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Semantography Series No. 182

SEMANTOGRAPHY AND THE LARGE TYPEWRITER COMPANIES

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During the summer of 1949 I completed the third book on Semantography. I was flushed with excitement and success. I have proved to myself beyond doubt that my symbols could be used for the most complex meanings in science, and even in poetry. Moreover, I had evolved a new theory on the basis of my symbols for good and evil and I have made a discovery of far-reaching importance. The time has come at last to approach the people of the outside world.

Of course, the few meetings I had with officials and scholars have dampened my hopes of early recognition. I felt therefore that I had to approach those who could make money with my invention - the large typewriter companies. And so I filed my provisional patent application for a typewriter for my symbols. The text of this application is contained in S.S. No. 111. I decided then to approach immediately the large typewriter companies and selected the following:

Imperial in Great Britain
Underwood in the U.S.A.
Remington in the U.S.A.
Smith-Corona "
Royal "
International Business Machine Corporation.

I decided on an approach, a bit unusual, in order to make it interesting for those who get my letters. I sent off one letter to the General Manager , and attached to it a letter for the Chief of the Patent Department. Here are the texts of these letters.

The General Manager
(Typewriter Company as above)
Dear Sir,

Would you kindly have the content of the enclosed papers examined by the Manager of your patent department, who is far-sighted enough to recognise a far-reaching (but apparently crazy) idea in typewriter manufacturing.

Not so long ago when the first inventors started to tinker on a "machine for writing letters", people considered them cranks. Now, I have devised a system of ideographic symbols, almost self-explanatory, recognisable even by children. The typewriter is the ordinary one, with a few adjustments, and it carries the alphabet too.

With this typewiter letters, invoices, statements, accounts, custom forms, bills of lading, technical instructions, circular letters, cables (for radio-photo without the need of coding, decoding, and translating) etc., etc. can be written to foreign countries. After a short training even the small traders in Africa and Asia, could read them in any of their languages, just as 1 + 2 = 3 can be read in any language. Now, people , who speak different languages can write letters to each other. Sure enough it needs little learning, just as a typewriter must be learned too. And crazy enough it even works for love letters too. What a prospect.

This is not a crackpot idea. I have worked it out during seven years of research. I am an industrial chemist (now retired) and know when a thing is practical.

The move is now on you. If your company will consider me cranky, other companies might not. Put this letter therefore, either into the wastebasket or into your tray for inventions department. In the former case, excuse the trouble.

Yours sincerely,
C. K. Bliss.

The Manager Patent Department
(Typewriter Company as above)
Dear Sir,

For a number of years I have been the manager of a patent department of a large electrical concern. Among our tribe, comprising patent attorneys, examiners etc. there was the standing joke of the man who came to a patent attorney with a grand idea: a two-language typewriter. You type in English and out comes a letter in French. "Wonderful", said the attorney, "how does it work"? "Why", said the client, "the details,drawings etc, are too be worked out by you, I furnish the idea."

Fancy that I should have worked out the details and even the drawings for a typewriter not confined to two languages. Now, correspondence can be carried out between people who speak different languages of any country. The idea is simple: ideographic symbols, and if we come to think of, almost 40% of the types on an ordinary typewriter are such symbols.

If you are interested, I may send you the duplicated copy of my manuscript (in due course to be published) with many chapters showing the applications for science, engineering, medicine, agriculture, industry, commerce, traffic, banking, merchandise, travel, postal service, international public signs, calender, etc., etc., etc.

You will agree with me that a patent is a costly, very limited and very dubious protection, if not backed by much money. I have found a new and better way. I have devised and already registered a number of copyrights, showing my basical lines in variations and on keyboards. The copyright laws protect anything which is written, printed, engraved, etc., on any material be it paper plastics, metal, for instance the keys on a typewriter. Thus for a few dollars registration fees, I have acquired rights which cover practically the whole world and last for more than 50 years (International Copyright and U.S, Copyright) If it is worthwhile to sue infringers, good legal brains can build up a good case etc., etc.

But I don't want to create a monopoly. The company interested in the promotion of this typewriter, should have special benefits, and others should not be denied the rights against a small royalty for the manufacturer of such typewriters.

Now, you may think I am out for money. The answer is no. I have been a successful industrial worker. I have the means to live. All the money derived from the rights should be put back into the promotion of the new mode of writing, (typewriter classes, primers, textbooks etc.)

And I think the largest companies should pool work on this idea. Therefore I have sent a similar letter to Royal, Underwood, Imperial and Int. Business Machine Corp, etc.

I have also filed a provisional specification, on which priority the pool may file other applications to cover the mechanical adjustments, described in the attached pages of my manuscript. I attach also a few other pages. Your machine needs no major alterations for this.

The world is getting smaller. Linguistic boundaries become an anachronism. Highway warnings in any language disappear to make room for ideographic symbols, which can be read and understood in any language. Presently my writing will become a practical reality.

I hope you will do this service to your company, and become interested in my proposal.

P.S. Let me know - the sooner the better - whether your firm is also interested in the proposed pool.

Yours sincerely,
C. K. Bliss.

Meanwhile I had approached other people in Sydney, especially Professor Washburne, an American scholar. His favourable comment was enough for me to send off another letter to the General Managers of all companies, proposing a pool for the exploitation of this idea.

In a later letter I submitted more papers, excerpts from my books, results of approaches to various peoples and the following

23rd November, 1949.

DETAILED PROPOSAL
concerning the Semantography Typewriter

Dear Sirs,

For the study of this proposal I shall not refer to the foregoing letters for convenience sake, but I shall repeat one or the other important point.

As you are aware this new writing system concerns not phonetic writing but a "picture writing" (incredible as it may seem) or to use a better term, a picto-ideography. The fact, that such a writing is in use in East Asia and that hundreds of thousands of clumsy typewriters are working in the innumerable offices of East Asia, and that an American Typewriter Company - acting upon the idea of the famous writer LinYu-tang - has evolved a typewriter capable of typing about 10,000 different symbols, all this makes it obvious that there is business in this for a typewriter company.

The Semantography Typewriter

However, the new proposed typewriter is not a mechanical monster. It is the ordinary typewriter which you can produce and only few alterations are necessary. The fact is, the small letters of the Latin alphabet remain on the typewriter and therefore it is still usable to write any letter in ordinary writing.

The Semantography System

Again, the new system is not a monster with 10,000 symbols, The fact that almost only 100 Symbol Elements are necessary to express any meaning is incredible at first. I am an analytical chemist by profession, and having this long life training in the scientific analytical method I have analysed the meaning of words until I obtain the "meaning elements". With these I build up a compound meaning. Consequently with reference to the new science of Semantics (Greek Semanticos = significant meaning) I have named my system Semantography. I did this on account of other features of my system which are not of special interest in this proposal dealing with the typewriter only.

The Scope of Business

As I pointed out in previous letters, I am an industrial man, which means a practical man. Consequently I shall disregard any use of this typewriter in the so-called "literate" countries (although there are many uses) I shall refer to countries in which the new system and typewriter would meet an urgent demand.

India and Pakistan

These two new states have a population of more than 350,000,000 people. Illiteracy is according to official figures 99.5%. Yet trade and commerce are very important and the interest in the population in any higher mode of living is expressed by the fact, that the film centre of New Delhi is the second largest production centre after Hollywood.

Unfortunately the population is divided by more than 300 languages and thousands of dialects which often vary from village to village. A phonetic script is out of the question. The Government of India tries to introduce a "federal language" which might have some success at the places of government, but which is hopeless in the country. I beg to refer to the United States, where in the country people stick to their own language, be it French, Swedish, Ucrainian, etc.

A pictographic script would be an ideal means as any government notice, or any government primer or any correspondence could be read in any of the different languages concerned.

