

The editor is very happy to present the following excellent articles on the techniques of debate. They contain practical advice for both beginning and advanced debaters. Glenn R. Capp is chairman of the department of speech and coach of debate at Baylor University and is a past national president of Pi Kappa Delta. Larry E. Norton is director of forensics at Bradley University and is a present member of the national council. Emmett Long is director of forensics at George Pepperdine College and is a past governor of the Province of the Pacific.

Debating the Affirmative

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The Problem

RECENTLY A LETTER from an organization that sponsors a national contest in debate stated in part: "I am enclosing a list of twenty-five debate propositions used for our National Convention debates. I am also enclosing an excerpt from an article that was rather critical of the fact that the negative won twenty out of twenty-one times. . . . I was asked by our National Officers to make a study of this criticism to determine whether the . . . was guilty of phrasing the propositions badly. Our Officers are also interested in knowing whether there are ways in which such a preponderance of victories on one side might be reduced. . . . I shall appreciate your sending me your reactions. . . ."

The enclosed critical analysis read in part: "There is no need for the negative side to study the case, all it has to do is to stick to a canned, 'They haven't proved anything,' which will do as well for one subject as another; and there is no use for the affirmative to waste time on studying, either, for they are licked from the start."

Parts of my letter in reply stated: "In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with the statement of these topics. They present well balanced propositions. The preponderance of wins for the negative must be accounted for on other grounds.

"I believe there are two reasons for excessive negative decisions. In the first place unless a great deal of work is given to preparing, it is much easier to debate the negative of any proposition. I can imagine that most of your people are busy men who can give

only a relatively brief time to preparing. From the nature of the negative side, which need only tear down an idea, it has the initial advantage. In working with my own students, we give at least seventy-five per cent of our attention to building the affirmative case early in the season.

"Secondly, I am wondering if the situation you describe cannot be helped by your choice of judges. My experience shows that debate directors or former directors judge more on the accomplishments in a debate and less on their belief on the questions than any other group. We get more negative votes where we use business men as judges. How would a panel of judges for your debates consisting of the following strike you: two business men, two debate directors, and one educator from a field outside of speech."

High school and college debaters have also testified to the difficulty of winning on the affirmative side, especially early in the debate year. This article proposes to discuss certain techniques and procedures designed to help overcome this seeming inequality.

Nature of the Affirmative Side

First, consider the general nature and philosophy of the affirmative side. The affirmative on any properly worded policy question should be the aggressor. Since the affirmative proposes a change in an existing political, economic, or social policy it must assume the burden of proving its case. No justification for change accrues unless an improved condition results. The negative, therefore, has the presumption in its favor at the beginning of the debate.

The procedures of burden of proof and presumption of argument come largely from legal procedure. The defendant in any legal action is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. Rights of the individual predominate. While varying degrees of proof exist, the preponderance of legal procedure favors the defendant. Liberty loving people prefer that an occasional guilty person go free than that innocent people be found guilty. This emphasis on the rights of the individual distinguishes the concept of the free world from that of dictatorial governments. This same principle pertains to college debate. An existing order is considered best until a better one can be proved. The affirmative must prove its case not only as good as the status quo, but better.

Debate procedures also borrow from policy-determining groups. The affirmative in a college debate may be compared to the proponent of a measure in a deliberative assembly. To prevail in a policy-determining group, the **proponent must show** that a proposal will remedy an existing problem better than the present system; otherwise, why change?

In short, the affirmative must maintain the offensive throughout the debate. A recent sports story stated that a certain football team won because it controlled the ball. During the last half the winning team ran forty-nine offensive plays, while the losing team ran only twenty-three. The winning team was the aggressor, as the affirmative side must be in a debate. The affirmative speakers must keep their case constantly before the audience and judges. In maintaining the offensive the affirmative has three obligations: (1) to present a *prima facie* case—one that is capable of winning as originally planned; (2) to uphold the case from attacks made by the negative; and (3) to answer the negative counter-arguments.

Present a Prima Facie Case

A case sufficient to win if not answered consists primarily of three factors: (1) a problem exists; (2) the affirmative proposal can correct that problem; and (3) the affirmative proposal will bring about advantages in addition to the correction of the problem. Should the negative introduce a counter proposal, the issue of which plan can best correct the evils then becomes a basic issue.

In proving that a problem exists the affirmative must show that the existing evils are sufficient to demand a change. Ordinarily an affirmative team cannot present all of the

evils which exist; it should give the strongest evils, being careful to concentrate on those which can be corrected by its proposal.

