

Semantography-Blissymbolics Series

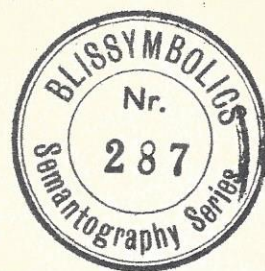
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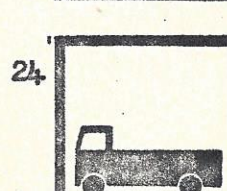
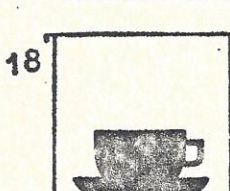
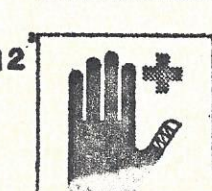
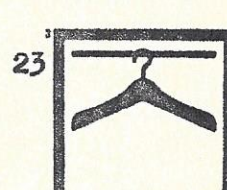
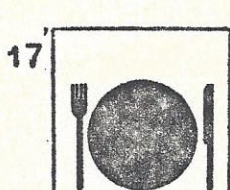
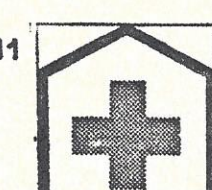
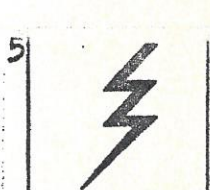
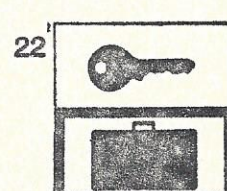
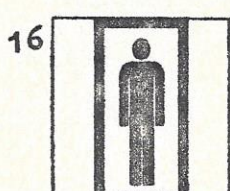
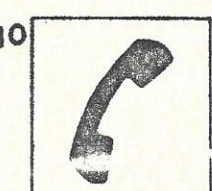
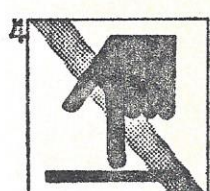
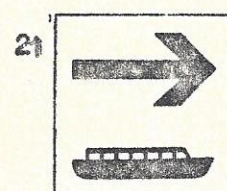
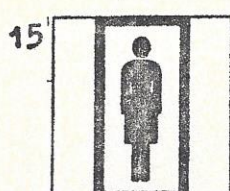
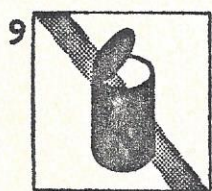
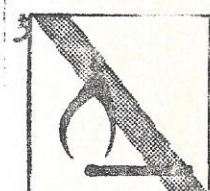
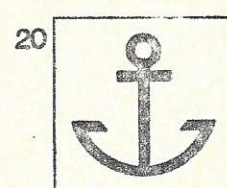
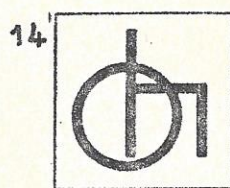
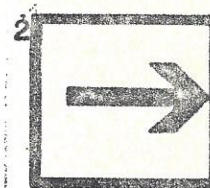
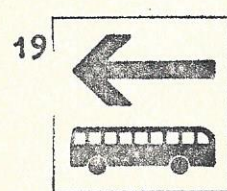
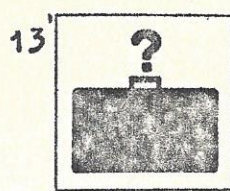
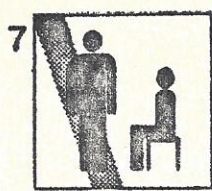
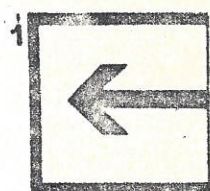
July 1967

EXPOSING EXPO'S SYMBOL SICKNESS

A critical Study by C.K. Bliss, B.Sc. Author of "Semantography"



In July 1966 I sent to the leading men of Expo 67 a free offer of my symbols to be used for the multi-lingual visitors of Expo. I also suggested that Montreal be linked with this "One Writing for One World." My letters went straight into the dustbin, as I found out later. Later they told me that they have already a "sign language." Really, a whole language? Not exactly. Only 24 symbols as shown below. On the following pages I shall explain what I call the "symbol sickness" which has gripped people who think of introducing symbols.



NEW SIGN LANGUAGE FOR EXPO

SINCE visitors to Expo 67 will be coming from all over the world, the Exhibition has made a special effort to avoid written messages. To surmount the language barrier it created its own sign language.

Without these signs there are 24 of them—the polyglot crowds might become lost, confused, uncomfortable, even hungry.

How many can you identify before reading the legend?

- 1—Entrance
- 2—Exit
- 3—No fire
- 4—Don't touch
- 5—Electricity
- 6—No admission
- 7—No standing
- 8—No sitting
- 9—Anti-litter
- 10—Telephone
- 11—Hospital

- 12—First-aid
- 13—Lost-Found
- 14—Handicapped
- 15—Women's WC
- 16—Men's WC
- 17—Restaurant
- 18—Coffee Shop
- 19—Bus Station
- 20—Marina
- 21—Ferry Dock
- 22—Locker
- 23—Cloakroom
- 24—Delivery entrance

EXPOSING EXPO'S SYMBOL SICKNESS

A sick correspondence with the Organisers of the Exposition 1967 in Montreal, with sick results, even to the visitors of Expo 67 who could not understand the symbols and could not find the toilets because of the "esoteric" symbols (as Time Magazine reported on May 12, 67) and forced the organisers to hastily abandon the symbols and put up words instead.

