AN EVALUATION OF THE DECLAMATION CONTEST

AS AN EDUCATIONAL PROCEDURE

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AS AN EDUCATIONAL PROCEDURE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to formulate criteria for the evaluation of the declamation, the selection of material for declamation, the method of coaching, the method of delivery, and the value of the declamation contest as a method of teaching.

Problem

The problem involved in the study was the gathering of materials from various sources in order to make a comprehensive survey of present educational thought on the subject of declamation contests and the values which participants in declamation contests placed on the training received.

Source of Data

The source of the data used in the study was mainly literature in the field of speech, philosophy of education, and records of the Interscholastic League of Texas. Additional material was secured through the use of a questionnaire filled out by students in college who had, at one
time, participated in declamation contests in the public schools of the state.

Method of Procedure

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I gives the introduction, purpose of study, the problem, the source of data, and the method of procedure. In Chapter II the literature on the subject of the philosophy of education, speech education, and the declamation are examined, and criteria formulated for the evaluation of the declamation contest and the activities concerned in preparing and participating in it. Chapter III traces the development of the Texas Interscholastic League from its inception in 1911 until the present day, and outlines the major changes that have been made in the development of it. In addition, this chapter measures the activities of the League against the criteria developed in Chapter II and draws conclusions regarding the value of same. Chapter IV presents the data obtained from questionnaires filled out by college students on their reactions to the declamation contest. Chapter V presents the conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER II

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING DECLAMATION CONTESTS
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The purpose of this chapter is to formulate definite criteria for evaluating declamation contests in the public schools and for the selection of materials and training of the students that will eliminate much of the guess work that has been prevalent concerning the use of declamations.

The aim to be accomplished in declamation should be given first consideration. This aim will color the entire program, selection of materials, and method of training. Since declamation is a part of the speech program, the aims of speech education as a whole may first be considered.

Immel, Dean of the School of Speech at the University of California, says that speech education stands for training that is second to none in fitting the boys and girls of today to take their places tomorrow as better men and women, better homemakers, better business men, better professional people, and better citizens as a whole.¹ Speech education

¹Ray K. Immel, Speaking Contests and Speech Education, pp. 7-8.
aims to give boys and girls a command of better English or better American speech. Better American speech means better pronunciation, choice of words, grammatical construction, and oral composition in ordinary conversation. It aims to give boys and girls the ability to convey ideas in a clear, concise, accurate, effective and pleasing manner. Another aim is to prepare boys and girls to take their places socially and to contribute their best to the community, through increased facility in public speaking, reading, and dramatics. And, finally, according to Immel, speech education should develop leaders in the community for all public welfare activities.

Another writer defines the aims of speech education as follows:

Speech education aims to help people speak better in order that they may live better. Desirable speech results from desirable habits of mind and desirable qualities of spirit.

The Speech Department of North Texas State Teachers College has set up the following definite goals in teaching speech:

1. Speech training for all students (not merely for those especially gifted.)

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2. Speech training is a means of securing better social adjustment of the individual and of increasing his changes of success in whatever field he chooses. (Not the acquisition of a platform art for special occasions).

3. A knowledge of all basic principles underlying all forms of good speech.

4. The maximum attainment of poise, agreeable voice quality, acceptable non-professional diction, and relative ease of expression.

5. The development of a direct unaffected conversational style in speaking and the ability to read both intelligently and imaginatively.

6. The acquisition of speech standards that will make each student an intelligent self-critic.

The principal aim of speech education may then be summarized as an effort to prepare boys and girls to be better citizens in their community, their state and the nation, by giving them the facility to speak their thoughts clearly, to form their own opinions, and to develop leadership in their communities. Does the declamation study in the public schools contribute to the accomplishment of these aims of speech education? This can be answered only by a consideration of the nature of a declamation and the ends outlined for it.

Hedde and Brigance have this definition for a declamation:
A declamation is the oral presentation of another's thoughts before an audience. In modern usage a declamation signifies the delivery of a selection, either prose or poetry. The thoughts of the declamation are absorbed and the words are learned so that the speaker delivers the declamation as if it were his own words. The speaker thinks vigorously as he goes through the selection, and his vigor seems to make the selection his own.

Bedichek lists the following as benefits to be derived from the study and delivery of declamations:

1. Greater appreciation of poetry and prose.
2. Better evaluation of the works of great writers and speakers.
3. More confidence in ability to express oneself.
4. Better realization of the power of the spoken word.
5. Acquisition of poise.
6. Better control of the emotions and bodily movements.
7. Development of the entire personality.
8. Ability to think and interpret for oneself.

Hedde and Brigance have this comment on the value of the use of the declamation:

The use of declamation for beginning speech work is distinctly valuable. Beginners are usually hesitant about expressing their own ideas freely, but in

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a selection ideas are already expressed. The student can put all his attention on the assimilation and delivery. It consequently offers greater opportunity for developing skill in delivery. Work on selections should also improve one's literary taste and appreciation, since good selections are usually taken from the speeches and writings of able men and women whose language and words are worth studying.  

The aims of declamation, then, are essentially, the aims of all speech education - development of the individual. And speech education, in turn, is closely coordinated with the aims of education as a whole. Education today is conceived as: A unitary process having as its goal the development of individuals able to live efficiently and happily in a democratic environment with profit to themselves and to society of which they are members.  

This concept of education whereby the aim is the development of the individual and the building of better citizenship is especially effective in a democracy. Quotations from a few writers will illustrate the significance of this. Caswell and Campbell say:  

It is the primary and fundamental function of the common school system extending from the earliest years of schooling, through kindergarten, elementary school, junior and senior high school, and the junior college, to educate the citizen for effective participation in all those common understandings and

6 Hedde and Brigance, op. cit., p. 112.

7 Bedichek, op. cit., p. 124.
cooperations which are necessary to sustain the best in our complex and contemporaneous civilization which is American. 8

Norman adds emphasis to this concept with these words:

Our school policy is inexorably bound to a continued striving toward the democratic ideal. Thus the schools will justify their being only in so far as they develop citizens who have a real understanding of the meaning of the democratic ideal, who believe in this ideal as the highest form of social living known to man, and who are willing to face real sacrifices in their efforts to realize this goal. 9

The need of the citizens to participate in life's activities is stressed by Hollinshead: "A major characteristic of a democratic society is its insistence on the right and duty of its members to participate in its organization and functions."10

Since the aims of speech education, declamation, and the fundamental ones of education tie so closely together, it would seem that the declamation would be an integral part of the school curriculum, and especially that of the speech department; quite the contrary is true. Up until recently, the name " declamation" had something artificial

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10 Arthur D. Hollinshead, Guidance in Democratic Living, p. 32.
and stilted about it, and training in speaking declama-
tions was limited mostly to a few gifted individuals in
some schools.

This situation has not been so much the fault of the
teacher as it has been of the concepts of what the declama-
tion actually was. Declamations, in the early schools of
America, were too often "displays of empty, dispassioned
oratory." Not so many years ago, high schools, in their
graduation exercises, required the graduates to "deliver"
a declamation or oration as part of the graduating exer-
cises. To be effective and duly impressive, these dec-
lamations had to be modeled on the style of the old Grecian
orators. Abstract, theoretical subjects were chosen for
discussion and the manner of delivery was unnatural,
"stagey," posed, and punctuated with stiff oratorical
gestures. Very few declamations excited the interest of
the listeners or added aught to the ability of the student
to speak or express himself in a convincing manner. Dec-
lamations, where they were taught in the schoolroom, were
patterned on the same general lines, with compulsory learn-
ing of a "piece to speak" by parrot-like imitation of the
teacher.

Then came the elocution teacher with elaborate ges-
tures, and stilted, exaggerated diction, voice and mannerisms.
In a revolt against this exhibitionary type of delivery
there followed a period of "poker faced," gestureless declaiming which violated all the rules of naturalness and was, if possible, worse even than the old time elocutionary style of speaking. Nothing was added to the pupil's ability, and too often a very healthy contempt for declamations was created within the minds of the participants and audience. This active dislike has colored the concepts of declamations held by many people, so that today in many places the very name "declamation" has fallen into disrepute.

All these things, however, have changed with the new concept of education that the twentieth century has brought. Education, formerly, was an end in itself; today, all of life is considered education. The youth of the land are given specialized training in acquiring skills and knowledge during the impressionable years of childhood and adolescence, but the process of education goes on through life. With the establishment of a democratic form of government, every citizen, if he wills, has a voice in the selection and administration of this government. The training of the youth, then, must include training in participation in life activities and this training must carry over into adult life. The education that is considered worth while today is one that aims to help the child live better. Empty rhetorical literature or aimless teaching has been
relegated to the outside - at least in theory. Under this concept, the declamation, with its aim of teaching the child to take a more effective part in his environment, has taken on new significance in the educational world.

However, many of the old ideas and antagonisms regarding declamations still persist in the minds of many teachers and parents. This is due largely to the choice of materials for declamations, and the methods that have been employed in teaching declamations. One of the purposes of this chapter is to formulate criteria for the selection of materials, coaching, and judging of declamations, and it is hoped that the discussion will clarify and dissipate some of the opposition's views on the merits of teaching declamations in the public schools.

One of the most difficult problems facing the teacher of declamation is the selection of material. At the same time here lies the teacher's best opportunity for raising the standards of the declamation. Delivering an oration is not merely an opportunity for a student to "show off," but it is, or should be, a means of developing powers in the individual student that are neglected by most school subjects. The preparation of a declamation, with its contact with vital thoughts, should deepen the student's understanding, broaden his outlook and develop his own powers of expression. But if it does these things, the selection
of materials should be given serious consideration and an effort made to raise the standards of the selections.

