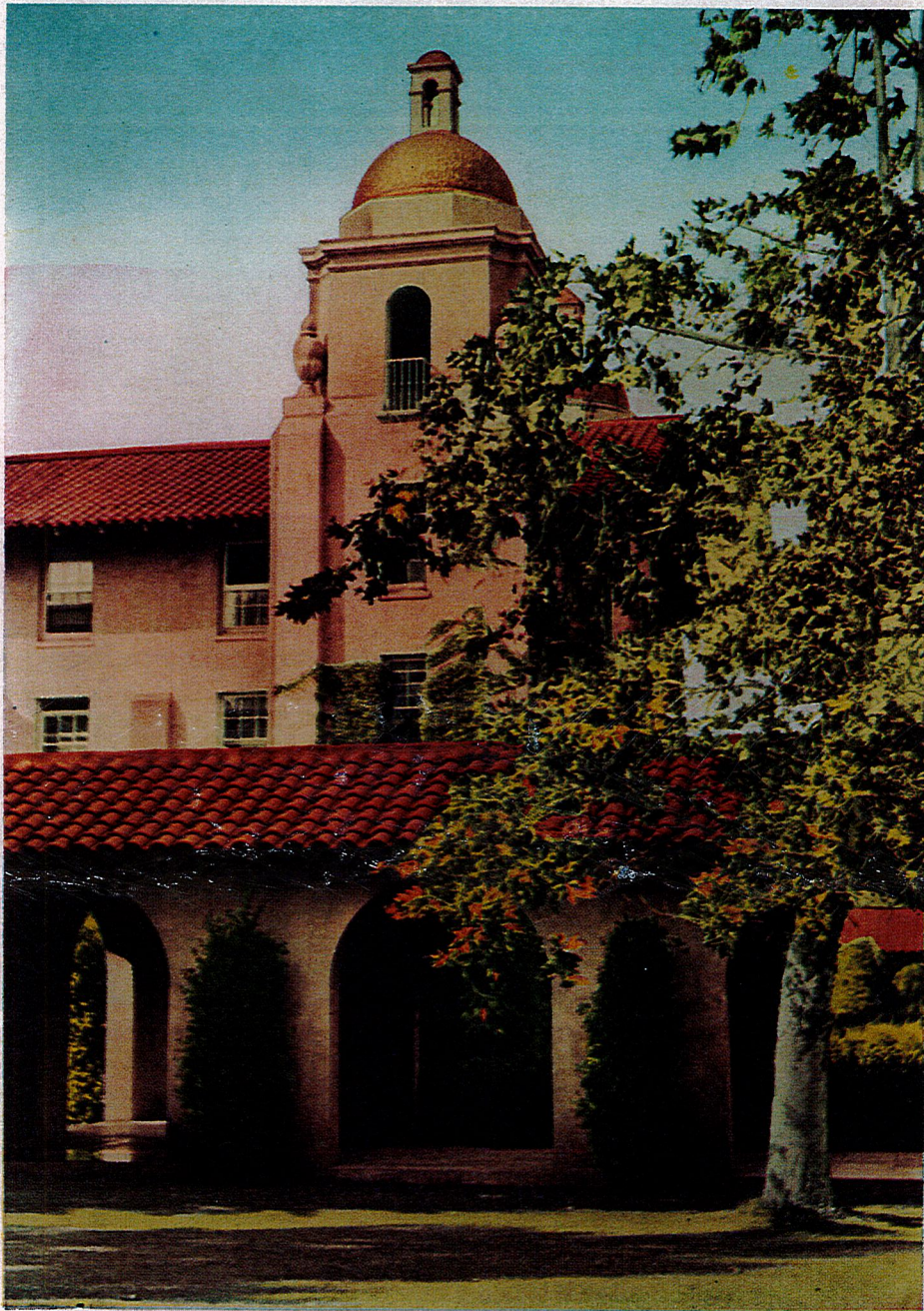


BANTA'S GREEK EXCHANGE



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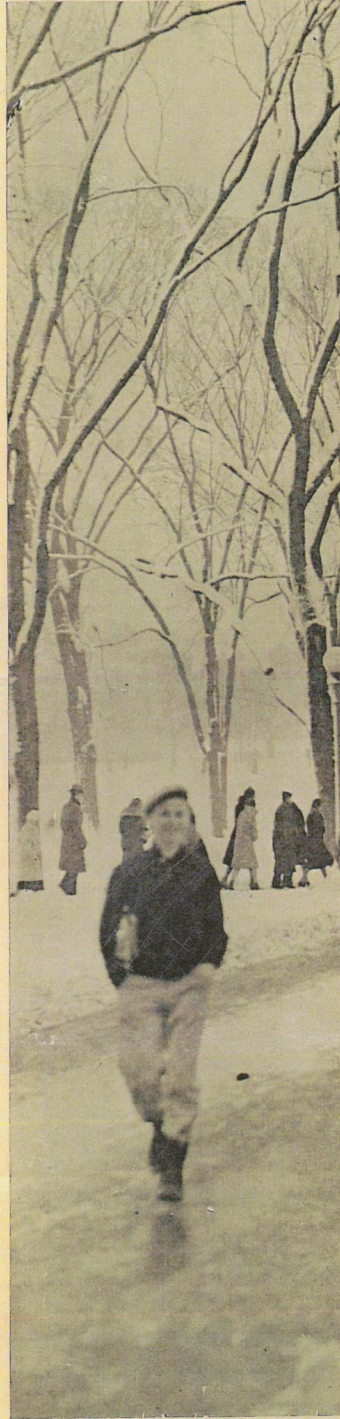


Fraternities Feel the Depression

IN ITS present stage of development the American college fraternity is, among other things, a business organization, and one objective standard by which a chapter can be rated is its ability to balance the budget and remain financially stable. When a chapter's books begin to appear red at the end of each fiscal year, the desirability of this chapter as a future home for a college freshman is questionable. It is unfair to ask a man to come into an organization and assume the debts contracted by his predecessors who have been in the chapter one, two, three years, or a college generation before his time. It has been increasingly interesting, during the past two years, to watch the floundering fight of some fraternities to keep their heads above water.

During the imbecilic years from 1926 to 1929 when all of "those who know" assured us that "prosperity had come to stay," grown men so completely lost their senses of value that now their business and family fortunes have completely vanished. With such a situation existing among business men, is it any wonder that immature college boys built houses which were larger and far too expensive for them to manage? On campus after campus during this period, houses large enough to accommodate forty-five to sixty people, erected at a cost of seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars have gone up, and often at the moment of occupation the organization would possess an equity of less than \$1000. One house president at Illinois told me that their house was built with the idea that there would be a minimum of forty-five men in the house. It was inconceivable in 1928, when this house was built, that there would ever be a time when members would be scarce. Last year the greatest number in the house at any one time was thirty-one men. This meant a loss of income amounting to \$8400, which in addition to some financial mismanagement, left the chapter very much in debt at the close of the year.

