

## IN MEMORIAM

### EDWARD CHRISTIAN HENRY BANTEL

Edward Christian Henry Bantel, Assistant Dean Emeritus of the College of Engineering of The University of Texas, died in Austin, Texas on April 3, 1965 at the age of 91 years. He began his service on behalf of the College of Engineering in 1901. For over fifty years he directed the full force of his creative abilities to the development of young engineers, and more important still to the development of men.

Dean Bantel was born in Troy, New York on September 30, 1873. His father died a short time before his birth. His mother, Frederika Lutz Bantel, faced bravely the task of raising Edward and his two older sisters. After finishing the elementary grades in school, he got a job at the local music Store. First he served as errand boy. He was later transferred to the repair department where he learned to refinish organs and pianos.

At the request of his mother he did go back to school. He applied himself assiduously to his work. Later he took two years of preparatory work in Troy Military Academy. Then he entered Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York, which was the first civilian engineering school in the U.S., having been established in 1824. While a student he was an active member of the Rensselaer Society for engineers, and served on the staff of "The Polytechnic" as reporter, business manager, and alumni editor. During the last three years at Rensselaer he was an enthusiastic member of the Glee Club. He received the degree of Civil Engineer in 1897. Because of his excellent grades he had been elected to Sigma Xi.

During the summers Mr. Bantel had worked as a rodman on the construction of the New York and New England Electric Railroad, as a topographer on Staten Island, and a topographer and surveyor on the New York and Ottawa Railroad. With this experience and a degree behind him, he accepted the job as supervisor of track from Saltillo to Monterrey of the Mexican National

Railroad, Northern Division. This assignment was interrupted by his enlistment as a private in Co. A of the 2nd New York Volunteer Infantry for service in the Spanish American War in the spring of 1898. He spent most of his army time in Florida, later transferring to the office of Lt. Col. H. M. Chittenden, Chief Engineer of the Fourth Army Corps. His acquired knowledge of Spanish served him well in this assignment.

Mr. Bantel was mustered out of the service in November 1898. He returned to the Mexican National Railway but this time he was supervisor of track in the Southern Division around Acamboro and Morelia. Political intrigue in Mexico caused him to resign in May of 1900 and to be successively instrument man, assistant engineer, and finally superintendent of railroads of the Cambria Steel Company of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. During this time he surveyed an 18 mile line for a 48-inch cast iron pipeline.

In the spring of 1901 the Engineering Department was "overloaded" with students. Professor T. U. Taylor needed help in the then quite important field of railroad engineering. President Prather wanted to employ a new instructor who had some knowledge of mining. Thus E. C. H. Bantel became the second member of the engineering faculty in the fall of 1901. For the first few summers he returned each year to New York to work in a mining engineering office to extend the scope of his practical experience.

As a teacher he was intensely interested in his students and always available for conference and advice. He became very popular with them and soon acquired the title of "Banty" which he retained as long as he lived. He frequently referred to experiences in Mexico in his classes on railroad curves and construction. He was a great believer in the building of character as well as the making of engineers out of his students. Many times he would interrupt his technical lecture to "preach" the boys a sermon. It was these sermons that endeared Banty to the boys.

Mr. Bantel rose through the ranks to Professor in 1913, and at that time he also was made Assistant Dean — the first in the College of Engineering. He worked very closely with Dean Taylor, and also with Dean W. R. Woolrich who succeeded Taylor.

Upon reaching the age of 70 years in 1943, he relinquished his administrative responsibilities, but continued on modified service to teach courses in Sanitary Engineering. He had been a forceful and effective teacher in this field for many years. He retired in 1951, remaining resident in Austin until his passing in 1965.

On October 27, 1904 he made a journey to New Orleans and was married there to Mrs. Lillian M. Daniels. This union was a very happy one, lasting until her death a number of years after his retirement.

Despite the fact that he was determined to be a perfectionist in his chosen field of work, his talents were not confined to teaching alone. For three different periods beginning in 1903 he served as a member of the Athletic Council. He ultimately became the chairman of this body. For many years he was the most popular speaker at football rallies. He served as a member of this body at the time of the planning and construction of Texas Memorial Stadium.

He struggled endlessly to advance the causes of professional honesty and personal integrity. He did this by example as well as by voice. He served for an extended period of time as a member of the Faculty Discipline Committee. He advocated the adoption of the Honor System because he believed that a successful professional career required a character beyond reproach.

He became a member of the Masonic Lodge in 1904. He was a charter member of the University Lodge No. 1190 (Blue Lodge). He served it as Worshipful Master and Chaplain. He had received the York Rite degrees in 1904 and it was in that year that he became a Noble of the Mystic Shrine in Ben Hur Temple.

He received the Scottish Rite degrees in 1919, was elected to the Supreme Council in 1921, became a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor, and the Thirty-Third Degree was conferred upon him in 1927. For many years he was reunion director of the Scottish Rite.

Dean Bantel served The University of Texas with distinction as a member and chairman of its Commencement Committee. He was always willing to give of himself without reservation in order to make commencement exercises as meaningful and as inspiring as possible. For sixteen years he sustained an extraordinary interest in making the culmination of collegiate experiences impressive in order that a love for the University might abide always in the hearts of the degree candidates. By this time it became necessary to confer degrees by proclamation rather than upon an individual or personal basis. Dean Bantel found it difficult to adjust himself to exercises of this type.

For many years Dean Bantel served as toastmaster at Annual Engineering Banquets. His skill in this capacity was extraordinary. Ex-students from all over the state made journeys to Austin to attend these functions. It was here that a tremendous college spirit was developed. It was through his efforts that much was done to preserve the lore of Alexander Frederick Claire, the Patron Saint of the College of Engineering.

His academic and professional honors were many. He was a member of Tau Beta Pi, Chi Epsilon, The American Society of Civil Engineers (Life Member), The Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, the American Association of University Professors, the Texas Philosophical Society, and a Fellow of the Texas Academy of Sciences.

For over fifty years this meticulous, kindly, gray-haired man made a monumental contribution in practically every phase of University activity. This he did with vigor. It was said of him that throughout this entire period of time he probably made fewer enemies than any other man in the history of the institution. The real significance of his worth, however, was established by the large number of individuals by whom he was loved.