

3-1948

Outline of Procedure for the English-Style of Debate...

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Recommended Citation

Ehninger, D. (1948). Outline of Procedure for the English-Style of Debate... The Gavel of Delta Sigma Rho, 30(3), 51 & 53.

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Outline of Procedure for the English-Style of Debate . . .

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The Ohio State University

Late last summer when plans were being made for the visit of the Oxford debate team to the Ohio State campus, it was suggested by a member of our forensics staff that we invite the British speakers to participate with us and the representatives of certain neighboring institutions in an English-style debate.

Upon searching the available literature, however, we were unable to find recorded any set of rules for conducting this type of debate. Accordingly, requests for help were dispatched to Mr. Anthony Neil Wedgewood Benn, a member of the Oxford team and President of the Oxford Union Society, and to Mr. F. S. Curzon, Chief Clerk of the University Union Society at Cambridge. Both of these gentlemen not only replied at length, but were kind enough to send us copies of the statutes governing their societies.

Working upon the basis of the information which they furnished, a set of rules was devised and used with considerable success in an English-style debate held on our campus on the afternoon of October 28, 1947.¹

Since other institutions may wish to experiment with the English-style, it seems desirable that these rules be made generally available in the pages of THE GAVEL. It should, however, be observed that in certain instances we have modified the regular British procedure in order to bring the debate within suitable time limits. We have also attempted at several points to introduce controls calculated to maintain orderly procedure, and to reduce the danger of "unbalanced participation" which may well result when no restriction is placed upon the number of times any one speaker may address the House.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

(1) The President calls the House to order and announces the motion for debate.

(2) Ten-minute speech by a previously designated speaker moving the adoption of the motion.

(3) Ten-minute speech by a previously designated speaker opposing the motion.

(4) Seven-minute speech by a previously designated speaker seconding the adoption of the motion.

(5) Seven-minute speech by a previously designated speaker opposing the motion.

(6) At this point the floor is open to any member of the House who desires to speak. The time limit on these speeches is five minutes. **No member may speak more than once**, points of order or information excepted. Members favoring the motion and those opposing it speak alternately. The President indicates the side entitled to the floor by announcing, "I will now recognize a speaker for the motion," or "I will now recognize a speaker opposed to the motion." (Insofar as practicable, each school represented splits its delegation so that it has an equal number of speakers favoring and opposing the motion.)

(7) Any speaker except the one who opens the debate may be interrupted by any member of the House at any time. Such interruptions take one of two forms.

(1) If the rules have been infringed, a member is entitled to rise and point this out to the President, at the same time describing the infringement which he believes to have taken place. (2) The second type of interruption permitted is a direct request for information addressed to the speaker who has the floor. To make this sort of interruption a member must first rise to his feet in such a manner as to attract discreetly the attention of the President. The speaker, if he wishes to be interrupted, will sit down. If he does not sit down, and ignores the member who desired to interrupt, the latter must resume his seat. An interruption on a point of information must be made in the form of a question, and is addressed to the speaker **through the President**. The interrupter may not himself impart information to the House; he may only seek to elicit information from the speaker. The President will rule the speaker out of order if his interruption does not constitute a genuine request for information.

(8) The debate on the motion proceeds in the fashion outlined for one hour and thirty minutes, at which time the speaker who originally moved the adoption of the resolution presents a five-minute speech answering the arguments which have been presented against it and summarizing the discussion. Immediately following this speech there is a division of the House. Abstentions are intimated by informing the tellers. The numbers having been added up, the President announces the results from the Chair.

(9) Members favoring the motion
(Continued on Page 53)

torney with offices in the Hospital Trust Bldg., Providence, Rhode Island.

Jerome N. Curtis (WR) is an attorney with offices in the Union Commerce

Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Gordon Mills (WAY) is Director of Forensics at Los Angeles (California) Junior College.

Thomas Brackett Reed . . .