Good selections are difficult to find. Prestige has placed a halo around some winning declamations, and these prizes are advertised as such by publishing houses. But chance and poor judges may cause poor declamations to win. Certainly many of the prize winners have little literary merit, and only a few appeal to the student. The fact that a selection sounds well enough is not sufficient, for a good selection should fill several additional requirements. According to Hedde and Brigance a good selection should be one that the student can readily understand and appreciate. It should come within the range of his experience, so that it can be assimilated and delivered as his own. He should be able to draw from his own experience comparisons and associations which amplify and intensify the meaning of the selection. In this way, the selection can become one of live interest instead of a collection of dead words. Then, too, the selection should be one in which the student firmly believes. If he does not believe in his subject nor care anything about it, attempts to deliver it in a convincing way will be useless. And, third,

11 Hedde and Brigance, op. cit., pp. 112-113.
according to these writers, selections that deal with hair raising, blood-curdling, and melodramatic situations should be avoided. The student should choose instead selections that portray the normal emotions and the finer tastes of human beings. The selection should be interesting, too, to the audience before whom it is delivered. Questions that have lost interest or that are extraneous to the knowledge and understanding of the audience should not be chosen.

Other tests of a good selection are those of clearness, movement and climax. A selection should not be too subtle and not too abstract. It should contain a vivid, moving thought, expressed in good language. Death scenes, "cute" child pieces, and ordinarily, comedy should be avoided. Nor should one choose selections wherein sentiment or pathos dominates. Care should be taken, too, to avoid tragic selections, and those which are beyond the interpretative powers of the student.

Sands lists six definite standards by which the value of a selection may be measured. These are: the use of good English, a sane theme, normal emotions, a true psychology, colloquial style, and experience within the reader's grasp. She considers these standards sufficiently important to give specific study to each.

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Good English, she says, requires not only non-grammatical expressions, but a vivid, powerful, image provoking vocabulary. The language should be simple, not "flowery" or wordy, but it should be vital and have a beauty or strength that will add to the student's appreciation of language through constant and close association with it.

The style of the declamation should be smooth-flowing, not too compressed, colloquial. This does not rob the language of beauty and originality, but it does eliminate "high flown" phrases and flights of eloquence that were at one time so popular in oratory. The language employed in speeches today is much more on the plane of conversation than formerly, and a student rightfully rebels against an oratorical role that is outmoded. An oration, to be sure, is something more than a casual speech, and the use of this more polished form of speech should be encouraged in the senior declamations. The language of the oration is more powerful, the thought more profound, the appeal to the emotions deeper. But the student should be able to feel that he is talking to his audience in present-day terms; only in this way can the thought be truly vital to him.

The theme should be sane, yet at the same time be raised above the level of patent medicine speeches and sensational stories. The selection should be true to life
as the student knows it, and expressive of the worth while sentiments of people, but lacking in "sticky sentimentality."

The expression that the material should be "an experience within the reader's grasp" does not mean that he must have experienced it in reality. People grow in understanding of life by putting themselves in others' places - vicariously living what they have experienced. However, the experience must be one that the reader is capable of understanding to the full; it should be within the reader's grasp, for he must experience it fully if he is to interpret it adequately.

The material must, of course, be something that appeals to the student. He must have a desire to make that thought his own and a real interest in interpreting it for an audience. But a teacher can point the way to sources that will invite his interest. A list of sources of materials appears in the Appendix.

After a selection is chosen, it may be improved by cutting, and if necessary, remodeling it. In doing so, however, one must take care that the selection does not lose its form, sequence, or moving vividness.

Another important step in teaching declamation is the

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13 Ibid., pp. 3-7.
methods chosen by the teacher. If the work is to be at all successful from the standpoint of the school and the interests of the pupils, the teacher should be one who has had some training in speech and in this type of work. She must be trained in the things which she wishes to impart to her pupils, or she cannot know when she is following the right procedures or wandering in a maze. She must be trained in speech in order to be able to teach well. 14

Figure 1 presents a list of questions for measuring speech potentialities of students, to be filled in at the beginning of the course, before the subject of declama-
tions is ever considered. This check-up would be benef-
cial in any course in speech, or to be used specifically for determining the possibilities of students about to enter any kind of speech contests. The teacher may use her own judgment in using any of these questions that seem to fit her particular group or add to them as she sees fit. The answers will reveal certain personality traits that should give the teacher an insight into what to expect from individual students in speech, as well as in other life situa-
tions. Some of the questions the teacher may ask or have the children check themselves and some will of necessity have to be filled in by the teacher.

Student's name and classification

1. Are there any speech defects? List them.
2. Are there any auditory defects? List them.
3. Are there any defects of vision? List them.
4. Are there any dialect errors? List them.
5. When you were small did you like to "play like?"
6. Do you like to play games now? What kind do you like best?
7. Can you enjoy a game even when you are the loser?
8. Can you enjoy activities when you are not the leader?
9. Are you usually a leader?
10. Would rather follow than lead?
11. Do you like to be on programs?
12. Do you like to dance?
13. Do you like to sing?
14. Is it easy for you to "carry a tune?"
15. Do you like to read; poetry, prose?
16. Are you self conscious?
17. Is it hard for you to concentrate?
18. Are you absent-minded?
19. If you like a thing do you mind spending long hours in working at it?
20. Do you like people?

Fig. 1.—Sample questionnaire for securing data relative to speech potentialities of pupils.
Sands says 15 that a good method at the beginning of training is to have the student paraphrase the material - write it or tell it in his own words. Have him state the main idea of the selection - the theme - in one sentence or phrase. Then he should see how the thought grows, how it is developed by the author. When a good general understanding of the theme and its development has been achieved, concentrate on details. Of course the student must know the meaning of each word, but he must also be aware of the suggested meaning - many words will be found to be rich in connotative value. The student must attempt to experience each thought, down to individual words. He must see them in his imagination.

Hedde and Brigance have this comment on the initial preparation of the selection:

First, read the selection carefully and silently until the main sequences of thought are distinct in your mind....

Second, learn the meaning of every word, every phrase, every reference, and every allusion as used in the selection. Mere dictionary meanings will not suffice. You must know what meaning the author meant those words to convey.

Third, master the full thought to be conveyed. This is not easy. One must first seek the central idea running through the entire selection, and then the subordinated ideas back of the central one. Likewise the main idea and the sub-ideas in each paragraph should be analyzed.

15
Mary K. Sands, op. cit., p. 11.
Fourth, study the personal attitude behind these words. How did the speaker feel when he spoke these words? Was his mood explanatory, exhortatory, ironic, indignant, or intensely earnest? Did he mean the words in the phrase to be puzzling, cynical, serious, serene, pitying, contemptuous, crisp, blase, or apologetic? 16

Too often insufficient time is given to the study of the declamation and the pupils are almost "hurled" into contests and declamation studies. Hedde and Brigance say:

Too often teachers are forced to use declamations chiefly for recital and concert purposes, and, of course, such preparation consists largely of coaching the student to imitate the teacher with little or no time or incentive to arouse original thought processes. But when students are merely coached on one selection for one occasion, only a limited benefit results; whereas if the student is drilled and trained in thinking, in interpreting the meaning and the ideas of the selection, and in acquiring ideals, then benefits, of lasting value will be derived from the study of the declamation.

It is best to work on a number of declamations before any exhibition time. It is also well to work on selections which will serve best to counteract some particular fault, as the conversational type for the student who is too oratorical, the rhythmical type for the jerky delivery, and the dramatic type for the reserved speaker. 17

If the material is carefully analyzed and the student constantly strives not only to understand it, but to experience it as vividly as possible, the problem of memorizing is reduced to a minimum. Let the student read from his book or manuscript through most of the preparation, putting his

16 Hedde and Brigance, op. cit., p. 114.

17 Ibid., p. 111.
effort on the recreation of the thought, and he will soon find that the material has become memorized without conscious effort. This method is also the best insurance against memory lapses.

As to the delivery of any selection Woolbert names totality of effect as the main criterion. He says:

The greatest possible success comes in public speaking when the audience gives the speaker their undivided and intense attention. To get a favorable response from an audience, get their attention, increase it, and hold it unwaveringly; and they will inevitably give the desired reaction. Rapt, unbroken attention leaves the audience entirely at the mercy of the speaker. If he can get them and hold them, they are as good as his. So the ultimate measure of successful speaking is the undivided attention of the audience. No test can possibly be more valid than this. 18

To guard against the haphazard preparation that has heretofore characterized declamation contests and to give both pupil and teacher something tangible to work with, Figures 2 and 3 are submitted. On these charts the pupil can put down "in black and white" just what he understands about his selection after careful study. Figure 1 is for the use of high school students and Figure 2 is for elementary pupils. This, of course, has nothing to do with delivery, but will enable the student to analyze his selection much more carefully than he could otherwise, and the teacher will know just where to begin coaching each pupil.

Read your declamation through several times carefully, then answer the following questions:

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<td>1. Are there any new words in the selection that you do not know? List them and give definitions.</td>
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<td>2. Are there any words that you are not sure of the pronunciation? Write them out with diacritical markings or in phonetic script.</td>
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<td>3. Do you have a complete picture in mind of the thought expressed in the selection? Write a precis of your selection.</td>
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<td>4. The mood of the selection is: (underline right word) patriotic, dramatic, inspirational, reverent, sympathetic, ironic, humorous, matter-of-fact, sad, sincere</td>
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<td>5. Are there any places where two or more ideas need to be weighed against each other for contrast or emphasis? Write them out with intonation marks to help with contrast.</td>
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<td>6. Are there any echoed ideas? Write them out.</td>
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<td>7. Are there any expressions that are unfamiliar or vague to you? Write them out. Then try to write them in your own words.</td>
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<td>8. Was the speech written to: (underline right word) inform, stimulate, convince, entertain, to move to action</td>
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<td>9. Are there any quotable or especially strong lines? Write them out.</td>
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<td>10. Are there any ideas expressed with which you disagree? Write them out.</td>
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Fig. 2.—Suggested analysis chart for Senior declamations.
Read your declamation through carefully, then answer the following questions:

1. Are there any words that you do not understand? Write them with their definitions.

2. Do you know how to pronounce all the words? Make a list of all those you do not know.

3. Do you understand what the poem is about? Tell the theme of the poem in your own words.

4. Are there any lines of the poem that you do not understand? Write in your own words as nearly as you can what you think they mean.