An important question for the affirmative concerns how much time to spend in developing the problem. Some affirmative teams do not spend sufficient time. In a recent tournament two affirmative teams gave the entire affirmative case in the opening speech. Such procedure is questionable. It does not allow sufficient time to support the specific evils with adequate logical proof. After the first affirmative speech the constructive phase of the debates stopped. The remainder of the debates consisted largely of a rehashing of the first affirmative's arguments. No standard answer can be given to what constitutes sufficient proof, but too much is better than too little. The degrees of proof required will vary with different propositions, but ordinarily the first affirmative speaker cannot develop more than the issue of need adequately if he gives the proper analysis and introduction to the debate.

Above all, the evils developed must be an outgrowth of conditions that can be corrected by the proposal called for in the proposition. Beware of presenting extraneous problems outside the subject matter of the proposition. Concentrate on those phases of the problem on which you have a natural advantage from the conditions which actually exist. Let the prevailing condition help you prove your case.

Your second problem concerns how to correct the evils. This involves the question of how detailed a plan should be given. Many affirmative teams present too detailed a plan. The time limits in a debate constitute a limiting factor. In some instances the proposal called for in the proposition may be sufficient. For example, this year's question for recognition of the Communist government of China by the United States to an extent contains the plan in the proposition. The affirmative needs only to show how the proposal can be put into operation, the approximate time required to inaugurate it, and any conditions of recognition which the affirmative considers appropriate. The affirmative cannot, however, evade the practicability of its proposal by hiding behind the word "should." The term "should" implies the possibility of the proposal being put into operation and how it would work should it be adopted. A good affirmative team will first outline the minimum details and conditions of its proposal, and then will show how it can correct each evil.

In addition to correcting shortcomings of the present system, often times the affirmative may point out additional advantages and thus strengthen its case. This procedure may constitute a good strategical device because the negative must answer these points. In doing so it will have less time to concentrate on the evils which the affirmative advanced and the means of correcting them. What differentiates added advantages from the correcting of the problem, depends upon how the affirmative develops its issue of need. For example, on the question of recognizing Communist China the matter of improving trade relations might be advanced as an added advantage if the trade problem is not presented as an evil. The same would be true of the effect of recognition on the attitudes of Asiatic countries and our allies.

In summary, the affirmative side must give first attention to presenting an adequate constructive case. It must present a case sufficient to prove to the average, reasonable and prudent person that its course of action should be taken. Some affirmative teams fail because their cases as originally planned are not sufficient to overcome the presumption that favors the negative at the beginning of a debate on any properly worded policy question.

Answer Attacks Made by Negative

While the affirmative's first duty consists of presenting an adequate constructive case, its duties do not end there. It must uphold its case from the attacks made on it by the negative. In performing this important function, the affirmative often makes several mistakes.

Some affirmative teams let the negative get them off of their cases and on to the negative objections throughout the debate. Remember that the affirmative must prove its case. This it cannot do unless it keeps the affirmative case constantly before the audience and judges. A good strategical device for the affirmative consists of briefly restating its case at the beginning of each speech. The affirmative speakers might well say, "Now here is the affirmative case restated briefly, how has the negative answered. Against our first issue the negative made two objections which I shall take up in order." After giving your counter arguments and evidence, conclude that the issue still stands. Then the affirmative speaker restates the second issue of his case, summarize the objection made against it, and attempts to answer them. Thus, the affirmative keeps its case moving throughout

the debate, and answers negative objections only for the purpose of rebuilding its own case.

Often negative teams succeed in narrowing a debate to one or two main objections upon which they have a natural advantage from the existing evidence and reasoning on the point. In most cases the affirmative will find it advantageous to keep its entire case going. If the negative abandons certain arguments the affirmative should emphasize that the arguments have been gained by failure of the negative to reply. While the affirmative has the "burden of proof" on its original case, the negative shares the "burden of rebuttal" with the affirmative and consequently must answer an argument at any time during the debate that the presumption favors the opposition. The burden of rebuttal means the obligation to reply to an argument. Once the negative fails to reply to a *prima facie* argument, it automatically concedes the point. If the affirmative remembers this principle, it can often prevent the negative from narrowing the debate to one or two objections on which it has a natural advantage.