At Illinois the fight for existence has



been particularly difficult because of the number of fraternities on the campus, and because of the elaborate building program which has been developed in recent years. Only the substantial enrollment which has persisted and the cooperation of the university have saved many chapters. More individual groups, organized under Greek letter names, and living in chapter houses, are to be found at Illinois than at any other university in the country.

That fraternities have just begun to feel the depression seriously during the last year and a half is evident from the fact that for the first time since fraternities first came on the campus in 1872 has there been a decline in the number of organizations in existence. This can be clearly seen from the following table showing the number of chapters each year since 1927-28.

YEAR	NAT.	LOC. SOC.	PROF. SOC.	TOTAL
(1) 1927-28	66	10	12	88
(2) 1927-28	68	8	12	88
(1) 1928-29	68	8	12	88
(2) 1928-29	68	10	13	91
(1) 1929-30	68	10	13	91
(2) 1929-30	68	10	13	91
(1) 1930-31	70	10	12	92
(2) 1930-31	72	7	11	90
(1) 1931-32	73	7	8	88
(2) 1931-32	70	7	8	85
(1) 1932-33	69	7	8	84

The start in the reduction of the number of fraternities which came during the second semester 1930-31 had its basis in the increased financial difficulties presented by the current economic conditions. This reduction came in the form of two consolidations. First, two local fraternities, K Z P and A A A, consolidated to bring to the campus a new national, A K II. K Z P was established as a local at Illinois in 1926, while A A A came into existence the next year. The personnel of the two organizations was very similar. Each chapter had 28 men for the year 1929-30, and K Z P had 28 return for the year 1930-31, while A A A had 21. In addition to their desire to go national, each organization was having difficulty with finances. The consolidation to form a chapter of A K II was a happy solution to their problem.

By

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