

The English Debaters Again



Two debating teams representing English universities have been touring the United States this past fall again meeting our students upon the platform. The program of international debates, begun when Bates College of Maine crossed the Atlantic in 1921 and Oxford returned the visit the next year, has continued to date in an unbroken series. The interest in these debates with our English cousins has encouraged debaters from other nations to visit our shores. We have had teams from Australia, Mexico, Canada, and other countries. This year a team from our own University of Hawaii, boasting of representatives of the various races most prominent in the Islands, is making a tour.

The Oxford team scheduled twenty-six debates. Its itinerary called for debates in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, and the South. It meets six Pi Kappa Delta institutions, Minnesota Gamma and Epsilon at Gustavus Adolphus and St. Thomas; Missouri Alpha and Theta at Westminster and Kirksville Teachers; Illinois Eta at Normal University; and Oklahoma Beta at Tulsa. The Cambridge teams toured the Atlantic Coast and the middle west, meeting the Michigan Delta debaters at Michigan State. These debates attracted much interest and drew good crowds. They have built up a reputation for being lively and animated discussions. People turn out to hear the authentic Oxford accent or to listen to the English wise-cracks.

Much has been written about the influence of the English debating system. The writer has listened to a number of these international debates, has followed the comment on these contests in the college and professional press, and has discussed them with those who have participated in them. While the appraisal which follows is necessarily personal, the opinion reflected is not his alone.

The first impression which affects the American observer is the outstanding quality of the English representatives. They have uniformly been men and women of character and personality, including the son of the premier and a descendant of Sir Walter Scott. They frequently are the outstanding university representatives of the nation. They have usually been graduates, men who have already established themselves as leaders, often young writers who have published in English magazines. Ramsay Macdonald's son was elected to Parliament while he was touring this country. As they have been chiefly men who have finished their education, they have been slight-

ly older than our own representatives. Many of them come with a background gained from European travel.

Most of them have welcomed their American trip as an opportunity to visit the United States. In order to make their trip possible they have been willing to meet a number of American colleges and universities. This has required them to discuss several questions. The subjects debated have ranged from the serious to the ridiculous, from our relations with the league of nations to the question of whether or not we should pity our grandchildren. One inevitable result of this broad discussion program has been that the English debaters have frequently talked on topics which they had studied but little and concerning which they did not pretend to know much.

These discussions of topics to which intent study had not been given has had its effect upon the nature of the debate. The English debaters have emphasized personality more than information. They talk in an intelligent, easy, individual manner emphasizing personal opinion more than a logical analysis of the available evidence. There is a greater attempt to entertain than to inform. Wise-cracking is frequent and now eagerly looked forward to by the average American audience. "The Lord created monkeys with tails, but left man to draw his own conclusions," one Britisher remarked. John Royle of the recent Cambridge team suggested of one of the Michigan State debaters that he "would have been better had he put less fire in his speech and more of his speech in the fire."

We have been told that this lively, personal, witty type of discussion is characteristic of the English debate and marks the difference between the American and British style in forensics. Undoubtedly it does. In part, however, it grows necessarily out of the fact that the English debater does not take the platform with the mass of information at his command which is characteristic of the better American college speaker. He could of course make the same type of preparation. That he does not results as much from the fact that for him his American trip is largely a vacation and a sight seeing tour and that to make it possible he has to discuss a number of questions as from a difference in forensic style.

While the English debates have more audience appeal and usually demonstrate that the British students are better speakers as far as audience appeal is concerned, the American students have not infrequently met them at their own style and more than held their own. The American student, often characterized by a flippant air, does not have to yield ground in a contest of sarcasm, wit, and wise-cracking. He generally feels, however, that while such exchanges are all right for entertainment, they do not help much towards an in-

telligent settlement of the question before the house. The general impression is that the American style of debating, with all its tiresome recital of evidence and close application of logic, is more effective.

The following editorial comment from *The Aquin* of the College of St. Thomas apropos of the recent debate there with the Oxford team, has been the characteristic American estimate through the fourteen years of English forensic invasions:

"The debate proved one thing definitely, and that was that the American style of debating is far superior to the English style. The style of this country, of course, is to confine one's arguments to specific issues, while the European manner is to side-step the opponents' issues and bring up several minor points along with a bit of humor. The last point, that is the humor idea, really brought out the difference in the two systems more than any other one thing. The American debate is generally a serious thing meant for educating the audience while the English idea is to entertain."