In attempting to uphold its case some affirmative teams make the mistake of restating supporting arguments and evidence which it gave originally in advancing the point. You should reserve additional reasons and evidence for the purpose of reconstructing your case. Perhaps this mistake stems from the erroneous impression that some debaters have that "new material cannot be given in the rebuttal speeches." This principle means simply that you cannot wait until your rebuttal speeches to complete your constructive cases. New evidence and additional reasons are desirable in rebuttal speeches on issues already introduced into the debate. Otherwise, the rebuttal speeches would consist of a restatement of what was said in the constructive speeches. Some affirmative teams seem to disregard the specific manner in which the negative answers a point and restates the point as advanced originally. Keep your case going throughout the debate by answering the specific objections made against it, adding new ideas and fresh evidence throughout the debate.

Affirmative debaters often make the mistake of over-zealous claims on what they have done and what the negative has failed to do. In a recent debate an affirmative speaker began his rebuttal speech by summarizing an important issue and stating that the negative had remained significantly silent on the point.

This claim would probably have made a more favorable impression on the judge had not the preceding negative speaker spent half of his rebuttal speech on the point. The judge was curious to know whether the affirmative speaker simply had not listened to the preceding speaker or whether he thought the judge had not. Psychologically, most people respond more favorably to understatement than to overstatement. Yet many affirmative speakers make sweeping claims for themselves and minimize all out of proportion what the opponent has done. What actually transpires in the debate usually makes more of an impression on the judge than the sweeping claims of opposing speakers.

Answer Negative Objections

Although the affirmative's constructive case and its defense form the chief concern of the affirmative in a debate, in most debates its obligations do not end there. Often negative teams advance an issue that takes the form of "the affirmative proposal will introduce new evils" or "the disadvantages of the affirmative proposal will outweigh its advantages." The affirmative must answer such negative objections. Both the attitude and technique of such answers may be important.

Usually the answers to negative positive objections should come at the conclusion of the constructive and reconstructive processes, already discussed. Such transition to their consideration may well take the following form: "You will note that the affirmative has presented a case for its proposal consisting of these issues. . . . The negative arguments against our plan were five in number which we have attempted to answer. Now there remains four disadvantages which the negative has advanced. Let us see if they are valid or controlling objections to our proposal." Follow this transition by your answers and then return to your original case to show where the objections were not adequate to overcome the advantages you presented. You answer the arguments for the purpose of showing that your case still prevails and thus keep the affirmative constructive case constantly forward in the debate.

On some occasions negative teams seek to get the affirmative team off of their own case by presenting numerous objections, often trivial, for the purpose of causing the affirmative to waste time. The affirmative need not succumb to such strategy. Usually only a few valid objections exist on any proposition; the

negative classifies them into numerous sub-points. The affirmative may well show where several of them stem from the same principle, and thus by answering the principle several points may be answered by one argument. By grouping all the objections under two or three main principles, the affirmative may answer successfully all of them in short order.

The affirmative does not have the obligation to respond unless an argument is presented in sufficient logical detail to create a presumption in favor of the one presenting it. On occasion the affirmative may shift the obligation for further proof back to the negative by stating that "we shall be happy to deal with the negative objections if the gentlemen will show where they are valid or how they apply to this debate." Use this technique where negative teams list numerous points with insufficient reasons and evidence. Never attempt to answer an argument when you already have the advantage on it.

In summary, college debate procedures do not give an advantage to the negative side. A sincere and successful attempt has been made to equalize the procedural methods. A preponderance of negative decisions early in the year usually occurs because of inadequate preparation and a lack of knowledge on how to present the affirmative case most advantageously. This article purported to call attention to the necessity of preparation and to review some of the strategical advices essential to successful affirmative debating.

Planning The Negative Case

LARRY NORTON, *Bradley University*

AT THE BEGINNING of any debate, the negative team, without any planning whatsoever, is winning with the status quo. Then the affirmative starts to unfold its case and the negative begins to adapt by using one of four possible approaches which has been previously decided upon. These approaches are: (a) straight refutation, (b) the status quo, (c) a modified status quo, or (d) a counterplan.

Before deciding upon the best approach toward any given debate proposition, certain assumptions relating to debate should be reviewed. It is assumed that a problem exists, that this problem is in the solution stage, and that all persons concerned are interested in

finding the best possible answers to the problem. Not only do we assume that dissatisfaction exists with "things as they are" but that several solutions to the problem are or have been under consideration. This we assume, since we know that there is seldom just one possible solution to any problem, particularly a problem of national or international significance.

A debater's preparation for evaluating a solution includes, therefore, an understanding of the total problem of which a given debate proposition is one possible solution. In the case of this year's national topic, this means that the debater must approach it by way of studying a problem which might be stated something like this: "How can the United States combat the spread of Communism in Asia?" the debater should realize that the status quo is one of several courses of action under consideration. Any solution which can justifiably replace the present system must be presumed to offer greater advantages than the present system. It may be insufficient to show that for a proposed solution, other than the status quo, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The same may be true of the status quo. In fact, when a present policy has become controversial, it is quite conceivable that its disadvantages may be slightly greater than its advantages. Thus the affirmative proposal may have greater disadvantages than advantages, yet be more acceptable than the status quo.