5. Are there any places where the meaning is carried over from one line into the next? Write them out as prose.

6. Is the mood of the poem: gay, sad, patriotic, religious, funny, tender, inspiring.

Fig. 3.—Suggested analysis chart for Junior declamations.

To attain totality of effect, delivery of the declamation, according to Hedde and Brigance, should be characterized by naturalness, directness, earnestness, impersonation, and normal physical expression and actions.

Although a speaker, without long years of experience cannot speak altogether naturally, but the appearance of naturalness should be sought. Good speaking, whether in
declamation or elsewhere, is simply enlarged and heightened conversation. The same emphasis, inflections and tones of good conversation should be used. The same clear-cut enunciation that marks good conversation should be present. To these elements of good conversation, one simply adds enlargement.

Directness is essential, not only in declamation work but in all speaking. By directness is meant personal contact between speakers and members of the audience, so that when the audience leaves the meeting, each person in it feels the speaker talked to him individually.

Another essential of good speaking is earnestness. This is not to be acquired by any special training or artifice of delivery; it comes from a thorough knowledge of the subject, a sincere faith in the message to be delivered, and an intense desire to make the audience feel the things that the speaker feels.

The matter of bodily activity of the speaker proves very confusing to many teachers. There has even been a widespread conviction that gestures of any kind should not be used. On the contrary, if the student has thoroughly assimilated the thought and feeling of the selection, he should feel the need for action. He may then in practice

19 Ibid., p. 119.
work out the best possible ways to convey his different meanings and moods through action. The action should develop with the appreciation of the meaning and the depth of the emotional content. Sands says:

It is through the body and voice that one expresses thought that has been put into words, and no practice is to be more deplored than that of coaching a child to stand rigid while trying to express his thoughts. Control there must be, of course, not wasteful, random movement, that detracts from the thought, but a poise that comes from mental as well as bodily control. Let real life situations be your criterion of judgment with regard to gestures, facial expression, and bodily movement. 20

Woolbert discusses posture as a part of declamation or speech training. He says that the answer to which posture is best is that it all depends upon the occasion - the size of the audience, the formality or informality of the meeting, the ease or restraint the speaker feels toward his hearers and toward the subject, the kind of communication to be established; intimate or reserved, matter-of-fact or intense, casual or oracular, didactic or prophetic.

The use or non-use of impersonation bothers many teachers of declamation. Impersonation means complete, literal action of another that is assumed by the speaker. 22 Sands says this has no place in any material that is

20 Sands, op. cit., p. 12.
21 Woolbert, op. cit., p. 95.
22 Sands, op. cit., p. 12.
intended for declamations; it is appropriate only in monologs that are objective in appeal. The speaker should impersonate only when uttering the direct words or the strong emotions of a character. Impersonation is an estimable art, but it is out of place in the material usually chosen for declamation contests or readings.

The voice, in the delivery of a declamation, should be responsive to the thought; and its quality, force, tempo, and pitch should be determined by that thought. The quality of a speaker's voice has much to do with the conviction he carries and with his comfort and assurance while speaking. A pleasing voice makes listening easy, and whatever tends to make it pleasant for the listener in trying to comprehend what the speaker means, is so much gained; whatever makes it difficult is so much lost. Consequently, purity of tone and smoothness of voice are fundamental necessities if a speaker desires to carry his thoughts to others on the safest terms. 23

The efficient, conscientious teacher will not take the progress of her pupils for granted. There are many ways of measuring and evaluating the progress of the learning process. Hedde and Brigance offer the following to be used as a basis of the criticism for the delivery of declamations:

23 Woolbert, op. cit., p. 140.
I. Speaker's virtues

1. Vigor
2. Life
3. Force
4. Emphasis
5. Likableness
6. Humanness
7. Directness
8. Voice
9. Interest
10. Simplicity
11. Enthusiasm
12. Warmth
13. Position
14. Choice of topics
15. Enunciation
16. Sincerity
17. Spontaneity
18. Earnestness

II. Delivery

1. Voice
   a. Natural tone
   b. Conversational manner
   c. Clear-cut enunciation
   d. Correct pronunciation

2. Rate
   a. Pause
   b. Deliberative delivery

3. Position or posture
   a. Easy and natural breathing
   b. Relaxation
   c. Poise. 24

The above might be advantageously used in criticising the delivery of declamations or any speech activity. Care should be taken to make the criticism constructive and objective; the ability to take criticism and profit by it is no small benefit derived from the educative process. If the use of declamations aids in establishing such an attitude, the value derived from that one factor alone would justify its use.

Figure 4 presents a method for checking on the general effectiveness of each speaker.

24 Hedde and Brigance, op. cit., p. 121.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANNER</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>POSTURE</th>
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<td>Poised</td>
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<td>Erect</td>
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<td>Egotistical</td>
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<td>Slovenly</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VOICE</strong></td>
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<td>Tuned to mood</td>
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<td>Denasalized</td>
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<td>Too loud</td>
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<td>Too soft</td>
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<td>Pitch too low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pitch varied</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Did you feel that the speaker was motivated by a desire to communicate?

Did the speaker make the meaning and the spirit of selection clear to his audience?

Did the main ideas stand out clearly? Were group relations well defined?

Was selection suited to speaker and audience? Were contrasts well marked? Were minor points subordinated? Was the speaker's attention direct absent-minded rambling

Was the selection well memorized?

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**Fig. 4.**--Suggested chart for checking general effectiveness of speaker.
Figure 4 may be used by either the teacher or members of the class. When it is in the hands of students, however, caution should be exercised. If the teacher sees that class members are becoming hypercritical and that the speakers are becoming self-conscious and nervous as a result, she should take over the use of the chart herself, without calling undue attention to the speaker's shortcomings.

Then, too, the alert teacher may use graphs to guide her in her evaluation of the pupil's progress. Figure 5 shows such a sample graph. On it the teacher may put down to check the various points she wishes to measure, or other additional points such as: manner, voice, posture, bodily activity, diction, projection, selection of material, thought grouping or phrasing, contrast. At the beginning she may measure the pupil on these different qualities and indicate on the graph where she thinks the pupil should be placed with reference to a median. Then later she can again evaluate the pupil as to his progress. A comparison of this location with that of the previous one should give some indication of the progress of the pupil, his greatest points of strength, and his weakest points. Further lessons might be planned in the light of the data thus revealed.

The length of time given over to the training of students in declamation will vary according to the teacher and the aim in teaching declamation. Where the teacher merely aims to "show off" some particular pupil, or teaches
altogether for the purpose of entering some contest, the length of time will necessarily be very short. But where the teacher realizes the true aim of the declamation - development of good citizenship - the declamation will and can be a part of the regular speech activities of the school. It can be integrated and coordinated with every phase of the school program. It should be an integral part of the extra-curricular activities, which are in turn, vital parts of the everyday school curriculum. And the training should be made available to all the children in the school. It is true that the use of declamations aids in developing the talents of a few gifted children in public speaking, but the entire school should be beneficiaries of a better speech program if the aim of speech education is to be met.

Various methods have been used by teachers to enhance the interest in declamations. One of the most important and most used of these methods is the declamation contest wherein students compete against each other for awards of some nature. In many instances there has been a great deal of opposition to this form of encouraging the study of declamations, and attention will first be given to some of the objections raised to declamation contests.

One of the most common criticisms of declamation contests is that they inspire rivalry between children and also between groups. Someone must win, and others must lose.
Fig. 4-A--Illustration of how to present pupils' score on each item on scale for measuring general effectiveness.
The spirit thus stirred up is not a healthy, sane one from the standpoint of education. Cooperation, not competition, should be the goal of the teacher. Immel counters this argument with the statement that there are two ways of looking at a contest. The first sees in speech contests merely a chance to win victories — ways by which a particular superintendent or school may outshine other superintendents and schools by having a winning team. The other way of looking at the declamation contest is to recognize that a contest is a means of putting life and motive into education. Contests, rightfully used, may motivate the work of better conversational speech, effective public speech, and adequate preparation for leadership. The teacher who sees the contest in this light goes in to win, but he knows that there is something far more important than winning and this thing is education. He does not lose sight of the primary motive in the contest, but rather uses the incentive to win to stimulate his students to the very limit of their effort. The special value of the contest, Immel holds, is that it makes a place where speech is to be used. It stimulates good work. There is something about a contest that brings out the best that is in boys and girls.

24 Immel, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

25 Ibid., p. 9.
and of the teacher and the school head have the interest of
the boys and girls at heart and think of them more than
merely winning. The value of the contest can hardly be over-
estimated.

Bedichék defends the use of contests by saying:

American boys and girls will not permit the
health, natural impulse for competitive endeavor to
be suppressed, for competition these boys and girls
will have. Their instinctive wisdom is truer than
the soft nonsense of educational theory that tells
them to practice cooperation, not competition; that
it is wrong to seek to excel; that the thrill of honest
victory is sinful; and that the humiliation of defeat
warp$ and corrodes the character. 26

Far from corroding the character of participants in
speech contests, according to a recent report of the Inter-
state Oratorical Association of sixty-eight winners of first
and second places in speech contests, twenty-three won the
distinction of being listed in Who's Who in America. 27 The
author goes further and relates several instances where the
institution of a directed inter-school competition cor-
rected grave juvenile delinquency problems.

Holm upholds the speech contest as a valuable educa-
tional procedure by setting forth the following benefits and
educational outcomes:

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34.

