that the trouble was due really to defects in the manufacture. Again, in a case of inspection a fire inspector saw that the flames had gone up the wall to an electric light switch, and concluded that the fire had started there; but Mr. Blood showed that the fire had started three feet below. He said that ninety-nine people out of a hundred think that they see a ball of fire, and while one should not try to get the report should look businesslike and dignified and interesting and recommendations, preferably at the first. The man who reads the report is generally very busy and not technically trained, so that he will not read the report clear through. He paraphrased the saying "Brevity is the soul of wit" to read "Brevity is the soul of a good report." In addition a report should be dignified and interesting and should remain concise. Men should remember that few people know what an officer pays attention to the final execution, the report should look businesslike and while one should not try to get out a picture book no sloppy work should be allowed. A neat necessary feature is a usable index. Photographs may well be included but should be mounted so as not to curl. Among the difficulties met are the facts that no two problems are the same and the engineer can't find the answer in the back of the book; nor except rarely, check his own work. He concluded by reading a poem "What's the Use" which illustrates the point that the chief thing in life is the satisfaction of having done your work as well as you can.

TALK TO ELECTRICALS ON REPORT WRITING

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