The Government of India has shown interest, after I had demonstrated my system to the Secretary of the High Commissioner of India in Australia and I have received a letter to this effect.

New Guinea and the Pacific Territories of Australia.

Hostile Powers in the United Nations attack Australia almost every month about "doing nothing to educate the natives" in this territory. These accusations are usually coupled with demands that Australia should give up these territories to other powers who would educate the natives. These territories are of vital defensive importance to Australia and also to America.

The difficulties are enormous. Here again we have hundreds of languages. The Government of Australia is vitally interested in any new mode of education which could bridge the enormous difficulties, and show the world that the natives are made literate - even more, that they have a script which enables them to be understood anywhere in the Pacific, where this new writing is put into operation. A primer printed in Australia could thus serve anywhere, including India and Pakistan.

Africa and especially the British and French Territories in Africa.

British scientists have made great efforts to improve agricultural methods in these vast territories. And they have come upon a fact which does not seem self-edident. They found that primitive people, engulfed in superstitions of all kinds, will not take to improvements in their mode of living, be it agricultural improvements, or sanitation, or hygiene, or anything else without the stimulus of literacy. Make a man able to read a page, and you lift him up to a higher consciousness of being and living.

Missionaries have found this out long ago, and their first work was concerned in evolving a phonetic alphabet for special natives tongues. However, it was always a makeshift procedure. The special sounds expressed by special letters were different with a different tribe, and after 20 years, pronounciation, and intonation having shifted makes phonetic letters not correct any more. However, a script independent of any language and pronounciation could do wonders.

Testimonials

In order not to protract this proposal I have refrained from bringing quotations from prominent people as proof for the facts mentioned above. I have demonstrated my system before the Australian School for Pacific Administration, that is before a group of teachers and they have expressed their opinions as follows:

"We feel that a system of ideogrammic writing would have uses for such things as public notices, and that it could be used among people speaking a variety of vernaculars."

The Curator of Anthropology of the Australian Museum, Mr. F.D. McCarthy has expressed a similar opinion.

I enclose exhibit 1 which carries the opinions of 3 important men, Prof. Washburne Prof. Hogben, and Mr. Hemming.

I enclose exhibit 2 being a facsimile of Prof. Washburne statement.

Exhibit 3 is an invitation to a lecture which I have given to the Society of Australian Inventors. This should be indirect proof that I can write down any technical meaning in my symbols, and that an International Patent Application written in my symbol writing is now a feasible possibilty.

Exhibit 4 and 5 should show you that this new idea would easily catch the public's fancy and could instigate a world-wide movement of a new hobby; people of any language corresponding with other people the world over for any purpose, the collecting of stamps, Boyscouts, Girlguides, etc. etc.

In other words: if this new idea is brought properly before the imaginative people of America and Europe, it could lead to great sales of the new semantographic typewriter even in these countries, apart from the commercial use of such typewriters.

Once I have proved that my system would be a new medium for trade and commerce I see no reason why it should not be adopted in small countries, wishing to trade and correspond with the great countries of industry of America and Europe.

What is necessary is that a great typewriter company should create interest in this new mode of writing, by making the necessary propaganda and establishing classes and courses.

My Aim

As pointed out previously, I want to devote my life to this propagation. I am now 52 years of age, but filled with enough energy and enthusiasm to go out and speak before audiences. I have been an honorary science lecturer of repute for the last 25years, and I know that I can hold an audience spellbound. Moreover, having been a factory executive, I can sell, be it an idea or a manufactured product.

Your outlay

You have not to risk much with this idea. What would be necessary only,would be one or two models of the typewriter, the printing of the little booklet first in English for the propagation in India, Pakistan, Australia and Africa; then the same booklet in French for the propagation in French territories etc. etc. Finally, it would be necessary to provide the means for my visiting these people, that means the people who govern these territories, the government officials, educational authorities, merchants and industrialists etc,.

The use for Science

Exhibit 5 is page 389/390 from my book, showing a letter of a Portuguese chemist to a Dutch chemist. I beg you not to be distracted by the crowded appearance of the first page, which carry also the English text, and additional explanations of the scientific terms. Please turn to the second page, and I am sure that you will get the impression that the symbols are simple, and many are almost self-explanatory.

The scientists of all countries are facing a terrific handicap; journals and books are printed in too many different languages. I have worked out a scheme of short abstracts, to be written in my symbols with the native words (of the scientist's country) beneath (and the words in English too) which would overcome the handicap.

On many scientific congresses this problem has been mentioned and committees been appointed to study its solution. But nothing came of it as the scientists realised that they cannot force themselves or others to learn a foreign tongue, like Esperanto or Basic English. But these symbols can be read in the mother tongue of every scientist. And their simplicity should make them even more attractive.

Please note that the symbols are not arbitrary. Every symbol represents the outline of real things, with the exception of those symbols which are already international like 1 2 3 4 + - x ! ? = and which are found on most typewriters.

The Construction of the Typewriter.

I enclose exhibit 7 the pages 93 to 99 (which I have sent to you already, but which I enclose for completeness sake). These pages describe the working of the typewriter. Please look also for the foregoing page 93, which shows you what a variety of meanings could be expressed by modification of the arrow symbol.

Kindly peruse also page 97 which shows that such a typewriter could be used in industry for writing of technical instructions and even of invoices.

The Patent Application covering the Typewriter.

I enclose exhibit 8 which is a copy of my provisional application. As you are well aware, the British and Australian Patent Law are in so far favourable to an inventor as he is allowed to file a provisional specification, in which he could refer to his invention in the broadest terms. After 10 months he must file a complete specificationwhich must contain claims, and if necessary drawings, and in which the invention must be properly described and somehow limited in scope, with regard to previous publications.

The Provisional Application was filed on July 2 1949. I might file another application with a later date. But I have been too long the manager of a patent department to know what a limited and very questionable "right" a patent really is. Consequently I have no desire to spend any money to obtain other patents in other countries.

It is up to you to decide whether you are ready to file a patent applications in other countries based on the priority of July 2 1949.

Rights based on the Copyright.

I was well aware that a patent is not only a very limited right, but its limitations are going so far, that it can never cover the system of symbol writing but only the mechanical contraption to write it. I was therefore bent on finding out whether or not a protection for the use of the symbols can be obtained. I believe to have found it in a copyright in Class 1 of the American Copyright Act, covering "Drawings for scientific or technical purposes." These geometrical symbols are undoubtedly "drawings for scientific or technical purposes."

To be sure, I enquired in a long letter to the Copyright Office in Washington. It is their unusal answer that they can not make any legal decision in their informations, but they agreed that they would take my applications and class them in Class 1. Consequently I made two different sets of applications, the first for the typewriter, the second for the symbols, These will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

Drawing copyrighted for the keyboard of a typewriter.

It is clear that a special provision in the Copyright Act for such a writing can not be found, simply because such an idea was not known at the time the Copyright Act was made. Exactly the same situation prevailed when it came about to decide whether phonograph records, broadcastings, and now television, were covered by the Copyright Act. It was decided that these performances fall under the copyright of the owner, and consequently the use of the copyright for such modern applications can only be made with the consent of the owner.

The situation with regard to the new idea of Semantography is this: If it should be necessary for a great typewriter company to establish certain rights in court and to prosecute infringers, the copyrights which I have obtained (and which cover practically the whole world) would be a very good legal base. The rest is done by the legal brains, the barristers etc. Such legal prodedure is a monetary consideration in the first place, and many litigations have been averted and the infringer brought into a license agreement by the mere threat of legal procedure.