27 Henry Lee Eubank, *What's Right With Speech Con-
tests*, p. 3.
1. Through speech contests participants will secure adequate training for life. (Speech contests are designed to develop leaders by giving thorough and detailed training.) The participant will develop power through learning to
   a. adapt himself to varying audience situations
   b. acquire poise and confidence before critical audiences
   c. develop perseverance and industry
   d. use the tools of voice and language to their utmost limit
   e. depend upon himself
   f. Develop a worth while fund of knowledge concerning the selection of the best in prose and poetry for speaking purposes

2. Speech contests provide training and experience for greater social good by providing
   a. opportunities in leadership
   b. fraternity and friendship of others interested in the same field
   c. a general broadening background

3. Contest speaking transcends "purely educational" instruction in speech. Outside the classroom teachers meet on the common ground of companionship and endeavor when working toward the same goal, thus gaining greater freedom from classroom barriers.

4. Speech contests work as an integrative factor in the work of the school by bringing together into one purposive activity much of the knowledge and skill acquired in other subjects and welding them into a vital part of the student's life.

5. Speech contests render a distinct service in the extension of education, to curtail the activities of such contests would be to curtail a great power in public and democratic thought.

6. Speech contests provide superior motivation in that
   a. competition brings speakers out of the mire of mediocrity and takes them to a higher level of attainment
   b. students that have been chosen to represent
their school feel that they have achieved distinction in the eyes of their fellow students.

7. Through participation in speech contests each school is able to measure its standard of teaching effectiveness in comparison with other schools. 28

As a result of the opposition to competitive speaking some schools have dropped the competitive element. According to an investigation, however, it was found that non-decision contests resulted in a loss of interest. The following losses were enumerated:

1. Audiences lacked interest.
2. Speakers lost valuable criticism.
3. They lose opportunities for training in sportsmanship.
4. They did not grow accustomed to having their work judged.
5. They lost a strong motive for research.
6. They grew careless on the platform. 29

Still another objection to declamation contests is that the judging is not always fair. This may be true, but it is not any more true in the field of declamation contests than it is in any other competitive field. Football and baseball must have their umpires, horse racing has its


judges, and even cooking contests at the county fairs must have someone to say, "This cake is the best." Bedichek says that if anyone wishes to profit by any given method, he must be willing to accept its inherent disadvantages.\(^{30}\) In the normal course of events, and allowing for the operation of the law of probability, contests of any kind will occasionally suffer from atrocious judging. He says to count that a necessary hazard and be done with it. Unless the teacher can guarantee his pupils against being incompetently, or even dishonestly, judged in later life, perhaps it would be better for him to condition them emotionally to this very common life situation. Perhaps the teacher can cushion some of the shocks that the children are almost certain to receive somewhere later in life. Certainly, he says, competition is the method that the teaching profession instinctively employs in teaching, and its inclusion in declamation is worth while in the educative process.

As the new philosophy of education becomes more prevalent, it is hoped that more and more time will be given to the declamation in the school, and that it will be recognized as a definite part of speech work, and a very worthy contribution to the development of the citizen as a whole and good citizenship in particular.

\(^{30}\) Roy Bedichek, *Speech Teacher and Competition*, p. 35.
As a summary and conclusion to this chapter, the standards outlined for evaluating the value of a declamation, the selection of materials, and the methods of coaching or teaching will be enumerated.

1. The aim of speech education is to fit boys and girls to live better, more worth while lives through being able to express themselves clearly, convincingly, accurately, and effectively on any question that may arise.

2. The aims of teaching declamations are:
   a. Teaches appreciation of good literature
   b. Aids in developing appreciation of high ideals as set forth in selections used in declamation
   c. Enriches the vocabulary
   d. Develops good sportsmanship
   e. Develops poise and assurance
   f. Encourages the student to stay with a definite piece of work until he has perfected it to the best of his ability
   g. Makes for accuracy in speech by attention to diction
   h. Aids in the development of an agreeable speaking voice
   i. Enhances the entire personality
   j. Gives the student the ability to think or to interpret for himself.

Since the aims of speech education are essentially those of the general aims of education, and the aims of declamation are likewise closely related, the conclusion is
drawn that speech education, including the use of the declamation, should have a place in the curriculum of every school. The further conclusion is that, wherever possible, trained teachers in the field of speech, or at least with some speech training, should be given the work of speech instruction.

Definite standards for evaluating a declamation are:

1. Delivering a declamation should aid in the development of the individual and the building of better citizenship, and should not be used to "show off" gifted pupils, or to build unhealthy conceptions of "winning" over others at all costs.

2. Training in declamation should not be confined to a few individuals, but should be made available to all the pupils in a school. It will aid in developing not only the gifted children, but the more backward as well.

3. Training in declamation develops leadership by providing thorough and intensive training to those who will represent their schools in competition, the gifted students.

Standards for evaluating selections of material suitable for declamations are:

1. The declamation should be one that the student can readily understand and appreciate.

2. It should come within the range of his experience.

3. It should be suited to the time and place of delivery.
4. The selection should be one in which the student firmly believes.

5. The selection should deal with sane, healthy situations and people, and not infringe on the tragic or the over-emotional situations.

6. The selection should contain a vivid, moving thought expressed in good language.

7. The vocabulary of the selection should be within the grasp of the reader.

8. The selection should have a worth while theme, and be within the realm of "good literature."

Standards for the evaluation of coaching declamations are:

1. The student should make the material his own, incorporate it into his activities, and learn, not only the words, but the thought and the meaning behind the words.

2. Delivery of the declaration should be characterized by naturalness, directness, earnestness, and impersonation to some extent.

3. Real life situations should be the criteria for gestures, facial expression, bodily movement. The student should be himself and interpret his reading by natural actions.

4. The posture used should depend upon the occasion and the material used. It should adapt itself to the time and place—formal at a formal affair, and informal at a
friendly, informal gathering.

5. The voice, in the delivery of a declamation, should be responsive to the thought; and its quality, force, tempo, and pitch should be determined by that thought.

Standards for evaluating a declamation contest:

1. The contest should aim to develop the whole individual, and not merely publicize a winning team or individuals.

2. The judges should have definite standards by which to evaluate the winners, and make their decisions in a fair, impartial manner.

The fact that many of these things have not been done is not so much a reflection upon the teachers of the country, but rather it is evidence that the specific value of the declamation as an educational aid has not been recognized by teachers as a whole. Then, too, declamation has specific values that can only be developed by the trained teacher in speech, and speech training is not universal in teacher training institutions by any means. The selection of proper material, the coaching, and the many incidentals that must be looked after in contests, too, prevent many teachers from using the declamation in contests or even in the daily activity of the schoolroom. They either do not have the time to give to the activity, or they do not want to be bothered with extraneous work of any kind. When
the value of the declamation as an educational aid becomes better disseminated, and when teachers understand more clearly what needs to be done and what standards to use, it is believed that speech education and declamation, a worthy handmaiden of speech, will receive a new impetus.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF DECLAMATION CONTESTS IN TEXAS AS
SPONSORED BY THE STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

In 1910, John A. Lomax, Registrar of the University of Texas, made a tour of the larger universities of the state to study extension projects. Upon his return he recommended the establishment of a league among the public schools of Texas for the promotion and development of educational contests. E. D. Shurter, professor of public speaking at the Texas State University, was appointed to take charge of the work.

The Texas State Teachers Association, meeting at Abilene later in the same year, listened sympathetically to an address by Shurter, in which he outlined the proposed advantages of an organization among the schools to promote contests in debating and declaiming. On the recommendation by Shurter, an organization was formed by the representatives of two hundred schools and it was called "The Debating and Declamation League of Texas."

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1 Charles Albert Dupre, The University Scholastic League, p. 21.
Membership in the association was limited to the schools that were affiliated with the University, and a payment of a one dollar membership fee was required.

The objective of "The Debating and Declamation League of Texas Schools" as stated in the constitution and by-laws of the association was the improvement in public speaking and debate among the students in the schools of Texas. The state was divided into ten districts for elimination purposes prior to the state meet.

The first constitution also provided for a state meet between the winning teams from each of the ten districts into which the state was divided, and further provision for amending and broadening the constitution as the need arose. The first meet was held in May, 1911, and at this meeting the rules were broadened to include participation of all secondary schools in Texas, if they so desired, and the addition of a declamation contest to that of the debate competitions. However, participation in both debate and declamation was limited to male students who had not passed their eighteenth birthday at the date of the final contest, and who had made passing grades in at least three of their studies at the time of each contest for which they entered.  

The University of Texas assumed full sponsorship of "The Debating and Declamation League" and reserved partial

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2 Constitution of the Debating and Declamation League of Texas Schools: The University of Texas Bulletin, II (October 8, 1911), p. 5.
governing powers. While officials of secondary schools were given governing powers in their own districts, the executive committee consisted of the University standing committee on forensics and oratory and had no representative from the secondary schools.

The original constitution did not provide for county eliminations, but interest in the speech contests increased so rapidly that county eliminations were advised and encouraged.

In the meantime, there was another state-wide organization fostered among the secondary schools of the state by the University of Texas. This was an organization to promote and control high school athletics. This organization had a state meet each year, which was somewhat similar in nature to that of the Debating and Declamation League, and a movement grew to combine the organizations. On May 3, 1913, a joint meeting of the two organizations was held at the University, at which time it was decided to combine the two organizations under a single head in order to affect economy in time, expense, and effort on the part of both the University and the participating schools over the state. The University Interscholastic Association and the Debating and Declamation League became The University Interscholastic League of Texas. The purpose of the League was a combination of the purposes of the two contributing organizations:
The object of this League is to foster in schools of Texas the study and practice of public speaking and debate as an aid in the preparation for citizenship; to assist in organizing, standardizing and controlling athletics in the schools of the state; and to promote county, district, and state interscholastic contests in debate, declamation, and athletics. 3

The basic principles of this new association are summed up by Dupre as follows:

1. The original constitution of the League and that of its contributing organizations made provision for the schools to participate in the control of the organization.

2. While participation in the early contests was limited to a few pupils through the lack of a program broad enough, the constitution was flexible enough to permit the addition of other educational contests.

3. From the standpoint of participating schools, the League was democratic in so far that its membership was thrown open to all secondary public white schools of the state. From the standpoint of pupil participation, it was limited to male pupils.

