

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

A Non-Profit Institution for the Promotion of Semantics and Semantography

5 Maroubra Bay Road, Pagewood, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia

FOUNDER and DIRECTOR: C. K. BLISS, B. Sc.



SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES NO. 151

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND SEMANTOGRAPHY

Throughout the years during which I worked on the books on Semantography and its publication, I refrained from approaching the Director-General of Education in Sydney. I realised that he is the highest authority. He could put my work into practice or at least to the practical test in the class rooms of Sydney. In 1949 Professor Carlton Washburne of New York wrote to me when in Australia that Semantography "should be subjected to controlled experimentation". With this I approached the New Educational Fellowship which was the organiser of Washburne's lecture trip. Here I met blank refusal which went even so far as they refused an informative talk about Semantography. I shall deal with my correspondence with the New Education Fellowship in Australia in a later issue.

I hoped then that other educators will induce the Director-General to approach me. Another factor which made me hesitate to approach the Director-General was that until 1951 an old man (whose name I have forgotten) was Director-General of Education. From quotations in the Press I realised that this man is too orthodox in his views even to consider my work. Then he retired and a younger man, Dr. H. S. Wyndham became Director-General. Many months passed by and Dr. Wyndham did not approach me. I then wrote to him the following letter.

Sydney 23rd July, 1953

Dr. H. S. Wyndham,
Director General of Education,
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

I presume that you have heard of my work Semantography. I have lectured at Sydney University and there were some articles in papers, educational and other magazines in Australia, Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere. Bertrand Russell and other scholars wrote in the highest terms about it. Prof. J. A. Lauwerys Director of the Institute of Education, London University and Prof. Carlton Washburne of New York approached the Director General of Unesco, etc. Highest recognition so far has come from Harvard University and the Library of Congress in Washington. They have given a standing advance order to Angus and Robertson to buy and collect anything which I or others write about my work (or shall write in the future) and be it a typewritten sheet only.

It was my hope and desire to be invited to give a demonstration of my work to the responsible men of Education in New South Wales. I presume however that you are snowed under by the immense routine work and therefore I am writing to you to-day asking for this opportunity. I shall outline the idea of Semantography here.

We learn the 3 R's in school and then we go on learning more R's and Arts. But the most important R is not taught in the primary and secondary schools of the world - for lack of a simple method: The Art of Reasoning. And even at the Universities the study of Logic is taken up only by a few students, who find the scholastic propositions and syllogisms too difficult to apply to everyday reasoning problems.

300 years ago, the great mathematician Leibnitz (1646-1716) dreamed of a simple "Algebra of Thought" so simple that even children could grasp and operate it. The symbols of this simple Algebra should be pictorial "for rendering our conceptions more real", and for giving to the world an interlinguistic medium which could bridge all languages, just in fact as $1 + 2 = 3$ can be read in all languages. Now, in 1952 at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Prof. O. L. Reiser of Pittsburgh University declared "Bliss realized the ambition of the great mathematician Leibnitz."

The history of new ideas shows that many innovators were not professionals in their field, and furthermore that new ideas look strange and even absurd in the beginning. In consequence thereof, many innovators did not find recognition during their life-time. In writing this letter to you, I assume that you will give me a chance to prove the great educational possibilities of my work, which has already been tried out privately in schools in Great Britain. I ask you too, not to delegate this demonstration to one man, who might be prejudiced, or reluctant to advocate a seemingly strange novelty. Give me the opportunity to demonstrate my work under cross-examination of a team of educators and convince yourself that Bertrand Russell was right in saying that assistance to my work means "performing an important service to Mankind."

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

From the following correspondence it will appear that Dr. Wyndham ignored my repeated plea to allow me to copy his letters. I am therefore unable to print his answers in full. I shall, however, make the contents of all his letters clear.

In his answer Dr. Wyndham informed me that he has read with interest my letter and he has also examined the volumes which I have published and the comments of eminent scholars upon them. He agreed with Professor Carlton Washburne that my work is most ingenious and that it should be subjected to the test of controlled experimentation. He also admitted that the consequences of my systems would be far reaching if it would be adopted generally throughout the world.

From the further content of Dr. Wyndham's letter it became clear that he made the same mistake as many other people made, namely he thought that Semantography is just a picture language. From my letter to him it becomes obvious that I was fully aware not to mention this aspect which has no place in the schools of Sydney. On the contrary, I referred exclusively to Semantography as an instrument to teach the most important "R" - the Art of Reasoning, a simple Algebra of Thought.

Other educators before him failed to realise or did not want to realise that Semantography can do this and Dr. Wyndham is one of them. He seized on the other aspect of Semantography, an inter-linguistic medium as a welcome pretext to refuse any action on his part. He then proceeded to explain that only collateral actions in all the countries could have any effect and therefore he suggested that I should approach the United Nations. They should critically examine my system in order to see whether it could be adopted as a means of promoting international communication and understanding. He then suggested that I should approach Unesco through the Commonwealth Office of Education in Sydney. The reader must be informed that education in Australia is strictly a State business and the Federal Government has no authority to interfere with education in any State. The Commonwealth Office of education is an organ of the Federal Government and is as far as education is concerned, an impotent body which can do nothing in any school room of Australia.

