

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University
Ohio State Engineer

Title: Around the Quadrangle

Creators: Weed, John Merrill, 1897-

Issue Date: Apr-1931

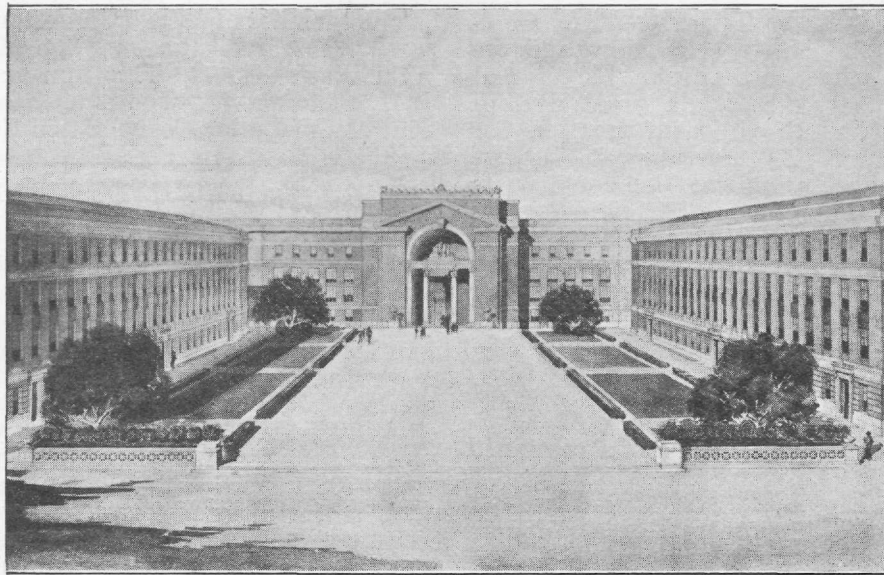
Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 14, no. 6 (April, 1931), 12, 24.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/34793>

Appears in Collections: [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 14, no. 6 \(April, 1931\)](#)

Around the Quadrangle



By MERRILL WEED

Lawyers may run for Congress, and politicians for mayor, but engineers are popular candidates for president. Each "party" of the Ohio State University Association (the alumni organizations) has nominated an engineer graduate for president.

The most loyal and interested Ohio alumni are the engineers. This information, imparted to me confidentially by a man high in Association circles (not an engineer himself) may reassure some who fear that engineering is too narrow and too highly specialized.

* * *

The most important question under discussion around the quadrangle just now is not the coming midterms, not the most suitable timber for Texnikoi (though I don't minimize in the least those activities of the student engineers) but the proposed two-year course underlying all the colleges of the University. The proposal is, as I understand it, that regardless of their plans for law, dentistry, engineering, or other careers, all students must follow the same courses of liberalizing studies—if they can be decided upon—before beginning in any way to prepare for their professions.

Immediately following the complaint that our graduates are turned out too standardized, this suggestion of putting them all through exactly the same two-year groove appears just a little peculiar.

A common interest that results in more intelligent voting, may make better citizens of all of us. But I wonder, sometimes, if the study of such intangibles as psychology or art or science of government leads to correct decisions as citizens. Reports of college professors and political scientists who preferred Al Smith to Herbert Hoover incline me to doubt the practical benefit of such training for citizenship.

If a basic course is wanted I suggest some definite subjects, particularly engineering drawing, for everybody, biologists, embryo lawyers, and fine arts majors, as well as the engineers. Experience with something definite like descriptive geometry is needed before tackling problems where a twilight zone of truth almost indistinguishable from error makes necessary a background of judgment and common sense. So before getting into the intangibles of psychology, economics, and political science we need the discipline of analytical geometry, qualitative analysis, and Reinhardt lettering.

Abraham Lincoln wrote that he had trouble in beginning his law practice, and that he improved his reasoning by solving every proposition in geometry; in that way he learned to bound every legal question north, south, east, and west.