In this particular case, I have copyrighted not the "drawings of a typewriter keyboard" which rights would be infringed by anyone making similar drawings. I have copyrighted "drawings on a typewriter keyboard". Let us suppose that a man has copyrighted a few lines concerning the use of typewriters. Consequently anyone printing these lines anywhere (on paper in a book, or on metal on a typewriter) would infring the copyright. I have copyrighted 9 different drawings discussed below.

Exhibit 9 shows you 9 different sets of lines on the keys of a typewriter. If necessary I can draw up and copyright (or you could do it) another 9 or 90 different sets, showing the elementary lines in different positions on the keyboard. An infringer would thus infringe if not the whole set of one drawing but he might infringe partially one or more copyrighted drawings. Thus a good case would be built up, either in court, or in the correspondence with the infringer to bring him to agree to terms.

Please note that the copyrights numbered (5), (6), (7) are designed for keyboards with two shifts (in which each hammer carries tree types, one representing a small letter of the alphabet, the other two representing geometrical lines.) Copyright (8), (9) show such a keyboard in full. Thus an infringer manufacturing a typewriter with two shifts might infringe one or the other copyright.

Copyright of the Symbols.

The Copyright Office in Washington has agreed also to accept these symbols under Class 1 and consequently they have been copyrighted in Washington and Berne. The derivations and combinations shown in the broad column show only a few samples. My book shows you that many more combinations are possible. If you agree to a wide protection scheme, I can draw up other sets of symbols to make it even more difficult for an infringer to get away. But he would have great difficulties to find better or simpler symbols. For instance it is almost impossible to better or to differ in the symbolisation of a wheel ⊙. And this is true with regard to the other symbols, which show the outline of real things.

Desirability of Monopoly

It is clear that a typewriter company, which spent much to induce a new idea in typewriting will want to protect its rights and will want to prosecute infringers. There are some aspects to the matter which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Let us assume that only one typewriter company does all the pioneering work, and that all the other companies are looking on during the years. In time the Semantography typewriter will be known and used, and if the other companies will now enter the market, they will have to use the same keyboard as the pioneering company, otherwise the typists trained in the pioneering machine, will refuse to learn another different keyboard.

In other words the incoming company will have to come to some agreement with the rightholding pioneering companies.

With regard to the other modes of writing, as for instance stenography, there has been competition of different systems. Each system propagated by a publishing house and a number of shorthand training schools has its merits, and consequently there are a variety of systems such as Pitman, Gregg, Gabelsgerger etc. etc. in use. However, there is a difference between the shorthand systems and the use of a keyboard system. It is a well known fact, that the scribbling of a stenographer can only be read by him or her, but usually not by another stenographer, even if he too is trained in the same system.

But the writing done on a typewriter is to be read by different people. Consequently if a number of companies are interested in the promotion of such a writing, they would find it advisable to came to an agreement upon the same system of keyboard.

Furthermore, if the rightholding company excert her monopoly very severely, the use of the system will not spread, and moreover the infringers will be more tempted to propagate their system. With infringers I mean people who advocate another system of writing or those who use the system in an infringing typewriter of their own.

How the rights should be used.

Taking all this into consideration I have found that the following procedure would be best suited to the furtherance of this idea.

(a) All publication of textbooks, primers, booklets for special use in industry, commerce etc, shall be printed by those who hold the copyright or license printers or publishers against a royalty payment.

(b) All typewriters only to be manufactured by the firms who hold rights or who have got a license to manufacture by the right holders.

(c) However, the use of the system and the symbols by commercial, industrial, governmental, educational , municipal bodies, as well as by any private person shall be free, provided the user adheres to the following conditions:

(1) that the user shall adhere to the official symbols as printed in official primers, textbooks, etc, and shall not invent fancy symbols of his own (which would soon lead to a new Babel of symbols.)

(2) that the user should - if he prints words in any tongue beneath the symbols - (as for instance merchandise: Cut here to open) shall put the words beneath the appropriate symbols. This would enable the reader to learn the meaning of each symbol.

I have thought for 7 years about all the possible ways of protecting the system, and those who will propagate it, by means of manufacturing typewriters or books, and have found that the above mentioned condition will suit best the furtherance of the idea.

My book "SEMANTOGRAPHY, 100 Symbol Elements to overcom Babel in reading, writing and thought."

You will receive with the same mail the first and second volume of my book. Do not shrink back from the protracted form of this book. It is so voluminous because I have adapted my chapters to so many human activities, and spent much on the theoretical basis of the idea. If you look unprejudiced into the book you will agree that the symbols are simple, and easy to recognise.

Please note that the symbols in my book are drawn exaggerated in size and thickness. I have done this to show their simplicity. On the typrwriter the lines would be smaller and thinner.

You will not receive the third book which deals with the controversial and philosophical meanings. The content of this third book you will gather from the List of Content of Chapters at the end of the second book. However, if you are interested, I shall be glad to send you the third book too.

Approach to the State Department Washington.

Mr Stuart Chase, the well known American writer and reformer has put me in touch with the State Foreign Department Washington, Foreign Service Institute, Assistant Director Frank S. Hopkins, whose institute does fundamental research in language. I shall approach him within the next few weeks and I shall send you copies of my proposal for special uses:

(a) for signals of stranded or crashed parties to aircraft overhead.

The Symbols can be laid on the ground, and can be read not only by airman of the same nationality, but by airman of other countries, (important if the crash occurs in other countries,) and if urgent messages as for instance: drop water drop food, etc.etc. are to be conveyed. See the chapter on page 366. If the U.S. Armed Forces adopt this system for training in the forces, friendly powers will do the same to derive the benefit of communication in an emergency, and all the others will follow suit, as it happened with the British Flag symbols code for ships.

If this happens then the Semantography typewriter will become a item in the training of soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

(b) During the last war the training of soldiers in languages became an important item, and new methods had to be evolved to teach languages to soldiers in the quickest of time. My system of picturizing of speech enables a new and probably the quickest way to give soldiers a basical set of words for communication. I have explained in my book that the great difficulties in language learning by foreigners comes from the fact, that very many expressions are metaphorical, idiomatic and when literally translated in the language of the foreigner are nonsensical. To 'make up my mind' is nonsensical in many languages, unless it refers to some plastic brain surgery. But 'to decide' is a meaning which has its exact counterpart in any language. Similar nonsenses are found in the use of particicles, To 'put a curtain up or down' makes sense in different languages, refering directly to picturable movements of picturable things (hand and curtain). But to 'put on a fight', to 'put down a fight', to 'put up a person' or to 'put up with a person' is nonsensical when translated into another language.

Learning foreign languages on the basis of picturable meanings, which automatically excludes nonsensical metaphorical and idiomatic expressions may become a training item in the armed forces, and the typewriter may find a new field.

(c) The Foreign Service Institute of the State Department of Washington maintains Information Libraries in most countries of the world, and distributes for hundreds of thousands of dollars printed material in most countries, mostly printed matters, books periodicals, etc.etc. to acquaint the peoples of the world with America's achievements and aims.

If the State Department Washington decides to adopt this universal mode of writing and to foster its knowledge in all parts of the world, by printing little primers with the natives words (and English) underneath, by issuing illustrated periodicals with a subcaption in the symbols besides English and the native words, then a subcaption beneath an illustration could be read in any languages of the world, then ONE PRIMER FOR ONE WORLD could become a simple reality,, and the Semantography typewriter would be used in increasing numbers.

I beg to excuse the length of this detailed proposal, but the whole matter is so novel, that a short letter might provoke many counter-arguments as to make the reader turn the proposal down. I trust that you will examine all I have sent you with the utmost care.

Special Approach to the U.S. Armed Forces and the Allied Command.

Apart from my approach through the State Department of Washington, I shall approach the U.S. Commands as well as the new Allied Command set up in Western Europe to direct the concerted action in case of war.