This is not the first time that I have been advised to approach Unesco; in fact since 1945 throughout the ten years I have found that Unesco is a wonderful pretext for people who want to get rid of me by advising me to go, if not to the devil, then to Unesco.

I then wrote the following letter : -

Sydney 11th September, 1953

Dr. H.S. Wyndham,
Director General of Education
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Re: Your letter 53/536/50143

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

Thank you for your kind letter, for studying my books and for the good words you have found for my work. In view of the fact that I have stressed the interlinguistic aspect of Semantography it is only logical that your advice is that I should approach the United Nations and Unesco.

Please be informed that - already in 1945 - Professor Needham of Cambridge promised me to direct the attention of the first General Conference of Unesco to my work. In 1946 Prof. Lauwerys took some papers with him and later wrote a letter to the Director General. Prof. Washburne approached personally the Assistant Director General of Unesco Dr. Taylor. Other scholars in various countries, including officials of Unesco supported my work in Paris. There was a time when I believed that a move will be made at the General Conference in 1951. As only few people knew about my work, I printed the attached three-colour leaflet and sent copies of it to the scholars I knew for distribution. I have a big file of letters from Unesco, including the Director General Dr. Bodet, and from highest officials of the United Nations. Even now various letters are under way in a futile correspondence.

You know of the handicaps of Unesco. Apart from a meagre financial position, they can undertake a work only if approved by a majority vote of 59 member states. The gist of all letters was therefore that the Australian Delegation must make a move at the General Conference. Of this I was well aware and I have concurrently tried - since 1949 - to interest the Commonwealth Office of Education in Sydney. Here however I fell victim to some subordinate officials who did not take the trouble to study my work. They considered it a crackpot idea and treated me accordingly. They refused to send my books to Unesco Paris. They refused to bring it to the knowledge of the Australian Unesco Commissions. They refused me the names of the members of these commissions and their addresses. They did not forward my letters to them. When I tried to see personally Prof. Mills, I was told that I cannot see him. I approached Mr. Weeden, but my letter remained unanswered. I don't think that he ever saw it. Yes, I was treated as pioneers of new ideas have usually been treated by subordinate officials in any country.

I gave up the struggle with the Commonwealth Office partly because educators told me that this Office has no power to introduce any new idea in education. Apart from distributing bulletins and posters it is of little help. Education in Australia is a matter of the States. Sooner or later I had to approach you.

I agree with you that the study of Semantography in schools as a medium for interlinguistic communication must be done simultaneously in different countries. But my work has two aspects, just like arithmetic has two aspects, the mathematical symbols have an interlinguistic value, a kind of international language used in the sciences, industry, commerce, etc. But this aspect is of lesser value. The important aspect is the operational logic of algebraic symbols, which children and housewives, technicians and scholars have learned to operate in order to come to agreement where otherwise disagreement would consist. Leibnitz, the great mathematician speculated 300 years ago about the possibility of inventing a simple "Algebra of Thought" in which pictorial symbols can be used and operated according to simple principles "which would guide the mind as do the lines drawn in geometry, and the formulas in arithmetic... and would be useful in giving thoughts less absurd and verbal than we now have." "Now" was the seventeenth century and for 300 years Leibnitz speculation was considered an impossibility. Now, scholars have agreed that I have solved Leibnitz's problem.

It is difficult to prove without a practical demonstration and a cross-examination that Semantography is indeed a simple "Algebra of Thought." At first it looks to everyone like a picture writing, until one realises that the words and meanings which cause sorrow and misunderstanding are exactly these which cannot be pictured. In my first letter to you, I said that we learn the 3 R's in the schools of the world, but the most important R is not taught in any school - for lack of a simple method: the Art of Reasoning. I claim that the operational logic of my symbols can clear up misunderstanding and disagreement which to-day causes sorrow in almost every home in statements like these:

You don't understand me	(Answer: It's not true)
You are always unfriendly	" " " "
You miss the point	" " " "
You are a failure, etc. etc.	" " " "

Thanks to the teaching of arithmetic, children and adults do not haggle, do not hurt each other with statements that $2 + 2 = 5$ or the like. But with statements like the ones above, argument and strife can go on until lives go to pieces. Repeat time and again that a child or an adult is a failure and in the end the victim will believe it and will give in and go to pieces himself. A War of Words goes on in almost every family, every community and every nation

and we have not been taught how to cope with it, how to recognise totalitarian propaganda and worse. We need more than anything else a simple "Algebra of Thought" which children and housewives, youngsters and workers can learn to operate. Semantography is this simple Algebra and the operational logic of my symbols can cope with such statements as the ones mentioned above. Such teaching can go on in a school in Sydney without the necessity of having corresponding teaching going on in other countries. Sydney can be the starting point for a great idea of mutual understanding between people who speak the same language, yet do not understand each other.