In 1966 leaflets appeared in the travel bureau, showing an interesting circular symbol consisting of its double symbol as shown below and repeated 8 times in a circle.



Main symbol for Expo 1967

I wrote the following letter to the general manager of Expo
To the President, or General Manager,
Montreal Exhibition 1967
1 Place Ville Marie
MONTREAL, Canada.

Sydney 15th July 1966

I added a mimeographed sheet in English and French to my letter.
This sheet is attached at the end of this issue.

Dear Sir,

Most probably you are a French-Canadian, and it would be more appropriate to address you in French. But alas, I can't do it, though I learned French for 7 years in the high school. I realised later that learning a foreign language in school results usually in failing, as admitted by most foreign language teachers. The mother tongue is an irresistible force, and people go on babbling as their mother babbled to them. This is why in Canada, in the U.S.A., in Australia, and elsewhere, people go on speaking French or German, or Ukrainian although their forefathers came into the country centuries ago.

When I visited Quebec I had difficulty to make myself understood in English. In Montreal I saw two distinctly different communities, even as to the movies in the cinemas. In Medicine Hat I heard only Ukrainian in the market place, and so on - you know the situation a thousand times better than I do.

And because of this, kindly allow me to write to you in English, though you may write to me in French if you wish. But something must be done to break the Language Barrier. In the U.S.A. the leading men of the hotel, motel, railways, airlines and business organisations have established an "International Committee for Breaking the Language Barrier" by the use of pictorial symbols which tourists can read in any of their languages. And the executive director of this committee has informed me that you have decided to use a sort of pictorial symbol for your Expo 67, namely a circle of human beings with raised arms. Seeing that you are already willing to use pictorial symbols for your Expo, allow me to introduce you to my work. I am the only man in the world who has evolved a complete system of pictorial symbols which can be used to write anything needed in communication, commerce, industry, and even science. In my semantography (from semanticos and graphein) this symbol  means a man, and this  a woman. This small circle  pictures the mouth and stands for speech. Hence this means man speaks:   and this means a speaker:  .

In order to acquaint all your officers with my work and with the possibilities it offers for your Expo, I have taken the liberty to duplicate a sheet in English and in French, and I have added to each sheet my sample Tourist Folder. I am sending you one sheet and one folder with this letter, and a copy of this letter in a few days to make sure you receive my message. At the same time, I am posting by airmail second class a number of sheets and folders to you, and will do so again in a few days.

Please read the sheet and the folder, distribute the copies to all concerned and if you need more, just let me know how many, and I shall despatch them without delay.

I hope my proposal will find favourable response with you, and I am prepared to work out special symbols for the special pavillions and special exhibits of the Expo. I would also be prepared to make a special folder tailored to the needs of the tourists who will visit the Montreal Fair, in short a special Montreal Expo 67 folder.

I am awaiting your kind reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss

P.S. Kindly realise the advantage of this neutral medium for Canada itself. It could help to lessen the animosity of those who want multilingual public signs everywhere.

The book will be available in America in a few weeks time, from the distributor Acme Code Company.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss.

From the notices in the newspapers I learned that the Commissioner General for the Australian Exhibit is Air Marshal Sir Valston Hancock who can be contacted in Canberra.

I wrote to him

Sir,

Sydney 20th September, 1966.

Would you kindly grant me an interview at your next stay in Sydney. I have a very important proposition for the Expo 1967, one which would enhance both the name of Australia and Canada.

It is difficult to disclose my proposal in a short letter. Hence my request for a personal interview. Enough to say here that the Federal Government has, on the recommendation of the Australian National University recommended my work to the United Nations. Incidentally, the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations has shown great interest in the matter.

Hoping that you will grant me the interview, I am with my thanks in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

and received the following reply.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

23rd September, 1966.

I shall be glad to see you during my next visit to Sydney.

However, before you decide to continue with your project I should tell you that our Pavilion is nearing completion in Montreal, the furnishings and furniture have been manufactured, the exhibits we intend to display and associated electronic aids are awaiting despatch to Montreal.

In short, the only room left for manoeuvre now is in relation to operational procedures in the Pavilion. If you feel that you have constructive suggestions to make against this background please contact me and I will indicate a rendezvous during my next visit to Sydney.

Yours sincerely,

(V.E. Hancock)

Commissioner-General.

I wrote back.

Sir,

Sydney 24 Sept, 66

This is to thank you for your prompt reply, for your kind willingness to meet me when in Sydney. I have studied your information and believe that my proposal will interest you. Here I wish to state that I have no intention to earn any money. On the contrary, I wish to give something which could be of great value to Australia and the Expo 67.

Please let me know when you will be in Sydney. I am ready to come to you anytime and anywhere. Thanking you in anticipation, I am,

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

I then received from him a letter to visit him in Sydney in the Federal Government Offices. I went there, However, in order to make a better impression I asked my secretary Miss Maureen Bates to come with me. Unfortunately, she failed to meet me at the arranged place, and went later on her own to Sir Hancock and received the same apathetic reception I had received half an hour ago. He is an old man with white hair and totally incapable to indulge in an unusual venture on his own. Indeed as I learned during our talk he is there only to be a figurehead. The actual arrangements of the exhibits, etc. is in the hands of the architect. Nevertheless I did what I could, though without result having come up against the old hindrance: bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, having received no reply from the General Manager of Expo in Montreal I wrote another letter

The General Manager
Montreal Exposition
1 Place Ville Marie
Montreal Canada.

