

Owen's Alphabet.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The Cherokee alphabet sponsored by the venerable Senator Owen from Oklahoma was described in a SUN article. If used to teach beginners, it would make English a feasible international auxiliary language. The primitive notation now employed makes English unfit for global use. However, it has never been shown that Cherokee script is an improvement on the international alphabet now so widely used in French-English and other language textbooks. IPA can be adapted to English usage. Pine Plains. JONATHAN HOLDEEN.

SUN

Global Alphabet

Senator Owen's Effort to Speed Up Learning of Languages.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Jonathan Holdeen is under a misapprehension concerning what Senator Owen advocates. The Cherokee syllabary (not alphabet) has nothing to do with Owen's "global alphabet," which is a system of straight and curved lines, hooks and loops, somewhat reminiscent of shorthand symbols, representing not letters but sounds. With a limited number of these phonetic symbols, the Senator claims, it is possible to represent all the sounds of the world's major languages, provided one is not too finicky about merging into a single symbol such slightly divergent sounds as the English t and the French t, which the International Phonetic Alphabet, a tool for scholars and phoneticians, rightly represents by two different symbols.

It is the Senator's contention that by the use of his symbols applied to the world's major languages, language learning for purely practical understanding will be enormously facilitated; that English, which is at present so difficult for foreigners because of the divergence between sound and spelling will become extremely easy, and will have a splendid chance of being adopted as an international language; and that our own school children, learning to read and write by the global alphabet method, will not have to spend endless hours learning how to spell.

Having visited the Senator in Washington only a few days ago, I was shown the manuscript of his forthcoming book, which gives 1,200 basic words and several hundred basic phrases in English, Russian, Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese, all transcribed into "global" characters. The system will later be applied to German, French, Italian and Japanese.

Global characters are easy to learn and to read. They represent, of course, only an approximation to the actual native pronunciation of the various languages, but it is an approximation that is close enough for understanding. To acquire the perfect native-speaker pronunciation and intonation there is, of course, no device save that of long practice with native speakers.

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law, and journalism, the papers unite in the common purpose of analyzing the backgrounds of countries engaged in the present world conflict, each from a different point of view, but all directed toward increasing the people's understanding and recognition of the problems facing a postwar world.

An extensive bibliography accompanies the series, to be mailed as a unit, and, in addition, to those who enroll is extended the privilege of writing in for further explanations or comment.

A NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR INDIANS IN PERU

THE Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs reports the institution in Peru of a new rural-education program for the country's more than 4,000,000 Indians. The plan is to teach the native population not only reading and writing but methods of improving its living and economic conditions. The Indians will also be taught how "to exercise their rights and duties as citizens of a 120-year-old nation."

The project is already under way with the establishment of ten teacher-training schools. Within a year it is expected that 450 teachers, specialists in rural and Indian education, will go into the field to staff 65 rural schools, as the first step in giving the Indians a new concept of their place in the life of the nation. Nine such schools, in the departments of Junin and Puno, are now in operation.

S . . . Laubach's system