Without a practical and personal demonstration it is difficult to believe that Semantography can be operated as a single logic. Prof. Washburne gave me the opportunity to give him this personal demonstration, but we had only 20 minutes in a jolting taxi: yet he realised the great potentialities of my work and wrote that it could be of great value. He, of course, demanded practical experimentation, and this is why I am writing this long and elaborate letter to you. You command the schools, you can command a classroom and a number of pupils. You can invite me to a personal demonstration before a number of your co-workers and yourself. You can put my work to the test, fire at me difficult questions, and hear my answers. But even if my oratory and my proofs should not convince you - the live experiment can tell only. To-day we do not live in the scholastic age where theories and methods were settled by argument. The great successes of science and education have been made possible by experiments only and this is why I approach you.

Here is a great and important idea which could make its way from Australia into the schools of the world. I have been a teacher all my adult life with the only difference that I did not take money for my teaching in evening classes, education halls, etc. I earned my livelihood in industry. I spent my savings and earnings on this work and all my writings are already collected in important libraries. My work will not be forgotten. But it is only a beginning. You can make more of it, can adapt it for teaching in the primary schools in New South Wales. The first primers could make your name known all over the world. I am already an aged man. I want to hand it over.

I ask you for an opportunity of a practical demonstration and for the controlled experiments which Washburne demanded. I cannot imagine that you will refuse this. On the contrary. I feel sure that you are a man of vision and that this idea will go out from the schools of New South Wales into the world.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Encl. Semantography Series No. 15 and 21 (Unesco)

I then received an answer from the Director-General in which he maintained his old line modifying it by saying that the "present" senior officers will be quite willing to give serious consideration to my work. He then suggested that I should approach Mr. Nelson of the Commonwealth Office of Education. The fact, however, is, that it was exactly Mr. Nelson who treated me shamefully since 1949.

Dr. Wyndham then appreciated my desire to have a controlled experiment set up in schools but he said that he has a responsibility towards the children of the State of New South Wales (which apparently might be endangered by such an experiment) and therefore he stated that the experimental work which I suggested must first have the support of scholars and experts in the particular field under discussion. I could not believe my eyes when I read this because I had submitted to him the testimonials of a number of eminent scholars in the particular field of discussion. Dr. Wyndham closed his letter by advising me again to have my work examined under the auspices of the United Nation. I then wrote the following letter to him.

Sydney 12th March, 1954

Dr. H. S. Wyndham,
Director-General of Education
of the State of New South Wales
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Re: Our Correspondence on Semantography

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

Your final letter was a final No to my pleas for a trial and demonstration

of my work before you and your co-worker. It took me some time to overcome my disappointment.

However, a number of people have urged me in the past to approach you and they want to know the reasons why you have declined. Whatever I say would be coloured by my disappointment. If I cite sentences from your letters, it would mean tearing them out of their context, one of the deadly sins of semantics. There is only one way open to be fair to you and to do justice to you. You have stated your reasons. You have referred to your responsibility toward the children of New South Wales and you have told me to go to Unesco and to other scholars. The only fair way would be to make copies of your letters and I ask you herewith for your permission to do so. In order not to cause you any further expenditure, I enclose herewith a stamped envelope. I shall be grateful to you for your earliest consideration, and thank you herewith for all the time you have given to my work. I am

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss B.Sc.

There was no answer to this letter. Apparently the matter was closed.

On the 26th June, 1954 the following article appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald.

EDUCATION INQUIRY STARTS ON MONDAY

The committee inquiring into secondary education in New South Wales will begin its first public hearing at 9.45 a.m. on Monday, the Acting Minister for Education, Mr. J. F. McGrath, said yesterday.

The first witness would be the president of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations, Mr. S. Liebert, he said.

"On Tuesday, the witness will be senator J.A. McCallum, who is a former inspector of secondary schools in New South Wales", Mr. McGrath said.

"On Friday an educational authority from the Education Department will give evidence on various aspects of secondary education.

"It is expected that the investigation will last at least several months.

Mr. McGrath said that the hearings would be held in Dalton House, 115 Pitt Street.

15 Witnesses

Last week Mr. McGrath announced that the inquiry would proceed upon similar lines to the Royal Commission.

The first sitting, to which 15 witnesses had been invited, was expected to last about three weeks.

The inquiry's term of reference are:

1. To survey and to report upon the provision of full-time day education for adolescents in New South Wales.
2. In particular, to examine the objectives, organisation, and content of the courses provided for adolescent pupils in the Public schools of the State, regard being had to the requirements of a good general education and to the desirability of providing a variety of curriculum adequate to meet the varying aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned.

