

COMMUNICATION

Below is printed a letter from Albert Gould Davis, '93, head of the Patent Law Department of the General Electric Company, to a member of the Institute Faculty.

Dear Professor _____:
In so far as concerns the technical training given by the Institute of Technology in the Electrical Engineering course, I have nothing but admiration and respect. I feel a considerable debt of gratitude to the Institute for the good which that training did me, and I remember well soon after I graduated that when meeting practicing engineers, I was asked where I had graduated; and when I said "The Massachusetts Institute of Technology" that seemed to settle the question of training.

Speaking almost entirely of the course as it was when I took it, I wish it might be possible to combine with this remarkable technical training, which teaches a man so much, a little more in the direction of teaching him to obtain more benefit from this knowledge, and this in two aspects: Civic Activity. The engineer ordinarily associates himself on graduation with a large corporation. Ordinarily also from the beginning of this work he finds his time very fully occupied. A lawyer graduated from a law school frequently starts in his own name and very frequently has much spare time for the first few years of his professional life. It is largely for this reason, I believe, that a lawyer is apt to take an interest in civic activities of one kind or another, particularly in politics, while the engineer is apt to overlook entirely his responsibilities and duties as a citizen for the first fifteen or twenty years after he graduates. This is a great loss, not only to the country, but to the engineering profession. I could wish that more were done in the Institute to train men in such a way that when they leave the Institute, they would have some appreciation of their collective as well as their individual responsibilities, which would make them more interested in associating with their neighborhood.

The English Language. Closely related to this, and perhaps of even greater importance, is the use of the English Language, both written and spoken. It ordinarily does a man very little good merely to know things; it is necessary that he should be able to tell others what he knows, and to make a good impression on those for whom he is working. I was told recently that college graduates transferred from the Testing Department to our Commercial Department had been asked to be transferred back to the Testing Department because they found themselves unable to dictate simple business letters. I see a great many reports and papers written by engineers, and have in my own department here at the General Electric Company during these last eighteen years been in charge of a number of young men who graduated from the Institute of Technology and similar schools, who had to prepare patent specifications and write briefs, etc., under my general direction. I find an appalling tendency to the use of awkward locutions and ambiguous expressions and generally to the use of bad English.

I therefore urge that a vigorous effort be made to train the Institute men not only in such a way as to give them, as at present, a well-grounded knowledge of the subjects in which they are specializing, but also such a training as will enable him to get the maximum possible benefit from that knowledge at the earliest possible moment. If it is necessary to sacrifice some of the technical training, I would urge that this be done.

When I was in the Institute, I got the idea that we were getting too much theory and too little practice; too much of the fundamental basis and too little of the practical application. I now realize that the Institute was right; that the properly trained man absorbs technical details with the utmost facility after graduation, but that it is very difficult for a man after graduation to pick up fundamental theory. I should hold fast to the fundamental theory, but I should be willing to sacrifice some of the technical details of the engineering training for the sake of a better knowledge of the English language, both written and spoken. I think that every graduate of the Institute ought to be able to write a report in clear, terse, vigorous English and to explain the work which he has done to his chief, or to a meeting of his associates, in clear, sharp, precise and clearly understandable language.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) ALBERT GOULD DAVIS.

CORRECTION

Forty-three per cent. of the Sophomore Class voted at the class elections last Friday, instead of 23 per cent as reported in Monday's issue of The Tech. The Sophomores ranked second, the Seniors leading with a percentage of 44.

NEW DORMS NEAR COMPLETION

Labor Question Delays Work All Summer—Three Factions May Strike

The new dormitories are still in a very unsettled condition and as yet no definite statement as to when they will be completed can be made. At the present time there is trouble between three different sets of laborers. All summer the contractors have been confronted by the labor question, and so the work has been delayed.

The interior of the dorms will be very plain, with hardwood floors, painted walls and ceilings, and dark woodwork, like that in the new buildings. The whole building is divided into sections which are separated from each other by fire-proof doors. All sections, except the two at either end, are to be occupied as single rooms or as suites. The single rooms are large, and each has two windows. The suites are arranged to accommodate any number of men by opening and closing the connecting doors. For every two men in the suites there are three rooms: a study, a bedroom and a dressing room with running water. There are no rooms with baths, but on each floor there are large shower rooms within convenient reach of all. The corridors do not extend through the whole building, but are separate in each of the sections and only connect with the rooms of their respective sections.

The sections on each end have been let to two fraternities, the Delta Tau Delta and Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternities. These two sections have been designed especially for fraternity houses and have been arranged as far as possible to comply with the special needs of the present tenants. As these sections are connected with the rest of the building by fire-proof doors they could at any time be joined to the remainder of the dormitory. Accommodations for cooking and the quartering of servants has been provided for in the basements of these sections.

As yet there have been no steam or water connections made, and the whole building is in a state of disorder. However, the plastering is all done. Most of the floors have been laid, but not scraped. Those in charge of the work will give no definite statement as to when the dormitories will be ready for occupancy, except that they hope to have the buildings in a livable condition by November 1.