Billions of dollars are spent on armament and now on the unification and standardisation of ammunition, guns, etc., in order to make co-operation possible between the various units of different countries, fighting together an enemy. One major item has not yet been attacked, because there was no solution present: that is the bridging of the languages in despatches between different units speaking different languages. Learning the other language or Esperanto or Basic English simply won't do. But a simple picture language in writing could serve admirably for the purpose. In fact, the military maps carry already such pictorial symbols to indicate a well, a mill, a factory , a lone tree, etc.etc. Soldiers learn to handle the most intricate gadgets. They would have no difficulty to learn a set of symbols to make themselves understood anywhere.

I am perfectly sure, that the U.S. Armed Forces, as well as the Allied Command set up for the Western European Countries would grasp immediately the importance of the new script and consequently they would not hesitate to order typewriters for the experimental stage.

If you agree to co-operate by making a few models, and help me going to the authorities to demonstrate my system, I believe that we could very soon get somewhere. And the men in power seeing an American typewriter company ready, would soon decide to give the system a try out.

I close now this proposal and wish to say a few words about the following: the examination of this proposal may take some time. I understand that I am not bound to wait until you have made up your mind in one way or another, and only then try to interest other people. This I would do if we conclude an option agreement. Your "Form Letter Procedure for Submitting Suggestions" does not contain a clause binding the other party not to submit an idea to someone else. In other words, I may try to interest other people in one way or another. However, if you are ready to make an agreement with me, it is self-evident, that I shall disclose to you all my feelers extended, in order that we may come to a satisfactory working agreement. If you should decide to co-operate with me, I shall be pleased. However, if you should be ready to turn all this down, wait until at least you have heard the reaction of the State Department of Washington and the U.S. Armed Forces. Awaiting your reply and ready to answer all your counter-arguments, I remain

Yours very truly,

C. K. Bliss

Well, I said all I had to say, and in addition I sent them book I and II. Then I waited hopefully. Here is the answer from conservative England.

Dear Sir, 11th October 1949.

We duly received your letter of July 17, which has been investigated by our Research and Experimental Department.

We appreciate your having approached us with regard to this matter, we would advise you that our present committments prevents us from interesting ourselves in your proposals.

We therefore return the details herewith you have been good enough to send to us,

Yours faithfully,
p.p. IMPERIAL TYPEWRITER CO. LTD.,
W.E. Hutchins . Secretary.

And here are the answers from conservative America.

Dear Sir, October, 4 1949

We are in receipt of your letters of July 17th and September 10th with enclosures relating to your typewriter keyboard arrangement for ideographic writing.

Careful consideration has been given your letters and enclosures, and,we beg to advise you that a typewriter keyboard of this character would be of no interest to this company.

We thank you for communicating to us and herewith return to you by first-class mail your papers, assuming you would prefer to have them in your possession.

Yours very truly,
ROYAL TYPEWRITER COMPANY, INC.
S. Kilgour.
Patent Department.

Dear Mr. Bliss, September 22nd, 1949.

Your letter with accompanying literature, sketches, etc, has been handed to me for consideration and reply.

We now make typewriters equipped with special type for nearly all foreign countries. Our present method is entirely satisfactory to all concerned and we have the needed equipment for continuing this procedure. We find no reason for altering our methods.

From past experiences, we know that your suggestion of having the various typewriter manufacturers get together and adopt your Universal Symbol Method would meet with absolutely no results. It is our belief that you will receive the very same reaction from the other manufacturers to whom you have submitted your suggestions.

In view of our stand on this matter, and I am expressing the concensus of opinion of our company, there appears to be no reason why we should consider the idea of financing your coming to this country, as you suggest.

We always welcome the receipt of any suggestions tending to benefit the typewriter. For this reason we are sorry that we are unable to give you a favourable report on your proposition.

Yours very truly,
L C Smith & Corona Typewriter Inc.
E. H. Moshieu.
Chief Engineer.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

Your submission, comprimising data for a Semantography Typewriter, Book I entitled the "Idea of Semantography," and Book II entitled "The System of Semantography", has been carefully reviewed by the division concerned and they have advised us that they would not be interested.

Accordingly, we are returning the material submitted to you under separate cover with the exception of your letter of November, 23 1949 and Exhibit 8 which are herewith enclosed.

We appreciate your interest with this company in submitting this matter to us for our consideration.

Yours very truly,
J.E.W. Frinsen.
Secretary and Corporation
Attorney.
Remington Rand Inc.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

We have carefully studied your very interesting letters in reference to your proposed "Semantography Symbol Typewriter".

Our survey indicates that it is basically a question of making type dies that can be placed in our regular machine. The question of positioning long or short geometrical shapes in positions other than the normal position on the writing line can probably be taken care of during this experimental stage by equipping the machine with twice the usual ratchet teeth so that one tooth turn either forward or backward would place the symbol in a different position than would normally be the

case if the machine was equipped with the ratchet normally supplied.

If for any reason you did not wish the carriage to move in typing certain symbols, those symbols might be put on what we call a dead or silent key so that when the key was operated, the escapement would not be effected and the carriage would not move. It is not a difficult matter to make any desired key a dead or silent one.

I am going to suggest that you visit our Sydney Office, Malcolm Building. off 252 George Street, - show them this letter with the idea of perhaps placing an order with them for a machine. Naturally you will have to detail the position of the eighty-four characters and the silent keys.

Upon a receipt of a letter from our agent, we will advise the cost and make the dies and any other incidental expense that seems necessary.

I am holding the supporting papers which you sent me with subject to shipping instruction from you.

With kind regards I remain,

Yours very truly,
J.A.B. Smith
Commercial Engineer
UNDERWOOD COPORATION.

In retyping the correspondence with Underwood, I see that I typed first their second letter of May 2, 1950. As the first letter is also of interest I reprint it here below.

Dear Mr. Bliss September 22, 1949.

I wish to acknowledge your letter dated September 10th and various supporting papers covering subject: Universal Symbols Typewriter.

You may or may not know of the efforts made of the late Senator Owen who spent many years and a great deal of activity in arousing interest in so-called Global Alphabet. He even went so far as to secure a hearing before the Committee of Foreign Relations, United States Senate, November 1945, in reference to this matter.

With the thought that you would be interested in Senator Owens presentation, I am sending you herewith a printed copy of that hearing. While the Senator's symbols differ from yours, the purpose is the same and anyone who gives time to develop the Global Alphabet deserves credit. Whether such a thing is possible or not, the future alone can tell.

For further information, we made a symbol type for Senator Owen to try out and I think that he had about six machines in use in his office in Washington previous to his death. I do not know what happened to the typewriters.

When the enclosure has served your purpose, will you please return it to the writer. I wish to keep it in our file.

Yours very truly,
J.A.B. Smith.
Commercial Engineer.
Underwood Coporation.

I was a bit crestfallen when I read the reference to the Global Alphabet of Senator Owen. This is a sort of shorthand phonetic system of the kind which G.B. Shaw advocated. It enables the writer to write a letter in English or a French letter or a letter in any other language with the new phonetic symbols. Consequently anyone who knows how to pronounce these symbols could read the English letter, the French letter, or the letter in any other language. He would pronounce the words correctly, but if he is ignorant in English, or French or the other language he would not understand a word he is reading.

Senator Owen even went so far as to secure a hearing and I studied the report sent to me by Mr. Smith. It was pitiful to read how Senator Owen writhed under the searing questions of some sentors who wanted to know whether anyone reading his alphabetical symbols would understand the Russian letter or the French letter he is reading. Of course not, but how Senator Owen tried to hide this sorry fact was a good lesson in semantics.

How Mr. Smith could write "while the Senator's symbols differs from yours the purpose is the same" I could not understand. I tried to make him see the light in subsequent letters.