Members of the committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. H. S. Wyndham, Director-General of Education in N.S.W. are :

Mr. H.F. Heath, headmaster of a primary school and president of the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation; Mr. A.W. Hicks, who before his retirement was assistant Under-Secretary at the Department of Education, Superintendent of Technical Education, and a member of the Public Service Board; the Rt. Rev. Bishop W. G. Hilliard, Bishop-Coadjutor of Sydney; Professor C.R. McRae, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Education at Sydney University; Mr. P.G. Price, Director of

Secondary Education in N.S.W.; the Rev. Father J.F. Slowey, Director of Catholic Education; Miss Clare Stevenson, an authority on girls in industry and business, and Director of the W.A.A.A.F. during the last war; Miss Margaret Telfer, Deputy Registrar at Sydney University; and the Rev. E. H. Vines, M.A., B.D., Dip. Ed., Presbyterian minister and former Moderator of the Presbytery of Sydney.

Immediately I wrote the following two letters : -

Sydney 29th June, 1954

To the Committee enquiring into
Secondary Education in N.S.W.,
c/o the Chairman.

Dear Sirs,

I have learned from the papers about your enquiry and your statement: "An invitation is extended to all members of the public...to give evidence on various aspects of secondary education." I request to be heard and shall be much obliged to you for your invitation. Here are a few details about my work.

Testimony on my work and my qualifications. Bertrand Russell wrote: "...an important service to mankind." Julian Huxley: "it provides something of real importance." Other scholars have expressed similar views. I am a graduate of the University of Technology of Vienna, Austria., and have lectured in various schools in Vienna. Now an Australian citizen, I have lectured in Sydney on the invitation of the Sydney University Extension Board and various student societies of the University and University of Technology of N.S.W.

My work and secondary education. The most important R is not taught in the schools of the world - for lack of a simple method - "The Art of Reasoning." 300 years ago the idea of a simple symbolic Logic came up. John Locke, Wilhelm Leibnitz and the great educator Bishop Comenius (who introduced with his "Orbis Pictorum" pictures into school books) thought about it, but, as important scholars agreed, my work provides the first practical solution of their thoughts. Semantography enables anyone to realize which words have vague meanings and must lead to vague and ambiguous conclusions; which words might be differently interpreted by other persons and might hurt them, though unintentionally, etc. The whole work is a new idea and can only be demonstrated personally and you may cross-examine me on any word or statement which may occur to you.

My Work and Unesco. There are two other aspects of it (besides the symbolic logic) which have attracted the interest of educators. One aspect is that the pictorial symbols are an aid to language learning (foreign and native), just as Comenius picture books were. The other aspect is that symbols have - like $1 + 2 = 3$, the same meaning in all languages and that therefore my symbols are a new medium for interlinguistic communication. Prof. Lauwerys (London). Prof. Washburne (New York) and Prof. Julian Huxley approached Unesco. However, they and I were informed that an Australian educational authority must promote it at the General Conference of Unesco. Only then can something be done on a global scale. I ask you therefore to be heard on the aspect of a simple logic for secondary education in line with your invitation to the public.

Yours faithfully,

C.K. Bliss

Sydney 29th June, 1954

Dr. H. S. Wyndham,
Director-General of Education,
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

You have been kind enough to advise me to approach Unesco again. I followed your advice and had a long talk with Professor Julian Huxley, first Director-General of Unesco during his visit to Sydney. He told me what I knew already of the limitations of Unesco (see below), but promised to study my work and also, as I insisted, to speak to the present Director General Prof. Dr. Luther Evans.

I received then a detailed letter from him in which he says: "I agree that your Semantography provides something of real importance." He informed me that he has informed Dr. Evans of my work during his visit to New Delhi where they met. In due course I received a letter from the Director of Education, Unesco Paris, and from the Director of Natural Sciences in which I was again informed that the officials of Unesco cannot promote or pursue any plan or scheme, unless they have a directive to do so from their superiors, that is the educational authorities of a member state, which proposes an idea and put it to the General Conference.

Mr. J. J. Nelson was therefore within his rights when - 5 years ago - he refused to send my books to Paris. He could also not promote my work to the Australian Unesco bodies, and he and his colleagues refused to disclose the names of the educators on these bodies. A letter addressed to these bodies c/o the Commonwealth Office of Education remained unanswered. I cannot blame him, as he had to act only on a directive from his superiors and not otherwise. I would have acted similarly.

As you know, I want to demonstrate my work (not the interlinguistic aspect of it) but the logical and semantical aspect as a simple Logic to a forum of responsible educators of New South Wales, where I live and where I can demonstrate it personally. Now, I think, the occasion has arisen, as the Committee enquiring into aspects of secondary education has publicly invited anyone "to give evidence." I beg you to forward the attached letter to the Committee.

You have expressed the view that eminent semanticists should express their opinion about my work. So far there is no chair for semantics in Australia, nor anywhere in the world. Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley, Carleton Washburne and others speak for my work, and I feel sure you too will recognize its value when you will listen to my demonstration. I remain with thanks in anticipation. Letter attached.

Yours sincerely

C.K. Bliss
B.Sc. (Vienna)

I received an answer in which Dr. Wyndham said that he appreciated the difficulties which I encounter to have my work examined by competent authorities especially Unesco. He then went on to say that as far as the Survey Committee is concerned there is no person on the Committee who would claim to be a competent semantographer and that the Committee may feel that their interest at this stage must be directed towards some of the broader aspects of the problem of secondary education. This indication of disinterestedness threw me into a rage which was not diminished by the closing paragraph in which Dr. Wyndham promised to place my letter before the Committee. After all the Committee is Dr. Wyndham. He is the Chairman, he is the Director-General. Whatever he wants to do, the Committee will do, whatever he does not want to do, the Committee will not do. I wrote then the following letter.

