

THE COOPERATIVE CLASSES

February 1936 marked the beginning of the Industrial Cooperative Scholarships in Mechanical Engineering and the introduction of some eighty earnest but pecuniarily embarrassed searchers for knowledge in the mysteries of sliderule and micrometer. We had embarked upon a pioneer voyage of five years with our goal a B.S. Degree. Our course in the past year has been rough, and a number of men were lost overboard, but we look forward with anticipation to happy landings on the distant shore.

A selected group, the "coops" have been forced to meet not only the rigorous requirements of a condensed and concentrated course, but also the no less exacting demands of the modern industrial setup. The fact that we have done so is attested by the remark of one employer, "I could use four more boys like the two I have working for me now." Indeed, there are more positions available than there are boys to fill them.

The one great advantage that the cooperative course offers, besides enabling ambitious students to work their way through college, is the fact that the theoretical knowledge acquired at school is taken more seriously after a work period in shop or foundry. The Coop Economic Club has been organized, wherein members work in various projects while out on the job. Semi-monthly meetings and discussions are then held in which both out-of-school students and those in school participate. The only time the students at school meet their working alternates is at social activities, and, as a result, a special setup was necessary to maintain contact between the groups. Co-executive offices of president, secretary, and treasurer were established, and the measures passed upon by the group at school are regarded as law by the group at work. Since our interests are so closely akin, no difficulties have been met, and a harmonious class unity has been maintained.

The repeating cycle of school and work has introduced so many contrasts that our lives in the past year have been anything but dull. From the drooping eyelids and spinning heads of school to the blistered hands and aching backs of industry; from empty pockets to jingling jeans; from the soft voice of the chem prof to the basso bark of the straw boss; from quiet evenings at home with eraser and slipstick to evenings all our own.

As a class we were rather slow in engaging in regular class activities, primarily because of the fact that we were at school only eight weeks at a time and acted as a unit without dependence on the freshman class. Junior Week and the Class Rush were our first activities in cooperation with the Class of "'39," although we had previously made the acquaintance of the Sophomore class on certain occasions when we neglected to wear the insignia of our lowly station.

A cooperative social smoker held last year formed our first introduction to the social aspects of college life. Since then we attended the Sophomore Informal in March and held another smoker in conjunction with the freshmen "coops" in April this year. We look forward to a far greater number of activities in the future and a closer cooperation with the regular four-year student groups.