4. Through its eligibility rules, an attempt was made to regulate and control the contests but the supervision of local contests was reserved by the constitution to the schools. 4

The first meeting of the State Interscholastic League was held in 1913. By 1916 the rules had been changed to include the girls as well as the boys in the speech contests, and certain standards had been set up which have

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prevailed, more or less since. A statement of the rules in declamation for the year 1916 will form a basis for further study of subsequent development and changes.

Article VI of the Constitution of the State Interscholastic League specified that there should be county contests in junior and senior declamation for boys and girls; district contests in both senior and junior declamation for boys; senior declamation for girls; and inter-district and state contests for the same. Article VIII, Rule 1, specified that no one should take part in any contest in the League who was twenty-one years old, on the first day of the preceding September. Rules 2 and 3 limited participation to undergraduates and to those who were taking at least four subjects in school and passing in three of them. 5

The following rules, applicable to the declamation contests are quoted verbatim from the 1916 bulletin:

**Nature of declamation.** In the girls' junior division, selections from standard poems shall be used, excluding dialect and impersonation. So far as is applicable, the character of the selections for the girls junior contest shall be the same as specified below for the contests in the other divisions.

In the boys' junior division, and in the boys and girls' senior divisions, each declamation shall consist of a prose selection from some standard author or well-known speaker. The subject matter of each selection shall be prevailingly serious in tone, and delivered for the purpose of convincing or persuading the audience of

certain ideas or truths; in other words a declamation should not be chosen which is primarily adapted to the purposes of mere entertainment. Poetry (excepting such poetical quotations as may be included in prose selections), 'funny' pieces, dramatic readings, and impersonations will not be allowed. Each student shall accept a declamation the words of which he adopts as his own for the purpose of speaking to a present day audience on a subject of present day interest and importance. In case of doubt as to the interpretation of this rule, the State Executive Committee should be consulted, and the decision of such committee shall be final. No declamation in the county, district, or final state contest shall exceed (5) minutes in length (about 600 words) or two pages of a book of ordinary size.

Note. A five-minute selection having required unity and sequence can readily be secured by judicious cutting—supplying, it may be, a connecting sentence or phrase here and there. Very often a three-minute selection is a complete unit, and in such case, that is long enough. No special subject for declamation is now required.

1. Programs of county and district contests. The order of speaking in the county, district, and inter-district declamation contests shall be determined by lot.

2. No speaker shall be coached or prompted in any manner during the delivery of the declamation.

3. The judges in declamation shall be selected as prescribed for the Rules in Debate (three, five or seven in number, selected on the basis of capability and impartiality).

4. Instructions to judges. The judges in the declamation contest shall receive the following instructions: This is a contest in delivery only, the speeches not being original productions. The basis of judging each contestant shall be: general effectiveness as a speaker. In determining general effectiveness the following matters shall be considered: interpretation, adaptation of the speakers' ability to the particular section, clearness in enunciation, emphasis, inflection, modulation, force, earnestness, naturalness, ease and grace of carriage, physical
expression, directness and the general effect upon the audience. No attempt, however, shall be made to trade these elements of general effectiveness by percentages, but each judge shall rank each speaker according to the effort as a whole. At the close of the contest each judge shall rank the speakers by the numbers, 1, 2, 3, etc. A speaker ranked first by a majority of the judges shall be awarded first place. In case no speaker is ranked first by the majority of the judges, the contestant the sum of whose ranks is least shall be awarded first place. The speakers receiving second and third places, respectively, shall be determined in the same manner. The ranks of the contestants shall be computed either by the judges themselves or by a committee appointed for that purpose. In case of a tie in ranking, the judges shall confer and decide the ranking of those tied. 6

The changes that have been brought about in the rules for declamation contests are noticeable when the above rules for 1916 are compared with those of 1938. Where the rules specified two contests in declamation in 1916 - a senior 7 and a junior contest - the 1938 eligibility rules prescribe three classes in declamations, as follows: high school, ward (or grammar grades), and rural school. Each of these classes was to have four divisions: senior boys, senior girls, junior boys, junior girls. The age limit, effective in 1940, was changed to eighteen years. Undergraduates only were allowed participation and the scholarship requirement was not materially changed from those of the first standards.

The most important changes that have been made have to

6 Ibid., pp. 31-32. 7 Ibid., p. 31.
do with the nature of the declamations and the standards set up for judging. In the 1916 declamation rules, it is seen that there was a difference made in the selections used for junior boys and girls. The girls could use selections from standard poems, but the junior boys and the boys and girls in the senior division could choose only prose selections. In the 1938 rules, both junior boys and girls' selections were to be made from standard poetry, which could be found in the school basic and supplementary readers. These poetry selections, however, were recommended only as a guide, and were not mandatory; there was choice of selection. The following statement taken from the rules is clarifying:

The selections chosen must not be in the nature of dramatic readings, must be in good English, and must not be in dialect or require impersonation. The purpose of this contest is to add to the mental enrichment of the pupils by the memorizing of standard poetry and to enable them to give a sincere, intelligent, and effective oral interpretation of the same to the audience. In case selections of this character are not delivered, the judges shall disregard such speaker in the grading and the decision of the judges shall be final.

The declamations required in the senior boys and girls' divisions were prose selections lying in the general field of good citizenship:

8

This requirement may be fulfilled by a selection dealing with (1) the fundamental qualities of virtues necessary for good citizenship, (2) a story or exposition of noted events or characters that have contributed to the making of America, (3) selections commemorating Texas heroes, history and progress, discussion of present day public question or issue. In general, the subjects used are intended to lead the students to study the problems of our American system of government and to incite in speakers and hearers aspirations toward a better citizenship. The purpose of these contests is to train pupils as public speakers and not as dramatic readers or mere entertainers. Therefore, a selection should be chosen which the speaker adopts as his own for the purpose of informing, convincing, or persuading the audience he is addressing on a present day subject relating to the opportunities and duties of American citizenship. In case selections of the prescribed character are not chosen, the judges shall disregard such selection in the grading and the decision of the judges shall be final.

There was much broadening of the instructions given the judges in declamation contests in the 1938 rules over those of the 1916 rules. Eight definite standards for evaluation were set up for the guidance of the judges. These are shown in the following chart.

The judges were to use this form in ranking the contestants. A speaker ranked first by a majority of the judges was to be awarded first place. In case no speaker was ranked first by the majority of the judges, the contestant the sum of whose ranks is least was to be awarded first place. Other ranks were likewise to be decided.

Ibid., p. 19.
ACHIEVEMENT IN DECLAMATION

Speaker No. ____________________ Division ____________________

Title ____________________ Author ____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Choice of Material
Appreciation of Thought
Projection to the Audience
Control of Bodily activity
Rhythm
Pronunciation
Voice Control
General Effectiveness

Total Score: ____________________

Comments: ____________________

______________________________
Judge

1-Inferior
2-Very Poor
3-Poor
4-Adequate
5-Good
6-Very Good
7-Superior 10

*RATING SCALE
Above 70 - Excellent
40-50 - Good
29-39 - Average
Below 29 - Poor

Fig. 5.—Suggested chart for scoring achievement in declamation.

Ibid., p. 38.
In the revised rules and standards of the University Interscholastic League for 1940-41, the above judging standards are further clarified and interpreted. The Declamation Judging Standards, as recommended at this time were:

I. Interpretation and Effectiveness. Approximate value, seventy per cent

A. Desire to communicate. (This is a very important point).

1. Did you feel that the speaker had a genuine desire to communicate ideas to an audience?
2. Did the speaker appear to have a real interest in what he said?
3. Did the speaker make you believe in his sincerity and enthusiasm as he delivered his declamation?

B. Interpretation. (This is a very important point.)

1. Did the speaker give the audience the spirit, the emotional coloring, and the attitude toward the subject intended by the author?
2. Did the speaker present the idea of the selection in a clear, intelligible manner which the audience could easily understand?

C. Directness. (This point refers chiefly to senior declamations. It is a very important point).

1. Did the speaker talk to, and for, the audience, rather than to the floor, windows, or ceiling?
2. Was the declamation spoken in a direct, conversational way or did it appear to be a memorized recital mechanically presented?
D. Suitability

1. Was the selection suitable material for this student, or was it too simple or complicated?
2. Did the speaker seem to understand the purpose the author had in writing the selection?

II. Mechanics of Delivery. Approximate value, thirty per cent.

A. Bodily activity

1. Did the body assist the speaker in a natural way?
2. Did the body hinder the speaker by being stiff and unresponsive?
3. Did bodily movements attract attention to themselves because they seemed artificial?
4. Did bodily movements seem so much a part of the speaker that they were not too obvious?

B. Voice

1. Was there too much or too little volume?
2. Was the pitch of the voice too high, too low, too monotonous?
3. Was the quality of the voice generally pleasing to the ear?

C. Rate

1. Did the speaker talk too fast, too slowly, at a monotonous rate with little variety?
2. Was there a variety of rate which resulted in emphasis of important points?
3. Was there a sing-song pattern, or a tiresome repetition of any pattern of speech?
4. Were the relatively unimportant words (articles, prepositions, etc.) properly subordinated to the more important words?

D. Pronunciation and articulation
1. On the whole, were the words pronounced correctly and accurately?
2. Was there a noticeable use of colloquial, local, vulgar, or obsolete pronunciation?
3. Were the words used spoken distinctly without being unaffected or unnatural?

It is apparent, when a comparison is made between these suggested instructions to the judges and those issued to the judges in 1916, that much progress has been made along this line. However, there could be no disagreement with the fundamental requirements of the previous instructions; from the first, the standards of the declamation contests have been in harmony with fundamental educational principles. The main improvement has been in the broadening and developing of the original bases for judging contestants.