The Bursar said that of all the work of the Institute in the erecting of the new buildings and the disorder of hurried moving, this dormitory question has been the most disappointing part of the whole affair. Every day he has hundreds of inquiries as to when they will be completed, and to these he can give no definite answer. He is especially concerned over the freshmen who have come here fully expecting to have a room in readiness for them, but instead have been forced to look out for themselves in a strange city.

SHOW COMPETITION

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and many incidental duties. The assistants are required to do much of the work of the stage department in order that they may know just what work is required of that department and be prepared to substitute for any of the men if necessary.

At the conclusion of the Sophomore business competition two men will be selected to act as First Assistant Business Managers of the Show. At the end of the season one of the men will be appointed Business Manager and one Treasurer of the 1918 Tech Show and both will be considered for the position of General Manager of Tech Show 1919. Last year's Freshmen Assistant Business Managers will have to compete again this year for their former positions on an equal basis with all new men who come out, and must attend tomorrow's meeting.

The Komers Dinners which was held annually about this time in the Fall will not be held this year. Instead a Show Smoker will be given shortly after Field Day for the purpose of arousing interest in the coming production. At this gathering the plans of the management for the coming season will be announced, and the author of the play named. An invitation will be extended to the entire student body at Technology to be present, and it is expected that an even larger crowd than has attended the Komers Dinners in previous years will be at the smoker.

M. I. T. ORCHESTRA MEETING.

This afternoon there will be an important meeting of the M. I. T. orchestra. Several matters of much importance to the members will be discussed at this time and a full attendance will be necessary. In order that that the freshmen may not have to cut the hygiene lecture, the meeting will not be called until five o'clock.

Room to Let—In private family, no other lodgers. Suite 310, Bexley Hall, Massachusetts Avenue, directly opposite New Technology. Inquire for Mrs. Maynard.

CLASS CREWS

First and Second Freshman Crews Temporarily Chosen

The first and second freshman crews have been temporarily chosen. The men are rowing as follows: First Crew—Bow, Warriner; 2, Schilbach; 3, Libby; 4, Killar; 5, Higgins; 6, Burroughs; 7, Bigelow; stroke, McNear; cox., Dana. Second crew—Bow, Whitten; 2, Pope; 3, Raburn; 4, Berg; 5, Morovitz; 6, Goldsmith; 7, Allen; stroke, Ross.

The managers are satisfied with the way in which the freshmen are reporting for practice, but the Sophomores have not been reporting as they should. The number of men reporting has steadily dwindled until yesterday when only three 1919 men reported. The varsity crews have not been picked owing to the scarcity of material and the managers are again urging all men who intend to come out to report at their earliest opportunity. Practice is held every afternoon from 4.00 to 5.30 o'clock to afford ample time for all to get a chance. The crew managers are to meet Manager Littlefield at 1.00 o'clock today in Room 4-108 for a brief meeting.

"CO-OP" HAS LARGE SALES

Tech Branch Reports \$34,375.18 Sales for Last Month

At the last monthly meeting of the directors of the Harvard Co-operative Society, it was reported that the Technology branch sales since the opening of school, one month ago, were \$34,375. They were distributed as follows:

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| Books | \$19,409.47 |
| Stationery | 13,228.22 |
| Men's furnishings | 1,737.49 |

Total \$34,375.18

The sales at the Co-operative Society's main and branch stores at Harvard Square up to Oct. 19 were \$151,693.73; an increase of \$16,940.65 over the total sales the same date last year. The present membership at the Technology Branch is approximately 1,760, while the members now enrolled at the Harvard Branch total slightly less than 3,000. Beginning today, the Technology Branch will carry a complete line of magazines and periodicals, and in addition five daily papers will be on sale.

COMMUNICATION

To the Editor of The Tech:

Dear Sir:

It did me good to observe a line in one of your editorials as follows:

"If a safe and sane policy is adopted by those in charge of the rowing squads so that large numbers of men can find profitable exercise rather than the nerve-racking pace of intercollegiate rowing, a great step will have been taken toward making participation in Tech athletics a personal matter with every student."

If the Governing Board of the Institute would provide facilities and make it their aim to encourage large numbers of non-athletic students to find profitable exercise, they would have something to be proud of in the way of an athletic system. Fewer men would be a wreck on graduation, and more students would get through in four years.

A. B. SOUTHWICK, '18.

COURSE XIII CHANGES

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number sent in former years is due to the Personnel Bill and the rapid development of the whole Navy Department.

Many of the officers of the Navy who have been through Annapolis and have served two years at sea wish to be sent to the Institute and desire to get through as expeditiously as possible. For this reason the course has been kept up to its original high standard, but part of it has been taken from the regular yearly schedule and has been instituted into a summer course so that the usual three years' work previously required can often be completed in two or two and a half years.

One of the greatest advantages of this course is that it gives to officers who have had experience at sea an opportunity to mingle with civilians while at college so that when they enter the Bureau of Construction and Repair at Washington they can deal efficiency not only with naval and military men, but with business men as well. By reason of this broad training they are exceptionally well fitted for the special work of this Department of the Government.

The course of Naval Design at the Institute is the only one of its kind in the United States. Three or four other colleges offer elementary work in Naval Construction, but none have such a high standard of excellency as has Technology.

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The best dressed men in your fraternities are among my patrons. Why not you?

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