Now with these thoughts in mind, we return to the choice of approach for the negative. This choice or general plan, all too frequently, is not clearly determined and therefore is not set forth early enough in the first negative constructive speech. Our first possible approach, straight refutation, is seldom a popular choice because, while revealing weaknesses in the proposed solution, it ignores the fact that all things are relative. In debate they are related to the status quo and the negative must not only show the disadvantages of the affirmative proposal but that such disadvantages outweigh the disadvantages of the status quo. In other words, in order to participate in a search for the best possible solution, the negative should do more than attack. In the straight refutation approach, the negative may by implication stand for the status quo. Yet, if constructive reasons for such a stand are not stated, we have no basis for comparative judgment. Therefore, the straight refutation approach, though

quite commonly recognized as an acceptable debate practice, is difficult for the writer to justify. Straight refutation when combined with one of the other approaches is more desirable.

The status quo approach is selected when definite accomplishments can be pointed to under the present system. In such a case the negative shows that satisfaction exists and proceeds to direct its primary attack on the affirmative need. The weakness of the approach is that it assumes a society without change. It tends to disregard the obvious fact that weaknesses in the status quo have caused the problem to become the subject of discussion and debate.

A more practical approach toward most problems is the modified status quo. This approach recognizes that, although the present system or policy is basically sound, some modifications are always both possible and desirable in a dynamic society. This approach conforms to the democratic way of meeting new situations by gradual modification of present policies and programs. To produce the best results, the modified status quo is combined with straight refutation. The need outlined by the affirmative is minimized. The negative then shows that the remaining need can be better met by minor adjustments in the present system than by the affirmative proposal.

The counterplan approach is frequently used as a strategic device and when thus used is difficult to justify. The negative, in taking such an approach, is saying that in its opinion there is a better solution than either the present system with or without modifications, or the affirmative proposal. In such a situation a more profitable debate could be held with the counterplan as the proposition and the negative assuming the supporting role. The affirmative may be justified in saying to a negative presenting a counterplan; "we shall be glad to meet you on this proposition some other day but for now, let's get back to the topic for debate." The added burden of proof which a negative is forced to assume when presenting a counterplan usually makes it an impractical approach.

In the final analysis, the specific debate proposition and the specific approach of an affirmative team will be factors in determining the negative's most effective stand.

The national debate topic for the current year appears to be one which, on the basis of early season experience, lends itself best

to the combined approach of straight refutation and support of the status quo. As is too often the case in early season debates the negative teams have specialized on the straight refutation approach but as the season develops this will undoubtedly be strengthened by increasing support of the status quo.

The basic approach to a given question having been determined, the negative is now ready to plan specific details. If at all satisfactory, it will accept the affirmatives definition of "diplomatic recognition." Be cautious of accepting terms that are narrowly defined. Sometimes it is a definite advantage for the affirmative to present a specific definition or narrow interpretation. Remember that until solutions to a problem have been determined, definitions should be kept somewhat general and flexible. If terms are unacceptable, give definite reasons and request the affirmative to make revisions in line with the inherent meaning of the question.

The most frequent reason for a negative teams loss is that it does not satisfactorily handle the weaknesses of the status quo which have been presented by the affirmative. Therefore, it will be important for the negative to emphasize from the very beginning of the debate, that the weaknesses and evils pointed out by the affirmative are not a product of our policy of non-recognition. This "negative" approach may be the best means of upholding the status quo and will be strengthened by whatever positive results can be casually related to a policy of non-recognition. It is likewise important that the negative shall begin early in the debate to raise doubts and objections as to the wisdom of extending diplomatic recognition.

What then is the planned approach of each speech within this broader plan? The first negative speaker, after accepting or rejecting the definition of terms and clarifying the negative stand in the debate will probably choose to refute directly one or more main affirmative contentions before presenting the arguments upholding the status quo. The positive arguments thus become the climax of his speech.