Sydney 3 Oct 66

Dear Sir,

On July 15, I sent you a letter by airmail containing a vital proposal for Expo 67, and a few days later I sent you a copy of this letter and the enclosures.

At the same time I sent you by airmail a number of copies of an address in English and French together with my sample Tourist Folder for distribution to your co-workers.

I made it clear that I do not approach you because I want to make money, but only because I have something to offer which could only enhance your Expo. It is a proposal to use pictorial symbols in your exposition which could be read and understood in all languages.

I have not received any acknowledgement of my letters. No doubt you are very hard pressed with work, but I would be much obliged if you could let me know that you have received everything: and your stand towards my proposal. I thank you in anticipation, and am

Yours sincerely,
C.K. Bliss

and received the following answer

Dear Mr. Bliss,

October 23, 1966

Thank you for your letter of October 3rd, 1966. We have searched thoroughly through our files and unfortunately have been unsuccessful in finding your letter of July 15th nor the documents you mentioned. Would you, therefore, be good enough to let us have copies of your correspondence so that we may study your proposal as quickly as possible.

We are very sorry for this inconvenience, and are very grateful for your interest in the 1967 World Exhibition.

Yours sincerely,
CANADIAN CORPORATION FOR THE 1967 WORLD EXHIBITION
Andrew G. Kniewasser
General Manager.

Meanwhile I have learned that the circular symbol for Expo 67 was designed by a Mr. Julien Hebert, and so I wrote to him

Julien Hebert
Industrial Designer
430 Bonsecours Street
MONTREAL QUEBEC Canada.

17th October 1966

Dear Sir,

I have been intrigued and fascinated by your symbol combination connoting "Man and His World" which you have designed, registered and copyrighted for the Montreal Expo '67. I myself am working on such symbols and have been since 1942, and have written books about them. Consequently I am especially interested in your research, according to which (as explained in the Expo 67 folder) "the basic motif is the ancient and world-wide symbol for worshipping man - a vertical line with outstretched arms."

Precisely where did you find that "vertical line with outstretched arms" and when was it published? Could you send me a photocopy of the page and full information as to the publication, author, publisher, place and date of publication. I include 2 international postal coupons for your airmail answer, and am ready to send you a cheque for the cost of the photocopy plus airmail expenses.

As the matter is very important to me, please answer at your earliest convenience, and be thanked in anticipation.

I remain, yours sincerely,
C.K. Bliss

Encl. 2 postal coupons.

and received no reply whatever.

Now I answered the letter of the General Manager dated Oct 23 in the following detailed letter.

Mr. Andrew G. Kniewasser
General Manager

Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition
MONTREAL Canada.

Yours letter: AGK:pp of
October 23.

Dear Mr. Kniewasser,

This is to thank you for your kind and prompt reply to my letter of Oct. 3 enquiring why I haven't received an acknowledgement of my²first class letters, and 2 second class letters, all airmail, sent on July 15, and the copies a few days later. Please receive now:

1. Copy of my personal letter to you
2. Duplicated letter in French and English, addressed to the leading men of Expo.
3. My Tourist Folder (Sample) showing some of my symbols for the international Traveller.

Please read letters 1 and 2 before continuing this letter.

In my personal letter to you I stressed the language difficulties of Canada which I have experienced when I travelled through your beautiful country. Your name of Kniewasser is obviously of German origin, and proves again that Canada is settled by many nationalities who are proud to preserve the language and the names of their forefathers. Esperanto, and even English has proved a failure

as a medium of communication across all languages.

There is only one possible way to overcome the language barrier: the use of pictorial symbols, and I am the first, and the only man in the world who has invented a consistent and complete system of basic pictorial symbols which can be used to convey every meaning needed in communication, commerce, industry, and science, a truly

"One Writing for One World"

Now, dear Mr. Kniewasser, I am a colleague, an industrial executive, now retired. In former years I have visited many exhibitions, and even world exhibitions. They came and went, and left no mark whatever of the tremendous efforts which men like you and your co-workers are putting into it. It was therefore my idea to approach you and to offer you a truly "MONTREAL FIRST", something which later generations may perhaps call the "Montreal Medium of international Understanding". Seeing that you have used a pictorial symbol for your Expo, I thought you may be interested in promoting my work at your exhibition. Hence my approach.

My idea is that your Corporation and the City of Montreal should put up pictorial signs for the visitors of all nations with the words in English and French underneath, so as to direct visitors TO THE TOWN HALL, TO THE EXPOSITION, TO THE FRENCH CONSULATE, TO THE RESTAURANT, TO THE TOILETS, etc. etc. Each visitor should receive a folder showing in one vertical column the pictorial symbols displayed, and in say 10 vertical columns the respective words in 10 different languages. In addition, a second folder should be distributed, similar to the tourist folder attached to this letter, showing to all visitors that a new medium for communication is presented by the Expo 67. In addition, I hoped that you may reserve a small corner in one pavilion where my books are on display.

