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FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 1920

IN CHARGE THIS ISSUE

- Albert J. Browning '22A. B. Alland '22

A STRONG CHAIN AND ITS WEAKEST LINK

AS monumental as the work for which it was dedicated, the Institute of today stands as a model of engineering efficiency to which the subtle hand of the artist has added beauty and dignity. Nothing was spared by the loyal Alumni and friends of Technology to insure the complete success of the educational buildings, and by the application of new ideas in architecture and the most up-to-date equipment, the resulting product became at once the most radical and unique departure from old fashioned colleges and also the last word in centralization of the entire instructing organization.

But one thing was sacrificed. The model power plant, hidden in the background, was handicapped by an unsatisfactory coal handling system, due solely to lack of funds and not to poor engineering.

The present system consists of a spur track from the adjoining railroad which ends over a pit near the power house, from which buckets on a continuous belt deliver the coal to small hoppers inside the boiler room, where it is distributed to the individual automatic stokers. It was originally intended to buy coal as needed and store it in the power house, but with the situation we have faced in the past few years and which may continue indefinitely, this system failed and coal had to be stored in large quantities outside the power house. A lot about 200 feet from the boiler house was selected for this purpose, and trainloads of coal were shoveled out here whenever they could be obtained. This caused another big waste of time and money since the coal could not be dumped into the storage space.

The problem now was to deliver the coal to the power house. This was crudely solved by building a second spur track alongside the delivery pit so that the traveling steam shovel could carry buckets of coal from the storage yard to the pit.

Such is the poor example of engineering which is set for the undergraduates, the men who must know efficiency and time-motion analysis as thoroughly as their calculus. A deplorable condition, indeed, when we consider the dangers and difficulties of the makeshift system.

Although there is little danger to adjoining property in the event of fire, a great risk is being taken as no adequate protection is provided for the coal in the yard. Since there is no trestle over the storage yard, there is a considerable delay in shoveling out the coal cars, to which may be added the waste of time in relaying coal to the station with many trips of the slow crane. Imagine the problem which is presented when the crane breaks down or is prevented from moving by a thick crust of ice and snow, a frequent occurrence last winter. With the station consuming about 25 tons a day in the summer it is hard enough to picture a shoveling squad of Institute employes supplying coal with the crane out of commission, but with a daily consumption of from 65 to 70 tons of coal in the winter the process of coaling the station in this manner is beyond imagination. Yet it has been done and done well for neither power nor heat has ever been denied the students for one hour out of any twenty-four in the four years since the completion of the new buildings.

Here is an opportunity for the Mechanical Engineering department to devise a wholly adequate, model coal handling system; certainly the problem offers a wealth of material for some enterprising Senior's thesis. Meanwhile, however, won't some patriotic Alumnus help his Alma Mater strengthen the one weak link in the practical operation of the "Great White City on the Charles"?

HOW ABOUT A CAMP TECHNOLOGY PUBLICATION?

THREE hundred Institute Sophomores left Cambridge last Monday for Camp Technology, the summer surveying camp where these men will spend eight weeks. From reveille at 6.30 o'clock until mess in the evening, the civil and mining engineers are engaged in railroad and field surveying, stream gauging, and drafting room work, but they have always found time to hold athletic events, attend dances at East Machias, and to have a minstrel show.

We wonder if the campers have ever thought of publishing a summer camp annual, a permanent record of work and frolic at Machias. Certainly the students would give their hearty support to have such a record in enduring form. Why not establish a precedent, Summer Camp 1920?

Alumni Notes

APPOINTED PRODUCTION MANAGER

G. L. Lawrence '09 has been recently appointed production factory manager of the 17 footwear factories of the United States Rubber Company. After graduating in 1909 in Course I, civil engineering, Mr. Lawrence started to work in the Boston Rubber Shoe Company as a planning man. When a vacancy in the superintendency of the company occurred in 1917, he was promoted to this position. The increase in production made it advisable to have a man in charge of all of the 17 footwear factories of the United States Rubber Company, and Mr. Lawrence having had special training in this kind of work, was appointed production factory manager.