Anyway, his offer to build a typewriter for my symbols was something better than the rejection I received from other firms. I hoped to cook up some enthusiasm in the Sydney Agent , but failed miserably. As I had not the money to order this machine, the whole idea remained still born.

The last firm approached the INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINE CORPORATION offered the greatest hope. The IBM had pioneered the electric typewriter and the computor. They, I hoped would be most receptive to my idea. I was thrilled when the first letter contained the hint that I may perhaps be invited to the States.

Dear Mr. Bliss, 23rd September, 1949.

Your letter of September 10th addressed to the General Manager relative to your suggestion "Universal Symbol Typewriter," has been received by Mr. Arthur K. Watson and referred to the writer for attention.

We will be interested to make a careful examination of the development in question As I note to refer to the Patent Department having received details about your machine, if you have an issued patent and will forward a copy, or advise the number, we will be prepared to take the subject under immediate investigation.

As I find that upon inquiry the only information our Patent Department has received is a carbon copy of the letter I am replying to, in case you do not have an issued patent, I am attaching a set of the regular forms which we use covering all unpatented developments, in accordance with our establishment procedure, which we finds tend to guard against possible future misunderstandings, in view of our own extensive laboratory and engineerings activities.

If you will insert the name of the device on the third page in the blank spaces provided for this purpose, filling in the date and the address, and return a signed copy, together with descriptive information and drawings or pencil sketches of your invention, it will enable ourselves to acquaint ourselves with the subject. George E. Bennett, our General Manager in Sydney will be then told to contact you in person, after which, should we find it necessary to do so, and as conditions warrant, have you come to the United States for the purpose of a further conference regarding the subject.

In the meantime we will hold the papers in open file awaiting your reply,

Yours very truly,
H. Wisner Miller Jr.
International Business
Machine Incorporated.

I was thrilled with this letter and wrote back immediately, offering more information on Semantography. Then I received a letter from Mr. Birkenstock. Later I learned that he is chairman of Market Research Committee. Declining letters from the other companies were signed by a chief engineer, a commercial engineer, a patent manager, etc., etc.. As IBM is the largest company in this field they have a special department to deal with new developments, a Market Research Committee. The main quation which they should put before themselves is: Is there a need and a prospective market for a typewroter, the typing of which can be read in all languages? The answer should be an overwhelming Yes, because the fantastic advantages should be obvious, even to a child. And yet, that Mr. Birkenstock wrote:

Dear Mr. Bliss November 11th, 1949.

Your two letters dated July 17th, one of which was addressed to the General Manager, and the other to the Manager of our Patent Department, relating to the suggested machine for writing symbols, have been referred to this department.

We have carefully reviewed the proposal outlined in your letters but it is the opinion of our people that we would not be interested in participating in a project of this nature.

Thanking you for your interest in writing to us, I remain

Yours very truly,
J.W. Birkenstock.
International Business
Machine Corporation.

I did not give up and wrote back on the 29th, November, trying again to impress Mr. Birkenstock and his market research committee with the advantage of my typewriter. I received then the final letter.

Dear Mr. Bliss, March 7th, 1950.

With reference to the "Semantography Typewriter" referred to in your letter of November 29 addressed to our Mr. H. Wisner Miller Jr. we have now completed a further review on this matter.

As you will no doubt recall, we wrote to you under the date of November 11, 1949, stating that we would not be interested in a project of this nature. However, in light of the additional information which was subsequently forwarded to us through Mr. Fritz Treuer, Box 167, Tellow Springs, Ohio, we have had the matter under further consideration, but have reached the former conclusion that we do not wish to undertake a development of this type.

We are therefore closing our file, but it would be appreciated if you will inform us whether you wish the material referred to above returned to you by registered mail in Australia, or to Mr. Treuer, in Yellow Springs Ohio. This material consists of a copy of bound volume entitled "The Idea of Semantography-Book One," copy of bound volume entitled "The System of Semantography - Book Two " and miscellaneous descriptive literature numbered 1 to 10.

Thanking you again for your interest in bringing your invention to our notice and awaiting your reply, I am

Yours very truly,
J.W. Birkenstock, Chairman
Market Research Committee.
International Business Machines Corporation.

This was the last blow and it was very hard to take. I tried to find some answer, some explanation. Up till then I understood why educators are most unwilling to change their ideas and their methods of education. But I hoped that the men who make money out of new ideas would be more inclined to test a new idea. I thought of all my experiences in industry and business and recalled then that most employees are most reluctant to advocate an idea which may indeed turn out to be a flop. I remembered too that outsiders who approached industrial firms with new ideas found closed doors and rejection. I realised then that an engineer with a new idea must work for its acceptance within a company of which he must be a member himself. He must be prepared to suffer defeat, even dismissal. Only then has he a chance to have a model built, have it tested and bring it to the knowledge of the president or the general manager. Even in such a case, the antagonism of the other employees is usually very strong. The engineer with a new idea had in most cases to leave the company, set a firm of his own up with this new idea - and more than often go into bankruptcy. It takes decades even in industry, until a new and untried idea which looks outlandish at first, finds acceptance and a market. Naturally, I was an outsider and in far away Australia. Mr. Birkenstock had not the vision or the courage to advocate a trial with my typewriter.

Four years later my cousin Mr. Karl Bittman went on a world trip and he promised me to visit IBM in New York. Here is his report in a letter to me.

Dear Karl, New York, 15th June 1954.

I hope that you have received word from Bill about us and possibily have seen one of my letters. With travelling from place to place, meeting so many people and dear old friends, with the sightseeing and the racing around on business, writing letters is extremely difficult, and I cannot write as often and as much as I would like to.

I have contacted the IBM as you requested, but let me tell you, I was not successful unfortunately. I have gone about this job, as carefully as I could. The usual procedure here is that you fill in a form and request an appointment which they only give you if they are interested. I tried to get some recommendation through friends. One told the other and finally we located a neighbour of one of my friends, who works at IBM and through him we got an appointment with the man in charge of the market research . I had not talked for more than 2 minutes when he said he knew of my system, they had had some correspondence on this in 1950 and he rang for the file, which was given to him in a matter of a few minutes. There was all your correspondence - I think it dated back to 1950. He explained to me that their corporation is not interested to develop a new idea of symbol writing. They would only be interested if there is a demand for such typewriters. I presumed that this was the answer they had given you before and I asked him would they be willing to review the position now. He read the letter and pamphlets that you had given me and said, he does not think that anything would come of the review as their policy still stands and they would only make a machine (or adapt it) or exploit a demand, but not to create it. I tried to put in an argument, that they always develop new machines, but he said that they were basically different; they are machines that simplify existing cumbersome calculation processes and these machines are usually produced at the demand of some institution or government agency and then developed further. Therefore he thinks his corporation would not make or adapt a machine the use of which would have to be propagated as a matter of principle. I am sure you know all these arguments backwards and could even imagine the whole conversation. He brought up the system of "Linguator" or some similar device where five basic languages have been brought into some system of translation on a particular level. From what I understood, they have made such a device, but the conversation went away too quickly from this subject, to enable me to grasp it fully.

He said, they would make one or several typewriters for your symbol system, if they receive an order and the system can be applied to a keyboard of a total of 88 units (upper and lower case). I am sure, this information is not new to you either.

My impression was, that they had considered the matter and were very familiar with the details. Especially the man he called in and who did most of the talking a Mr. John Wheller, knew all about it. At the time you corresponded with them, a Mr. J.W. Birkenstock was the head of the department, now it is Mr. J.A. Little. We finally departed on the assurance, that they would reconsider the matter any time, any time that you think that a demand exists. In other words, if some agency takes on the system and you approach them then, they would reconsider the matter. I feel sure that they really consider a matter, that is what they are there for. It looked to me that they really had done some research on it, and the file was quite voluminous.