And so I wrote to you - immediately I saw your symbol displayed in the windows of Sydney's travel agencies. I could not do it earlier. Imagine my chagrin when three months passed, and I did not receive even an acknowledgement of my personal letters, and my massive ^{air} mailing of printed matters in French and English. All 4 letters couldn't have got lost. What has happened is the usual thing: every General Manager has employees who sort out the incoming mail and let you see only the important ones. The unimportant ones go immediately to other men, and letters of obvious cranks go straight into the garbage bin. The trouble is that not every man can see the advantage of a new idea which at first looks strange and even absurd.

Now, you have been kind to reply to my second letter. And it may well be that you will have a number of counter-arguments why my idea, admirable as it may seem, cannot be promoted by the Canadian Corporation for the Expo 67. One argument I heard already, namely that 50% of the visitors will come from the United States, 40% from Canada, and of the rest 10% surely 5% will understand French or English. Is it really necessary to put up pictorial signs for the remaining 5%? The answer to this is that the pictorial signs are displayed not so much as to guide the visitors, but to tell them of a new idea in international communication which is one of the sights, and one of the new wonders of the Expo. Indeed, the fact that 95% will recognise the pictorial symbols instantly because they can read the words in French and English underneath, will contribute to the success of this new wonder. And every visitor will take home your folders and will show their friends home the wonder of a new international writing which can be read in all languages.

Now suppose you are very much taken with my proposal, but you have to submit it to the Board of Directors, And they may decide that it cannot be done for one reason or another: it's too late now, it's too novel an idea, etc. etc. You would then write me a letter saying "So sorry, Mr. Bliss, etc. etc." What then? Well, before I deal with this, I hope that you have got the impression that I am an idealist who wants to give something to mankind. You may also feel that I am not out for money. I am a retired man, and have enough money, even to indulge in writing such letters and trying to persuade people of the goodness of a new idea. In my younger years I was director of the patent department of a large firm and I have conducted many legal litigations in many courts in matters of patents, trademarks, copyrights, etc. etc.

When I saw your symbol for the Exposition I realised immediately that it falls within my copyrights which go back to 1942. When three months passed and I had to come to the conclusion that my letters have, and will not be answered, I wrote a letter to Mr. Julien Hebert on the 17th October, asking him to tell me where he got his symbols for man, supposed to be an "ancient" one. I enclose

4. Copy of my letter to Mr. Julien Hebert of October 17. Mr. Hebert gave me the same treatment, he did not answer my letter.

So, dear Mr. Kniewasser, please tell Mr. Hebert that he is responsible for inducing your Corporation for printing millions of such folders which may infringe my copyright. Has Mr. Hebert made a search in existing symbols copyrights? Or can he prove that his symbol has been published before 1942 or 1949 the first

date being my beginning of work on symbols though unregistered (which makes no difference in court, provided I can prove it with my notebooks), the second date 1949 being the year when I registered my copyright in all countries of the world with the exception of the few pirate countries like China. If Mr. Hebert can produce a prior publication showing the exact lines he drew (not the picture of naked human beings raising arms in a similar outline) well, I shall then know that my copyright has no effect in this particular case, and shall apologise for having bothered you with this. So, please tell Mr. Hebert to produce his prior publications.

Kindly excuse my mentioning all this, and adding to your worries and troubles. I had hopes that my proposal of July 66 will be gladly received. I am only a human being with all my faults and failings. Besides, I don't want a single penny for myself. All I want ^{is} that this idea should be made known to mankind. You know that American organisations in international travel and tourism, hotel and motel associations, railways, buslines, shipping and airlines are feeling that the language barrier is the greatest hindrance to enjoyable travel. The publicity created for this idea by the Montreal World Exposition would be the right thing to make it known ^{to} all that such a system of pictorial symbols exists. Thus you can make your Exposition remembered long after 1967. Somehow I feel that your Board of Directors would turn me down, in much the same way as your mail sorter has turned me down already. Hence this lengthy letter.

Now, you being a general manager and well versed in industrial and similar situations which create some legal difficulty, you surely know that great corporations who have millions at their disposal, shun the courts, and even shun private arbitration courts, and shun the employment ^{of} lawyers, because all this costs much money which is hopelessly lost. The responsible men come together and weigh the points of the case. In my case, I am well versed in legal matters. I have conducted many court cases. Only a few years ago I tried to persuade an Australian industry which infringed a patent of mine to talk it over and to come to a friendly understanding. When they balked, I lodged my papers with the High Court, whereupon they settled immediately. If Mr. Hebert can produce his prior publication, I shall be happy to tender you my best wishes and my apology. If he cannot do this, I shall be happy to submit to you a plan for making my work known through the Exposition - should your Board of Directors be reluctant to do something about it.

The next move is now with Mr. Hebert. Meanwhile you may talk my proposal of directional public signs in the Exposition and in the City of Montreal over with your co-workers. If it can be done, you will make me a happy man indeed. I live only for this idea, and I want to see it come to life and for the benefit of all mankind.

I wish to thank you for your kind letter of October 28, Somehow I feel that you will recognise my idealistic endeavours and will respond accordingly. I am, thanking you for your response.

Yours sincerely,
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

Now I bothered that Mr. Hebert again.

Dear Mr. Hebert, M O S T U R G E N T 5 Dec 66

Surely an oversight has failed to bring an answer to my letter dated October 17 to which I attached 2 international postal reply coupons. Kindly give it now your attention.