- al House," NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, v. 149, October 1889, p. 425
- (8) Reed, "A Deliberative Body," OP. CIT., p. 150
- (9) IBID., p. 151
- (10) IBID., 1. 150
- (11) LOC. CIT.
- (12) Robinson, Wm. A., THOMAS B. REED, PARLIAMENTARIAN, Dodd, Mead and Co., N. Y., (c 1930), p 257
- (13) By actual count, taken from the INDEX to Vol. 23, Parts 1-7, 52nd Congress, 1st Session, Dec. 7, 1891 to Aug. 5, 1892, and INDEX to Vol. 24, Parts 1-3, 52nd Congress, 2nd. Session, Dec. 5, 1892 to March 3, 1893.
- (14) These speeches were: (1) Against the Mills Tariff Bill, May 19, 1888; (2) In favor of repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, August 26, 1893; (3) Against the Wilson Tariff Bill, Feb. 1, 1894.
- (15) Robinson, OP. CIT., p 262
- (16) Leupp, Francis E., "Personal Recollections

- of Thomas B. Reed," THE OUTLOOK, v. 96, Sept. 3, 1910, pp. 36-40
- (17) IBID., p. 37
- (18) Alexander, OP. CIT., p. 126
- (19) Robinson, OP. CIT., p. 261
- (20) IBID., p. 262
- (21) Stoddard, Henry L., AS I KNEW THEM, Harpers, N.Y., (c 1927), p. 192
- (22) Roosevelt, Theodore, "Thomas Brackett Reed and the Fifty-First Congress," THE FORUM, v. 20, December 1895, pp. 410-418.
- (23) Reed, "A Deliberative Body," OP. CIT., p. 155
- (24) The complete story of this dramatic battle is told in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, First Session, Cong. 51, vol. 21, January 29, 1891, pp. 948-1024.
- (25) Reed, "A Deliberative Body", OP. CIT., p 156
- (26) Resolution by Rep. Sherman, N.Y., in the House of Representatives, upon the death of Reed, December 8, 1902.

Discussion Method in War Industry . . .

taught the leadmen. The leadmen taught the workers. Handed down in this fashion, the J.T. formulas reached ten million workers in a mater of months.

It is important to know that the democratic method of group discussion had again proved itself an effective educational and problem-solving device. It is important to know that this effectiveness was demonstrated on a nation-wide scale. But probably most important of all is the fact that the job was done so quickly.

Democracy has been criticized for being slow. To convey information or to solve problems by means of group and public discussion, it is said, requires a distressingly long time. By contrast, the propaganda methods of authoritarian societies are thought to be inherently quick-acting and more efficient. The T.W.I. project stands in rebuttal.

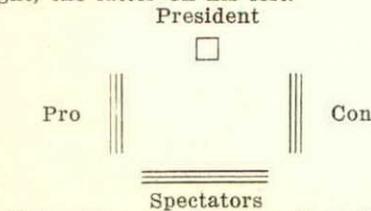
Teachers may well face this fact: So vast a project in group discussion was conceived and effected by leaders from the fields of industrial training and industrial engineering rather than from the field of speech. The speed with which

the War Production Trainers were produced is especially provocative. To teachers of speech the idea of covering the art of conference leadership in a one-week course may seem absurd. A year's course in Fundamentals of Speech, followed by a year in Public Discussion and Debate, plus about two years of extra-curricular speech activities, might not seem excessive. Thus, T.W.I. measures in days what we measure in years. Perhaps theirs is "too little" and our "too late." It is a stimulating challenge to re-examine our whole approach. For despite many limitations and failures, the T.W.I. Institutes have demonstrated that adequate conference leaders can be trained in a much shorter time than many of us had previously thought possible.

1. Stuart Chase, "Show-How: A Revolution in Management," READER'S DIGEST, October, 1943.
2. Stuart Chase, "To Do It Easier and Do It Better," READER'S DIGEST, November, 1943.
3. Stuart Chase, "Teaching Foremen That Workers Are People," READER'S DIGEST, September, 1943.

English-Style of Debate . . .

sit facing those who oppose it, the former ranging themselves on the President's right, the latter on his left.



(10) The speeches are clocked by a

timekeeper. Members must bring their remarks to a close upon receiving his signal.

(11) A member may speak on any phase of the subject he desires. The President will, however, rule out of order any member who attempts to introduce material which is obviously not germane to the discussion.

- (1) Representatives of Denison University, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Otterbein College, Oxford University, and The Ohio State University participated.