

MAKE ALL MEN LITERATE

Owen's Global Alphabet Can Be Learned In Day

Distinguished Author Explains His Idea In Special Article For "Labor Review"; Hopes To Abolish Poverty And Ignorance

Through the courtesy and with the permission of LABOR, official organ of the Railroad Brotherhoods, and the most influential Labor publication in the nation, Minneapolis Labor Review presents the following timely and important article. It is characteristic of the most able editor in the country, Edward Keating, that in the fine publication he edits this article should have been given prominence. It follows as published in LABOR.—Editor.

When Oklahoma was admitted to the Union in 1907, it sent to Washington as one of its Senators Robert L. Owen, an extraordinarily brilliant gentleman. He soon attained leadership, always taking the progressive side of great problems. He voluntarily retired from the Senate in 1925, after serving 18 years. Since then he has lived quietly in Washington, but has always retained his interest in worthwhile reforms.

Recently he perfected a global phonetic alphabet. It is a breath-taking idea. Senator Owen has been good enough to explain his proposal in an article written for LABOR. It is probably the first exposition of the subject presented in any newspaper of general circulation, and LABOR welcomes the opportunity to place it before its readers.

By ROBERT L. OWEN

With a population of 2,200 millions of people, speaking more than 2,200 languages or dialects, it seems apparent that there should be available a world language so that, through the printed word and over the radio, they can communicate with each other, with understanding and intelligence.

This objective is immediately possible through the use of a mechanism to which I have devoted thousands of hours within the last three years. The Senate has presented the plan in three Senate documents and some of the greatest linguists of the world have been good enough to express their approval.

The supporters of my plan are now incorporating the World Language Foundation for educational and charitable purposes as an instrument through which those who approve of English as a world language may cooperate.

For the convenience of readers of LABOR, I am submitting herewith a chart showing the proposed global alphabet—names, sounds and forms. Strictly Phonetic

The global alphabet can be learned in one day. With it every known language can be printed, using the keyboard of a monotype machine for the composition of type. Such type is now actually available.

No global letter is silent. Every global letter immutably represents one sound only. Anyone knowing the global alphabet can pronounce intelligibly, at sight, any language printed in the global alphabet. The alphabet is strictly phonetic.

It has 18 consonants, 18 vowel sounds and 6 compound consonants. With these forms, every word in Webster's "Unabridged Dictionary" can be read and pronounced.

Easy To Spell

All difficulties in spelling vanish because spelling, under this system, consists merely of writing down the sounds with global letters in the serial order in which they occur in any syllable or word.

Every global letter begins and ends on the center line of writing. Therefore, it can be written rapidly with a pen after reasonable practice.

Under my direction, there has been already prepared a word and phrase book teaching Spanish and English, so framed that one speaking Spanish

can learn to speak English in 90 days, and any intelligent person speaking English can learn to speak Spanish within the same time.

The text of this book could be set up by a compositor at the keyboard of a monotype, linotype or intertype machine.

All Languages

With this pattern, all the other leading languages and dialects could be taught in the same manner. Similar books are now being prepared in Portuguese, Russian and Chinese texts, with others to follow.

The entire world can be taught to speak the English language by this system at less than 1 percent of the daily cost of the United States in this World War.

The one grave difficulty, which has prevented foreigners from learning English, is the inherited orthography of our current English, which is extremely difficult for foreigners to correctly pronounce.

The global alphabet, being strictly phonetic, saves years of time in learning to read and half the time which it would take to read the same books printed in current English. It takes only half the paper to print such books and half the storage and transportation.

Idea Is Spreading

Within the last two decades the use of phonetic alphabets in the abolition of illiteracy has made enormous progress. Over 300 different groups now use a phonetic alphabet of their own contrivance for this purpose, because there are people who, by using their local phonetic alphabet, can im-

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SENATOR OWEN'S GLOBAL ALPHABET

GLOBAL ALPHABET—NAMES, SOUNDS AND FORMS. The NAMES of Global letters are their sounds. Huh Juh Guh Kuh Luh Ruh; Buh Puh Duh Tuh Fuh Vuh; Muh Nuh Suh Zuh CHuh THuh. The Global form represents the sounds of the capital letters in the words given below. SHut, zZure, THick, WHen, QUick, siNG. Vowels: Ah At All; too BUt FEW; hE mEt hER; nO nOt fOR; bAByBYE; bOY nOW OUt. u preceding a vowel equals W as in Wet; i preceding a vowel equals Y in Yes. The sign | indicates that a proper name follows.

diately write and read the local language.

Through the use of phonetic alphabets, Russia has abolished illiteracy in the Soviet Republics and has increased the national income and production over 400 percent.

India has done the same thing under the Laubach plan, using individual phonetic alphabets. Turkey has achieved the reform by the adoption of a phonetic alphabet of 9 letters, and Mexico is carrying on an extensive educational campaign at this very moment, under the Mexican law and the "each-one-teach-one" plan.

For Mankind

I conceived the idea of a global alphabet many years ago and determined to perfect the system. I have given it thousands of hours of microscopic analysis in the last three years.

I have done this at my own expense from a sense of patriotism and a profound gratitude for what I owe to other men.

For every day in a long life I have been fed and clothed and sheltered and received the friendship of God's little messengers all over the world.

It is but natural that I should have a passionate desire, while still in possession of my faculties, to serve those who have so befriended me.

To the service of mankind, I dedicate the work I have done with the deep hope that it may render them the service which I anticipate by enabling them, through the radio and through one world language, to abolish ignorance and poverty and make it possible for the people of every community in the world to multiply their production by using modern knowledge and modern inventions.

FINAL WORD IN WARD SEIZURE DELAYED

WASHINGTON—Because the case has not yet passed through the circuit court of appeals, the U. S. Supreme Court March 12 declined to decide whether the seizure of Montgomery Ward & Co.'s Chicago properties under the President's war powers was constitutional.

Both the government and the anti-labor company sought a supreme court test now by evading the regular practice of going through the appeals court.

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