

Written June 1971

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS, CHINESE IDEOGRAPHS,
ESPERANTO AND SAFETY SYMBOLS
FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA

Nearly one year ago an article appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald titled
RACIAL HOSTILITY ACCIDENT HAZARD ON BUILDING JOBS.

This article told an amazing story: over 50% of the work force on building and construction sites in the State of New South Wales, Australia are immigrants of thirty different countries who can't speak English. Hence, safety warnings in English are of no use and attempts are being made to evolve some sort of symbols which could be read in any language. Naturally, I was most interested in these endeavours and I sent the article to my friend Dr. Douglas Nixon Everingham who is a member of the Federal Parliament of Australia. He wrote a letter to the New South Wales Minister for Labour and Industry about this matter. Unfortunately, his typist sent the letter off to the Minister of Justice who didn't know what it is all about. Dr. Everingham then asked me to clear up the matter and I wrote therefore, the following letter to the Minister for Labour and Industry.

The Hon. E.A. Willis, B.A.,
Minister for Labour and Industry
Parliament House, Sydney

Sydney 26 Nov. 70
Written at the request of the Right Hon. Member
for Capricornia, House of Representatives
Dr. D.N. Everingham M.P. Canberra. Copy to
Minister J.C. Maddison and Dr. Everingham.

Your Excellency,

Please read first the attached copy of my letter to Minister Maddison in which I explain the history of this case. Only after you have read the copy, then please continue reading this letter.

It deals with an article which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald Aug. 19, 70 and is titled: "Racial hostility accident hazard on building job." The first paragraph reads:

"The problem of racial antagonism on building sites was almost impossible to solve because of the language barrier, a union official said last night."

"The official, Mr. F. O'Sullivan, president of the N.S.W. branch of the Building Workers Industrial Union, was speaking at the State Industrial Safety Convention at Macquarie University."

Then there is this paragraph in about the middle of the article:

"Mr. O'Sullivan said the Building Industry Safety Council was investigating the possibility of establishing some form of universal safety symbols.

These would be easily understood and thus reduce the accident risk."

I attach herewith the article from the Sydney Morning Herald.

Now we all know that symbols can be read like $1 + 2 = 3$ in all languages. The new international airport at Mascot contains some such symbols, and no doubt Mr. O'Sullivan has such symbols in mind, which, because of their truly international significance would be acceptable by all building workers, which means something because the article explains that up to 50% of the building industry labour force are migrants which hail from 30 different countries.

Now, if you care to look at my letterhead you will see the word Blissymbolics and its international term Senantography which in Greek means "a meaningful writing" so meaningful that anything written in my Blissymbolics can be read in all languages without translation.

To make sure that I am not a crank I wish to say that I have lectured at it at both Sydney Universities, and that the Ministry for External Affairs has asked the National University of Canberra for an opinion of my work, and when this expertise turned out favourable, has recommended my work to the United Nations. Alas, this august body has other worries, and nothing came of it, because...well we know why. Unesco has also dealt with my work, but the officials have pointed out that a majority decision of all nations is necessary, etc. etc. In short, in a hundred years I shall be feted as a true Australian pioneer who died frustrated and not recognised in his own country, as most Australian pioneers before. I am now well over 73, but thank heaven I have a good sense of humour

humour and can stand it.

During the last 24 years I have pestered, bothered, and badgered many an official and many a ministry and have been a true pain in the neck to everybody. But I stated throughout the last 24 years that I don't want a post, nor do I want a penny. All I want is to be allowed to demonstrate my symbols before the full committee be it for road safety signs, for industrial safety signs (my first approach is dated 1951 for this kind of application which is the content of this letter) and for other applications. The result: I NEVER GOT THAT CHANCE. Again I went to say that - even if my symbols should be accepted - I give them free for all mankind and especially for the people of my new home country Australia.