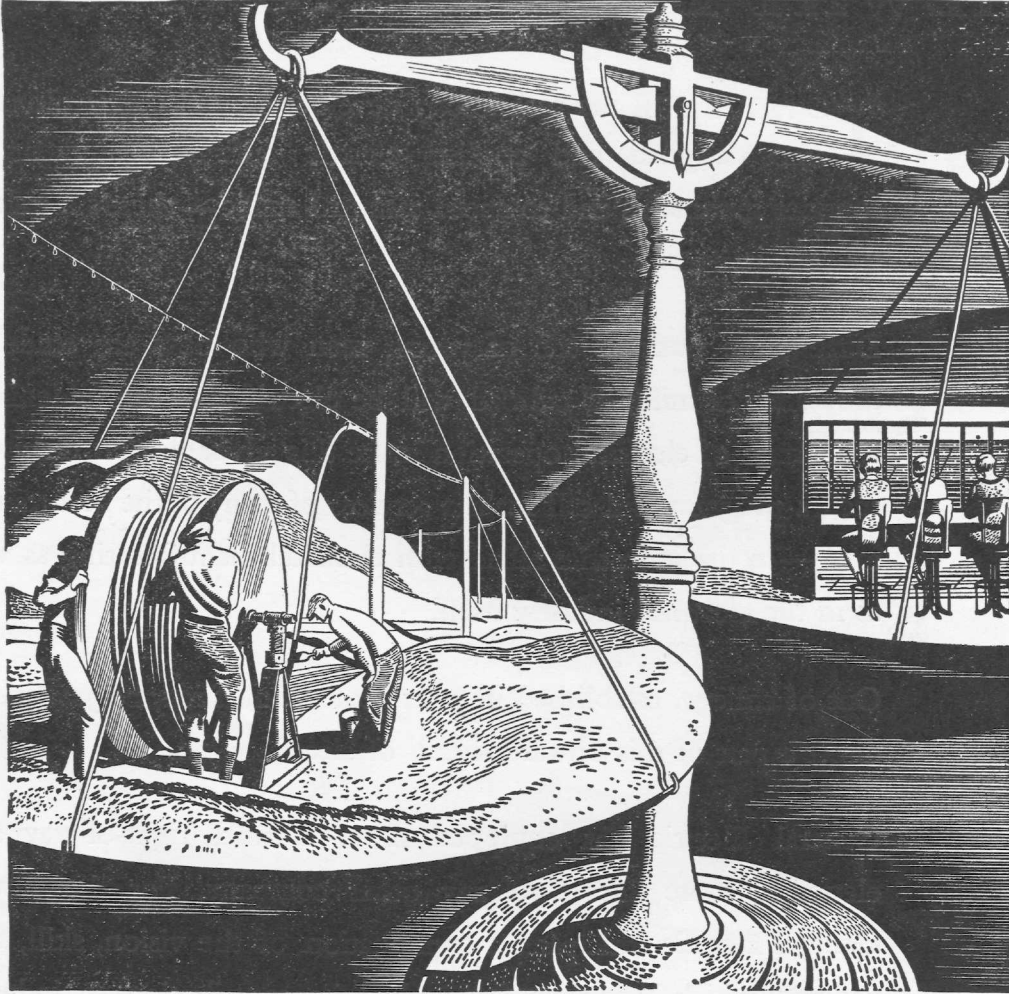
If we must have a basic course, the first year in engineering is suggested for all the colleges. Drawing, math, and chemistry furnish the discipline and laboratory practice, and English the liberalizing element.

Getting the stiff math courses and the shop work out of the way in the first two years prepares the way for more nebulous studies, economics, psychology, literature, history. A college course is like getting experience after graduation; sound training on the drawing board and in handling the mathematics of the business in design and testing had better come first while the technical studies are fresh in mind; sales and executive work will follow naturally if the graduate is fitted for them. Too often, I believe, a good draftsman is spoiled by trying to become a salesman or manager.

After the first two years in college the student engineer knows how to work and study and may be trusted with liberalizing electives. More elec-

(Continued on Page 24)

STEPPING INTO A MODERN WORLD



Striking a balance for a \$4,000,000,000 industry

“On a large scale” describes accounting in the Bell System, whose properties cost more than \$4,000,000,000.

On the outgo side are, for example, four or five hundred million dollars annually for new construction; vast sums for keeping telephone equipment in good order; a payroll running into hundreds of millions a year. Under in-

come are such diverse items as a few cents for a local telephone call, or thirty dollars and upward for a call to a city across the Atlantic.

The men responsible for this phase of the telephone business have worked out scientific methods of control—but their effort to refine old practices and devise new ones goes on. *The opportunity is there!*

BELL SYSTEM



A NATION-WIDE SYSTEM OF INTER-CONNECTING TELEPHONES

RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION - -

TO ADVANCE the technology developed by electrical pioneers who designed and applied electric railway equipment to conquer mountains and to speed terminal traffic—there's a task to try your temper!