One fruitful source of disagreement among contestants and judges was eliminated in the revised rules and regulations for 1940-41. Previous to this ruling, judges were the final arbiters of what constituted "standards" in the choice of selections. If a school so desired, it might challenge the selection used by a winning team, and ask the judges to disbar a contestant on the grounds that his selection was not in conformity with the requirements. The revised rules for 1940-41 provide all declamations for junior boys and junior girls "shall be selected from the prescribed

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11 Constitution and Rules of the University Inter-scholastic League, (Revised edition for 1940-41) University of Texas Publication, No. 3824 (June 22, 1938), p. 23.
list of poems issued by the state office." All the directors of declamation were to select only such titles as were on this list, with the exception that if a poem outside this list was desired for use, it must be submitted to the state office prior to the meet for approval or disapproval. This mandatory list consists of several hundred titles, and varies in subject matter to such a degree that any teacher or student can find adequate material for junior declamations. 12 This action does away with any source of dissatisfaction in this respect, and puts the league declamation contests on a much sounder basis.

The listing of the various points and the explanation of same has also aided in clearing up another confusing situation in the training of declaimers. While there has been no definite rule against the use of gestures by contestants, there has long been an existing opinion among teachers that the League has forbidden the use of gestures in the declamation contests. In the questions asked the judges on the Mechanics of Delivery, the impression is given that bodily movements are permissive, and that they should be natural and an outgrowth of the feeling in the selection. This is in conformity with the best thought on the subject.

Little change was made in the material suggestions for senior boys and for senior girls, but one important addition has been made. Senior declamations written by students are eligible for use provided they comply with all regulations. Such declamations are to be judged on exactly the same basis as any other declamation. There have been demands for divisions in humorous and dramatic readings, and original oratory besides the type now in use.

One rule that makes for greater naturalness in delivery was also formulated in the revised regulations for 1940-41. This concerns the manner of presenting each contestant during the contest. Former rules had prescribed that the contestants, after they had drawn for places on the program, should be seated on the stage in the order drawn. The presiding officer announced each contestant by number and announced the title and author of his selection. The new rules, provide that after the contestants have drawn for places on the program, they be placed in a room off the speaking platform or stage. They appear on the platform alone, deliver their selection, and leave the stage. The rules also recommend that declaimers to not announce the author and title of their selections.

There is also a new ruling concerning the selection of judges. It is especially recommended that good critic judge be secured to judge all contests. In case this is
impossible, there or any larger number of competent judges should be named.

When these standards set up by the Interscholastic League of Texas for declamation contests are compared with the criteria formulated for the evaluation of declamation contests, the conclusion is drawn that Texas educators have been in agreement with the best opinion along this line in the literature studied. The standards of the Texas Interscholastic League are high and in harmony with accepted criteria for declamation contests.

Reference to the standards formulated in the previous chapter shows wherein and how the practices and aims of the Texas Interscholastic League conform or differ with those set up in the criteria.

The aim of the Texas Interscholastic League, in fostering declamation contests, is a "preparation for citizenship." This is in conformance with the best thought on the question as brought out in the literature.

The selection of material for the junior boys and girls, as prescribed by the Interscholastic League, is limited to selections from standard poetry. Although the criteria does not specify that selections be chosen altogether from this source, it does recommend that the selections be taken from literature of recognized standing and merit. The Interscholastic League permits selections only
within this sphere, but it gives a long prescribed list which is sufficiently broad to permit the teacher and pupil to make selections for almost any time, place, or occasion.

The declamations required in the senior boys and girls' divisions by the Interscholastic League in Texas are prose selections lying in the general field of good citizenship. No specified list is given, but suggested lists are available for both teachers and participants. In this respect, Texas may be said to be in agreement with the best thought in literature concerning the choice of material for senior declamation students.

The Texas Interscholastic League sets up definite standards for judging the effectiveness of a declamation in the declamation contests sponsored by the League. Reference to these standards, as given in this study, show that there are eight points to be considered: choice of material, appreciation of thought, projection to the audience, control of bodily activity, rhythm, pronunciation, voice control, and general effectiveness.

These standards, as set up in the form of questions, indicated that the material should be suitable for the student, and understandable to him. The delivery should be made in a direct, conversational manner and not mechanically memorized and presented. The speaker should
give the audience the feeling that was in the selection in such a manner as to make it clear an intelligible to the audience. The speaker, too, should be interested in his selection, have a desire to communicate this interest to the audience, and be sincere in his attitude. In the light of the criteria set up for the evaluation of choice of material, the Texas standards are fully worth while and representative of the best thought existing today.

In the standards for judging the mechanics of delivery, indication is found that this delivery should be natural, the movements an outgrowth of the feeling in the selection, and not stilted or artificial, and a part of the speaker. These are in conformance, also, with the best thought on this subject today.

Standards for judging the voice, as outlined by the Interscholastic League of Texas, gave emphasis to volume, pitch, and general quality of the voice. While no definite requirements as to what constituted desirable qualities along these lines are given, the supposition is plain that the voice should be of pleasing quality, pitched to a harmonious level, and sufficiently strong to carry the words distinctly. There could be no disagreement in thought with these desirable voice qualities.

The rate at which the speaker talks is also given consideration in the standards. The variety of the speech,
the stress on words, and the repetition of words are given attention. While there are no specific details given, any competent judge may follow the standards and make a fair decision.

The pronunciation and the articulation of words are also stressed in the standards. They should be pronounced correctly and accurately, colloquialisms and vulgarities should be omitted, and the manner of speaking should be natural and unaffected. Texas standards, in this respect, fully meet the criteria set up in the previous chapter.

However, the use of these definite standards have only been available within the last two years. Previous instructions to judges had been in line with accepted standards, but they had been vague and indefinite. It would be impossible to make hard, rigid rules covering all conditions, without making the whole process mechanical, so the conclusion may be drawn that the Texas State Interscholastic League has made progress in sponsoring and conducting the declamation contests.

In conclusion, it may be said that the declamation contests have been very popular in Texas. More students have participated in declamation contests than in any form of the League contests, and interest has been steadily growing.

This survey of the growth and development of the declamation contests in the Texas Interscholastic League has
shown that there has been an interest in such contests, and that the fostering officials have given serious study and attention to improving the contests and keeping them in conformity with the modern educational philosophy and practices. It is hoped to show in the next chapter that students who have participated in these declamation contests, whether they have won or lost, have benefited from the experience.
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF DATA SECURED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES TO
ONE HUNDRED UNDER GRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS

In order to gain some knowledge of the value the declamation contests have been in the lives of Texas school children, a questionnaire was prepared and given out to one hundred under-graduate students at the North Texas State Teachers College. These students, previous to entering college, had been students in the public schools of Texas and each one of them had been a participant, at least one time, in a declamation contest. It was thought that the reaction of the students to the declamation contests would be significant in this study. The questionnaires were not given out indiscriminately, but were presented personally by the writer and this personal contact facilitated a good response from the students queried. A copy of the questionnaire will be found in the Appendix.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts to facilitate analysis. Each of these will be presented in the analysis of the data secured.

Table 1 presents the first part of the questionnaire and a tabulation of the answers received.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Information Concerning Declamation Activities in One Hundred Texas Schools</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did your school take part in interscholastic League activities?</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was there much interest in your school in such contests a. On part of students?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. On part of teachers?</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did you win any honors?</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are in favor of such contests?</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Was speech offered as a regular course in your school? a. Was declamation a part of the course?</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are you interested in the field of speech?</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did participation in declamation contests influence your interest in favor of speech?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Did the training you received in preparation for declamation contests differ from that you have received in regular speech courses either in high school or college?</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did the time you spent in preparation for the contests interfere with your school work?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you feel that the time was well spent?</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Would you like to see an increased interest in such contests?</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Would you like to coach declamation?</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first question is a general one, and asks merely whether the student's public school, which had been attended, took part in Interscholastic League activities. Ninety-seven of the students stated that their schools had, while three indicated that their schools had not participated in League activities. Eighty students said that their schools showed much interest in the League activities; twenty said that the students in their schools had taken little interest. On the question of teacher-interest in the activities, eighty-two students said their teachers had showed an active interest, while eighteen thought their teachers had not shown much interest in the different contests. These data bear out the statement by Bedichek that

The great trouble with many teachers who do not like the contests is that they do not like the trouble of contests. They do not like to have their work put up against somebody else's work before a competent set of judges. The schools generally are pretty soft in their teaching simply because they have no way of objectively determining a good teacher from a bad one.

Eighty-three of the students questioned stated that they had won honors in League contests, and seventeen stated that they had not won any honors. The fact that they had not won any honors does not seem to have influenced them against contests, for the answers to the next question show that only five out of this seventeen were opposed to such contests.

1 Quoting from personal letter from Roy Bedichek to the writer, March 23, 1943.
while ninety-two favored them and three were indifferent. Personal questioning revealed that three students were forced to enter the contests, three were indifferent, and one complained that students were trained to speak too mechanically, that judging was unfair, and that losing gave one an inferiority complex. This one student held this opinion in spite of the fact that she had won honors in contests. However, the preponderance of opinion expressed by the students was that they were in favor of the contests and thought they were worth while.

Forty-six students said that speech was offered as a regular course in their schools, and fifty-four students said that it was not. On the other hand, only twenty-three students said that declamation was a part of the speech course. This shows that thirty-one of the schools offering regular speech courses did not include the teaching of declamation in the speech course.

The above data are significant to the student of speech today. Modern educational philosophy has defined the aim of education as the development of the whole individual and preparation for good citizenship; in the next breath it says that the ability to communicate effectively with his fellow man is one of the most needed qualities of the good citizen. Declamations, as pointed out previously in this study, are potentially one of the best mediums for developing a student's ability to think, talk, and act for himself. If the speech
departments of the public schools are not including declama-
tions as a part of their speech training, they are not tak-
ing advantage of all the possibilities for training the in-
dividual for citizenship. The data, in this case, if they
can be said to represent a composite view of the schools of
Texas, indicate that speech, the foster parent of declama-
tion, is not giving enough attention to its own offspring.