This is why I have given up approaching ministers and governments. But Dr. Everingham who is my fervent supporter has not given up hope. He has even asked pertinent questions in Parliament. He got lots of letters from the top officials which letters were well meant, but didn't mean a thing. I wish I could find a bookmaker who would lay me some odds with regard to my approach to you, which approach I made through Dr. Everingham, because I know he loves this kind of parliamentary activity for humanitarian causes (saving lives in industry, or on the roads, etc.) and who is much younger than I, and therefore hopeful and energetic. I would say that now my present approach to the top officials of your ministry (of which you are the chairman) will also be doomed to fail, and I am afraid no bookmaker will be so careless with his money to take my bet because he too will realise that I won't get anywhere. But why?

The answer has been given by Isaak Newton three hundred years ago in his famous law of inertia which says: A body will remain at rest or in straight uniform motion.. etc. In short, bureaucracy - BUT - I have a university degree in chemical engineering, have been a director of a large firm and a factory man most of my adult life and I can cite hundreds of instances of bureaucracy in big business. It is not only inertia. There are psychological hindrances which work in every person. And here is what has happened and what will happen with my approach to you. Dr. Everingham may be unhappy about these my frank words, but being a man at the end of my life I hope you too will understand my frankness and excuse it.

You have a secretary, as every top man has. And this secretary has a fine job and is most anxious to keep it, because he has a wife and kids to feed. What is the job of a secretary to a minister? He has to look through the incoming mail and has to sort the letters into essential and not essential mail, the proposals made in such letters into useful proposal and not useful proposals, the writers of such letters into obvious cranks or wise and rational men. I have found out a number of times that I was judged a crank, and my symbols a crackpot idea and therefore, that was usually the end of it. Because the secretary is most anxious not to bother his chief with cranks.

Incredible as it may seem (and here my crankiness will become obvious) my symbols are not only useful for road warning signs or industrial safety signs, those symbols which express abstract meanings like essential or non-essential, useful or not useful, crank, or wise man contain a symbolic logic of their own. They refer to the mind of the person who judge something this way or that. The mind in my symbol is pictured by the outline of the brain under the upper skull, thus . And the logic rule for such of my symbols is that not two minds think alike. If your secretary considers me a crank, others will think I am not a crank. But even if he and you are in favour of my symbols, some of the top officials in your department will be in disfavour and will obstruct it or simply sabotage it. The Minister of Justice the Hon. Maddison gets a copy of this letter and in my last lines to him I refer to the application of my symbols to law. The lawbooks of all countries and all languages are crammed with the word reasonable or unreasonable. My logical symbols then explain why one judge may consider his judgement reasonable whereas a higher judge may reject it as unreasonable, and my symbolic logic shows a way out of this dilemma.

But now I am in a dilemma myself. Dr. Everingham has asked me to write to you. What will happen? You will appoint one of your officers to listen to me - and this will be the end of it. He will report to you or to his top officials and this again will be the end of it, and more and more building workers will suffer through accidents. So I state here what I have stated in previous letters to ministers. I shall not talk to an underling. I shall not even talk to you alone, because if you are enthusiastic about my symbols, if you press on your top officials to do something about them, they will resent you and me. So, I shall be ready to demonstrate in a lecture my work to a panel of all persons concerned, and I hope you will arrange such a lecture. I am

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

I received the following answer from the Minister:

Dear Mr. Bliss,

9 Dec 1970

I refer to your letter of the 26th November, and desire to advise that I have arranged for your suggestions to be considered by the Chief Inspector of Factories. It is possible that the Chief Inspector will communicate with you concerning details of the symbols for possible use in the Departmental Code of Safety in the building industry.

Yours sincerely,

(E.A. Willis.)

Minister for Labour and Industry.

One month later the Chief Inspector wrote to me the following considerate letter:

Dear Mr. Bliss,

The Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr. E. A. Willis, has referred your letter of 26th November, together with its several attachments, for my consideration and practical assessment of the value of your proposals for the work of the Department.