The second negative speaker will strike again at the affirmative need and supplement the first speaker's evidence supporting the status quo. His main obligation and opportunity lies in refuting the projected advantages of recognition presented by the second affirmative. Since affirmatives commonly present a broader need than their solution could

possibly remedy, it will be appropriate to point out in many debates that only a minor part of the need will be met by diplomatic recognition. His principal objective will be to show that diplomatic recognition, far from being advantageous to the United States and the free nations will actually weaken their position in Asia. The conclusion of his speech, at least the last two minutes, will be devoted to an excellent summary. There will be summaries planned for every speech of course, but here is an ideal place in the debate, at the close of the constructive arguments, to summarize the entire debate and in terms favorable to the negative stand.

The first negative speaker in rebuttal will, if necessary, devote a brief amount of time to need. His main contribution to the negative cause will be to narrow the debate to the one or two issues which have become paramount as the debate has progressed. The affirmative has had the opportunity to set the issues at the beginning but now the negative has a distinct advantage in selecting those which shall be the focus of attention during the rebuttal speeches. Many affirmative teams go on the defensive and stay there as a result of effective limiting of issues in the first negative rebuttal speech. The first speaker will combine this procedure with a pointing up of the obligations resting upon the affirmative for the establishment of its case.

The second negative rebuttal speaker will re-emphasize the reasons for non-recognition, pile up unanswered objections to diplomatic recognition, anticipate final affirmative rebuttal arguments, repeat what the affirmative must do to establish its case, and conclude by highlighting at least one constructive argument.

The debater with a general plan carefully determined, will be capable of making necessary adaptations in the course of the debate. Having something definite to deviate from gives one confidence to deviate or adapt as well as the assurance of returning to the predetermined plan.

And finally, it may be wise to give a little forethought to delivery. Negative speakers, probably because they are attacking so much of the time, tend to become pugnacious. Regardless of what approach you are taking, remember that you are an advocate. As such you are trying to present a point of view in the most attractive and reasonable light. Then use voice and action in such a manner as to enhance the attractiveness and reasonableness of that point of view.

Rebuttal Technique

EMMETT T. LONG, *George Pepperdine College*

ANY DISCUSSION of this subject must proceed from a statement of one's opinion about the basic purpose of debate as we engage in it in the American intercollegiate tournament. In the January, 1952, *Western Speech Journal*, this author stated such opinions:

The Debate Tournament Judge is in the position of determining which of two debate teams has presented the better arguments on a given question. He is asked to determine which team did the better debating, not which team was more persuasive to him personally. He is, therefore, evaluating the skill of two groups in finding materials and shaping them into arguments, their understanding of and skill in using the accepted constituents of logical proof . . . he is not a judge of audience response.¹

It should be noted that this article brought several rebuttals.^{2,3,4}

On the basis of this author's understanding of debate, rebuttal should serve to compare the cases of the two sides and attempt to establish the following:

- (1) destroy the lines of reasoning of the opponent's case;
- (2) present additional evidence to support one's own arguments and defeat opponent's arguments;
- (3) emphasize the advantages of one's case.

It is the purpose of constructive speeches to build the case. This means all arguments of both sides must be presented in this period of the debate along with a reasonable amount of rational demonstration and/or evidence. It cannot be overemphasized that constructive time (this includes the negative) should be spent in developing the case. It should not be spent primarily in rebuttal. Of course, the cases must clash, misunderstandings must be cleared up and all points of difference should be brought out in the constructive. However, the greatest sin of debaters in constructive time (particularly the negative) is the failure to present a prepared, organized, logically arranged, rationally developed, and evidence-supported case.

Against this backdrop the author's remarks on rebuttal technique should be seen. Let us consider this matter in the following ways:

- (1) responsibility of each rebuttal;

- (2) taking notes;
- (3) using evidence;
- (4) delivery.

Responsibility of Each Rebuttal

The first negative rebuttal is the most difficult of all because it immediately follows ten minutes of negative constructive speaking. If the preceding speech has stayed with its responsibility, the rebuttal is much easier. The five minutes should be spent in

- (1) rebuilding first negative constructive arguments,
- (2) reviewing the cases of both sides,
- (3) showing the basic weaknesses in the affirmative case.

Item (1) can be covered by second negative constructive, but this author believes it is better for this to be done in rebuttal because it gives a substantial burden to this speech and it allows the speaker who presented the arguments to rebuild them.

The first affirmative rebuttal is also difficult because it can fall into the pitfall of starting at the wrong point and trying to cover too much and covering nothing clearly or thoroughly. This speaker must remember this; all *basic* arguments of the negative must be answered by the end of this speech. To accomplish this, the speaker must crystallize and answer the arguments of the second negative constructive. He usually must ignore the preceding speech and he usually has no time for summary. He is the hatchet man; he must chop down every negative argument previously unanswered. The speaker should remember two important things;

- (1) don't try to answer a shot-gun negative by answering each argument—group them, show improper elaboration by negative;
- (2) don't try to answer new arguments presented by the preceding speaker; merely point out they are illegal.