I hate to have to write all this, but you will realise that a personal visit by me cannot change the attitude of the whole organisation. I only feel this: my

visit established that your propagation was not turned down offhand by a "Unter laeufel" but it was considered the way they are organised, and although an "Unter laeufel" (underling) must have made a report on it and some "research", it has gone through several hands and also the head of the department knew of the matter although he was not in charge at the time of the correspondence, However, on second thought, it is more likely the present head of the department rose to the position from within this department and therefore knew the details.

Kindest regards,
from Karl and Mary.

Well, that settled the matter with IBM. I could hope ne more. A year later I decided to buy a varitype machine. Naturally my hope rose again, because with the varityper I could use a special font or fonts with my symbols. After buying the cheapest varityper on the market I approached the firm with the following letter.

G.J. Farmer Esq.,
Vice President
RALPH C. COXHEAD CORPORATION.
Newark 5. N.J. U.S.A.

27th April, 1955.

Your letter FDY/jcr of March 22, 1955.

Dear Mr. Farmer,

This is to thank you for your comprehensive letter and for the informative literature on the varityper. I do not know whether Mr. Ralph C. Coxhead is the inventor of this admirable piece of human ingenuity, or whether he is the man who performed the more difficult job, bringing the idea from a blueprint to a marketable product. In any case, I offer my congratulation to all the men who have made the varityper what it is: a new important tool for humanity. This is emphasised by your letterhead stressing that the varityper can compose in all languages.

Writing to pioneers in a field of typewriting I feel sure that you will have an open mind to realise the importance of my work in the typewriter field, a work which can become universal by the use of a varityper. Twenty years ago, the idea of a typewriter which can type in hundreds of different types seemed little more than a crackpot idea or atleast wishful thinking only. Now you have realised this wishful thinking. Twenty years hence, I feel sure that my work with your co-operation will have enlarged the use of the varityper all over the world.

I refer to my system of Semantography, and I include among other material a leaflet about my lecture at the University of Sydney, showing the application of Semantography for cartographing work. I see from your leaflets that you have evolved a special model for Letters-up tracings and drawings. My Semantographic system incorporated on a special font in a varityper can be used for geological survey maps. The search for oil is going on all over the world, and such geological survey maps are an urgent necessity. Moreover, geologists and technicians in different parts of the world working on oil exploration speak different languages. Geographic maps have already a variety of symbols. Now every meaning in geology and cartography can be expressed in Semantography, and thus your varityper can open up a new field for its use.

As you see from the included material, Semantography consists of a system of pictographs and ideographs, which are almost self-explanatory. With them the un-heard of possibility is now available: a circular letter, an invoice, etc. typed in all languages can be read in Semantography, just as in fact the symbols of mathematics in pricelists etc,, are readable in all languages of the world.

I have written three volumes, showing the application of Semantography for all fields of Science, Industry, Commerce and Communication. These books are available in the Library of Congress (Catalog Card Number 52 - 65550), Harvard University and other American Libraries, including New York. Moreover, some of the librarians realising the pioneering value of my work have given a standing order for anything I or others write on Semantography. Moreover, I hold a number of rights in the U.S.A. and elsewhere which protect the use of this system.

The symbols displayed in the attached leaflets are much exaggerated in size. Actually they can be as small as these types. For instance this symbol ∩ indicates the outline of the human skull, which houses in its upper part the brain. Consequently this symbol ∩ means to think, to ponder, to contemplate, to consider and so forth in all languages of the world.

I intend now to varitype and print a pocket book showing the application of Semantography for all fields of science, industry, commerce, etc. For instance, the use of my symbols for radiophoto cables which need no coding, decoding and translating. What I need is a special font made by you, showing within the space of 12 point lettering the various lines and symbols. As every varityper font contains two full sets of types altogether 180 different symbols would be more than sufficient for the composition of any compound meaning.

My first question is: What would you charge me for a special font bearing my symbols? You have made such fonts in hundreds of variations and I understand that the cast is made of enlarged drawings. You would give me all information, perhaps send in all actual drawings from a font already made, and I would make all the drawings according to your specification. You would then have the engraving, cast or whatever other process, done.

How much would you charge me for this, considering the special pioneering work I am doing, considering perhaps too, that I might stress particularly the use of the varityper for this new world-embracing idea of communication. Such a cheap pocket book, written in English and showing the new medium of Semantography would soon be translated in other languages drawing the attention to the use of the varityper in other parts of the world.

As the symbols will be in 12 point size and most of them would stretch over a square area such as the letters V M do, the use of the differential spacing varityper model is out of the question. An ordinary model will do, indeed, as explained below, a non justifier model, say the cheapest one, the M 11 would suit me admirably. In your export price list this model is priced as $ 480.00. I refer to the cheapest model because of the following reasons.

You are aware that men who pioneer a new idea are usually short of money for this idea. I have to make a living in other spheres and this leaves me little to spare for Semantography. All I could do to scrape together for sending to you would be $ 500.00. Is it possible for you after considering the pioneering work I am doing and the help you would give me in promoting the varityper for this new idea, to supply me with the special font needed and in addition sending me a reconditioned secondhand model M 11 for the sum of $ 500.00. I do not ask for much and I believe, you and the other pioneers of the varityper will recognise my pioneering work and the promotion it might give to the varityper. Studying your varityper and the Coxhead Liner I have some valuable patentable ideas which might interest you, once my proposal has found a willing ear with you. Hoping to hear from you I am

Yours very truly,
C.K. Bliss B. Sc.

But again I found no response.

Dear Mr. Bliss May 5th, 1955.

Thank you for your very interesting letter of April 27th and enclosures.

As to the questions, please note that our charges for the design and manufacture of the first type with special characters will be approximately $ 3000.00

Our Model M 11 being a standard model, would not fit the type of composition to be prepared and we feel that the DSJ model would be more appropriate for your purpose.

Inasmuch as we are represented in your country by our very capable Distributor Stott and Hoare Pty., Ltd., Broughton House, Corner Kent and Clarence Streets, Sydney, may we suggest that you take this matter up with them and perhaps with their assistance you will be able to get enough support to promote your ideas.

We must warn you however, that our already overcrowded type program does not permit us to accept any orders for special types for at least another year.

Wishing you luck in your endeavours, we are,

Sincerely,
RALPH C. COXHEAD CORPORATION
G.J. Farmer.
Vice President.

I had no $ 3000.00 for a special font. Another hope went down the sink.

Later I learned from the papers that the President of IBM is coming to Sydney I felt that I could not let this opportunity go by. And so I wrote.

The President
I.B.M.
Sydney 15th August, 1956.

Dear Mr. Watson,

I am the inventor of a typewriter (of normal build) by which an operator in an office can type a telegrame which needs no coding, decoding and translating. Instead, the receiving clerk in whatever country can read the cable in whatever language he understands.

Furthermore the principle can be applied to your electronic machines for translating text in any language. You and other people in the USA are already working on such machines. My idea could greatly simplify all this. I am holding protective rights in the USA and other countries.

But I am not out for money. If you take to the idea and when it starts to show profit, I am ready to agree that whatever royalties should accrue, should be used for the promotion of this idea.

Why do I want to see you? Because only the boss can dare to take up a new idea the principle of which is new, and may seem evem crazy to other people. The inventor of the typewriter had a hell of a job to convince the then International Goosequilt Corporation of his time that his crazy contraption is better than a goosequilt. And the inventor of the punchcard in 1888 could not convince the then IBM of the usefulness of his idea.

