

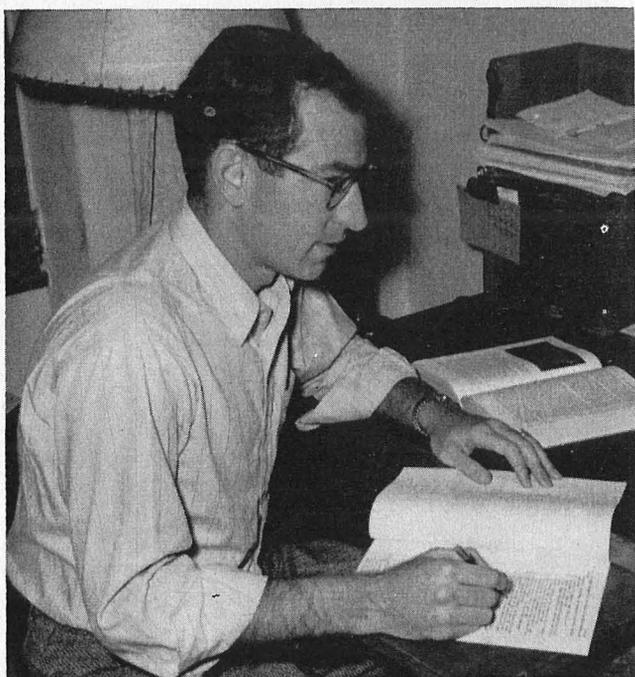
THE BEAVER

Some Notes on Student Life

TECHMEN SLAMMED SHUT the books, forgot the formulas, and washed the glassware that had occupied them during the second term, to be greeted by what first seemed like a warm and welcome spring. As their hearts warmed up and their brains thawed out, they realized that this Easter vacation did not herald an ordinary spring. The seniors were faced with vague question marks hanging at the end of their one remaining term of college life: grad school? . . . the draft? . . . essential industry? . . . The undergrads found that other students their age and sex were far more worried about military service than they were—perhaps because life at Tech leaves little time for pessimism. But Tech leaves little time for optimism, too, and many were shocked to realize that the possibilities of conscription and war they had considered in Current History were grim reality at least in the worries of the people outside.

Private Enterprise and History

Every year freshmen and sophomores at the Institute have been reading, outlining, and carefully memorizing from eighty to one hundred pages of history per week. While in the throes of this tedious process last year, some enterprising freshmen conceived the idea of pooling



Sophomore George Moore, one of the originators of the history outlines, studies American history with his outline for the week. He got a B in history last term.

their resources of time and energy: some of them would read and outline the required material carefully and concisely, while others would be responsible for the printing and distribution of the outlines.

The simple economic laws of monopolistic expansion and supply and demand could not long remain inoperative in such a situation, and soon other freshmen expressed an interest in the outlines and a willingness to join the group. The efficient division of labor into reading and outlining, printing, and distribution became a weekly practice for the group, as the popularity of the outlines steadily grew. The system flowered into a big business, and the original group pronounced itself a pseudo-corporation.

Now that the originators of the idea are sophomores (none of them failed freshman history), they are extending their system to cover the sophomore history course. These sophomore outlines, which are distributed at the beginning of each week, and copies of last year's freshman outlines are currently being sold at a price of \$1.25 for a one-term subscription. Optimistic rumors suggest that about one hundred members of each of the two classes now subscribe to the series.

The general attitude of the history instructors is that the important thing is to learn history—with or without these or any other kind of outlines. But the instructors fear that the students may come to rely upon the outlines to the extent of neglecting their assigned reading. The entrepreneurs counter that the outlines, which generally run about six pages of concisely mimeographed sheets per week, are intended only for the purpose of reference and review, and that their main purpose is merely to save the students the time spent in writing up their own notes. And besides, they add, continuous reading of the texts without the disturbance of stopping to jot down points every few minutes will allow the student to appreciate the smooth continuity that the texts are purported to have.

Perhaps some of the memory courses will provide a fertile field for expansion. It is rumored that the combine may extend its activities into engineering courses. Although it is unlikely that we have here the beginnings of a major crisis in education, the main protagonists are maintaining a tight-lipped secrecy. The instructors have no comment concerning the possibility of changing textbooks, or the choice of examination questions; and the advocates of the outlines offer no data correlating subscriptions with grades.

A Chemist and an Engineer

Six hundred forty delegates from 35 states and 133 college chapters of Pi Kappa Delta, National Forensic Fraternity, converged upon Oklahoma A. & M., Stillwater, Oklahoma, for the 17th national convention of Pi Kappa Delta, one of the two top-ranking national debate tournaments. Among these were 110 men's debate teams, composed almost entirely of political science, pre-law, and other liberal arts students who had come

THE BEAVER . . . CONTINUED

to debate . . . "Resolved: That the non-Communist nations should form a new international organization." But with them were a junior mechanical engineering student, a senior chemist, and their debate coach from Caltech—Stan Groner, Ulrich Merten, and Dr. Lester L. McCrery, respectively.

After eight debates, the team of Groner and Merten had won seven and lost one, thereby gaining a rating of superior, the highest rating awarded at the tournament. They returned with appropriate medals and the interesting report that some people on the Oklahoma A. & M. campus were seen with slide rules affixed to their belts.

Biologists Arise!

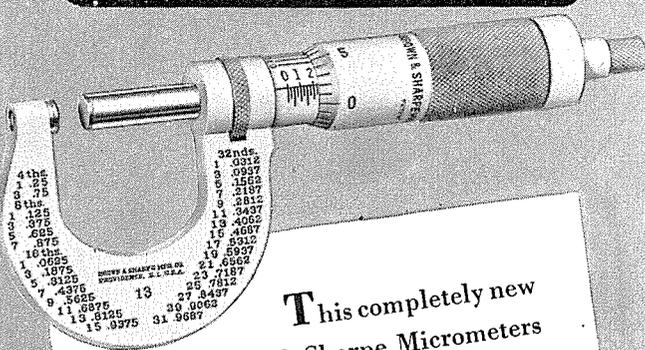
Small classes and intimate contact with instructors are not guaranteed assets in pursuing an education, but an illustration of how the unique opportunities at Tech can be most effectively exercised was recently provided by the undergraduates and faculty members in the biology division. The faculty and many of the students sensed

that the sequence of courses in the undergraduate biology curriculum could be revised and reintegrated to form a more unified whole in relation to themselves and the surrounding context of chemistry courses. On their own initiative, the undergraduates polled each other, juggled units and requirements in the Institute catalogue, and proposed a new system to the faculty.

The new system, with minor changes, was accepted and endorsed by a special committee of the biology faculty. The changes have enabled the biology curriculum to achieve three main goals: courses in plant biochemistry can make the most effective use of the background furnished by chemistry courses; pre-medical students can satisfy the requirements for medical schools in only three years of undergraduate work at Tech without having cramped or overloaded schedules; and biology undergraduates will enjoy a wider choice of courses and more electives. Less important than the nature of these specific changes, however, is the way in which they were initiated.

—Al Haber '52

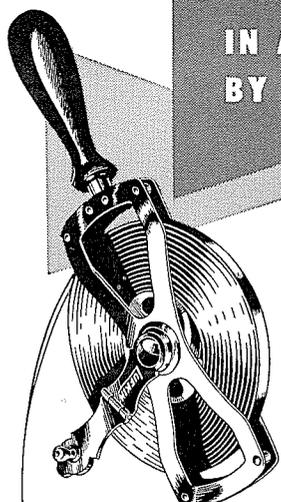
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