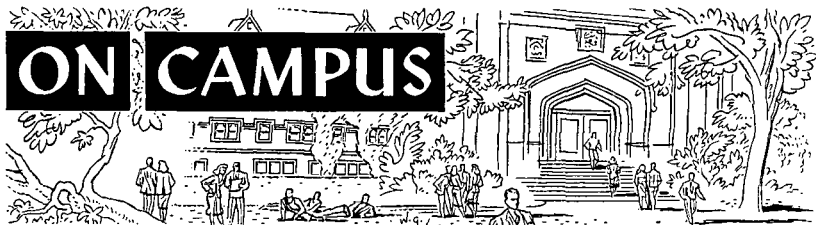


ON CAMPUS



INTERCOLLEGIATE debating in the United States goes back to the 1870's when teams from New York University and from Rutgers challenged one another. Such local rivalries gradually grew into regional contests and, more recently, into a national program with a single resolution selected annually for competition in colleges and universities.*

A committee of the Speech Association of America, a department of the National Education Association, drafts four or five resolutions on which college debate coaches vote. The winning resolution becomes the national debate topic for the year.

Recent college debate topics have been: a permanent policy of wage and price controls, a compulsory (federal) fair employment practices law, free trade, and diplomatic recognition to the Communists of China. The current resolution reads:

RESOLVED: That the nonagricultural industries of the United States should guarantee their employees an annual wage.

In other words, the college debate teams are examining one version or another of the ancient and continu-

ing debate between economic freedom and political control — open competition versus the welfare state.

From many debate coaches and from students themselves have come pleas for literature and material explaining and upholding the case for the competitive market and limited government. There are so many ways of planning, so many "experts," so many brilliant arguments for minding all the world's business except one's own! Most seriously lacking are sound and appealing arguments in behalf of personal choice and freedom.

The Foundation for Economic Education is striving to help fill that void. Each year, as soon as the college debate topic is announced, Miss Bettina Bien of the Foundation staff assembles and offers on request packets of the best material she can find on the libertarian side of the issue.

The packet available this year, and already requested by approximately 500 college debate teams, emphasizes that a worker's best guarantee of security lies not in a politically enforced "deal" but in the real bargaining which involves willing exchange with others in a free market economy.

* A similar national program is conducted at the high school level. See "Reaching High School Debaters" in *THE FREEMAN*, December 1955.

Why Wages Rise:

1. LABOR UNIONS?

F. A. Harper

Wage rates are higher in the United States than in any other country. And they are about five times as high here as they were a century ago, in purchasing power.

Many explanations of this phenomenal rise have been attempted. Dr. Harper proposes, in successive issues of *THE FREEMAN*, to analyze the causes and the non-causes. In this first installment he deals with the proposition that labor unions have caused wages to rise.

THE RECENT joining of the two major labor unions in the United States met with mixed emotions. On the one hand, such concentration of power anywhere in society frightens those who know its evil consequences. But on the other hand, the move is accepted as part of the long-time progress of unionization which is commonly believed to be the cause of our high and rising wages. "So," say many, "the fruits are worth the risk."

The belief that unions cause wages to rise seems to be borne out by simple observation: In repeated instances it is observed that a labor union demands a rise in wages for its members. An argument ensues between the union and management; there may even be a strike. Sooner or later a wage

rise is granted — if not for the full amount requested, at least for a major part of it. Other firms then have to meet this new rate or lose workers. So it appears, ipso facto, that wages in general are raised by union activity.

Such a close-up observation, however, may lead one to see things that are not so, as the proverbial fly on the chariot wheel believed that it propelled the vehicle. One must stand off a bit from the publicized union activities if he is to gain a true perspective on whether they cause average wage rates to rise. One needs, for this purpose, a telescopic view by which to compare the long-time trends of wage rates with changes in union membership.

On the accompanying chart.

Dr. Harper is a member of the staff of the Foundation for Economic Education.