The British visitors have usually been willing to schedule debates with any institution which can meet their financial requirements. For example, the recent Oxford team met the alumni association of a junior college. A contest with an eight hundred years old institution from across the seas has an appeal, especially to many of our young American institutions which have in many cases less than a half a century behind them. The prestige of Oxford and Cambridge and the novelty of an international debate have made these visiting teams very popular opponents. While they require a financial guarantee to cover their expenses, many institutions have found the investment a profitable one. Two thousand attended the Cambridge debate at Wayne University. Besides the financial gain, these debates have often furthered forensics and increased student interest.

The first enthusiasm over them has died down somewhat. American forensic leaders are not taking them too seriously any more. At first it was suggested that the American style would be reformed along English lines. While they have undoubtedly helped to make the American student more conscious of his obligations to his audience and to relieve the deadly seriousness and rapid fire of statistical information characteristic of our debates, they have left the essential nature of the native intercollegiate contest unaltered. Perhaps, in part, this is due to the great emphasis on contest debates in tournaments now the chief feature of our forensic programs. The humorous, personal English style of discussion just does not hold its own against the more deadly American seriousness in a tournament. While the Eng-

lish style has helped us to improve our own, it has not caused us to abandon it.

Many improvements have been made in the international program. The guarantees asked were too heavy originally. Three hundred dollars were demanded and received in some cases. It has been figured that one popular team of a few years ago took in enough to make possible its trip on around the world. The American visit was a profitable speaking tour for some of these early visitors. That has been changed now. The financial inducements now expected are more reasonable.

The basis on which these international trips are maintained is distasteful to the sense of justice of many Americans. The colleges and the public of the United States are asked to pay the freight both ways. We finance the visits of our English cousins to this country and also the return trips our own debaters make. As the English debaters usually represent families from the high economic levels, while our own have not infrequently been men who are working their own way through college, there is no reason why the debaters of each nation should not pay their own expenses, except perhaps that the American public is willing to pay to hear a speaker from one of the world famous old English universities, while the British public has no interest in many of the small colleges their speakers debate and have never heard of them.

Perhaps, also, it is time to drop the clowning and give the debates a more serious turn. In fact, during the past few years the trend has been that way. It was suggested originally that the contests should promote international good will and understanding. Perhaps they have. Such serious discussions as the recent ones concerning the advantages of an unwritten constitution, such as the English, over a written one, such as the American, lead to a better understanding of the differences in governments.

The idea might be extended to other nations and more timely questions discussed. If the language difficulties could be overcome, and they can, it might be very interesting to have Italian students defend Mussolini's African policy before American student audiences. Many of us would be glad to hear a Japanese team justify its nation's policy in the Orient. If Hitler cared to send representatives from German universities to discuss his treatment of the Jews, there are a number of American colleges who could put able debaters of Hebrew ancestry on the platform against them. Such a debate would certainly not be dull.

National Officers Attend Speech Meeting In Chicago



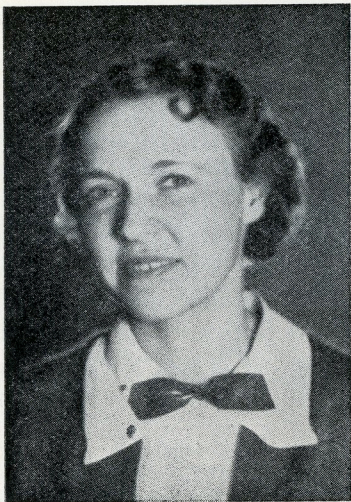
President George McCarty and four of our national vice-presidents held a meeting to plan the program for the National Convention in Houston while they were attending the meeting of the National Association of Teachers of Speech at the Hotel Stevens in Chicago, December 30 to January 1 inclusive.

The nine hundred who attended this meeting made it the largest meeting of the teachers of speech ever held. The attendance was increased by meetings at the same time of the American Speech Correction Association and the National Theatre Conference. Approximately one hundred twenty-five speakers took part in the program. Forensic tournaments received attention, both in the formal discussion groups and in the informal hall-way comment.

The program presented at the gathering was an interesting and varied one. Its major divisions were: Graduate Study; Oral Interpretation; Rhetoric and Public Speaking; Coordinated Program of School Groups; Theatre and Dramatic Art; Speech Correction; Speech Science and Phonetics; Tests and Measurements; Curriculum Changes; Extra-Curricular Activities; College Fundamentals Courses; and Forensic Contests, Methods and Values.