Sydney 12th July, 1954

Dr. H.S. Wyndham,
Director-General of Education
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

U R G E N T

Your letter 7th July

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

You are hinting strongly that the committee might refuse to hear my evidence, because "there is no person on the committee who would claim to be a competent semantographer." You know very well that there is only one person in the whole world who is a competent semantographer, and that's me. You know that it represents a simple Logic for adolescents, the most important item of education, the Art of Reasoning, which so far has not been taught, because there was no simple method available. And you know that the world's foremost logician, Bertrand Russell has spoken in highest terms about it, also Julian Huxley and other eminent educators. This alone should warrant not to refuse to hear evidence on my work.

For 8 long years have I approached patiently and politely educators in N.S.W. asking for nothing more but to be allowed to demonstrate my work before

before a panel of cross-examining educators. This little request was never granted, not even by you. But now, here is the statement of the minister, the invitation to the public, the terms of the enquiry. You cannot refuse my evidence without acting contrary to the minister, contrary to the terms and contrary to your duty to the people of New South Wales.

The committee will do what you want to do. They will not revolt against you. Should I not be allowed to give evidence contrary to the invitation of the Minister, I shall have no other recourse than to insert in the press a Public Protest to the Minister of Education. I shall publish the whole correspondence and let the people of New South Wales judge for themselves, whether or not I deserve to be heard, after Bertrand Russell has recommended my work.

Please understand that I am only a human being, who has made patient and polite approaches to N.S.W. educators for 8 long years. The strain is too much. Should you invite me, kindly consider this desperate outburst as not been written. If however, you turn me down again, I ask again for permission to copy your letters. My request of March 12, to which I attached a stamped and addressed envelope has not been answered.

You and the committee have now an opportunity to show publicly whether or not you have magnanimity of mind towards a pioneer of education. I ask only to be heard, nothing more.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

I did not receive any answer and therefore I sent off the following letter.

Sydney 25th September, 1954

Dr. H.S. Wyndham,
Director General of Education
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Re: Request of March 12, for permission to
copy your letters.

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

More than half a year ago - after I realised that you do not wish to grant me a hearing and a demonstration of my work - I asked you for permission to copy your letters to me. I have sent similar requests to important men and institutions. In line with international custom of courtesy I enclosed a stamped envelope. All such requests were granted. Only you did not respond, though - as you can ascertain from my letters - they were polite and courteous.

During the last 5 years I approached a number of Sydney educators. I asked for a hearing or I sent them some material or I asked for an information. For any request I enclosed a stamp and an envelope. But a number of them ignored my letters, failed to return my material and overlooked, apparently in contempt, my stamp. They filed it or threw it away or kept it. In any case, they did not use it for the only possible purpose. Can you imagine my growing anger and my bitterness, when you too treated me in the same way. It may explain my outburst in my letter of July 12 to you.

You have refused repeatedly my plea for a hearing and demonstration of my work, though it is your duty as Director General of Education to examine any new idea in education. I ask you again for permission to copy your letters. Should you not respond to this request within the next 4 weeks, I shall take it that you do not want that your letters be publicised. People would have to judge you from my letters to you only. And anyone who knows of the history of education knows too that originators of new ideas in education have been treated similarly by the educational authorities of their day. Bishop Comenius, the inventor of the picture book for schools (Orbis Pictorum) was a refugee, living on the mercy of a few friends. Pestalozzi was forced to close down his private school. Froebel invented the kindergarten and the authorities promptly closed them down, and so on. In 1949, Prof. Washburne an authority on education made over the A.B.C. as Guest of Honour the following accusation against his own profession:

"We take easily to technical innovations, but we resist any change, we even pride ourselves with the antiquity of our educational innovations."

Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and other eminent scholars have testified that I am pioneering a new idea in education. I ask you to revise your stand.

Yours faithfully,

C.K. Bliss

On the 29th September, I received an answer from the Director General and he stated that I must have to some extent misunderstood his letter of July 7th. Since I am particularly anxious to appear before the committee, he authorised me to prepare a submission which can be distributed to the members of the committee, and when the committee will reach the stage when it can hear me, I shall be informed. I answered as follows.

Sydney 5th October, 1954

Dr. H.S. Wyndham,
Director General,
Department of Education,
SYDNEY.

Dear Dr. Wyndham,

This is to thank you for your letter of 29th September and to inform you that I shall prepare and post the minute for the members of the committee within the next weeks. Meanwhile, I am with renewed thanks.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss B.Sc.

The Submission on Semantography. S. Series No. 152

The reader is now asked to read the "Submission" which forms the next issue of the Semantography Series.