The situation stated simply is this: I hold copyrights from 1942 to 1949 valid in all countries of the world with the exception of such pirate countries as China. If you can prove to me that your symbols shown in your design "Man and His World" are published before these dates, the matter is settled comfortably.

But if you can't, then you and the Expo Corporation are in trouble. Millions of folders carrying the design have been distributed all over the world. The implications are obvious.

As said before, prove to me that your design goes back to an "ancient" symbol before 1942-1949 I shall not bother you and the Expo Corporation anymore. So, please give this matter your kind attention and be thanked in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,
C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

Again my letter was ignored, in spite of the attached postal coupons.

Meanwhile, however, the General Manager wrote a nice and detailed letter.

Dear Mr. Bliss, December 9, 1966

Thank you for your letter of November 9th as well as the documents accompanying it.

Your proposal regarding the use of pictorial signs as the means to overcome international language barriers has long been a part of Expo 67's programme. In fact, quite some time ago, the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition

commissioned Paul Arthur and Associates Limited, graphic designers of Toronto, Ontario, to create a sign language especially for its use and that of its many visitors. I enclose herewith Expo 67 Information Bulletin, Volume No. 5, October 1966 which outlines the 24 symbols adopted, as well as a press release on the same subject.

Needless to say, your project, although certainly a most interesting one, cannot be entertained or endorsed by the Corporation in that it would conflict with the one presently in operation or at least represent a duplication of effort.

As to the second part of your letter, whereby you claim to have a copyright dating from 1942 on the Expo symbol itself, our Legal Branch is of the opinion that, since the element used as the basis of our symbol has been in the public domain for many centuries, it is accordingly not subjected to copyright. For your information I am enclosing copies of pages 9 and 10 of "The Book of Signs" by Rudolf Koch, published in 1930 by the First Edition Club of London. Moreover, the symbol incorporating the element is protected by statute, 12 Elizabeth II, Chap.32, Article 18a, paragraph 5, which reads:

"For the purpose of section 51 and 52 of the Trade Marks Act, each of the marks of the Corporation and the official symbol of the exhibition shall be deemed to be registered trade marks of the Corporation, and a reference in those sections to the Trade Marks Act or the provisions of that Act shall be construed as including a reference to this section."

Trusting that this reply is to your entire satisfaction, I wish to thank you for your suggestions and the interest which you have shown in regard to the Universal Exhibition of 1967.

Yours truly,

CANADIAN CORPORATION FOR THE 1967 WORLD EXHIBITION

Andrew G. Kniewasser

General Manager

I had to agree with him that the symbol adopted is not covered by my copyright. But there is a curious co-incidence in these old symbols which Mr. Koch assembled. On page 9 the symbol appears to mean Man . On page 10 of Koch's book, the duplication symbol means two men in friendship. But the same symbol standing upside down means The man dies. This is illustrated herebelow.


Man


Two Men in Friendship


Man Dies

Now as the double man symbol is repeated 8 times in a circle the symbols on top of the circle mean indeed Men in Friendship. But as the circle continues to the bottom the symbols are now upside down and mean just the opposite either both men have died or their friendship has died. But this curious meaning escaped notice. But another curious incident occurred. The hippies of America chose a symbol for Peace, and incredibly they chose the symbol for man dies (within a circle) to mean Peace, apparently the Peace of the Graveyard. But again those ignoramuses didn't know the original meaning of the symbols which now hundreds of thousands of girls and boys are wearing, proclaiming unwittingly

 old symbol for man dies  Hippie symbol for Peace (of the graveyard?)

Having received at last the original 24 symbols designed by Mr. Hebert, I recognised immediately their "sickness" as there are no words underneath in say English and French (which most visitors would understand) to tell them what the symbols mean. I was therefore not surprised when Time magazine of May 12 1967 reported the opening of the exhibition and reported too an unhappy incident occurring thousands of times when visitors could not understand the "esoteric" symbols for men's and women's toilets. They could find them only after many "desperate enquiries" as Time reported. Unfortunately I have not at the moment the Time report at hand, as I must have it in another file. If I find it in the meantime and the mimeographing of this issue is still not been done, I shall quote the Time report in full.

I was enraged and enthusiastic at the same time when seeing the 24 official symbols adopted by Expo. Enraged, because the old fallacy was repeated: NO WORDS UNDERNEATH THE SYMBOLS, BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE ERRONEOUS BELIEF OF DESIGNERS THAT SYMBOLS MUST BE SO WELL DESIGNED THAT THEIR MEANING IS INSTANTLY UNDERSTOOD.

Well, it isn't. And in the following paragraphs I shall discuss symbol by symbol and point out the deficiencies of them. I was glad to read later that indeed, most of the symbols have been misinterpreted and with reason. Alas, I read two years later in a special issue of the American magazine PRINT devoted solely to symbols that Mr. Hebert has not changed his mind. He still believes that symbols need no explanatory words in the native language, but must be self-explanatory and instantly too. However, he has realised his shortcomings and therefore he states that it may take a generation until people will know it, as reprinted in S.S. 364 which carries the title:

THE HOPELESS INCAPABILITY AND INAPTITUDE OF THE "SYMBOL SEEKERS" (FOR MONEY) AS ILLUSTRATED IN A SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE PRINT NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1969.

