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## DIALECTIC WINS SOPH-JUNIOR.

### Spirited Contest on Government Ownership of Railways Won by the Affirmative.

The annual Soph-Junior debate between the Di and Phi societies took place in Gerrard Hall Friday night, before a good-sized audience. The query was: "Resolved, That the United States government should own and operate the railroads." The affirmative side was presented by the Di representatives, Messrs. B. F. Reynolds, '08, and Roby C. Day, '07 and the negative by the Phi debaters, Messrs. Oscar R. Rand, '08, and W. A. Jenkins, '07. The president of the debate was Mr. J. S. Kerr and the secretary, Mr. E. S. Stewart, both of the Philanthropic society. The judges were: Dr. T. J. Wilson and Professors W. D. Toy and Collier Cobb.

The debate was one of the sort that you like to hear. Each speaker leaped into the fight with zeal and earnestness and stayed in until the end. The speeches showed power of analysis, ability of presentation and, in some cases, swiftness of repartee. At the conclusion of the debate, the judges returned their decision in favor of the affirmative.

Mr. B. F. Reynolds was the first speaker for the affirmative, and some of the points he made follow:

Government is the exponent of our social and economical life, and being such, it is bound by its nature to protect its citizens industrially as well as politically. It is also the proper business of government to develop all the national resources and to promote those institutions upon which the social, political and industrial welfare of society most vitally depends. Government in its organic capacity can assume control of an industry upon two conditions: First, there must be industries in which comprehensive social interests are involved; second, there must be industries in which social evils arise as the result of unregulated private administration.

The speaker next showed that railway transportation is a function of government. First, in its legal relation, in its constitutional warrant which has already been exercised in the purchase and operation of the Panama railroad; second, in its analogy to public highways—the sole justification of its erection and existence; and, third, in its comprehensive social and economic interests—in that our civilization and our very existence itself depends directly upon the railroads.

The railroads, which possess almost the exclusive control of the intercourse of the country, including the conveyance of persons and every necessity of life, the service of the postoffice, and the movements of the troops, have none of the qualities, and ought to have none of the

privileges, attaching to private commercial establishments; therefore, it would be an outrageous error to regard the American railways as business ventures important to none but the shareholders; they, on the contrary, involve interests social, political and industrial of the greatest magnitude; and, in short, it is incumbent upon a government of the people, by the people and for the people to own and operate such an industry.

Mr. O. R. Rand, first speaker for the negative, presented this line of defense:

The essential difference between a democratic and a paternal government lies in exalting the individual and encouraging individual initiative. Paternal governments are characterized by governmental initiative. This spirit of individual enterprise has been the greatest factor in our rapid industrial development. It brought forth our splendid system of railways. Government ownership and operation would deaden individual initiative and lead to paternalism.

By concentrating enormous power in the hands of the Federal government, the ownership and operation of the railways by the government would lead to centralization. In the United States the powers of government are divided between the Federal, State, and local governments. The Federal government has authority to regulate inter-State commerce, while the States have power to regulate intra-State commerce. If the nation tried to operate the railroads it would come in conflict with and override the State's powers, thus concentration greater power in its own hands. Furthermore, the railroads would of necessity become a political issue and political corruption would ensue.

Transportation is not a function of a democratic government. Industry is a function of an individual. Anything which produces wealth is an industry. Transportation is a factor in the production of wealth in that it gives to articles place utility. It is therefore, an industry. The proper position of the government toward its industries is to regulate, not to own and operate.

Mr. R. C. Day, of the Di society, second speaker for the affirmative, said in part:

I propose to show you that government ownership and operation are both practical and necessary.

In the first place the purpose of Federal railroad ownership and operation would be to furnish, at least necessary expense, the most efficient service to the greatest possible number, and thereby strive to promote the entire industrial and social welfare.

Federal ownership would provide a national railroad department, employing the most responsible operatives through a branch of the civil service, and thereby promote a

strong, unified service to all classes of people and of industry, an impartial service, since the fundamental principle of government service embraces the "square deal."