The Assistant Secretary of the Survey Committee informed me with his letter of November 2nd of the receipt of the Submission. He said that my evidence will not be taken until early in 1955. On the 27th January he informed me that I shall appear before the Committee on the 17th February, 1955.

Draft of the Speech. S. Series No. 153

I wrote then the "Draft of the Speech" which forms Semantography Series No. 153. The reader is kindly asked to study now this issue as it contains the thoughts which I had in mind when preparing for my appearance before the Committee.

The day before my appearance I went to the Education Department to have a look at the room and to see whether I can secure a blackboard. The Committee was not sitting that day and I had an opportunity to study the name plates of the 7 members of the Committee. 3 of them were churchmen and somehow this fact gave me an idea to change a great part of my speech. The reader who knows my thoughts about the meaning of religion in my Semantography, knows that I am filled with a desire to find symbols which could be acceptable to the believer of every faith and even to the so-called unbelievers. Somehow the idea took hold of me to show the Committee that my symbols and the handling of them could be applied even to the ideas of ethics and religion.

Although I knew that an official stenographer will take down my speech I was afraid that this may not be done properly because of the fact that I speak usually too fast and moreover my foreign accent may present difficulties for the stenographer to understand me completely. I, therefore, made arrangements to have a tape recorder installed at my own expenses.

Next day I was there on time long before I should appear before the Commission. The people with the tape recorder came and installed everything and I went in to listen to the witness who spoke about the role of physics in the curriculum of secondary education. After his deposition there was a pause during which I asked and received permission to use the tape recorder.

It was a great moment for me because I had waited and worked for more than 12 years for just this moment: to appear before a forum of competent educators. In my daydreams during the 12 years I hoped that I shall have to face a barrage of questions, of unusual statements, of difficult propositions which I would have to translate into Semantography in order to show how the logic and semantics of my system could be applied to all this. Instead I faced a committee of stony silence. They just let me talk and somehow my hope sank from minute to minute.

I knew that the Chairman had rejected my demand for a demonstration time and again. I knew that I had forced my way into the committee and I knew too that such aggressiveness is usually not tolerated by educators in authority. Nevertheless, I went courageously on, though I felt that I was not the best at that time, but this probably was not my fault. In many previous lectures, I have felt that when the audience went with me whole heartedly I was very good. Here, however, I felt just the opposite. I felt standing before a set of old educators, with set minds and set ideas, orthodox and resistant to any change, least of all to a revolutionary idea like Semantography. I tried to be as short as possible but I was still too long in my deliberations because the Chairman interrupted me and wanted that I should finish my talk, suggesting that the rest of my deposition should be taken up by answering to questions. However, he interrupted a demonstration which was very dear to my heart and therefore I begged him to let me have another 5 minutes in order to finish my train of thoughts. After that, I said, I was ready to face whatever questions will be asked. Now, my worst fears materialised, namely, there were no questions at all. One by one the committee members said that they have no questions to ask. Somehow I just couldn't believe my ears. I thought that such an idea as Semantography must at least provoke them into giving me some difficult and embarrassing questions. But no: they had no questions to ask. The last man in the row was Reverend Mr. Vines. Somehow he felt that he had to break the silence of the committee by saying at least something.

To my astonishment he started on a tirade saying that apparently I want to abolish the alphabet. He thanked God twice for our alphabet. I was flabbergasted. The reader who will study my submission and the draft of my speech and the report of my actual speech will find that I have taken great pains not to deliberate on the aspect of Semantography as an inter-linguistic medium. I realised all the time that this was a committee which had to inquire into the aspects of secondary education in New South Wales and the inter-linguistic aspect of Semantography had no place in the high schools of Sydney. Therefore, from beginning to the end I concentrated on the second aspect of Semantography as a simple logic which school children and high-school students could easily learn to operate.

Reverend Vines then went on to say that apparently in China the illiteracy of the Chinese people is due to the fact that Chinese characters are so difficult to learn. In his own words "to-day an educated man in China of 21 can read about as well as an educated English boy of 6". This was a shameful lie borne out of utter ignorance. The truth is just the opposite, namely that in China children of 4 years of age are learning and reading Chinese, whereas in the communities of the western world children start at 6 years to learn to read. I have in my possession a film which I made myself when in Shanghai of a unique distinction of Chinese "unofficial" education. In Shanghai when a child gets the smallest coin, he has two ways to spend it, he may buy a lolly or he can spend an hour reading in the street libraries. There are street libraries all over Shanghai where old Chinese are surrounded by little children sitting on little stools and reading the fairy tales which the Chinese librarian hands over to them in return for the coin.

I had to answer to Reverend Vines and I did not know what to say. I could of course prove his utter ignorance. I could tell him that it is simply not true that Chinese characters are difficult to learn and I could tell him that he has misunderstood my whole talk or was prejudiced right from the start, believing my work to be a picture language and nothing else. But somehow I just could not do this. I still had hope that the Committee will do something in favour of my work and I felt that if I attack Reverend Vines now, whatever chance I might have would be utterly destroyed. I, therefore, refrained from giving Mr. Vines the lie. I refrained too from pointing out that it means misunderstanding of my talk, as I had tried to demonstrate Semantography as a simple operational logic only. I decided, therefore, not to offend Reverend Vines or the Committee as a whole and therefore I answered Reverend Vines explaining the advantages of Chinese writing and the fact that it has united different tribes into the greatest nation on earth. I referred to the ideographs of mathematics and others

which are to-day used all over the world. I quoted Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain who said once that "ideographic writing will achieve the final victory over phonetic writing."