BUILDS PRATT SCHOOL

R. E. Runels '11, course I, civil engineering, of Lowell, is a member of the General Building Company, Inc., which is building the new Pratt School of Naval Architecture. Shortly after graduation Runels was a foreman in construction work in the field and then worked as an hydraulic engineer in New York. He acted as one of the resident engineers of Lockwood, Greene and Company, engineers in Boston, until 1917. During the period of the war he supervised the manufacture of the .45 Colt cartridges in the United States Cartridge Company of Lowell. After the signing of the armistice he became associated with H. Newton Marshall Company and shortly afterward became a member of the General Building Company. Runels is giving his personal attention to the work on the Pratt School and is particularly interested in it because of his connection with Technology.

MAP-MAKER ACCOMPANIES SCOUTS ON WESTERN TRIP

F. E. Matthes '95, scoutmaster of Troop I in Washington and topographic inspector of the United States Geological Survey, will accompany Brooklyn scouts this summer on a trip to the Far West offered by the Far Western Travellers' Association. He graduated in Course I, Civil Engineering, in the Class of 1895. He has done topographic work for the Geological Survey since 1898, starting as assistant topographer. Two years later he was made topographer and mapped the Rockies just south of the Canadian boundary line and his work resulted in the creation of the Glacier National Park. Matthes mapped the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, one of the most difficult pieces of topographic work undertaken by the Geological Survey. Then he spent two summers in mapping the Yosemite Valley. In 1910 he was assigned to map Mt. Rainier and since then he has been making a geological study of the Yosemite Valley. During the war he made various geological investigations in reference to army cantonments and translated from the French "The Manual of Artillery Orientation Officer." He has been connected with the scout movement for the past five years and Troop I of Washington, D. C., did excellent work under his guidance.

FORM ENGINEERING FIRM

Edward B. Richardson '98 and Harry Gray have formed a partnership under the name of Richardson and Gay, consulting engineers, with offices in Boston. Mr. Richardson, formerly of Richardson and Hale, consulting engineers of Boston, was recently discharged from the army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel after serving in France with the 26th division, field artillery. He is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and an associate member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. He graduated from course VI, electrical engineering, in 1898 and is a member of the Electrical Engineering Society.

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COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor of the Tech:

In a recent issue of THE TECH you stated that the committee in charge of the recent All Technology Reunion has suggested that these reunions be made decennial events instead of every five years, and that these decennial reunions be supplemented by course reunions. While it is appreciated that this is but a suggestion and would not be final until approved at least by the Alumni Council, I have found such a hostile spirit among 1914 men whom I have talked with against such a plan that I would like to ask for a little space in your communication column to present a few arguments against this plan.

If we all live to the proverbial three score and ten and were graduated at the average age of twenty-three, we would have but a maximum possibility of five reunions in a lifetime. With a reunion but once in ten years it has undoubtedly been assumed that a greater effort would be made to attend than with five year reunions. With business or other reasons preventing one from attending his first ten year reunion, he would have to wait another decade, which might mean twenty years from graduation, before he could attend a reunion. Will the average Technology man live twenty years on unimpaired Tech spirit? No! The interim course reunions would prove a poor substitute.

The small attendance at the last reunion should not be too heavily attributed to its propinquity to the great 1916 reunion. Of the many reasons sent in by 1914 men for not being able to attend, not one gave that as a reason. There were other fundamental reasons which seem evident and should be avoided in future reunions.

Class five year reunions detract from All Technology reunions. Why not abolish strictly class and course reunions and concentrate once in five years on whooping big All Technology reunions? Make the program

such that classes can have their reunions on day or two preceding the grand reunion. The recent reunion program was well adapted for this. Several classes had reunions on Saturday and Sunday, and finished with a classer on Monday evening. And it is more important, have a definite program and not one of a goal nature such as the recent reunion.

Let's have next reunion in five years, and let it be a humdinger!

H. RICHMOND, Secretary, Class of 1914.

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