During the business life of young men who now are students, thousands of miles of railroad will be electrified—the undeniable economies of electrical operation make this advisable. To carry out such a program will call for the services of many of the best-trained men—in the industries allied with electrical manufacturing as well as in the electrical industry itself.

Out of college, established in your profession, it may be *your* job to direct a part of this onward march of electrification.

General Electric has equipped more railroad right-of-way and electrified more lines than any other company. For the future, General Electric anticipates a continuation of the vision, skill, and progress which have thus far marked its contribution to industry and transportation.

Booklet GEK-55 tells about some of the railway electrification projects with which G-E engineers have been identified. Address your request to Publicity Department, General Electric Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

GENERAL  ELECTRIC

95-771DH



-IN THE FUTURE....

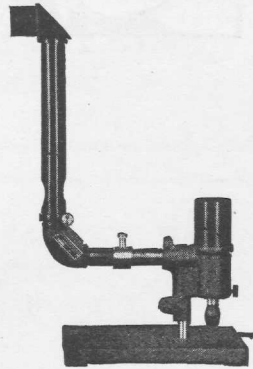
Will It Test Your Mettle?

JOIN US IN THE GENERAL
ELECTRIC PROGRAM, BROAD-
CAST EVERY SATURDAY EVE-
NING ON A NATION-WIDE
N.B.C. NETWORK



**BAUSCH
& LOMB**
for
PRECISION

Optical Thickness Gauge — for measuring the wall thicknesses of hollow transparent objects. One of the Bausch & Lomb family of precision instruments for solving the problems of industry.



FOR BETTER VISION →
ORTHOGON LENSES

**BAUSCH & LOMB
OPTICAL COMPANY**

635 ST. PAUL STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

**THE
MOUNT VERNON
BRIDGE CO.**

Engineers and Manufacturers

of

Iron and Steel Mill Buildings and
Structural Work, Railway and
Highway Bridges, Roofs,
Viaducts, Etc.



Builders of the Structural Steel Work
in the Ohio Stadium



MT. VERNON, OHIO

AROUND THE QUADRANGLE

(Continued from Page 12)

tives in the curriculum might help. Enough are offered, however, for the engineer to get a liberal education if he's that kind of a fellow. Indeed the group requirements in the College of Arts make a liberal education harder to obtain there than in Engineering.

After all, establishing a curriculum to cure college people of lack of effectiveness as citizens is like passing a law; people are going to be just about as they are, anyhow. It all depends on two minds—the student's and the professor's. Some students will read, think, vote intelligently, although they must follow the narrowest sort of curriculum. Some instructors are the finest teachers of English, literature, economics, citizenship, though their subjects are mathematics, drawing, geology, or Hebrew. What we need is not more courses but more instructors, not more machinery but more personal acquaintance of professors and students who may know each other as individuals and gentlemen.

* * *

That broadside will just about fill my column. You probably infer that I am not in favor of a junior college. You are right. Not unless the curriculum contains a liberal amount of science, beginning with engineering drawing. And I think it unwise to give a certificate or diploma for the completion of two years' work; too many people will think of such "graduation" as a college degree.

* * *

Midterms, graphs, reports and dances all have their place, but they should be curtailed enough to permit reading of history right before our eyes, the stirring—to a republican (not political)—turn of events in Spain, the abdication of a king and the establishment of a republic. The people may be disappointed, but they have a right to try to manage their own affairs. Kings are picturesque, but rather a useless luxury.

* * *

The Mysterious Universe by Sir James Jeans is recommended as a head-stretcher. Perhaps Immanuel Kant was right after all when he said two hundred years ago that there must be two worlds, the world of appearances and the world of things as they really are. Trying to grasp things as they are is intriguing, but Sir James dashes our hopes by reducing the Universe to pure mathematics. You'll enjoy the way he does it.

* * *

Speaking of the universe, there's a hotel in Paris called Hotel of the Universe and of Portugal.

* * *

I have been chuckling ever since I read this line descriptive of the horrors of traffic in New York. Odd McIntyre quoted it. It's "The only safe way to cross a busy street in New York is to lead a cow."

An idea for farm relief.

* * *

The Romance of the Rails, a two-volume opus by Agnes C. Laut, is remarkably easy reading, and well illustrated. Incidentally, this biography of great engineering feats, the railroads, is available to engineers who will call at the library of the College of Commerce.