After my appearance before the commission I wrote the following letter to the Assistant Secretary.

Sydney 17th February, 1955

T. J. Conway, Esq.,
Assistant Secretary,
Survey Committee.

Dear Mr. Conway,

Please receive my sincere thanks for all your kind co-operation. The notes which I have submitted to you to-day contain the first Submission, which I have sent to you already in October, 1954 and the Draft of the Speech which contain an outline of my work and some symbols. I have stitched both parts together, though ^{you} may take off the Submission because this has been submitted before. The complete written material about my appearance will therefore consist of 3 parts, namely:

1. The Submission, dated 14th October, 1954
2. The Draft of the Speech, dated 17th February, 1954
3. The actual Record of my Talk, recorded by the Court Stenographer.

As you will remember I said that I am going to change drastically my intended speech in order to show that the mathematics of my symbols takes into account the profound meanings of the Universe which so far have been relegated to religious teaching only.

I am now waiting for the court stenographer to send the stencils.

Yours faithfully,

C.K. Bliss

Next day the following article appeared in the Herald:

SCHOOL SYMBOL SYSTEM

A Sydney research chemist told the committee inquiring into secondary education yesterday that a new school system he had devised was being studied in the United States and Britain.

He is Mr. C.K. Bliss, founder and director of the Institute of Semantography.

He said his system consisted of applying symbols to the teaching of various subjects.

Bertrand Russell had told him that the person who furthered his work would be performing an "important service to mankind."

Professor Joseph A. Lauwerys, of the University of London, had approached the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation about the work.

A Sydney publishing firm had instructions to collect books and pamphlets on the system for American universities, including Harvard.

Talk Sought

Mr. Bliss asked the committee to recommend the arranging of a seminar, to be attended by young teachers and students, to discuss his system.

He said variation of the main symbols indicated various actions and objects.

Children were not being taught which words were vague, fallacious, and had different meanings.

There was no simple method at present to teach the art of reasoning, which is the most important art.

Too Young

Dr. G.H. Briggs, giving evidence on behalf of the N.S.W. division of the Institute of Physics, said students often went to universities too young.

Some of the teaching it was necessary to give them in their first year might more usefully be given in school.

"It is commonly felt that the development of an interest in natural science, a critical outlook and an experimental curiosity are quite as important in the undergraduate beginning a science course as large amounts of formal knowledge," he said.

Proposals

Dr. Briggs said the institute felt the school requirements of future science graduates could be met by -

Terminating secondary education with one or two years spent in specialising on particular subjects.

Beginning with, say, a four year period of general education which should include one or more science subjects, at least for intending science graduates and probably for all pupils.

The committee adjourned until 10 a.m. to-day.

The Daily Telegraph, however, brought only a report about the submission of Dr. Briggs on physics in secondary school education. I, therefore, sent off the following letter to the Daily Telegraph.

Sydney 19th February, 1955

To the Journalist
who wrote the article
"Science has 'vital role'"
Telegraph, 18, February.

Dear Sir,

For the sake of a new idea in Education which has been highly praised by Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and other eminent scholars, I ask you whether it is truthful reporting to the readers of the Telegraph to omit or suppress completely half of the proceedings of the Survey Committee enquiring into Secondary Education (Chairman the Director General of Education Dr. H. S. Wyndham). You have reported only the appearance of Dr. Briggs, but you have completely omitted my appearance.

The Sydney Morning Herald has devoted the headlines and the first half of the report to my work (Herald 18th February, page 6, last column, "SCHOOL SYMBOL SYSTEM"). Surely the comparing and discriminating reader seeing the discrepancy between the Telegraph and Herald report will wonder whether the Telegraph has given him a truthful report of what has happened at the Meeting.

A man who pioneers a new idea must be prepared to fight for it. And fight I will. I ask you, Sir, for an explanation. Why have you suppressed my appearance? Surely new ideas in Education are of vital concern to the people of New South Wales and they have a right to know about it.

Should you ignore this letter, I shall have no other recourse than to protest to your Editor in Chief and to the Directors of the Telegraph.

Yours faithfully,

Encl. Return envelope.

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

The chief editor of the Daily Telegraph answered promptly saying that the reporter who covered the proceedings did not suppress my talk. He reported it, but the sub-editor deleted this section of the report. The chief editor then went on to say that he agrees with me that new ideas in education are of vital concern to the people of New South Wales and that the Daily Telegraph have told the people of New South Wales about Semantography in the article which appeared in the Daily Telegraph on July 22, 1950 (Note: this forms Semantography Series No. 7). The chief editor ended his letter by saying that the sub-editors are facing a day-to-day struggle in trying to cram all the news of the world into a limited space.