Eighty-one of the hundred students queried stated that
they were interested in speech; nineteen said they had no in-
terest whatever in the subject. Inasmuch as fifty-four of
the schools represented did not offer regular speech courses
in the school, this information is neither alarming nor sur-
prising. The student who has not had speech training nor
has even had association with such a department in his school
has little means of knowing or appreciating the values of
speech. Sixty-nine out of this number of eighty-one
students who favored speech said that participation in dec-
lamation contests had influenced their interest in favor of
speech. Only one contestant said that participation in con-
tests had influenced her to dislike speech activities.

Thirty-five students said that the training they re-
ceived in preparation for declamation contests differed from
that offered in the regular speech courses. Part III of the
questionnaire analyzes the differences the students listed.
Thirty-five students said that preparation for declamation
contests had not interfered with their work in the regular courses. Thirty students had had no training in speech, and had been given training in declamations for only a short while preceding the League contests.

The opinion of ninety-four of the students interviewed was that the time they had spent in declamation study had been worth while; six students thought they had received no benefit from the study and that the time spent had been of no value whatever.

Ninety-one students indicated that they would like to see an increased interest in speech contests in Texas, while nine said they were indifferent to whether speech training was given or not. Fifty-six of these ninety-one students who favored expansion of the speech program in Texas, said that they would like to coach declamations. Seventeen of the students said that they did not plan to teach, and the remaining seventeen felt that they were not qualified for the work.

The composite conclusions gained from the data secured in this questionnaire warrants the statement that declamation contests, on the whole, have succeeded in arousing interest in them and in speech training in general among the students who have participated in them. This is a healthy sign for the further growth of declamation training, and if participation in these contests has aroused interest, this interest in the years to come will be transformed into greater
declamation activities. The fact that these students, for the most part, are now preparing to teach, is significant; they will carry the interest derived from the declamation contest over into their schools.

Table 2 shows the approximate enrollment in the public schools of eighty of the students interviewed, the number of students entering declamation contests at the time these students participated, the time spent in training for these contests, and the percentage of the students taking part in such contests. Only eighty schools show results in this table for the following reasons: fifteen of the students interviewed did not know the enrollment of their schools and five of the students had been forced to enter the contests. The schools, then, of these students, were not included in the table. Table 2 was made from the answers to the following questions:

1. Approximately how many children were enrolled in the school where you participated in declamation contests?

2. Approximately, how many students took part in the contest the years you entered?

3. Approximately how much time did you spend each year in preparation for the declamation contest?

Data from Table 2 give a complete picture of what has been happening in Texas schools so far as the study of declamation is concerned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Approximate enrollment</th>
<th>No. Pupils entering declamation contests</th>
<th>Time spent training for declamation contests</th>
<th>Percentage of enrollment participating in contests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 mo. 3 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3 mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Approximate enrollment</td>
<td>No. Pupils entering declamation contests</td>
<td>Time spent training for declamation contests</td>
<td>Percentage of enrollment participating in contests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>all year</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 wks.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3 mo.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12 wks.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 mo.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Approximate enrollment</th>
<th>No. Pupils entering declamation contests</th>
<th>Time spent training for declamation contests</th>
<th>Percentage of enrollment participating in contests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6 wks.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25,266</td>
<td>22.16</td>
<td>464 wks.</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>315.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>5.8 wk.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The approximate number of students enrolled in these schools was 25,266, or an average of 315.8 students to a school. The approximate number of students who participated in school contests in these schools was 2,216, an average of 20.7 students to the school. The average per cent, thus of students participating, was 8.3. The approximate amount of time devoted to declamation training in these schools was 464 weeks, or an average of 5.8 weeks.

These figures are significant. They show that a very small per cent of the school children of Texas have participated in declamation contests which were available in the schools, and that a small amount of time was given to the training. As the table shows, in the majority of the schools this was the only speech training offered. The inference is that the training was only given for a short while directly preceding the contests,
and that the probable motive dominant in this training was to prepare winners for the school. In other words, the criticism made by one of the students that "they were just picked up, jerked into the study of declamation, and pushed through the contest," is justified. The major aim of declamation, training the child for better speech in order that he may live better, seems to have been lost sight of in the scramble for honors. Declamation, if it is really worth while to the student, must be carried on over a longer period of time, be more closely integrated with his work as a whole, and made an integral part of the school program. The declamation contest is worthy as a motivating agent in the study of declamations, but more time should be given to the study preceding contests.

Section III of the questionnaire deals with other types of declamation contests besides those sponsored by the Interscholastic League of Texas, the reasons assigned by the students for lack of interest in the contests, the difference in training received in preparation for declamation contests from that received in regular courses in speech, who coached declamation contests in which the students participated, most satisfactory speech experiences of the students before entering college, and the values which students felt that they had gained from entering declamation contests. These different items will be considered separately here.
Table 3 shows the other types of declamation contests and the number of students entering same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Contest</th>
<th>Number of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Forensic League</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-Mural or Play Day</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce Sponsored</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data indicate that there are few declamation contests sponsored in Texas outside those of the Interscholastic League.

Table 4 lists reasons for lack of interest in declamations as reported by thirty-seven of the students interviewed and who had stated that there was little interest in their schools.

Analysis of this data indicates that the major causes of lack of interest in declamation contests in the schools surveyed, in the opinion of the students, were lack of qualified teachers and lack of school spirit. This last cause might easily stem from the first; a teacher who is not qualified to teach declamations, has no interest in them, will not be likely to arouse any interest in the student body.
### TABLE 4

REASONS GIVEN BY THIRTY-SEVEN STUDENTS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN DECLAMATION CONTESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for lack of interest</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of qualified and interested teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of school spirit or &quot;students too lazy&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress placed on athletics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of school authorities on grounds of &quot;benefit to the few&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time on the part of teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory participation in declamation contest</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the difference in training in preparation for declamation contests some of the students received from that received in regular courses in speech.

### TABLE 5

DIFFERENCES IN TRAINING FOR DECLAMATION CONTESTS FROM THAT GIVEN IN REGULAR SPEECH COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences in ways of training</th>
<th>Number of students expressing opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training for contests was weaker on fundamentals: voice, body, diction - than regular speech courses</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in declamations was more mechanical</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training consisted of mimicking teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More individual attention given to contests</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data indicate that less stress was placed on fundamental speech training and more upon training to win, obviously at the hands of untrained teachers. In the opinion of twenty-nine of the students this idea was paramount.

Table 6 shows who coached the declamation contests.

**TABLE 6**

**NUMBER OF PUPILS THAT HAD VARIOUS TYPES OF TEACHERS AS DECLAMATION COACHES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular speech teacher</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any teacher who would serve</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English teacher</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety-eight students reported on who coached them in declamations, and only fourteen of these were trained by a regular speech teacher. The preponderance of the students were coached by English teachers and "just any teacher who would serve." Since declamations, to be effective, embody all the principles and arts of good speech, "just any teacher" cannot serve effectively as coach. Too many times English teachers know subject matter, yet lack ability to express themselves well. They are to be commended for their
willingness to aid in coaching a subject in which they are not trained; the criticism here is that speech and declamations have not been given enough attention in Texas in selecting the faculty and planning a curriculum.

Table 7 lists the most satisfactory speech experiences of the students interviewed prior to their entrance to college. Twelve students gave no preference.

TABLE 7
THE MOST SATISFACTORY SPEECH EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS BEFORE ENTERING COLLEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Experience</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration contests</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatics</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks at community or religious gatherings</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular speech class</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral reading</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Declaration contests, the above table shows, were the most satisfactory speech experiences of the majority of the students interviewed, in spite of all the criticisms leveled against them and the fact that in many cases they have been in the hands of untrained teachers.

Figure 6 illustrates much more clearly the overwhelming popularity of the declamation contest in comparison with
other types of speech activity. These findings coincide with the figures of the Interscholastic League concerning entrants in various contests. More students have participated in declamation contests than in any other contests sponsored by the League.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declamation Contests</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatics</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates</td>
<td>XXXXXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks, Community and Religious</td>
<td>XXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Class</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral Reading</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>10  20  30  40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 6.—The Comparative importance students attached to various types of speech activities.

Table 8 lists the personal values the students reported that they had received from participating in declamation contests, in order of rating.

If this table is a true reflection of the values the students who were interviewed feel that they have gained from the participation in declamation contests, there is more regret that only eight per cent of the children in these schools availed themselves of the privilege of entering the contests.
TABLE 8
THE NUMBER OF PUPILS THAT RECEIVED EACH VALUE FROM PARTICIPATING IN DECLAMATION CONTESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Received</th>
<th>Number of Pupils Reporting such Value Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poise</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help in overcoming timidity</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for fraternity with others interested in same field</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity of staying with a given piece of work until it has been perfected to the best of the student's ability</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of literature</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more agreeable speaking voice</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased vocabulary</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of personality</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better posture</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better diction</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General broadening background</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some ways the picture revealed in these data of the declamation contests in Texas may appear to be dark, but the over-all picture is not so. It must be remembered that speech
education has only gained recognition as a worthy part of the curriculum within the last few years. There are not too many trained speech teachers in the public schools today. The fact that the declamation contests have been carried on, that they have continued to be sponsored, and that more students have entered them than any other contest in the state, all augur well for the future of the movement. As more speech training is offered in the teacher training institutions, as a better understanding of the aims of speech education grows, and as the training in declamation is broadened to include all the children, interest will grow. Speech education is a definite part of the school curriculum, and the declamation is one of speech's best methods for developing and training the young students for future speech activities and thus for intelligent citizenship.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions have been reached from this study of the value of the declamation contest and the best methods of training the students for participation in it.

1. The declamation is a definite part of speech education, and should be included in the regular speech programs of the school.

2. The declamation has definite educational values that the student does not receive in other studies.

3. The declamation aims to give the student a greater appreciation of poetry and prose, a better evaluation of the works of great writers and speakers, more confidence in the ability to express opinions, greater poise, better control of the emotions, and the ability to think and interpret for oneself.