In the second place the corporation operates its road for the accumulation of wealth. In pursuit of this purpose the public welfare, when inconsistent with it, is constantly neglected. The corporations resort to discriminations, rebates, disregard of law, public bribes, and through these to restraint often to the ruin of personal business initiative as is shown by abundant evidence.

Finally government ownership and operation will remove these evils, which for over thirty years of attempted government regulation under private control has grown more serious, by substituting the one government policy of most efficient and thorough service instead of the personal selfish purpose of the private corporation.

Since the cause should be removed to cure the disease and as a more absolute private monopoly cannot be expected to bring that result, government operation only can be expected to remove the dangers and at the same time provide a strong, unified, and impartial system of travel and transportation.

Mr. W. A. Jenkins, for the Philanthropic society, closed the first round, speaking along the following lines:

If the proposed system excelled the present one it would have to give lower rates and better service. Could the government give lower rates? At the very lowest estimate the government would have to issue seven and a half billion dollars' worth of bonds to purchase our railroads. The annual interest on this immense debt at 4 per cent would be \$300,000,000. The net profits of the railroad business last year amounted to \$188,000,000, or \$112,000,000 less than the interest on the bonds which the government would have to issue. The annual deficit would have to be drawn from public taxation, else the government, instead of lowering rates, would have to increase them.

Could the government give better services? The annual interest on the bonds, as already seen, would be \$300,000,000 per year. After the dividends, amounting to \$188,000,000 were declared last year, there were between \$92,000,000 and \$93,000,000 set aside for improvements and extension. Granted that the government would give the same rates that we now have, and make the usual amount of profits and surplus for improvements and extension, it would first have to pay the interest on those bonds before allowing anything for improvements and extensions; but the profits, plus the surplus, would not pay the interest on the bonds by \$20,000,000. How then could the government give better service?

## A DRAMA IN ONE ACT.

### Wherein Bill McDade & Company, Sleep Dispellers, Do Their Daily Stunt—Conversation as a Test of Lung Power.

Scene: any one of one hundred rooms in the South, Old East and Old West; the time: some time in the tiny hours just before dawn any old morning in the year. Darkness and intense silence prevail and the inmates are sleeping the sleep of the sleepy.

Suddenly the sound of a pump vigorously manipulated breaks forth. For a half a minute it continues and then a blood-curdling sound, half shout of triumph, half roar of defiance greets the ear: "H-a-a-a-r-d luck! h-a-a-r-d luck!" It strikes the eardrums of the slumbering ones and converts their peaceful dreams into nightmares. They toss restlessly as if in the grasp of some insatiable demon. Again comes the cry, "H-a-a-a-r-d luck!" This time it is taken up and answered from other portions of the campus in varying words but with unceasing vociferousness. A Babel of sounds in which each voice seems striving to drown all others ensues.

(The sleepers toss more feverishly. One half-opens his eyes.)

The pump appears gradually to become the center of the sound radiations. Bursts of Satanic laughter follow sentences shouted at the top of the speakers' voices.

(The other sleeper now opens his eyes. The first half-raises himself on his elbow.)

The pump is now ceasing to be the center of the group of voices, which is scattering again to different parts of the campus, but the conversation is being continued with unabated vigor. Questions and answers, satiric comments punctuated by appreciative merriment are hurled back and forth. As the distance between the parties to the conversation increases, a reserve of lung power is called into play, which overcomes this disadvantage. Suddenly the conversations close for a brief space.

Both slumberers are now wide awake. "What was that?" asks one, apprehensively. "Confound those loud-mouthed coons!" cries the other, hotly. "How in thunder and by all that's eternal——!!!  
Curtain.

Furthermore, Government employees would not render efficient service. If directly appointed by the government, they would be changed whenever a new party came into power. If some scheme of civil service examinations were adopted, how could you test the fitness of one million, six hundred thousand employees, representing every degree of intelligence from a spike-driver to a railroad president? The rejoinders were apt and witty.