And now to an Analysis of the Expo symbols as illustrated in the front sheet made by a new process by which the pictures and texts are electronically read by a photoelectric cell and transferred to the stencil by means of fine needles which then allow the stencil to be printed in the usual way in any duplicator. I made the attached sheet to study and test the new electronic process, and titled this sheet (and this whole issue) as shown on the front sheet and herebelow.

Please consult the first sheet of this issue showing the symbols
EXPOSING EXPO'S SYMBOL SICKNESS

The symbols and the legend below is an exact reproduction of the official leaflet. In the following paragraphs one symbol after the other will be scrutinised. There is however no need to speak here again about the main "sickness" namely that Mr. Hebert and the organisers thought it wise NOT to put words in English and French underneath the symbols, which fallacy lead to utter misunderstanding and even catastrophe with regard to the symbols leading to the toilets as quoted before from Time Magazine May 12.

Expo Symbol 1 and 2 ENTRANCE and EXIT The arrow stands in relation to the 3 lengths of the square in bold lines. These 3 lines indicate in my symbols a room open at one side, and the Expo symbols mean the same. Hence, in symbol 1 the arrow moves into the enclosure to mean ENTRANCE, and in symbol 2 out of the enclosure to mean EXIT. If therefore the arrow and the 3 bold lines would stand alone, the symbols may well be understood. But unfortunately the designer thought it wise to close the square with a thin line. Thus the predominance of the 3 bold lines disappear and they seem to be some sort of perspective shading only. The symbols were therefore not understood by the tourists, even when shown without a thin right line.

Expo Symbol 3 NO FIRE The oblique line is well understood to mean NO, as in NO PARKING, but what the line crosses out was not so easy to grasp. It looks like a caliper which draughtsmen use. It doesn't look like a burning match which it should represent. Had there be an explanatory word underneath as NO FIRE tourists would have realised (after thinking about that strange caliper) that it may indicate a match. But it would then only mean DON'T LIGHT FIRES. It would not mean what it was designed to mean, namely DON'T SMOKE. The symbol was not understood.

Expo Symbol 4 DON'T TOUCH I have read all there was published about these Expo symbols and the reaction of the tourists to them. One writer said that some tourist thought that the sign is an invitation to touch with your finger the top of whatever there was there. See also the false interpretation of symbol 6.

Expo Symbol 5 ELECTRICITY This is the old lightning outline to mean usually DON'T TOUCH, LIVE WIRE, HIGH TENSION etc. Unfortunately, the symbol was placed at outlets for shaving with an electric razor, or at switches to mean indeed ELECTRICITY. The symbolisation of a plug or a switch with a dangerous lightning picture is utterly idiotic, and indeed there was misunderstanding and criticism.

Expo Symbol 6 NO ADMISSION If this uplifted hand would be accompanied by the uniformed head of a policeman, it would be readily understood. But without the policeman it was misunderstood. It was shown on doors to mean DON'T ENTER. Instead, tourists thought that they have to place their own hand onto the outline of the printed hand and to push the door open - just the contrary as intended.

Expo Symbol 7 and 8 NO STANDING and NO SITTING. Here again a word underneath the symbol would tell the story. But without a word tourists didn't know what to make of it. The meaning of NO STANDING may make some sense in a bus or electric car telling the passengers that there is no standing room. But the second symbol makes no sense at all. If the organisers do not want that people should sit somewhere, well, they would simply not provide chairs or benches there, and people would not be able to sit at all. But to provide seating and still say DON'T SIT is idiotic.

Expo Symbol 9 ANTI-LITTER This symbol represents the height of idiocy. The designer wanted to tell the tourists to throw litter into the garbage bin provided. But the oblique line across the open garbage bin tells the opposite DON'T USE THIS.

Expo Symbol 10 TELEPHONE This symbol is used in many countries, though in many countries there is still the old type of telephone (even in telephone boxes) the hearing piece hanging apart from the mouth piece. This symbol is not designed by the Expo designers. It is universally recognised, but becoming obsolete through the use of the Ericophone (dial, hearing and speaking piece in one stand-up device) also in push button phone, etc.

Expo Symbol 11 HOSPITAL This is another idiocy of the designer. What the tourists want in the grounds of Expo is a first aid station. But the outline shows a house. Still, the symbol of the Red Cross is universally understood, and copied here.

Expo Symbol 12 FIRST AID This is another idiocy. The foregoing symbol showing the outline of a house and a large red cross was meant to mean HOSPITAL. But if indeed there was a hospital in the exposition grounds, surely dangerously ill people could not go there by themselves. What they would seek was a FIRST AID STATION, and from there they would be transported by an ambulance to the hospital. But as enquiries proved, the outstretched hand, the small red cross, and the barely seen bandaged finger was simply not understood to mean FIRST AID.

Expo Symbol 13 LOST-FOUND Another idiocy of the designer which proves his utter lack of imagination. It shows a suitcase and a question mark. This was quite appropriate because tourists simply did not know what to do with the suitcase.

Expo Symbol 14 HANDICAPPED Another not understood symbol. I have shown this symbol to a number of people, and none understood it. The outline of a chair is understandable to me, because I have the same symbol for chair. But the circle, without spikes does not indicate a wheel, and together a wheel chair. But even if the word HANDICAPPED would have been printed underneath this unintelligible symbol the meaning would still not be clear. If the symbol would be shown next to an entrance without a turnstile, it would not still mean HANDICAPPED PEOPLE IN WHEEL CHAIRS PLEASE PASS THROUGH HERE. And furthermore, what about the HANDICAPPED on crutches????

