

THE CONFERENCE OF ENGINEERING TEACHERS HELD

The Best Methods of Conducting Recitations is Subject of Discussion for Afternoon

The Engineering Teachers' Conference, composed of all College teachers who conduct classes of engineering students held its regular meeting Tuesday afternoon at 4:10 in the Civil Engineering Building.

Chairman J. C. Nagle presided at the meeting. The subject of discussion for the afternoon was, "Methods of Conducting Recitations," and was presented by Professors W. A. Stone, J. W. Mitchell and R. D. Brackett. Professor Stone led the discussion.

He talked from an outline which he had prepared on the blackboard. In the beginning he made three assumptions which he said were the fundamentals of a recitation; first, all students are in college to learn the subjects they are taking; second, they will do as little work as possible in order to pass; third, they do not know how to study the material they are to learn.

As reasons for these assumptions he gave: his observations and experiences as a student; his expert-ence as a teacher here; the statements of other teachers; the confessions of the students; and the fact that when most teachers become students they are given to criticism of the methods used by their teachers, etc.

He defined the recitation under the heads of: responsibilities of the heads of instruction; some methods of instruction; the five formal steps; and the art of questioning.

The responsibilities of a recitation are to learn what the students know and do not know, to learn whether the students have used correct methods of study, etc., to guide the student in correct thinking, to prove to the student that it is worth his while to come to college—his College—to take this course, to make the student feel that he has honest-ly failed or passed, to keep up college standards in class work, convince yourself that good work is being done, to secure the proper distribution of grades so as to prove to yourself and others that college standards are being maintained in your department, and that you are a good or an excellent teacher.

Some laws of teaching are: the law of sense-perception, motor re-action, apperception, Self-activity, aim, induction, deduction, interest and attention, habit-forming.

Some methods of instruction were: report method, topical method, conversational or development method, question and answer method, drill or memory type, mixture of above.

"The lecture method", he said, "may be used to give information to a large body of students when no other method can be used, because of lack of teachers, etc., or when organizing, or giving out new facts that can not be obtained by the student from any book. When it becomes such that the teacher reads the lecture either from his own text or that of another, then one of the poorest phases of teaching has been reached. Why not have the students buy the text, or why not publish the

lecture? It then becomes as has been said of it—a method whereby knowledge or information is transferred from the teachers' note book through the students' pencil point to the students' note book without it having ever entered the head of the teacher or the students."

"The development method, questions and answers or assignments in the text is the best method for the students here," he said.

The art of questioning was elaborated under six heads: first, that skilled questioning demands rapid adaptation on the part of the teacher, he must think clear and rapidly, must have a sense of relative values and have skill in wording questions; second, the recitation as a place for group progress determines technique, questions should be addressed to the group, then name of the student called, students should not be called upon in fixed order, some device must be used to secure fair distribution of questions; and no time must be wasted in assisting or pursuing individuals; third, adequate commendation and reproval to individual differences; fourth, rapid pace for drill questions; fifth, repetition in thought questions; sixth, call upon in-attentive students frequently.

Professor Stone then explained the methods used by the Chemistry department. He said most students are too practical, that they need more of the fundamentals.

Mathematics Department. Professor J. W. Mitchell discussed the "Recitation" under the head of methods of teaching in the Mathematics department. He has found the best method of conducting a recitation in mathematics is to send the students to the board, give them a problem to solve, and to help them just as little as possible.

Good English in Recitations. Professor R. D. Brackett placed great stress on the use of good English in the conduct of a recitation. No matter whether it be a class in chemistry, engineering or agriculture, the student should be drilled in the use of correct English.

In the general discussion that followed the program several ideas were expressed by some of those present. Dean Puryear said that a great evil is a tendency on the part of the teacher to make the discussion of the subject being recited too perfunctory. The teacher should come to class with a definite aim to be reached through the recitation.

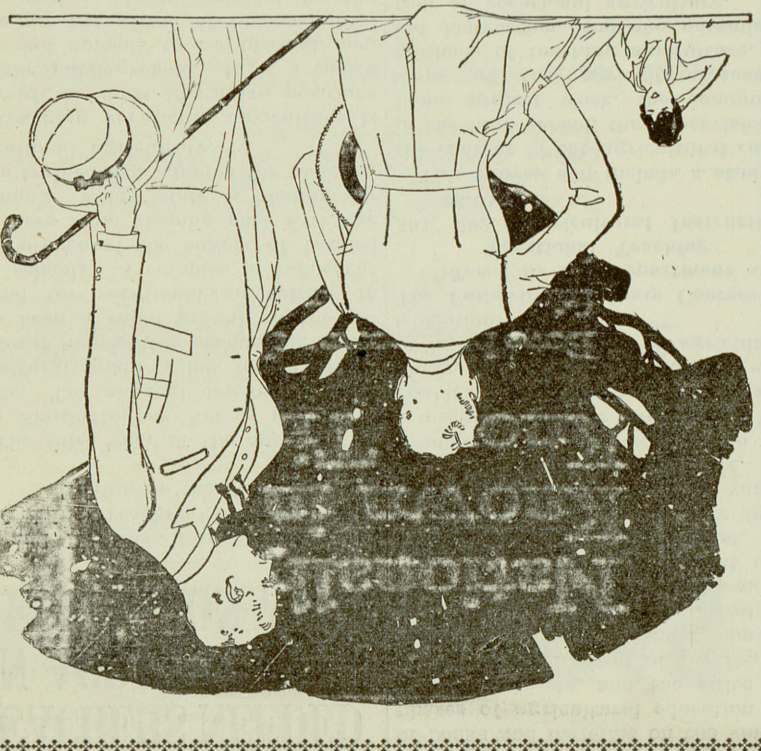
Professor Salisbury remarked on the importance of good English, and said the general tendency was to be too departmental. Dr. C. C. Hedges told how the Chemistry department made use of

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A young girl named Mable, danced on the dining room table. She blushed very red when a gentleman said: "O, look at the legs on the table!"

SEATS FOR BIG LEAGUE GAME GOING VERY FAST

Seats for the big league game to be played here Monday, March 29, by the Philadelphia Athletics and the St. Louis Cardinals are now on sale at Sparks & Casey's Confectionery, and they are going fast.

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