

A Letter to the Alumni

THIS IS A LETTER of thanks and commendation to the alumni of Caltech for their earnest and successful efforts toward bringing to reality that long-cherished dream of the Institute that it would some day have a gymnasium and other needed athletic and recreational facilities for its students.

"The California Institute of Technology is a college, graduate school, and institute of research in science, engineering, and the humanities." So reads the statement of the educational policies and objectives of the Institute formulated by the late Dr. Arthur A. Noyes and adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 29, 1921.

In the past 27 years the great achievements of the Institute as a graduate school and a research institute have sometimes overshadowed in the public mind the fact that one of our basic purposes has been to conduct an undergraduate college of a unique type. If the earnest efforts and remarkable achievements in creating such a college have not reached the pages of the newspapers, this goal has nevertheless been a primary interest of the Institute administration and faculty throughout the Institute's history.

This 1921 statement goes on to say in part:

"It is hoped . . . to make the undergraduate courses of the Institute a combination of fundamental scientific training with a broad cultural outlook. . . . Every effort shall be made to develop the ideals, breadth of view, general culture and physical well-being of the students of the Institute. To this end the literary, historical, economic and general scientific subjects shall continue to be taught by a permanent staff of men of mature judgment and broad experience; . . . moderate participation of all students in student activities of a social, literary or artistic character shall be encouraged; students shall be required or encouraged to take regular exercise, preferably in the form of games or contests affording recreation. **It is the purpose of the Trustees to create as rapidly as possible additional facilities for these student activities by the erection of a student union, a gymnasium and dormitories.**"

In 1922, at the end of his first year at the Institute, Dr. R. A. Millikan reported to the Trustees the accomplishments of the year and the pressing needs for the future. A large section of this report was devoted to the problem of "the creation of more satisfactory conditions for student life." He discussed particularly (a) the need for additional land for athletic facilities and the immediate erection thereon of a gymnasium, (b) the need for student dormitories, (c) the need for "student clubhouse and commons with which the social, religious, recreational and dining needs of the Institute students may be adequately provided for."

As the years have gone by, generous Institute donors have provided funds for urgently needed buildings to house scientific and engineering laboratories. Funds were also raised for a splendid, though now outgrown, student dormitory and for a beautiful clubhouse for faculty and graduate students. In spite of an energetic search, however, funds have never been found for the erection of a gymnasium and a student union, two needs which are far more urgent in 1948 than when Dr. Millikan outlined them so urgently in 1922.

A major step in this direction occurred in 1947 when

the Institute arranged to purchase most of Tournament Park from the City of Pasadena at a cost of \$280,000. An ideal site for the development of adequate athletic and recreational facilities is now available. The next step is to build these facilities as soon as possible.

From what source can the funds be secured? It appears still to be true that prospective donors are more inclined to provide funds for scientific, educational and research purposes than for the critical needs of student life. This is not an unusual situation, since nearly every institution in the country has faced the same problem. The older institutions of the East have depended on their alumni for help in providing such facilities. Until recently the California Institute Alumni consisted of a relatively small group, a young group, and a group which, by and large, had not attained positions of affluence which enabled them to return generously of their substance to their Alma Mater.

This situation is rapidly changing. The alumni themselves sensed this two years ago and an energetic group of Alumni Association officers, believing the Association had come of age, organized the Alumni Fund.

The first question which these officers asked Institute officials was, "To what purposes should the initial proceeds of this Fund be devoted?" The answer to that was relatively easy. The Institute had a long list of urgent needs for funds. Which of these needs could most readily command the enthusiasm of the alumni and for which of them would it be most difficult to find support from other sources? The needs of the students for recreational and athletic facilities seemed to be the obvious answer. It was, therefore, agreed that the first goal of the Alumni Fund would be to provide for the erection of a gymnasium.

The initial response to the Alumni Fund gives assurance that the alumni are eager to seize this opportunity of aiding their Alma Mater. The news of the purchase of Tournament Park and the possibility of erecting thereon a gymnasium was a tonic to the undergraduate students last year. At long last they felt that the Institute would have the necessary facilities to insure a well-rounded student life.

We are now trying to determine how the most adequate athletic facilities can be provided at the minimum cost. New developments in construction techniques give promise that an excellent gymnasium, suited to the needs of the Institute program and adapted to the conditions in Southern California, can be erected at a cost of \$250,000. The assured contributions to the Alumni Fund already amount to one-third of this sum. The day when the first basketball game and the first Alumni dinner will be held in the new gymnasium may not be too far distant.

To every alumnus who has contributed money or effort to this Fund the sincere thanks of the Institute are hereby extended. To every alumnus who has not yet participated the Institute extends a cordial invitation to use this opportunity of rendering urgently needed assistance to his Alma Mater.