A partial list of Pi Kappa Delta coaches present follows:

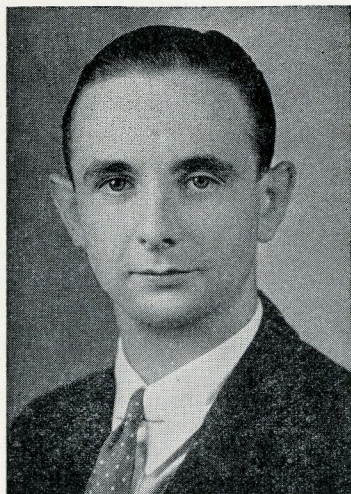
President George McCarty, South Dakota State; S. R. Toussaint, Monmouth; W. V. O'Connell, Battle Creek; Forest Rose, Southeast Missouri State Teachers; George V. Bohman, Dakota Wesleyan; Former National President George R. R. Pflaum, Kansas State Teachers of Emporia; Former National Vice-President J. D. Menchhofer, Michigan State; Chas. S. Templer, Hamline; Karl Mundt, Eastern State Teachers; Herbert Curry, Yankton; Dana T. Burns, Baldwin-Wallace; F. Byers Miller, Berea High School; Guy Eugene Oliver, North Central; J. W. Carmichael, Bowling Green; Theodore Hatlin, Franklin; Harry Thomas Wood, Michigan State Normal; D. W. Morris, University of Maine; Leroy T. Laase, Hastings; Vernon A. Utzinger, Carroll; C. C. Cunningham, Northwestern; Le Roy Lewis, Duke; and Everett Brown, Eureka, Kansas.



LORA BRYNING

Puget Sound, Washington Alpha, second in debate at the Linfield tournament (1934); extempore speaker (1935).

FROM
CANADA
TO
MEXICO



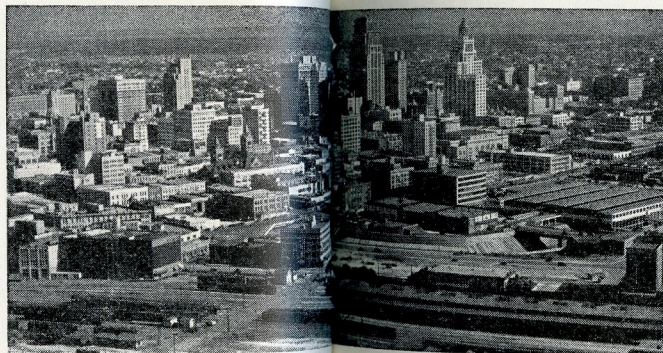
EGBERT RAY NICHOLS,
JR.

Redlands, California Alpha, student representative on the National Council. Competed at Lexington (1934). Winner of oratory at Western Association of Teachers of Speech Tournament (1935).

FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC

From the Four Corners of the Nation

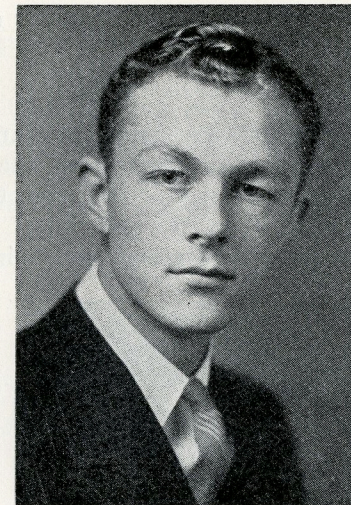
SEVEN ARE STRONG



HOUSTON, TEXAS
THE OIL CITY

To the Pi Kappa Delta Convention at Houston

FROM MARYLAND TO CALIFORNIA



HAROLD W. HICKEY

Colby, Maine Alpha. State champion high school debater (1931); debated at Lexington (1934); second in provincial oratory (1930).

FROM THE
GREAT LAKES
TO THE
GULF

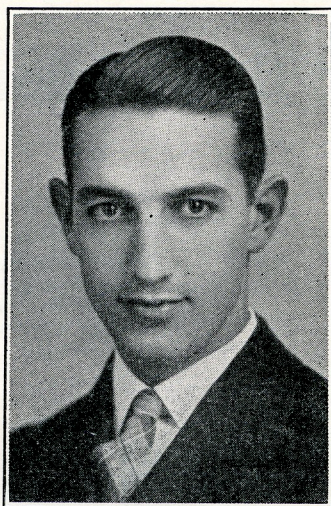
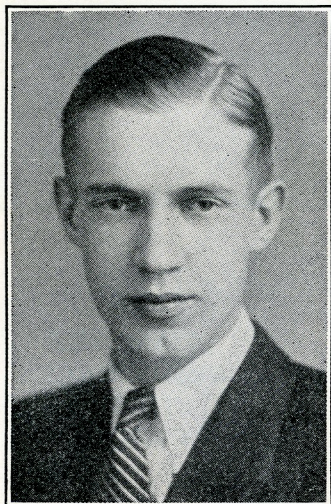
BETTY TEST

Rollins, Florida Alpha. This will be her first trip to a National Convention.