Expo Symbol 15 and 16 ^{WOMEN'S WC and MEN'S WC} These are the symbols which were the cause of many desperate enquiries as to "Where, for Goodness sake are the toilets??" The symbols were displayed on the grassy grounds, and on footpaths and streets leading to the toilets, but tourists didn't know what they mean. Furthermore the difference between a male and a female figure was negligible. The female figure (symbol 15) could also well represent a man in an overcoat, not a rare sight in Canada even in spring and summer. The symbol 16 should mean a man, but the thin white lines separating the arms from the body are indeed so thin as to become invisible at a distance or for short-sighted people. The thick oblong outline was utterly unnecessary.

Expo Symbol 17 RESTAURANT Another "esoteric" (according to Time magazine). The crossed forks or a crossed fork and spoon mean RESTAURANT for the last 100 years since the railway dining cars used this symbol in time tables. But in this Expo symbol the fork and the knife (not a spoon) are so thin as to disappear almost against that black disk, of which tourists simply did not understand that it means a plate. Another sample of the idiocy of that designer who wanted to be different.

Expo Symbol 18 COFFEE SHOP This symbol has been used many years before Expo.

Expo Symbol 19 BUS STATION This symbol can only be understood when shown on a shelter with benches to mean indeed a BUS STATION. But it does not mean a BUS STOP, and it is utterly useless in streets where the buses are not running, but where the tourist wants to go to a bus station.

Expo Symbol 20 MARINA Another useless symbol. A marina is visible for anyone by the landing platforms and the water alongside with buoys, etc. No symbol is needed.

Expo Symbol 21 FERRY DOCK Another symbol which has the same deficiency as the symbol 19 to mean bus station, as explained above.

Expo Symbol 22 LOCKER This symbol is one of the few which are understood. But again if displayed next to the boxes of lockers it is not needed because the boxes themselves indicate what they are for. Still, no criticism, and again an old symbol.

Expo Symbol 23 CLOAKROOM Another idiocy which tourists didn't grasp as the clothes hanger could indicate perhaps a locker for clothes, but not a cloakroom where you can deposit your clothes against a ticket and payment.

Expo Symbol 24 DELIVERY ENTRANCE Another idiocy born out of the first 2 symbols for ENTRANCE AND EXIT. Again we see here the heavy 3 lines marking a room, and an opening or a thin line at right. At best it could mean a garage for trucks, but not an entrance, as the arrow is missing.

As told before, the management of Expo had to bow to the many complaints and had to hasten to put up words in English and French to tell the people what where is and where what is. In total: a symbol disaster. But this disaster did not deter designers to stick to their fallacious contention that it is possible to design symbols which - without a word underneath - would be instantly understood. On this theory, the British Ministry of Transport put up one and a half millions of road signs with ^{out} an explanatory word underneath. After years of use, many motorists still did not know the meanings of certain symbols - and this in a field where understanding the meaning of the symbol may mean the difference between Life or Death.

PS. Just found the Time report of May 12, 67 about the opening

of Expo 67. It says: "The sophisticated silhouette pictograms

intended to point the path to the lavatories were so esoteric that many people could not tell what they were, managed to find washrooms only after many desperate enquiries."

The End.

To the leading men and women who are organising the forthcoming Montreal Exposition 1967

Sydney, 15th July, 1966

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This letter is duplicated for distribution to all officers of the Montreal Exposition.

You all are working hard to make the Montreal Exposition the outstanding event of the century. And you would surely welcome something which could be a "MONTREAL FIRST" to the world to be remembered by the generations to come. Well here is your FIRST, and it was started by Canadians.

According to the New York Times of March 29, 1964, the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations suggested that the U.N.O. should promote symbols which could be read in all languages. Consequently the General Assembly Circular of March 19, 1964, was sent out to all nations under the heading "Facilitating Communication."

The United Nations Association of Australia answered, after the Australian National University had recommended to the Australian Government the work of an Australian scholar, C. K. Bliss (that's me) who has invented a complete pictorial symbol writing, a real

"One Writing for One World"

This idea has already caught on with the leading men in Travel and Tourism. American and European Airlines, Railways, Hotels and Business Organisations are determined to introduce pictorial symbols which travellers of all nations can read in all their languages. For them I have made the attached Sample Tourist Folder, showing some symbols from my book, "Semantography-Blissymbolics."

I, the inventor, propose to you that your Montreal Exposition should be the FIRST to give this MONTREAL FIRST to all humanity. In Canada, in the United States, in Australia, in all lands of all the continents people hate each other, mainly because they speak and think in different languages. Riots, bloodshed, and even wars are the sorry results. What divides all the people really?

Basically geometrical lines which make up the phonetic alphabetical letters A B C etc. which form words, different in different languages, and even in the same language spoken differently in different provinces or different parts of many a city.

Let us give them geometrical lines which form visible pictures of the world we live in. Let us give Humanity a new Medium of Universal Communication which will make us all realize that we are One Great Community on this Planet artificially divided by sounds.

Here is a MONTREAL FIRST which will form a bridge across all lands and languages, all races, and all religions.