This is the reason why I want to see you, and only you. Already the Library of Congress, Harvard University and other libraries in America are collecting all my writings on this new idea, including my letters to important people.

This letter will also find its way into the American Libraries. I hope that the result of our meeting will give credit to you and the IBM. Give me 15 minutes of your time, Mr. Watson. To high a price for a new idea by which the IBM will ultimately benefit?

Yours sincerely,
C. K. Bliss.

In addition I worked on the men of the IBM in Sydney. I was successful. I met Mr. Watson, but I met him only for a few seconds. He introduced me immediately to his lieutenant Mr. Cummins to whom I should tell all. And Mr. Watson went out of the room. This was a great disappointment, because I felt that every employee is handicapped by his fear to promote an idea which has not yet proved its worth. Nevertheless I did my best and explained all to Mr. Cummins. Later I sent off the following letter to him. I was a bit apprehensive, because I felt I had to tell him the truth about my approach to the IBM in 1949.

Thomas L. Cummins, Esq
IBM World Trade Corporation 25th August, 1956.

Dear Mr. Cummins,

Please accept my sincere thanks for having given me your time and your benevolent consideration. My thanks are also due to Mr. Watson, and I beg you to hand over the attached letter to him.

Recalling our meeting, I feel that I had to tell about my approach to the IBM 7 years ago. But I feel now apprehensive of having told you that Mr. Birkenstock wrote to me that there is no need for my idea. From life-long experiences in industry I know that a man who declined once an idea will try to justify his decision by any means. If Mr. Birkenstock becomes aware that my idea is again under consideration he will work against it. It's a sheer act of self preservation. Therefore please do not mention it to him. Let a new mind consider and decide.

Now that you are on a world tour, you will realise the need for a typewrit-er like mine. Imagine a merchant in India (or Uganda or Abyssinia) could type a letter in his own language on my typewriter to the IBM or any other firm which could read the same letter in English, send it off to another firm which could read the very same letter in any other language...well, that would surely be the greatest marvel in the history of language and typewriting.

If the IBM brings out such a typewriter, immediately every business college in the world would offer courses for handling it. It's simple and the symbols are actually pictures, and the typewriter could type ordinary letters too in small letters of the alphabet. If ever there is a need for something in the world trade, here is one. And you are the representative for the World Trade Corporation. I feel sure that you will not let such an idea down. It could bring new glories to the IBM and enhance your name and status. Don't listen to the counter-arguments of every person who countered new ideas. Let me answer every argument against my work. I am an engineer and I know that it works. And please remember: it's not a new Esperanto. It can be used in any mother tongue.

Wishing you all the success of your tour and a good homecoming, I am

Yours sincerely,
C. K. Bliss.

My fears were correct, he handed over my idea to another employee a Mr. Farr.

Dear Mr. Bliss November 15th, 1956

Mr. T. L. Cummins has referred your idea to me for a common symbol language typewriter for consideration.

It does not seem to me that your very worthy idea has developed to the point to where mechanisation through the development of a new machine can be justified. I am sure you realise that it is not availability of a typewriter that will initiate the establishment of courses in business colleges, but rather it would be the acceptance of this common symbol language by the public in sufficient numbers to justify mechanizing its preparation.

My judgement is based upon the limited information which I have from Mr. Cummins after your discussion. If you feel that it would contribute to my better understanding and appreciation I would welcome further details. May I suggest that the best means for me to evalutate your idea would be for you to write to me in your common symbol language, thus I would be in a far better position to determine the problems involved in gaining international public acceptance of this means of communication.

Yours very truly,
G. C. Farr.
Manager Product Planning Department.

This time I felt that here is my last chance. And so I wrote to Mr. Farr and tried to show him that Semantography can be used for immediate problems.

G. C. Farr
Manager Product Planning Department
IBM WORLD TRADE CORPORATION
807 United Nations Plaza
New York 17, N.Y.

26th November, 1956.

Re: your letter of November 15.

Dear Mr. Farr,

Many thanks to you and to Mr. Cummins. I am glad that you are ready to study my work. I must refrain however from writing to you in Semantography. Though it seems to be simple, I might as well write to you in one of the alphabetic symbol codes of the telegraphic codes, which you might not know.

And here it is where my work could be used to profit: for doing away with the cumbersome and complicated telegraphic codes. There are quite a number of them all in heavy and costly books. It needs extensive training to learn how to code and decode. It takes hours for one simple telegram, and mistakes make matters worse. With clerks in various countries who have only cursory knowledge of the English language it means translation with further delays and difficulties, exactly the sort of thing that must be avoided with urgent messages.

If a machine could be brought onto the market which does away with the endless coding and decoding, business firms would take to it easily. Of course, a certain training is necessary with every business machine, and this means an acquaintance with new sets of symbols. The meaning of words must be translated into single letters with typewriters for shorthand, and the meaning of 2 + 2 = 4 must also be translated into other symbols if used in an electronic computor.

It is true what you wrote: that a certain system had to be used first until a machine was invented to make it quicker and neater, as it is the case with the ordinary typewriter. It is equally true that certain machines are first invented and then introduced to the public, together with the system of how to use them. I propose a simple typewriter for telegraphic messages which need no coding decoding, translating. The intriguing thing with my typewriter is that it need not be a new machine which would cost money to develop. In fact, any ordinary typewriter could be adapted for Semantography as shown below.

With such a typewriter, the clerk of a firm would type out his message in Semantography, reading it in his own language (say English). The very same strip of paper would be used to transmit the message by radiophoto cable. There would be be no mistakes whatever. The receiving clerk would immediately read off the message in his language, be it Hindustani, Malay, or Portuguese, or any other language.

Before I go any further, please be informed that I myself am an engineer with long training as an executive in industry. I know when a thing is not practical. I have turned over and over every difficulty, and I could surely dispel any doubt you may have, if I could only be in America and talk the matter over with you and the other men of the IBM. As it is, I am of an advanced age, and this idea got hold of me 14 years ago. It fills all my thoughts. My books are in various American Libraries, as for instance the Public Library of New York and others there. The Library of Congress, Harvard University and others, have given standing orders for all my writings on the subject. Accept therefore the following scant information on the typewriter in the knowledge that I am ready to give extensive information if wanted.

From the attached page you will see that the two normal sets of keys on the ordinary typewriter are retained, except for the capital letters which I have discarded They are fossils anyway. We usually write in small letters as this and other writings prove. Thus, the small letters on my typewriter can be used to type the names of places, ports, people, firms, ships and chemical and other products, which are today even in coded telegrams typed out in full. Furthermore, we have the international numerical symbols and others on any typewriter. These too are retained. Only the capital letters are removed and in their place we have the line elements for the composition of the symbols. Please peruse the attached page showing the two sets.

However, in order to type compound symbols, two adjustments are necessary. One is to suspend the automatic jumping forward of the carriage. Instead, the carriage stays put, enabling the typing of lines on top of one another. Only when the lower space bar is pressed does the carriage move on. The second adjustment is a finely divided ratchet (much as it is used today for the half spacing) which enables to set lines slightly above or below (as we use the half space to write H_2 or a_2).

I shall now introduce you to a number of my symbols. Naturally I chose first simple and obvious symbols. I am drawing the symbols by hand and therefore much larger than a typewriter can do. But I have two symbols on my typewriter which I produce herewith, □ ∩ and which shows you that small symbols are easy to discern.

Now to the most versatile of international symbols: → the arrow. We would first type a horizontal line — and then add an arrow › head to make either the meaning of forward → or backward ← . Now we can type another vertical line | to type the following meanings which might seem almost self-explanatory (once one has been told about them.)

⊢ start |→ departure → forward →| arrival →⊣ stop

Please observe the great economy in writing space and also writing time as compared with the typing of the ordinary words which need more typings.