Your obvious frustration in trying to promote an idea which you sincerely believe to be of value in humanity and the safety and welfare of workers in Industry has my sympathy. You, of course, are not the first, nor will you be the last person to suffer this frustration. If, as you suggest, the value of your work is recognized 100 years hence, you may indeed be fortunate. Many do not even receive this tribute.

Assuming that you and I are to discuss this problem to some good effect, it would be advisable for you to understand the limitations of my position in the matter from the outset. Firstly, I have no knowledge whatsoever of the symbolism you employ in your signs and am therefore prepared to consider their value with a completely open mind.

Secondly, in my present state of complete lack of knowledge of the virtues and value of your system, I am not prepared to recommend to the Minister that a conference of top line officials be arranged to consider something about which I know nothing. I am not adverse to recommending such a course of action to the Minister but only wish to be reasonably sure there are worthwhile grounds for doing so.

Whether the Minister would be prepared to arrange a lecture to a panel of persons concerned, as proposed in your letter, would be up to him. He may well wish to see something of your system himself before recommending such a step. The possible results of such a lecture are beyond my powers of forecasting but I see no particular reason to expect that you would get acceptance of your system by this means any more than you have by the other avenues which you have tried. However, you should always be hopeful and certainly we should oppose the holding of such a lecture purely on the grounds of pessimism concerning its possible result.

This Department administers the Factories, Shops and Industries Act and the Scaffolding and Lifts Act, two of this State's major items of legislation concerned with the welfare and safety of persons in industry; however, the Acts do not give either myself or the Minister's unlimited powers and we cannot arbitrarily impose upon industry a system of signs, particularly if they are of a nature which could be considered as radical or unconventional by normal standards of judgement. The Department does, however, have considerable influence in promoting safety ideas in industry and through its Safety Education Service its publicity media and the work of its Inspection Staff, can help to gain the acceptance of good ideas by individuals and industrial organisations.

You may be aware that the Department does already promote the use of standardised warning and dangers signs in accordance with the Australian Standard Codes and Internationally accepted Standards for such signs.

I do not know whether you have submitted your system for the consideration of the Standards Association of Australia. They obviously should be an interested body since they publish several Standards dealing with industrial safety. If you have submitted your proposals to them I would be extremely interested in their comments.

So, Mr. Bliss, as you forecast in the final paragraph of your letter, the Minister has appointed one of his officers to listen to you. I am prepared to listen if you are prepared to talk!

If you wish you may visit me at my office at 132 George Street, Sydney. In either case I shall be accompanied by at least two senior officers of my own

own organisation whose opinions I respect but whose judgement does not necessarily influence my own. Both the other officers will record their opinions quite independently and all three independent opinions will be forwarded for the Minister's consideration.

If you feel that what I have said in this letter warrants any further action on your part, would you please contact me by phone on 270-2176 or write to me direct at the address on this letterhead. You are, of course, at complete liberty to address any further communications to the Minister if you so desire or prefer.

Yours sincerely,

S. V. Foulkes,
Chief Inspector.

I then prepared for my demonstration and wrote the Memorandum titled

BLISSYMBOLS (SEMANTOGRAPHY)

FOR SAFETY IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

IN THE STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A written preparation of the talk to be given by the inventor of Semantography, Mr. C.K.Bliss, B.Sc. on the 26th January 1971 to the Chief Inspector Mr. S.V. Foulkes and two of his senior officers on the initiative of the Minister for labour and Industry Mr. E. A. Willis of the Government of New South Wales, Australia

On the following 5 pages (numbered 1 to 5) is the Memorandum mentioned above which thus become incorporated into this larger issue, the pages 1 to 5 are now pages 5 to 9 of this issue, which then continues with page 10.

Report on the lecture.

