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The 'Global Alphabet'

REPRESENTATIVE VICTOR WICKERSHAM, of Oklahoma, recently obtained leave to include in the *Congressional Record* a letter written to him by ROBERT L. OWEN, of Washington, who has developed a "global phonetic, stenographic alphabet."

It is surprising, in view of the fact that basic English recently attracted so much attention, that Mr. OWEN's even more basic "Global Alphabet" has not created more of a stir. Mr. OWEN has labored for more than 15 years over the problem of making easier an understanding among peoples of different tongues. From the eminence of his 89 years he has submitted a scheme which is highly interesting for several reasons.

In the first place, the use of Mr. OWEN's phonetic alphabet of 42 letters "with which any language in the world can be printed," would save youngsters in school all the time now being lost in learning how to spell unphonetic words used in English, of which there are thousands. "Unphonetic words" are defined as those in which two or more letters are used to convey sound. Mr. OWEN's system would simplify spelling, and would also eliminate the confusion that arises when a non-English-speaking person comes upon a clause such as "Though a tough cough plough me through."

The only possible objection to Mr. OWEN's "Global Alphabet" lies in the fact that when written it vaguely resembles Turkish, and persons who have spent years learning how to handle our 26-letter alphabet might not take kindly to so sharp a departure from their familiar literary surroundings. However, the big factor in Mr. OWEN's favor is that printing in English with "Global" requires only half as much paper as the amount needed to print the language at present. With paper at a premium, "Global" appears just the thing to double the content of newspapers and books without increasing their size. Economy-minded congressional committees might find Mr. OWEN's scheme worth looking into.

Richmond Times-Dispatch
7-31-44