Great scholars have read my book, have praised it highly and have agreed that my symbols are simple and practical for communication, commerce, industry and even science. Please study the attached folder, look into my book, and realize what it could mean for the Montreal Exposition. I propose that you give prominent space in your exposition, that my books should be on view, together with large wall displays and lectures. Millions of tourist folders should be printed which stress the Montreal Expo, and should be given to the millions of tourists who will throng the travel bureaus enquiring for tours to Montreal. In addition, the City of Montreal may display these public signs for all tourists to read in all their languages.

Do I want money? Not a penny. Though I have mortgaged my home, and am up to my ears in debt for the printing of the thousands of my books, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets, I have vowed that it should be given free to all humanity. My idea is that those firms whom you commission to print or paint these copyrighted symbols should pay a royalty which should be wholly used for the propagation of this idea.

Here is a MONTREAL FIRST which will be used and remembered by all the generations to come.

I am, awaiting your spirited response and promising to co-operate with you with all my heart and mind,

Yours sincerely,

C. K. Bliss

C. K. Bliss.
2 Vicar Street,
C O O G E E,
N.S.W. Australia.

Sydney, 15.juillet 1966.

A toutes les personnes prominentes qui organisent la prochaine Exposition 1967 de Montréal.

Cette lettre a été multipliée afin d'être distribuée à toutes les personnes responsables pour l'Exposition de Montréal.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Vous travaillez tous dur pour faire de l'Exposition de Montréal le grand événement de ce siècle. Sans doute vous ferez bon accueil à une chose qui pourrait être une "primeur Montréal" dont le monde se souviendra pour des générations futures. Eh bien! Voici votre PRIMEUR et les Canadiens en sont les initiateurs.

D'après le New York Times du 28 mars 1964, la Délégation Canadienne auprès des Nations Unies, avait proposé à l'organisation des Nations Unies d'encourager des symboles qui pourraient être lus dans toutes les langues. Voilà pourquoi un memorandum de l'Assemblée Générale du 19 mars 1964 fut envoyé à toutes les nations portant l'entête "Facilitating Communication". L'Association Australienne des Nations Unies répondit, après que l'Université Nationale de l'Australie eut recommandé au Gouvernement Australien le travail d'un érudit australien, C.K. Bliss (c'est moi) qui avait inventé une écriture complète de symboles, une véritable

"ECRITURE UNIQUE POUR UN MONDE UNIQUE"

Cette idée est déjà populaire parmi "les gros bonnets" dans le monde des voyages et du tourisme. Les compagnies aériennes, les chemins de fer, les hôtels et les organisations commerciales, en Amérique comme en Europe, se sont décidés à introduire les symboles que les voyageurs de toutes les nations, peuvent lire dans toutes leurs langues. Pour eux j'ai fait le présent pliant échantillon pour touristes, montrant quelques symboles pris de mon livre: "Symboles de Sémantographie Bliss". Moi-même qui suis l'inventeur vous propose de faire en sorte que votre Exposition de Montréal soit la PREMIERE à présenter cette PRIMEUR DE MONTREAL à l'humanité entière. Au Canada, aux Etats Unis, en Australie, dans tous les pays de tous les continents, les gens se haïssent, surtout parce qu'ils parlent en pensant en différentes langues. Des bagarres, des massacres et même des guerres en sont les tristes résultats. Qu'est-ce qui divise réellement les peuples?

Ce sont au fond des lignes géométriques qui constituent les lettres de l'alphabet A,B,C etc. qui forment les mots différents dans les langues différentes, voire dans la même langue parlée différemment dans les différentes provinces ou dans les quartiers différents de mainte ville.

Donnons-leur des lignes géométriques qui forment des images visibles du monde dans lequel nous vivons. Donnons à l'humanité un nouveau moyen de communication universelle qui nous fera réaliser tous que nous ne formons qu'une grande communauté sur cette planète divisée artificiellement par des sons.

Voici une PRIMEUR MONTREAL qui jettera un pont pour relier tous les pays et toutes les langues, toutes les races et toutes les religions.

De grands savants ont lu mon livre, l'ont hautement loué et sont d'accord que mes symboles sont simples et pratiques comme moyens de communication, pour le commerce, l'industrie et même la science. Veuillez étudier le pliant ci-joint, regardez dans mon livre et réalisez ce qu'il pourrait signifier pour l'Exposition de Montréal. Je propose que vous réserviez une espace prominente dans votre exposition, que mes livres soient étalés, qu'il y ait de vastes étalages et des textes. Des millions de pliants pour touristes devront être imprimés pour ceux qui se presseront dans les agences de voyage pour visiter Montréal. En outre la Ville de Montréal pourrait étaler ces symboles publics pour tous les touristes destinés à être lus dans toutes leurs langues.

Si je veux de l'argent? Non, pas un centime. Il est vrai pourtant que ma maison est grevée d'hypothèque, que je suis criblé de dettes pour imprimer des milliers de mes livres, brochures, pamphlets et feuilles volantes, mais j'ai fait le vœu de donner tout pour rien à l'humanité tout entière. C'est mon idée à moi que les maisons qui seraient chargées par vous d'imprimer ou de peindre ces symboles aux droits réservés paient une redevance qui serait entièrement mise à la disposition de la propagation de cette idée.

Voici une PRIMEUR MONTREAL qui sera usée par toutes les générations à venir et restera gravée dans leur mémoire.

J'attends votre réponse courageuse et je promets de coopérer avec vous de tout coeur

Tout à vous,
C.K. Bliss
C. K. Bliss
2 Vicar Street,
COOGEE. Sydney,
N.S.W. Australia.