4. Realization of the full aims of declamation can come only from trained speech teachers who devote considerable time to the subject.

5. The full value of the declamation can not be gained in a compressed study of two or three weeks,
especially when it is treated as an isolated matter, apart from the regular speech course.

6. Six definite standards for the selection of material for declamations are: the use of good English, a sane theme, normal emotions, a true psychology, colloquial style, and experience within the reader's grasp.

7. The pupil should understand his material for a declamation, should believe in the truth of its statements, and be in sympathy with the emotions expressed.

8. The delivery of a declamation should be characterized by naturalness, directness, earnestness, and normal physical expression and actions.

9. Real life situations should be the criteria for gestures, facial expression, and bodily movement.

10. The voice, in the delivery of a declamation, should be pleasing, and the quality, force, tempo and pitch should be determined by the thought.

11. The declamation contest is one of the most effective methods of arousing interest in the study of declamations.

12. The contest should aim to develop the speaking abilities of the entire group, and not be devoted entirely to training a few "gifted" individuals.

13. The Texas Interscholastic League, in its promotion
of declamation contests, has kept pace with the progress in educational thought. As educational philosophy has changed, the League's activities have correspondingly changed.

14. Texas lacks sufficient trained speech teachers in its schools. This does not necessarily mean that there should be a teacher in the school who teaches speech alone, but that one of the teachers should have speech training in addition to training in other subjects.

15. Lack of trained speech teachers and conflicting ideas of the value of declamation contests coupled with the old ideas of what constitutes a declamation account for the lack of interest in declamation study in the public schools.

The following recommendations, based on the results of this study, are offered:

1. Declamation should be a regular part of the speech training, and should be taught continuously throughout the school year. Preparation, then, for declamation contests, would come only at certain intervals, but more students would be prepared to enter and would have received valuable training besides.

2. There should be a teacher in each school who has had some training in speech education.

3. Participation in the declamation contests should be voluntary and not compulsory.

4. More time should be allotted the speech teacher for declamation activities.
5. The declamation contests should be encouraged more in the schools, and in the other school activities such as play festivals and intra-mural meetings. Such a program, designed for use in small schools, is set up in the Appendix.

6. The aims of speech education with the corresponding aims of the declamation should be given more attention in teacher discussions and planning for the work of the school. So-called weaknesses, prejudices, and rumors may be refuted in this way.
APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Section I

Check "yes" or "no"

1. Did your school take part in Interscholastic League activities?

2. Was there much interest in such contests
   a. On the part of the students?
   b. On the part of the teachers?

3. Did you win any honors?

4. Are you in favor of such contests?

5. Was speech offered as a regular course in your school?

6. Was declamation a part of the course?

7. Are you interested in the field of speech?

8. Did participation in declamation contests influence your interest?

9. Did the time spent in preparation for the declamation contest interfere with your school work?

10. Do you feel that the time was well spent?

11. Would you like to see an increased interest in speech contests in Texas?

12. Would you like to coach declamation?

Section II

1. Approximately how many pupils were enrolled in the school where you entered declamation contests?

2. Approximately how many took part in the declamation contest?
3. Was participation compulsory or voluntary?

4. Approximately how much time did you spend each year in preparation for the contest?

Section III

1. In what other declamation contests did your school take part besides those sponsored by the Interscholastic League?

2. (For schools that report lack of interest.) Do you have any idea why there was a lack of interest?

3. (For those that report a difference in training they received in preparation for declamation contests and regular speech courses.) In what ways did the training you received in preparation for declamation contests differ from that you received in regular speech courses?

4. Who coached the declamation contests in your school? (Where declamation was not taught as a part of the regular speech course.)

5. List your most satisfactory speech experiences before entering college in the order of their importance to you.

6. Check any of the following personal values you feel that you gained through participation in declamation contests:
   
   - Poise
   - Help in overcoming timidity and self-consciousness
   - Sportsmanship
   - Assurance
   - Appreciation of literature through selections learned for contests
   - A more agreeable speaking voice
   - Increased vocabulary
   - Development of personality
   - Better posture
   - Better diction
   - List others
SOURCES OF DECLAMATION MATERIAL

Collections


Kline, R. E. Pattison, *Selected Speeches for Practice*, Chicago, American Correspondence School of Law, 1915.


Clippings

Bureau of Public School Interests, *Centennial Declamations*, Austin, Division of Extension, University of Texas, Bulletin No. 3542, 1935.

*Classified List of Junior Declamations*, prescribed for use in the declamation contests in the junior division of the University Interscholastic League, 1940-41, Austin, Division of Extension, University of Texas Bulletin.
Prescribed List for Junior Declamations, revised for 1941-42, University Interscholastic League, Department of Extension, Austin, University of Texas, 1941.

Poetry


Magazines


This Week (Editorials), Dallas Morning News, Dallas.

Readers' Digest, Reader's Digest Association Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York.

Editorials in many of the best magazines and newspapers are suitable for declamations.

Declamation Publishing Companies

Wetmore Declamation Bureau, 1631 Paxton Avenue, Sioux City, Iowa.

Ivan Bloom Hardin Company, Des Moines, Iowa.
### INTRAMURAL MEET

**One Day's Duration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Story Telling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
<td>Science Research</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:45</td>
<td>Radio Broadcast</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:45</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:45</td>
<td>Noon Recess</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-2:45</td>
<td>Declamations</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>Original Speaking</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-Act Play</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * * *
PROGRAM FOR INTRAMURAL MEET

The proposed program is offered in place of the Inter-
scholastic League contests or in preparation for such a con-
test. At this time, when, due to the war effort, trans-
portation is difficult, intramural meets are becoming more
likely to take the place of inter-school contests. Then,
too, a meet of this nature will provide more opportunities for
participation of all the pupils in the schools in competitive
endeavor, thus meeting the criticism that school contests are
for the few.

This program is planned for the average school and
covers one day's activities. No athletics are included in
this program and these should be offered on a succeeding
day or at another time, because all the pupils should either
participate as contestants or as an audience in the listed
contests. Each class should be encouraged to enter as many
contestants in each event as possible. At the end of the day
results can be totaled to determine which class is the winner.
In this way class spirit, instead of individual glory, would
be the motive in winning.

The aim of the program is to correlate speech activities
with all phases of the curriculum as nearly as possible.
Both junior and senior events could be conducted simul-
taneously.

Story Telling

Time: 9:00-10:00. This event might be considered as
a part of and used in English or reading classes, especially in the elementary grades. The following rules might apply:

1. Story should not exceed six minutes
2. Story should be taken from a phase of the reading work in English of both Junior and Senior divisions
3. Contestant will be judged on:
   a. Naturalness
   b. Ability to tell a story
   c. Interpretation
   d. Selection of story to personality of teller
   e. The teller's interest in his story

Science Research or Hobbies
10:00 - 10:45

The second phase of the meet might be a science research project which could incorporate lessons in natural science, geography, woodwork, and nature or hobby interests developed along these general lines. The research job or experiment must be planned by the student and demonstrated and explained alone, or with one assistant, to the judges. Demonstration should not last over five minutes. Each student may enter one research job or experiment.

Students' speeches will be judged on the following:

a. Originality of the job
b. Knowledge of the job
c. Presentation of his work in an interesting manner

d. Technique

Suggested experiments are:

a. Small airplane
b. Radio set
c. Insect collection

Radio Speaking
10:45-11:30

This might be worked out of a study in geography for the junior division and history for the senior division. Each junior student might be allowed to enter a human interest story concerning some nation or country studied in geography, that is now of current interest, and each senior student some similar event. The basic consideration is giving the pupils an opportunity to present interesting material through the medium of radio.

Rules for such a contest might be:

The script should be written in advance by the one who is to read it. (Combination of English and speech).

Maximum time allowed for script will be five minutes.

Speakers will be judged on the following:

a. Interest of the selection

b. Poise, self-control, and expression
c. Naturalness of delivery

d. Radio personality

Declamation Contest
12:45-1:45

The first hour after the noon recess might be given over to declamation contests for both junior and senior contestants. The following rules might apply:

1. Titles should be submitted to the sponsor five days previous to the date of the event.

2. Prose shall be used in the senior division, and poetry in the junior.

3. Selections should not be more than five minutes long.

4. Points to consider in judging:
   a. Diction
   b. Voice
   c. Poise
   d. Suitability of material
   e. Bodily activity
   f. General effectiveness

Original Speaking
1:45-2:45

The subject matter could be anything that interests the speaker: science, home economics, athletics, current events, humorous incidents, and the like.
Rules for such a contest might be:

1. The student selects his own material, subject to the approval of the sponsor, and this should be given to the sponsor a week before the contest.

2. The student organizes his material and determines the manner of presentation.

3. Speakers should be limited to five minutes.

Judging points are:

a. Organization of material

b. Interest of subject matter

c. Delivery

One-Act Play

2:45 -

The last event might be one-act plays. Rules might be:

1. The action should be natural and convincing, moving steadily to a climax.

2. The time required to give it should be limited to thirty minutes.

3. The scenery should not be elaborate, and the setting simple, possibly designed and made by art and shop classes.

4. Points for judging are:

   a. Plot

   b. Characterization
c. Coherence

d. True to life

After the presentation of the contests, visitors might be escorted through the buildings and exhibits of different classes - art, home economics, shop, etc. be judged. The home economics students might be utilized in helping plan the costumes for the one-act plays, if they did not wish to participate otherwise. The fundamental principle underlying the entire effort should be a greater and wider opportunity for all the children to take part in competitive activities, which had for their basic purpose, better training in speech.
JUDGES COMPOSITE BALLOT

Assuming that a contest involving six speakers has been judged by three judges, the ranks given each student by the three judges should first be totaled. The speaker having the lowest total then wins first place; the one with the second lowest takes second place, and so on. The ballot might look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Judge 1</th>
<th>Judge 2</th>
<th>Judge 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2nd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1st.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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