

## A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LOSS OF KOSTKA HALL

Office of the President

On Saturday afternoon, December 14, Kostka Hall, Campion's oldest building, was totally destroyed by fire. Two students suffered a bit from smoke inhalation, but their condition was not serious. One fireman has been hospitalized with a broken leg and burns, and a couple of other firemen suffered less severe burns. Other than that, there were no personal injuries.

Kostka Hall housed the administrative offices, several classrooms, the theaters, the art department, and various auxiliary facilities. The fire began in one of the small rooms on the top floor, from undetermined cause. It was discovered by a student working in the radio room, V O C, early Saturday afternoon. He summoned help from a couple of Jesuits and some students. They turned in the fire alarm and attacked the fire with extinguishers, but the smoke became too great and drove them out. When the fire department arrived, they thought at first that they would be able to control the fire and confine it to the upper floor, but it quickly grew beyond their control. In the meantime, some of the faculty and students organized to carry out the records from the offices on the first floor. They managed to save these and some of the easily movable items of equipment. As the fire grew, however, they were advised by the chief to stop this operation.

Help was summoned from the fire companies in several neighboring towns. They responded generously, but were unable to do more than prevent the fire from spreading to adjacent buildings. By evening only portions of the walls were standing. Heating lines to some of the other buildings ran through Kostka; these, of course, were broken by the heat. Our engineers re-routed steam through other places to keep heat in all the major buildings, but not in the infirmary and music hall. On Sunday they laid an emergency line above ground to carry heat to these two buildings. Since the walls still standing constituted some danger, a wrecking crew was brought in on Sunday to knock down the parts that looked capable of collapsing.

With the generous help of a number of students who worked most of Sunday, administrative offices have been relocated in the front part of Lawler Hall. Other temporary measures will enable us to accommodate the classes and study halls that were formerly conducted in Kostka. In general, then, the school will function much as usual, except for the dramatics work and the movies. Unfortunately for the students' social life, their coffee house and dance hall will not be able to find new quarters on campus.

Though the total destruction of a major building is obviously a very great loss, there is much to be thankful for in the situation. There was only one serious injury, to the fireman, Mr. Fishler; business and student records were saved; the fire did not spread to Campion or Xavier Halls, as it might easily have done. Had circumstances been different, our loss could well have been far greater.

At this time we have not formulated any plans for the construction of another building. We will, of course, have to do something soon to provide for the lost classroom space and the theaters, but this will take some time to plan. In the meantime, the school will continue to run as normal, though with some minor inconveniences.

J. R. Hilbert, S.J. President