

## KANSAS-NEBRASKA DEBATE.

## Unanimous Victory for Nebraska. Good Team Work Does the Deed.

The fifth annual debating contest between representatives of Kansas and Nebraska Universities was held in Lawrence, Kansas, on the evening of May 12. The question: "That the combinations of railways to determine rates are not desirable and should be prohibited by law," is one of great interest and importance though a most difficult one.

Nebraska had the affirmative and was championed by F. G. Hawxby, C. P. Craft, and C. S. Wilson, while O. J. Lane, Franklin Baker, and T. M. Brady defended the negative for Kansas.

The judges, Prof. W. F. Patrick, of Iowa City; Senator Bolter of Logan, Iowa, and Prof. McAfee of Park College, Mo., decided unanimously in favor of Nebraska.

This was one of the hardest fought contests Nebraska ever entered. She was opposed by able men who won the three highest places in the final contest in Kansas University. Lane and Brady are senior law students of high standing, while Baker is a junior academic, with special training in elocution and dramatic impersonation. The Nebraska men consisted of one freshman and two senior academics. They are all zealous students who believe that labor conquers all things.

The contest was held in the K. U. chapel, known as Fraser Hall. It is a neat, well shaped auditorium, with good acoustic properties, and was decorated appropriately for the occasion.

The band commenced playing at 8 o'clock. At a few minutes before 9 p. m. the black-board on which Nebraska charts were hung was carried into the chapel rostrum and placed in the centre of the stage just in front of the pipe-organ. The Nebraska debaters followed, each carrying an armful of references, and took their seats at the table on the left side of the stage. The Kansas speakers followed, taking their places on the right of the stage. After music by the Haskel Indian band had ceased, the chairman of the evening, Prof. Burdick of the Law department, explained the rules of the debate, that each speaker was to have fifteen minutes, and each side should have ten minutes in addition for a rebuttal. Nebraska was warned by a three minute bell, and Kansas by a one minute warning.

The audience was requested not to cheer any speaker during his debate. A few yells and cheers were given for each side by the jolly Jay-hawkers, then F. G. Hawxby, leader of the affirmative, was introduced and the contest was on.

Mr. Hawxby briefly outlined the long contention between the people and railway managers concerning transportation rates, then after carefully defining the question launched into the argument. He showed that though the affirmative were not entirely satisfied with the operations of the present Interstate Commerce Act, they held that by adding a few needed amendments and more strictly enforcing present laws, many of the alleged evils complained of concerning railway rates could be removed. He decided there is no reasonable grounds for rejecting our present competitive system under national

restriction to resurrect a system rejected after long years of trial and admitted failure. Convincing evidence was produced to show that rates were extortionate and fluctuating to a greater degree under combination of railways than under the present law. He illustrated the baneful influence of pooling combinations in encouraging rate wars, which are now practically removed. Then the unfairness of such a privilege being granted to railways which is not given to any other corporations was emphasized.

O. J. Lane opened for Kansas, and rather objected to the interpretation of the question given by the affirmative and declared that pooling combinations were not involved in this question. He maintained that combinations to determine rates are desirable to secure shippers and railway stock-holders against the ruinous war of competition between competing roads. He believed that combination of railways would prove to be an economic saving as it has been in other industries. The railways are the only organizations which can not charge what they please for their services.



C. S. WILSON, Sec'y., '99-'00.



F. G. HAWXBY, Pres., '08-'09.

C. P. Craft, for Nebraska, sustained the position of the affirmative, by quoting from the very same reports used by the negative. He reviewed with great force and clearness the abuses of railways, possible only under combinations. He declared it was "necessary for the negative to show cause for action in discarding present laws and overruling the decisions of our court." (2) "The negative must show that their system will eradicate present difficulties without bringing about greater evils." Competition causes rates to fall gradually and surely in accordance with natural laws, while, as he illustrated by a chart, combination fixes rates arbitrarily for a given time, and readjustments are sudden and spasmodic. Parallel roads were built with a promise of affording keener competition, and now the negative would lay the law of competition on the shelf.

Franklin Baker, for Kansas, grew eloquent in denying that this question applied to pooling combinations. He declared that pooling could not be applied until rates were first fixed by agreement. Unrestricted competition has led to bankrupt roads and forced them into receivership.

He maintained that the whole policy of our industrial system is toward centralization and combination. Differentials, he declared, were perpetuated by the present system rather than by combinations.