The lecture itself went fairly well, that is as far as my usual eloquence is concerned. The three officers (including Mr. Faulkes) sat and listened and rarely interjected to ask questions. As a whole I realized later that the lecture was a failure, as I was afraid it will be. The officers showed no enthusiasm, nor lively interest. They were rather sceptical, and understandably so, as my pictorial symbols (though basically pictorial) are not as pictorial as the officers were accustomed with regard to their placards showing real pictures of real accidents.

I suggested that a few of my signs be displayed on large portable boards to be set up at danger points, merely to attract attention that somewhere there is danger to be avoided.

Well, the reader may now read my Memorandum and then the following letters which go to great length to prove again that my ideas are way out of official ideas and hence not acceptable to the officials.

Please read now the next 5 pages, the Memorandum.

Sydney 22nd January 1971

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A written preparation of the talk to be given by the inventor of Semantography, Mr. C.K.Bliss, B.Sc. on the 26th January 1971 to the Chief Inspector Mr. S.V. Faulkes and two of his senior officers on the initiative of the Minister for Labour and Industry Mr. E. A. Willis of the Government of New South Wales, Australia

The Begin of the Story: On the 19th August 1970 the Sydney Morning Herald brought an article titled "Racial hostility accident hazard on building job." I quote the relevant passages from this article:

"The problem of racial antagonism on building sites was almost impossible to solve because of the language barrier, a union official said last night.

The official Mr. F.O'Sullivan, president of the N.S.W. branch of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, was speaking at the State Industrial Safety Convention at Macquarie University.

"The problem calls for the greatest degree of tolerance and understanding", he said.

"But because of the language problem between workers and authority it is almost insurmountable."

"The language barrier is one of the strongest potential accident hazards that could be imagined."

Mr. O'Sullivan said that migrants from at least 30 countries made up 50% of the building industry's labour force.

Many of these were illiterate in their own language and most could not speak English, he said.

Mr. O'Sullivan said that the Building Industry Safety Council was investigating the possibility of establishing some form of universal safety symbols.

These would be easily understood and thus would reduce the accident risk."

The rest of the article deals with the demand for extra pay through loss of work by accidents, and the demand of better safety measures.

The Action that followed this Article:

The Right Honourable Federal Member for Capricornia, a friend and supporter of Bliss' Semantography took action. He is Dr. Douglas Nixon Everingham M.P. of Rockhampton, Queensland. He wrote a letter to the Minister for Labour and Industry in New South Wales, drawing attention to the use of Blissymbols for safety in the building industry of Australia. I followed this up with my own letter to the Minister. The Minister then directed the Chief Inspector Mr. S.V. Faulkes to get in touch with me. I received then his letter dated 12th January 1971, and I must say with joy and satisfaction that never during the last 20 years have I received a letter from a government official who expressed so wundervoll understanding of my plight as did Mr. Faulkes. In my letter to the Minister I told of my many approaches, especially to authorities responsible for the safety on the roads, and never could I get a real hearing, though I never asked for a remuneration, nor a post, nor a penny. All I asked for was to be allowed to show my safety symbols to a panel of the responsible officers. I said that I am giving ^{my symbols} free for use to the Government of New South Wales and Australia. But I never got a chance.

Now at last, Mr. Faulkes has invited me to demonstrate my symbols to him and to two of his senior officers, and I am preparing this written draft of my forthcoming talk. I shall give copies to Mr. Faulkes, to his senior officers and many more to distribute to the Minister and other officials if Mr. Faulkes and his senior officers should think that a follow-up of my talk should be contemplated. For this I offer my full support and co-operation, and of course without any monetary demand.

It will be necessary now to speak of myself, and to relate some of my experiences in the prevention of accident in industry, and my experiences with national and international authorities, who are responsible for the prevention of accidents. This story I shall tell on the following page and then come to my symbols.

My background in industrial safety: I hold a degree in industrial chemistry from the University of Technology of Vienna, Austria. For 15 years I worked in the laboratory, in the factory and then as an industrial executive. All other chemists and assistants who worked in the same laboratory suffered at times grievous bodily harm through shocking accidents, because we worked with most dangerous and explosive chemicals - all, except myself. I came out unharmed, and all the workers under my care were never harmed, because I always took proper preventive action.

