



P. C. DEBATORS CHAMPIONS OF STATE LEAGUE.

Maris, Brown and Rees Win Final Debate in Forensic Contest With Albany College.

Rich offerings continue to find their way into P. C.'s victory basket, the last goal being tossed by the Pacific College triumvirate, Maris, Brown and Rees. Albany had defeated McMinnville College and Newberg had defeated the Monmouth State Normal, and the debate for the championship of the League took place here between the victors Friday evening. Each had won a unanimous decision over opponents while supporting opposite sides of the question and it was a case of Greek meeting Greek.

The speakers were greeted by a large audience in the college chapel, the latter being appropriately decorated for the occasion. Government ownership of railroads was the issue, Pacific College upholding the affirmative and the visitors the negative, represented by E. L. Jones, G. T. Bricchet and W. H. Steel. The judges were Attorneys Hosford and A. King Wilson, of Portland and Attorney W. H. Ragsdale, of Moro. Mayor Jesse Edwards presided.

Paul Maris opened up vigorously for the affirmative, first outlining the program for the affirmative as given below. The question as stated was: "Resolved, that the railroads of the United States should be owned and operated by the national government." The resolution was supported by the affirmative under five main heads in the following order:

1st. The railroad system is simply a system of public highways and its operation is a governmental function.

2nd. The railroad system is by nature a natural monopoly.

3rd. Railroad monopoly means power to tax and this is a dangerous power in private hands.

4th. The railroad monopoly in private hands has been a leading cause of political corruption.

5th. Government ownership is not an untried experiment and is practicable.

From the first proposition the conclusions were drawn by Maris that the railroads, being public highways, should be available to all on equal terms and that since private corporations, delegated to perform the governmental function of highway management, have made this management the instrument for robbing rather than serving the people, the government should assume direct management of this function.

The statement that the railroad system is by nature a natural monopoly was substantiated by our own railroad history, showing the alarming rapidity with which railroad companies have been consolidated and that at present seven men practically dominate the railroad business. The tendency toward monopoly was shown to be due to the fact that lack of co-ordination results in an enormous waste. Parallelism of lines was shown to be another fruitless waste, resulting from unbridled private enterprise and a now unified system. Our country was shown to compare miserably in this respect with publicly owned systems.

Brown continued with argument for the affirmative showing that if railroads were allowed to monopolize in private hands, the corporation in control would have power to tax the people and that the power to tax is a dangerous power in the hands

of private citizens. He then contrasted the difference in the aim of private and public ownership, showing that the primary aim of private management is private profit, while public ownership aims at public service. As instances of railroad disinterest in public welfare, he cited cases of our great social monopolies which are creations of the railroad rebate. The deceitful practice of overcapitalization was also shown as a result of private ownership, and an example was used to show that railroad profits are much greater than the companies claim.

He concluded by showing that the railroad official has not tried to keep the equipment of the road apace with public prosperity, and as a result we have suffered from a national car shortage and the number of wrecks are constantly increasing.

Rees rounded up the argument for the affirmative, in summary as follows: Our present system of private ownership of railroads corrupts and pollutes politics. This is shown by the railroad control of many state legislatures; the part they have played in politics; and the disclosures in the United States Senate. Corruption would be greatly eliminated by government ownership as then the railroads would not be the active cause of corruption, but merely the field of operation. Appointment of employees under strict civil service laws would secure efficient men and would make employment of necessity strictly non-partisan.

Government ownership is not an untried experiment, but has been proven practical by the experience of foreign countries. Three fourths of the monarchies and two thirds of the democracies own railroads, and everywhere with the single exception of Italy it has proven a success. In almost all countries where tried it has lowered rates, decreased the number of accidents and fatalities, purified politics, improved service and equipment of roads, eliminated watered stock and stock and bond gambling and abolished local and personal discrimination.

Jones, Albany's able leader, opened the case for the visitors, giving the following objections upon which they based their argument: Government ownership is unnecessary, unwise, unsuccessful and un-American. To prove the first point he spoke of the development of the great West by the railroads, of the extent of mileage in America, the superior excellence of our own system, the greater improvements, more modern accommodations, etc. He laid special emphasis upon the fact that the Inter-state Commerce Commis-

sion now has power to handle the situation under recent legislation and obviates the necessity of government ownership. In the second place he held that the change would be unwise, resulting in untold corruption in office, sectional discriminations, etc.

Bricchet took up the economic phase of the question, holding that for the government to take over the railroads would swamp itself in debt. He also showed up the extravagance of general government operation, its lack of efficiency and length of time taken to get results.

Steel completed the case for the negative, first, by proving that public ownership has not proven a success in Europe as maintained by his opponents and second by maintaining that the system proposed is socialistic, paternalistic and un-American.

Jones closed for the negative in rebuttal. He admitted the first two points argued by the affirmative, but claimed that their connection with the issue was not at all pertinent. He laid particular stress upon the fact that the speakers on the affirmative had failed to prove that public ownership had proven successful or practicable. He closed with an able summing up of the argument as advanced by the negative.

The visitors were forcible, plausible speakers and made out a strong case against public ownership. It was the plan of the affirmative to leave all rebuttal work for the closing speech by the leader. To those unacquainted with this fact, the visitors looked like winners when Jones sat down. The visitors evidently considered themselves as such.

But they reckoned without Brown and his final effort. He knows the railroad question from Alpha to Omega and the way he "broke up the interference" was a marvel. He tore right through the positions established by his opponents and made a rebuttal that was little less than sensational.

He hastily disposed of the negative's stories of failure of government ownership in foreign countries and quoted their own authority to show that it is a success. He then summed up the affirmative's argument and showed that if the roads are allowed to monopolize in private hands, they will not legislate against themselves and as they have in a great measure controlled politics in the past they will do so even more completely as their power increases. If thirty years of national legislation has failed to hinder railroad evils, we certainly have no guarantee that future actions will control them and as legislation has failed elsewhere, he argued

that it would fail here. The question simply resolves itself as to whether we want a government monopoly or a powerful monopoly in private hands.

This closed the forensic battle and the audience awaited eagerly the decision, which would mean the league championship for 1907. It read two for the affirmative, one for the negative, Ragsdale of Moro, Eastern Oregon, voting in the minority, the two Portland attorneys deciding for the Quakers. The closeness of the contest added to the enthusiasm with which the decision was received and the victors were the heroes of the hour. They had added the cap sheaf to the string of victories with which Pacific College had been favored.

Too much can hardly be said for the hard, plucky fight put up by the Albany speakers. They were rattling good talkers and talked to count. They went up against some unexpected argument which was hard to meet and doubtless admitted too much of the ground taken by the affirmative without realizing its significance.

The P. C. boys won by their thorough knowledge of the question and by getting down to fundamental principles and staying with them.

The debate was followed by an informal reception in honor of the Presbyterians, Pres. McGrew speaking a few words of welcome. Mr. Jones replied in a good speech in which he set forth the advantages to be obtained in college in debate work.

Throughout the evening musical numbers were furnished by Mrs. C. B. Wilson in a piano solo, E. A. Newby in a vocal solo, Sara Knight and Katherine Romig in a vocal duet and a male quartet made up of Huber Haworth, Arthur Wilson, Claud Lewis and Weslev Hagmann.

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