A week later the assistant secretary of the Committee sent me two copies of the evidence as recorded by the official stenographer. When I read it I was flabbergasted. Many paragraphs contained utter nonsense and to any one who would read this record only, I must appear as a babbling idiot. Apparently the secretary himself realised the shortcomings of the record and therefore he wrote that I should let him know if there are any corrections which should be made. I rang him up immediately and told him that the record had to be re-written on the basis of my tape recording and that I shall do so.

I then started to take down my actual speech from the tape recording, but soon I realised that it will do no good. The official stenographer has left out whole paragraphs of my speech and it will appear improbable that he should have done so, being a skilled court stenographer. As I still had my hopes with regard to the committee and as I still did not want to offend them by showing too clearly the shortcomings of their own stenographer, I decided then to follow closely the official record but to make it appear sensible.

Corrections of the Official Record, S. Series No. 154

I therefore wrote the corrections of the official record which forms Semantography Series No. 154 and the reader is kindly asked to read this issue as it is in many ways different from the "Draft of the Speech" issue, No. 153.

Official Record, S. Series No. 155

In order to make this story complete I made an issue of the official record which forms No. 155 and should be read only after my Corrections (No. 154) have been read. Otherwise the impression that I babble nonsense might arise. It took me some time to write and type the corrections of the Official Record and it was not until July, 1955 that I wrote the following letter to the Assistant Secretary.

27th July, 1955

Mr. T. J. Conway,
Assistant Secretary,
Survey Committee of Secondary Education,
Education Department,
SYDNEY.

Dear Mr. Conway,

I refer to your letter of 25th February and our subsequent telephone conversation and beg to bring the following items to the notice of the persons concerned.

(1) As told on the telephone the Official Record typed by the stenographer has serious faults. It is true, I often talk too fast and moreover the subject matter is unusual, excuse enough to make mistakes. I asked the stenographer to send me the stencils in order that I may draw the symbols shown. Had he done this I would have immediately found the mistakes and I would have asked him to correct them. As it is, the record mentions a number of times "(symbols shown)" but does not show them. This would make the record incomprehensible to anyone who was not present. In addition many sentences simply make no sense and anyone reading this record must be baffled, to say the least. For this reason I have drawn up the correction of the Official Record which I submit to you herewith.

(2) The Herald of February 18th stated in the report on my talk "Mr. Bliss asked the Committee to recommend the arranging of a seminar to be attended by teachers and students to discuss his system".

I have learnt that the main object of the committee is to formulate the new curriculum which would be introduced in 1959 (in 4 years time). I understand too that no novel subject can be introduced before various tests have been made. I believe that the Department of Education has some seminars going in which novel ideas in education are introduced to teachers and I think that such seminars would be a proper place for discussion and testing of my work. Could you, after making the necessary enquiries from the Director General and other persons, inform me whether the inclusion of my work in such an experimental seminar has been considered or is going to be considered.

(3) I enclose 2 prospectuses, the first being a prospectus about a special paper read by Professor Oliver L. Reiser of the University of Pittsburgh before the American Association for the Advancement of Science (and being specially devoted to Semantography). The second prospectus refers to all publications on Semantography. Whether or not a seminar, as mentioned above, is contemplated I put a suggestion to the Director General to include all the writings on Semantography into the Reference Library of the Department of Education and your other reference libraries. I draw your attention specially to the Semantography Series which contains everything written on Semantography either by me or by other persons.

The importance of my work and all the writings about it is proved by the fact that great libraries in America and in Australia have given a standing order for anything written or to be written in the future on Semantography.

Please put my suggestion before the responsible persons. Surely the least the Department of Education can do with regard to my work is to incorporate my writings in its reference libraries. This would ensure that other researchers and educators may take advantage of my work and bring it ultimately to practical use in the schools.

Awaiting your reply, I am

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

Encl.

3 copies Correction of Official Record

Reiser Prospectus

Semantography Prospectus.

The reader may judge for himself that I have not asked too much. All my hopes were dashed when I soon received a letter from the Secretary. He agreed to substitute my Corrections of the Official Record for the original Official Record.

With regard to my suggestion concerning semantography and the acquisition of my literature on semantography, he advised me that both propositions will be considered by the committee when my evidence is being reviewed and when the committee will make any recommendation within the terms of reference under which it was constituted.

This appeared to me a subterfuge. The Director General has the power, apart from the committee, to instal a seminary or to introduce any experiments he may wish to make or to spend a few pounds for the acquisition of my books for the reference library of the Education Department. Almost as a mockery, the Assistant Secretary concluded his letter by saying that the fact that my literature on semantography is available in the libraries in Sydney will be brought to the attention of the members of the committee.

This concluded his letter and I think it dashed any hope I previously held with regard to the committee. In the newspapers it was said that the committee will have to decide the curriculum for the year 1959 that is four years hence and I realise too that this committee, as many other official committees, is a convenient device to put things off and off for years. I have no hope any more that these educators or any other educators will take an active interest in my work and will help it along.