The second negative and affirmative rebuttals are similar. Both should restate the cases and show superiority by comparison. Both should rebut the speech which has just been given. The negative rebuttal should in addition hit hard the fact (if it happens) that the affirmative at this point has failed to deal with negative arguments. This frequently happens if the first affirmative rebuttal fails to answer all basic arguments. The negative speaker has the right to call for a decision to the negative regardless of what last affirma-

¹Emmett T. Long, "The Debate Judge and the Rhetorical Critic," *Western Speech*, January, 1952, p. 23.

²Carroll P. Lahman, *Ibid.*, October 1952, March 1952, p. 150.

³Lester Thonssen, *Ibid.*, October 1952, p. 287.

⁴Gale L. Richards, *Ibid.*, January 1953, p. 29.

tive may say if these missed arguments are basic and substantial.

Taking Notes

Note-taking is hard to learn. It is frequently disorganized, hard-to-read, and too extensive. One should have a scheme of note-taking something like this:

| Outline of Constructive Speech | Opposition Attack | Answer |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| I. | | |
| A. | | |
| B. | | |
| II. | | |
| A. | | |
| B. | | |

The important thing to note is that a good rebuttal is one which is organized in terms of one's constructive arguments and continues to develop them. Notes should be brief. The goal is to be able to jot-down a word or two to symbolize the opposition's point and a word or two to symbolize the intended reply. Wordy notes result in poor rebuttals; keep them short.

Using Evidence

Most debaters develop an evidence file, made out on small cards. Outside of the obvious need for affirmative and negative divisions, it is difficult to assign absolute categories for further divisions. A filing system after all is good if it works for the person using it and each person should develop his own logical system. One big error of debaters is to depend too much on quotes, if not on evidence. To be sure all good arguments must include essential available evidence, but many debaters are slaves to the quote file. First, use your head; your own ability to out-reason the opposition, to find flaws in their chain of logic. An evidence file should be reasonably brief to be useful. It should contain only material which can be called evidence, not just opinions which have little value when balanced by an opposite opinion.

Delivery

Practically all debaters speak too fast in rebuttal. They attempt to cover too much. Frequently debaters really win the debate and lose the decision because, "They got it out, but failed to get it over." No judge, no listener can be expected to follow complicated reasoning given with machine-gun rapidity. The debater should learn to accept this dictum: it is better to say something slowly and clearly rather than communicate nothing to the listener.



IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Pearl Cliffe Sommerville, one of the ten founders of Pi Kappa Delta, passed away at the Brakow Hospital, Bloomington, Illinois, October 28, 1954—the fortieth anniversary of Illinois Alpha which he established at Illinois Wesleyan University. He had been in ill health since undergoing surgery last spring.

Dr. Sommerville held Pi Kappa Delta key number seven, was a member of the first charter committee, sponsored Illinois Alpha as chapter number six, and served Pi Kappa Delta in executive positions and as a constant, enthusiastic member and supporter. On last April 7, he wrote, "I have been speaking before audiences for over fifty years and you can truly imagine that my interest in forensics and Pi Kappa Delta has not declined any at all."

As a public school teacher and superintendent, college and university professor, minister, public speaker, and author, Dr. Sommerville devoted over half a century to the ideal of a thoroughly educated and moral people. As a leader of men, counselor and director of youth, humanitarian, scholar, friend, he built an immortal monument through creating a closer fellowship and an increased human kindness. He exemplified the art of persuasion beautiful and just and Pi Kappa Deltans are grateful for founders such as he. His was the way of the pioneer, the pathfinder, based on the philosophy,

To all upon my way
Day after day
Let me be joy, be hope! Let my life
sing!

As debate coaches and teachers of speech, we are interested in those procedures which will provide the greatest educational benefits for our students. In keeping with past practices of including suggestions for improving forensic and debate activities, decisions, and speech preparation, the present article by Dr. Murrish is submitted for your consideration. Before assuming his duties as director of forensics at Illinois Upsilon, Dr. Murrish served as director of forensics at Nebraska Wesleyan University, 1949-52.

Should Debaters Judge Their Own Debates?

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One debate, which appears endless, is concerned with discovering the most effective method of judging debates. Although college students have been engaging in intercollegiate debate contests since 1892, we are still far from agreement in interpreting judging criteria.