DON SMITH

Senior. Former editor and present business manager of the college paper. Four year debater. Has participated in two provincial contests and the last national at Lexington.



GEORGE HENIGAN

Senior. Former business manager and present editor of the college paper. Three years of debating. Extempore speaker at the last national convention at Lexington.

CARRYING DEBATE TO THE PEOPLE

The forensic department of Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, Kirksville, Missouri, is one of the largest in quantity and quality in the history of the college.

Of the 659 students enrolled in the fall quarter, 58 are new members of the debate squad, 10 are veteran debaters who are members of Pi Kappa Delta, and 25 are participating in extempore speaking and oratory. A conservative estimate places from 15 to 20 percent of the entire student body engaged in oratory, debate and extempore speaking.

Following is a pamphlet sent to schools, clubs, churches, etc., in Northeast Missouri which states the position taken by the Teachers College in regard to serving surrounding communities:

"Someone has said that the reason for hope in America in our present state of world affairs is that America wants

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THE WINFIELD TOURNAMENT

Messrs. George Henigan and Don Smith of Kearney State Teachers College, Nebraska Zeta, won the men's championship in the debate tournament at Southwestern College, Kansas Delta, December 6-7. The Nebraska team defeated Texas Technological College of Lubbock in the final contest.

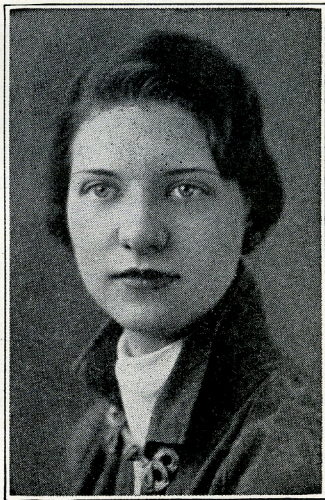
Two Pi Kappa Delta teams spoke in the finals of the women's tournament, where Oklahoma Iota,

Central State Teachers of Edmond, defeated Oklahoma Eta, East Central Teachers of Ada. Oklahoma Eta also won second in the junior college tournament, which was won by Seminole, Oklahoma.

Miss Irene Buhler of Southwestern won the women's oratorical contest and Paul Geren of Baylor, Texas Iota, won the men's oratorical.

Seven states were represented by speakers from fifty colleges. There were one hundred seventy-eight debate teams competing. The six hundred seventy-four debates handled in two days constitutes something of a record.

Prof. Martin J. Holcomb, Illinois Xi of Augustana, brought a squad of fourteen eight hundred miles to compete.



IRENE BUHLER
Southwestern College

DEBATE SUBJECTS

The annual survey of debate subjects taken by "Inter-collegiate Debates" reveals some interesting facts about the variety and popularity of debate subjects for this debate season.

Of 105 colleges and universities reporting out of about 500 the Supreme Court is receiving attention from 101. The Socialized Medicine subject, chosen as the national high school subject, is being debated by 28 colleges and universities. League Sanctions stands third with 12. The others stand as follows:

6. The campaign of 1936.
5. Control of industry; the Neutrality Policy.
4. The Constitution, written or unwritten.

3. Coeducation; the Agricultural Adjustment Act; Cotton Control Program; Right of Expanding States to Control Weaker Nations; Nationalization of Munitions; the Relief or Government Spending Program.

2. Compulsory R. O. T. C.; Economic Nationalism; Statehood for Hawaii; Italian Policy in Ethiopia; Limitation of Wealth by Taxation; The New Deal; Old Age Pensions; Public Utilities; Socialism; Social Security Legislation.

1. Advertising; Canadian Wheat Control; Professional Athletics for Colleges; Reform of Constitution; Credit; Specialized vs. General Education; Effective Use of Leisure; Emergency Powers; Fraternity System; Jury System; Married Women in Industry; Styles; Olympic Games; Parole System; Federal Police Power, Extension of; Profit System; Propaganda; Sales Tax; Thirty Hour Week.

