Letters to The Tech

Conference, anyone?

To the Editor:
The editorial "Conference top- ic" in the Dec. 9 issue of The Tech was a glorious revelation of the triumphs of Parkinson's Law.
To begin with, what was the first justification given for the conference? "Why, to render "an advantageous demonstration of the building's capabilities." This is in accordance with the 291st Pre- cepts of classical Parkinsonian ana- lytics, which states that, "The number of conferences held in- creases to meet the facilities available."

On top of that, the possibilities for empire-building must have made dozens drool. Consider the Planning Committee alone. There must be close to half a dozen jobs to be filled, all of them for nearly a full year. Then there'll be the Arrangements Committee, handling day-to-day affairs and (let's not forget) money as the conference progresses. Last but far, far from least is the all-power- ful Committee Assignments Committee.

Next, consider all of the money involved. Money to transport guests here, money to put them up, and, of course, money for the aforementioned day-to-day af- fairs. It may run to thousands, maybe even, with a little careful planning, tens of thousands of dollars.

There is, however, one small fly in the conferential ointment. There is nothing to confer about. But even this can be turned to ad- vantage. Think of all of the pub- licity that can be stirred up by asking the student body at large for suggestions as to a topic. Na- turally, there will probably be useless, since few understand the stringent requirements that a topic to be discussed at such a conference must have. It must be one about which many words (al- though not much content) can be said. It ought to be possible to stretch it out over at least a week of lectures, discussions, seminars, colloquia, etc., without anyone running dry.

Besides that, the topic must al- so be chosen so that there is no danger of any actual progress or answers coming out of the gath- ering. Not only would this leave less for the next conference (one must always plan ahead), but it might also lead to lack of har- mony between the participants if there should be a disagreement as to the exact nature of those answers.

However, there is nothing to fear. With such topics as "Campus Morals," and "Student Gov- ernment and the Administration" ever ready for consideration and debate, there should be little diffi- culty in finding a topic guaran- teed to produce days of discus- sions and speeches, reams of re- ports and minutes, piles of publicity and headlines for all con- cerned. Happy conferring!

Joe Arnold

16 One Religion

ONE RELIGION

People are segregated into different religions. This practice of sects among the descendants of the various religious sects is present in the United States and creates a sense of division. If you prefer One Religion, please send name and address to Joe Arnold

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Looking Back

By Jeff Trimmer

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1985

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We were wary of

MARTESIA STRIATA!

The object of our concern was a small, wedge-shaped mollusk found in southern waters where we planned to lay telephone cables.

Like others of its genus Martesia (of the family Pholadidae), it is a borer.

Usually it bores into limestone or some other substance to find a home. Would it—could it—bore into our undersea cables?

At the time, we were testing the performances of proposed dielectric materials for undersea cables at various simulated depths, temperatures and ocean pressures. We also tested for resistance to marine biological attack.

The testing showed that our cable covering wouldn't be attractive to pholads, and in nearly fifteen years of experience with undersea telephone cables we have peacefully shared the ocean bottom with them.

But we had to be sure we could. In the telephone business, reliability is everything. We must do all we can to safeguard service from interruption. No threat is too small to ignore, not even that posed by a tiny mollusk.

Right now we've got other problems. Out in the Dakotas, hungry squirrels and field mice are nibbling on our wires.

We have to run.