This disagreement is manifested in the split decisions handed down by the "expert" judges. Furthermore, I am told, debaters themselves are sometimes dissatisfied with the verdict of their judges.

Criticism of debate judging often extends to an indictment of the activity itself. It is frequently contended that the over-emphasis on winning of decisions may destroy the inherent values of forensic competition.

I think that all of us who have debated or coached debaters are convinced that this activity is an essential tool of decision making in a democratic society. We recognize that the challenge and subsequent re-examination of ideas and proposals through intelligent debate have produced the instruments of social progress.

With this premise as our point of departure, it is necessary that we seek to improve our judging techniques in such a way that they are consistent with the basic philosophy upon which college debating is predicated. It was with this view in mind that I undertook an investigation of debate tournament procedures. This study was made at the University of Denver in 1953. One high school and two college tournaments, involving more than three hundred debates, were included in the experiment.

The investigation involved a comparison between evaluations of the debates submitted by both the contestants and the critic judges.

The contestants submitted evaluation forms at the conclusion of each tournament (before the official decisions were announced). These forms included: (1) The ranking of opposition debate teams from first through last. (2) The designation of which team, in the opinion of the contestants, should have been awarded the decision.

At the close of the tournament, the contestant ballots were compared with the official decisions submitted by the critic judges. It should be remembered that the contestant evaluations did not influence the official tabulations.

The results of the study disclosed an unusually high correlation between contestant and critic appraisals. An examination of the two college tournaments, Tau Kappa Alpha and Rocky Mountain Speech Conference, revealed that the contestants and critics were in agreement about two-thirds of the time in respect to the decisions. By contrast, the debaters in the high school tournament sponsored by the National Forensic League agreed with the decisions of the judges in about half of the total instances.

Similarly, contestant rankings of opposition debate teams bear a close correspondence with the official critic evaluations. This was especially true in the Tau Kappa Alpha competition where the rankings of the teams based on critic decisions were almost identical with the team standings as determined by contestant rankings.

A "multiple" judging experiment was conducted in the fourth round of the TKA tournament to provide a broader base for comparison. Five critic judges (college debate coaches) were assigned to judge a debate between two teams, undefeated in their three

previous contests. The contestant evaluations disclosed that all four debaters would have awarded the decision to the affirmative. However, the official ballots indicated that four of the five critic judges voted for the negative. This illustration indicated the willingness of winning debaters to give due credit to the argumentative skill of their opponents.

The data compiled at these three tournaments suggested that debaters are capable of exercising a considerable amount of objectivity in judging their opponents. The results indicated that team rankings as determined by opposition evaluations agree substantially with rankings based on critic decisions.

Even more striking is the fact that the majority of the debaters agreed with the critic determined decisions in the two college tournaments studied.

As a supplement to the study I included a report on two tournaments in which the official results were based solely upon contestant evaluations. It was discovered that the winning teams in these two tournaments (the Grand National at Fredericksburg, Virginia and the University of Texas) had also established a better than average record in their previous critic judged debates.

Consequently, it appears that contestants can be expected to evaluate their opposition in much the same frame of reference as critic judges.

What conclusions may we draw from these findings? It is not my purpose to suggest that all tournaments be judged entirely by the contestants. Instead, my observations have led me to endorse the basic pattern of the critic judge concept. I feel that my investigation indicates that debaters and critics are basically agreed as to what constitutes effective debating despite surface manifestations which indicate otherwise.

However, I do feel that contestant evalua-

tions, when used in conjunction with critic decisions, can play an important part in the implementation of our forensic program. I have found indications that debaters become more self-reflexive and objective by virtue of the contestant evaluation process. When debaters submit judgments of this type they are appraising the total situation of which they are a part. As they examine their opposition in this manner they are also evaluating their own liabilities and assets.

If we are to train debaters to become more intelligent and responsible speakers, it is important that we provide them with an opportunity to evaluate their own deficiencies as well as their proficiencies. I am convinced that contestant evaluations provide a functional methodology for the partial attainment of this objective. As debaters learn to be more self-reflexive, it would seem that a higher degree of ethical responsibility would ensue. We are all aware of the debater's complaint that the last affirmative rebuttal speaker misconstrued the negative stand. Deliberate misrepresentation and unethical presentation would have little value in a contestant judged situation. One debater expressed this idea very succinctly when he commented, "There is no point in being unethical or discourteous when your opposition is also your judge."

Therefore, it is my recommendation that other tournament directors seek to employ contestant evaluations as a supplement to critic judged tournaments. If debate is to survive as a contest activity, it must be justified as a learning technique. Self-objectivity is the focal point of all learning. Let us provide debaters with this opportunity through the evaluation of their own debates. By so doing we tend to reduce the advantage of glib tongues and sophistic devices and to emphasize the value of sound argument and sincere, conversational speaking.