The predominant position of the Pi Kappa Delta subject is quite apparent from this survey. Also the wide variety of subjects possible for debate at this time is manifest. It is noticeable also, that outside of the two national subjects chosen by organizations, the trend is to take subjects of current interest—subjects in the daily news.

If the other four hundred colleges were heard from there might be an increase of interest in many of these subjects, but it is quite probable that the comparative popularity of the subjects would remain the same.

PRACTICE TOURNAMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO

The Practice Tournament sponsored by the Western Association of Teachers of Speech and conducted by Professors Joseph Baccus of the University of Redlands and Kenneth M. King of San Francisco State Teachers' College was held in San Francisco Nov. 25-27. The convention was a very successful one and several of the teachers and students taking part remained for the sessions of the Western Association of Teachers of Speech at the William Taylor Hotel held during the latter part of the same week.

The contest results were as follows:

Men's Debate: 1st, University of Southern California; 2nd, Wilamette.

Women's Debate: 1st, Linfield; 2nd, College of Pacific.

Junior College Debate: 1st, Bakersfield; 2nd, Glendale.

Men's Oratory: E. R. Nichols, Jr., University of Redlands; Mr. Brown, University of Denver; Mr. Fuller, University of Denver, tied

for first in two preliminary and final rounds, Mr. Nichols leading in the final round.

Women's Oratory: Gertrude Wachob, Bakersfield; Miss Whorley, Puget Sound, tied for first place. 3rd, Miss Marie Nichols, Bakersfield.

Men's Extempore Speaking: 1st, Paul Hammond, California Institute of Technology; 2nd, Weston McIntosh, University of Redlands.

Women's Extempore Speaking: 1st, Miss Railsback, Linfield; 2nd, Miss Bryning, Puget Sound.

Interpretive Reading (Women): Miss Beth Botkin of University of Redlands and Miss Bard, San Francisco State College, tied for first. Miss Collins, San Francisco State, third.

The following states were represented in the contests: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Thirty-three different colleges, universities and junior colleges sent representatives and contestants. There were 50 teams in the men's varsity, 21 women's teams, and 30 lower division and junior college teams. Sixty-four men took part in the extempore contest and about 35 men in oratory. The Pi Kappa Delta or Supreme Court subject was used in the debates and the decisions were 152 affirmative and 146 negative.

Charges that debaters are "sissies," and no good for other activities are amply refuted by the scholastic records and activities of ten men on the Trinity, Texas Beta, squad. William Everheart is an all-conference guard on the football team, and number three man on the varsity tennis team. Stuart Lumpkins is number one man on the varsity tennis team, and four others are either squad men or reserves in tennis. Everheart is vice president of the student body and president of the Y. M. C. A. George Collins is editor of the college weekly, and Ronald Hubbard is assistant business manager of the same organ. Collins and Neil Kirkpatrick are members of the student council. Joseph Copeland is president of the Players' Club. William McCurdy is secretary to President Leach of the University, and a member of the University male quartette. Howard Rutherford is assistant cheer leader, and secretary to the Dean. Several members of the squad are regularly on the University Honor Roll. Under leadership of President Wm. McCurdy, Texas Beta chapter is planning an active year, and a large delegation to the Houston convention.

EDITOR'S PERSONAL PAGE

Where inconsistencies cease from troubling and logic is at rest

What boots it thy pleasure?
What profit thy parts?
If one thing thou lackest,
The art of all arts?

The only credentials,
Passport to success,
Opens castle and parlor,
Address, man, address.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The reader of this issue will probably agree with the Editor that Southwestern and Kirksville Teachers got more than their share of space and publicity. They got it because they did some interesting things and sent accounts of them to the FORENSIC. One reader recently wrote that he noticed the FORENSIC tried to feature news of unusual forensic achievements. He sent in with his letter an account of some of the interesting things his own chapter was doing. More than one chapter has profited through information gained from the pages of the FORENSIC. It has learned of profitable debate questions and new forensic methods. It should respond by sending the FORENSIC news of some of its own achievements. If you think your chapter is being discriminated against in the pages of the FORENSIC, won't you see that your national magazine is supplied news and pictures about your members? Be sure that your college paper is being sent to the Editor. It is the best and most constant source of information he has. Not half of the chapters are sending their papers.

Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.—Herbert—"Temple".

No pen can anything eternal write
That is not steeped in shadows of the night.—Chapman.

He who speaks well is a man.—*President U. S. Grant.*

A fool is known by the multitude of his words.—*Bible.*