

Ex-Senator Has Alphabet For All World

By Francis J. Kelly
Associated Press Staff Writer

Using 41 novel symbols and holding 16 others in reserve, former United States Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma has developed a "global alphabet" he thinks capable of breaking down the world's language barriers.

"Through it I can teach any reasonably intelligent man Chinese in two months," he enthused. "It is a means by which we can teach the English language to all the world at high speed and negligible cost. It will pay its own way."

Although at first glance Owen's alphabet appears to resemble some shorthand systems, he said it was entirely different. His is based on 18 vowel sounds, 18 consonants and 5 double consonants—"ch," "sh," "th," "ng," and "wh." The 41 regular letters are little hooks and wiggles and slashes and curves.

Emergency Symbols Ready

In case it develops that Tibetan or Urdu or some other tongue contains sounds not capable of expression by the 41, Owen has 16 orthographic substitutes warming the bench. In general, they are angular or triangular in form.

Owen, at 87, is blind—a handicap he scoffs at.

"I just dictated them to my secretary, by metes and bounds," he explained. "In my mind, I would picture a square, and describe to her how the character should fit into its limits."

("Metes and bounds" is a surveyor's term, used to describe the outlines of an enclosure.)

A former Indian agent for the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma, Owen was inspired by Chief Sequoia, who in 1823 invented an 85-character alphabet which enabled his Cherokee tribesmen to learn in two or three weeks to write their own language.

An outline of Owen's system was printed recently as Senate Document No. 49 at the request of Senator Thomas (Democrat) of Oklahoma. Illustrations show the global alphabet standing in for the conventional letters of Latin, Greek, French, Japanese, Chinese and Cherokee Indian.

Not to Mention the Savings

As for English, a few simple waggles of the pen and there was: "I saw Esau kiss Miss Kate. The fact is, we all three saw; I saw Esau, he saw me, and she saw I saw Esau."

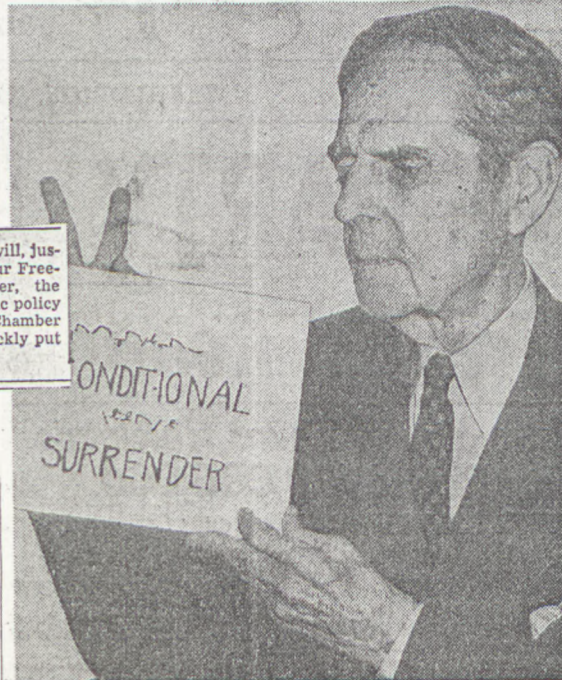
Owen said his shorter, phonetic word forms would save paper, ink and postage, that spelling no longer would be a problem and that "the use of this system with its defined pronunciation would have a tendency to end or limit brogues and dialects."

But in announcing that the copyrighted system would be "my free gift to the world," the former Senator stressed this:

"The global alpha-

for peace, abundance, goodwill, justice and happiness. The Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, the Twentieth Century economic policy adopted by the London Chamber of Commerce, could be quickly put before the world."

'Globalanguage' to Break Down Barriers of Speech Developed



EXHIBITS "GLOBAL ALPHABET"—Using a famous United Nations ultimatum, former Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma, shows how it would look translated from English into the "global alphabet" he has devised, which, he says, is capable of breaking down the world's language barriers. —A. P. Photo.

By the Associated Press.

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