More Probing of the Cadaver

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IN THE MARCH, 1954, issue of THE FORENSIC, Professor Robert L. Scott presented a most interesting analysis of the degree of putrefaction presently attained by the corpse of intercollegiate oratory. After some twenty-five years of experience in coaching and judging original oratory at both the high school and college levels, I can certainly agree with Pro-

fessor Scott that each year judges of oratory "groan more painfully at the thought of sitting through another session." I disagree with him as to the fundamental cause of these "groans," and doubt if the solution he suggests would get at the cause of that situation.

Professor Scott presents an excellent summary of the potential values of original ora-

tory but objects to the facts that the speech must be memorized, that delivery techniques may be deliberately planned and rehearsed, and that seldom in life situations does the speaker prepare a talk with this degree of thoroughness. These are three valid criticisms. Rebuttal to these objections is possible, but in fairness we must admit that in all forensic events there are obvious weaknesses as well as virtues. The point is, do we judges of oratory "groan" because of the fact that we are about to hear a series of carefully prepared memorized speeches, given with the best techniques of body and action of which the students are capable? I think not! We squirm and find excuses to be elsewhere because we know that inevitably the majority of those speeches will be either representative of a species of semantic exhibitionism or dull beyond human endurance. I charge further that we coaches are primarily at fault for this situation.

What is the secret of the really great speech? Obviously, the speaker must have superior delivery. Most of our intercollegiate orators have that. There must be language facility, and again our students usually do a creditable job. There must be effective organization and appropriate content. The majority of our orators do a fairly effective piece of work on these matters. There must be a subject appropriate for the speaker, the audience, and the occasion. It is the neglect of the first item of this requisite that I believe is primarily responsible for the precarious health of intercollegiate oratory today.

I can recall, without the slightest degree of nostalgia, some of the orations I have heard during this past year. A fifteen year old native-born Texas high school student talking on "What Freedom of the Press Means to Me." A college senior from a small Louisiana town, who had never lived in a metropolis, shedding crocodile tears over the grievous problem of "Slum Town." A pink-cheeked college freshman, solving the narcotics problem. A charming and winsome sophomore lass ridding the world of the menace of the hydrogen bomb. Need I go on? Every coach of forensics has drowsed through these horrors.

I suspect that you, like me, have heard some unforgettable student orations. Analysis of these seems to indicate that in every case the orator was speaking from the heart, on a topic very close to his life and one in which he had a profound personal conviction, a belief which he ardently desired to share with others. Let

me mention the subjects of a few such memorable orations that I have heard. The dark-complexioned girl with the slight French accent who, as a resident of Casa Blanca, married an American soldier and eventually returned with him to study at a small Wisconsin college. She saw in that rural community the seeds of the same racial intolerance that had blighted her childhood and she pleaded that this must not happen in America. Or the speech of a hearing therapist who, after many hours of clinical work with deaf children, described the needs for greater public interest in these unfortunates. Or the veteran who, in 1947, protested vigorously and effectively against efforts of his fellows to obtain special privilege in American life. Or the student from a rural area who, in 1934, pleaded the cause of the American Farmer. These orations were not based upon: "Well, coach, what shall I talk on this year?"; an article or two in a popular magazine; midnight oil the evening preceding the tournament; a superficial knowledge of the problem and an even more immature and superficial analysis of the possible solutions to that problem.

I believe that the selection of a topic for intercollegiate oratory should be a matter of considerable serious thought and discussion between the coach and the would-be-orator. If the student can find no topic upon which he does have a sincere and deep conviction, upon which he is genuinely qualified to speak by virtue of some direct or considerable indirect experience—that student should not be permitted to compete in oratory. This procedure would eliminate three of the five orators who represented my school last year. I suspect intercollegiate oratory would have survived and even appreciated the absence of this trio.

Professor Scott' suggested solutions, that we substitute manuscript reading for memorized orations, is most interesting. This procedure would develop certain practical skills not matured by our present methodology. But I suspect the reading of "Slum Town" would be just as dull and counterfeit of intellectual integrity as was its memorized counterpart. I fear that faced with a battery of orators, securely armed with manuscripts, the "groans" of prospective judges would turn to moans of real anguish. I firmly believe that Quintilian's famous precept, applied specifically to the selection of the oratory topic, would do more to resurrect intercollegiate oratory than would the substitution of a manuscript for memorization.