When we now add the date by making say 15-11-1956 to stand for the 15 November 1956, we could arrive at the following meanings. Assuming that we refer to the despatch of goods. We then get the meaning in all languages of:

⊢→15-11-1956 this means that the despatch will start on the 15th Nov. 1956.

|→15-11-1956 this means that the goods have been despatched (the arrow has already left the starting line) on the 15th Nov. 1956.

→| 15-11-1956 this means that the arrival of the goods will be (the arrow has not yet touched the finishing line) on the 15th Nov. 1956.

→⊣ 15-11-1956 this means that the goods have arrived (the arrow has already touched the finishing line) on the 15th Nov. 1956.

We can also use a simple symbol (like a concave or a convex lens) for indicating past or future and putting this over the symbol in question.

→ have forwarded → will forward ← have returned ← will return

Similarly a vertical arrow would indicate up ↑ and down ↓ . Together with the compound symbol for price (money and goods see below) we could indicate the prices

↑ have gone up ↑ will go up ↓ have gone down

Now we could cable for a shipment of 50kg of pennicillin to be forwarded

→ 50kg pennicillin

Except for the arrow(which is new in the cable) all other symbols 50 kg and the word pennicillin are international.

The symbols shown above could be used for the departure or arrival of goods, persons, letters, money, ships, etc. All that is necessary is to add a symbol in front indicating

goods man letter ship money (an abridged rod of Mercurius:)

Thus we could easily cable that the goods have been despatched, please forward money, that Mr. Soandso has left with the ship Soandso on that date and that he will return on another date etc.etc.

Believe me dear Mr. Farr I have not selected symbols which are especially simple. Believe me that all my symbols are just as easy as these. And believe me I am not out for money or to make a fortune in royalties. Being of advanced age, the whole idea has become an obsession with me. When you are at such a stage in life, all you want is to hand over to humanity a new tool.

Now once, the IBM would bring out such a simple electric or non-electric typewriter together with a primer for commercial correspondence, then something unbelievable would happen. The world would suddenly realise that there is a typewriter available by which men could write letters which could be read in any language. A firm in say Finland could send the same letter of enquiry to firms in different countries and the same letter would be read in English, in French, in German, in Italian or in any other language. The clerk in those firms would be able to answer the letter to a stranger of a strange country and language. It would be the greatest inovation since writing was invented. It would be something which would indeed be worthy of the IBM World Trade Corporation.

And consider please that little money would be needed for an experimental typewriter which would simply be an adjusted ordinary typewriter. And consider furthermore that I (an old fox in patent protection) have in a new way secured monopoly rights in practically all countries, rights which run three times as long as an ordinary patent (50 years against 18 years of patents, and no patent fees to be paid year after year.) Before I refer to this let me touch upon another application of my Semantography.

The IBM has brought out an electronic translating machine. This, however, was a very limited affair, being able to handle only a few hundred meanings. The task to make a machine for all meanings of the dictionary appears to be hopeless, not only because a word has so many divergent meanings, but also because every language has idiomatic expressions which, when literally translated into other languages amount to nonsense. And when such idiomatic expressions would be fed into an electronic translating machine, it would babble only nonsense. The machine would translate well a phrase like 'put down' the glass. But 'put down a name' means in English to write it down. When 'put' is translated into another language it means anything but 'to write'. To 'put up' a picture would be easy to translate. But to put up with a man means in English to suffer his presence. The words when literally translated into another language would come out as utter nonsense. How can Semantography overcome this seemingly unsurmountable obstacle?

Well if a problem is fed into an electronic computor, it must be first translated into the language which the computor can understand. The electronic computor understands only the symbols 1 and 0 of the binary system. It does not understand the symbols of the decimal system 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9. Similarly when a translating job is fed into a translating machine which I visualise then the problem would have to be first translated into Semantography. This means a simplification of the expression to the barest minimum and a complete avoidance of idiomatic expressions . Once a circular letter coded into Semantography is fed into the electronic translating machine it would automatically produce typed letters in any language required. Sure enough the letters would be devoid of polite and meaningless phrases, they would be terse and to the point and easily understandable. I have only touched on this matter because the IBM has already experimented with such translating machines. My heart however, is set on a simple typewriter as explained above. And now to the protective rights.

Mr. Watson and Mr Cummins have both asked me right in the beginning of our discussion whether or not I control protective rights. If I have none, they pointed out, there would be no use proceeding. The IBM is only interested in a new idea if it is protected. I said that I have such rights. I have been director of the patent department of a large firm making electronic equipment in Europe. And I know my way with patents. Not only are they very costly to obtain and maintain, they are of doubtful value and moreover at the best they last only 18 years. I have got a new idea. I have turned to the International Copyright. Symbols are writings and they can be protected by copyright registering them in one of the Berne Convention countries and in the USA. This leaves only China and Russia. I have registered a number of copyrights in Washington and Australia, thus gaining protective rights for 56 years in all countries of the world. (I did this in 1949). Moreover, any symbol printed or engraved on any machine is too protected by copyright when registered and I have registered a number of typewriter key arrangements in Washington. Furthermore I have registered my main symbols in such a way that any derivations or deviations would fall under the copyright. You know that to hold monopolyrights a big firm is necessary which is ready to fight through any action. It is a big firm only which dissuades infringers.

Now that I have completed more than 4 pages, let me end with a personal appeal to you. Having been a whole life in industry, I know that it is practically impossible for an outsider to get a hearing, least of all to see that his idea is adopted and carried out. There are usually the ideas of the executives which are put into realisation. However, it seems different with IBM. Not only has Mr. Watson listened carefully to my demonstration. Not only has Mr. Cummins had further discussions with me. You too have answered and expressed your willingness to study the matter further. This is heartening.

I beg to stress the most important point in this venture: it would not cost money, in fact, only the adaption of an ordinary typewriter. And it would tremendously enhance the name of IBM World Trade Corporation in bringing out something which would almost amount to a miracle: a machine which would write in all languages, a great tool for world trade. Should you be the man who would co-operate with me in forging this new tool, I have no hesitation to have your name added to this idea. As I said before I am not out for royalties, nor personal honours. I am sixty years of age, and I shall count myself lucky if God will give me another few years to live and if I could use these years to work in co-operation with you and the IBM Corporation on this idea.

I enclose a few leaflets, and I hold myself in readiness for any further information with reference to my books on Semantography. Thanking you for your willingness to explore a new idea, I am with best regards to you, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Cummins.

Yours sincerely,
C.K. Bliss.

Then I received the final letter,

Dear Mr. Bliss, December 18th 1956.

Thank you for your additional information which you forwarded me so promptly following my request on November 15th.

For the past several weeks, we have devoted careful consideration to your suggested course of action. With the new material which you placed at my disposal in your November 26th, letter, I feel better qualified to offer well-considered judgement with respect to your proposal.

It is my opinion and that of my associates that much more work remains to be done in establishing a working knowledge of your technique and an appreciation of it by those who would use it before any form of mechanisation is in order.

Accordingly we must decline your invitation to construct a typewriter to satisfy the requirements of Semantography.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of an extremely interesting subject. I will look forward to meeting you if I am in Australia or if you should be visiting the United States in the future.

Yours very truly,

G. C. Farr.

This matter was finally closed. But my strongest asset apparently is, that I am like the British of whom it is said that they never know when they are beaten. So I go on fighting.

When I am typing these old letters onto the wax stencil (often years later May 1960) to produce this issue of Semantography Series, a number of letters have gone out to American firms, including the IBM. The reason is: the U.S. Armed Forces have advertised for a method and machine to coordinate directives for the logistic field supplies for armies which speak in various languages. The interested reader is asked to study the issue "Semantography and the U.S. Armed Forces."

The End.