My approaches to national and international safety authorities: I published my work in 3 volumes first in 1949, and after that I began to approach safety authorities. My first approach was directed for accident prevention on the motor roads of Australia and the world. In Sydney, there was (and perhaps still is) the Committee for Road Safety Signs, then under the chairmanship of Professor Elkin. I wrote a begging letter to him, asking for an interview, but he ignored my letter. I could only talk to a minor official, could explain to him some of my symbols, and could leave with him my large chapter on safety signs for the roads. But it was all in vain.

I suggested for instance the abandonment of the long and illegible sign PEDESTRIAN CROSSING. I recommended instead my symbol of two walking legs. Seven years later Prof. Elkin installed the walking legs. I wrote a burning letter to the Minister of Transport Mr. Martin, saying how many old people who have died from 1949 to 1956 could have been saved had my walking legs symbol been adopted. Unfortunately Minister Martin was off to study transport abroad, and died soon after his return. His secretary advised me to see Mr. Peach who is the man who is responsible to mount those walking legs symbols. I tried a number of times to ring him up or to see him, but could never find him, and he did not respond to my written plea to ring me up. Finally I received a letter from the ministerial secretary that I have forfeited my chance, because I have failed to contact Mr. Peach. Bitterly I asked myself "Who should run after whom?" I after Mr. Peach, or Mr. Peach after me who has better symbols for better safety."

I have had similar bitter experiences with other safety authorities here and abroad and even with the authorities in the United Nations who too deal in safety symbols for the motorroads. I never got a chance, or even an answer. The trouble of course is psychology. Every human being is unhappy when he is confronted with another guy who has a better idea. Moreover, the job security of that official too is involved. This does not apply to government officials only. I have found bureaucracy in big business, and I need only to point to the motorcar industry and the reluctance of the directors to install safety measures in motorcars. However, I feel now that I have found in Mr. Faulkes the right man, and I believe that my suggestions will be easily adoptable, simply because I have great experience in the introduction of my symbols in such a way that their acceptance can be assured.

My approach to the Director of the Chamber of Manufacturers of New South Wales.

When I came to Australia in 1946 I decided not to go into industry as a manager. I wanted to write my books. But I had to earn the money for the upkeep of myself and my wife. As it happened, my house was opposite General Motors in Pagewood and I soon got a job as a spotwelder in their Frigidaire section. There I had an opportunity to meet many migrants of many countries and to witness the difficulty of these new migrants who could not speak English and therefore could not read the warnings. Here is but one instance how even those who learn a little English could be misled by misinterpretation. I found that some migrants think that there are two kinds of materials in fire hazards, those materials which are FLAMMABLE and those which are INFLAMMABLE, and thus could be handled with safety.

I soon approached the Director of the Chamber of Manufacturers in Sydney Mr. Hall, and presented him with issue No. 42 titled "Industrial Emergency Symbols in Semantography." The reason for the introduction of these symbols are the same as outlined by Mr. O'Sullivan, the language barrier. I attach to this memorandum Enclosure No. 1, my issue No. 42 of the Semantography Series. Needless to say that I got nowhere, and Mr. Hall is not a government official, but a man of the private industry which suffers from the time and work loss through accidents. A Warning: Please don't apply the symbols shown for factories to building sites. The symbols shown deal mostly with electricity and fire, hazards rarely encountered on building sites. Kindly understand all these preliminary stories, which however need to be known, because their knowledge will help.

My lecture to the N.S.W. Branch of the Institution of Industrial Safety Officers

Every time I go through Sydney streets and see potential accident hazards everywhere, hazards which can take life, my mind is ravaged with bitterness about the futile approaches of mine which had no effect whatever. I was then happily surprised when the officers of the Institution of Industrial Safety Officers invited me to speak on the prevention of accidents through my symbols. In this lecture I spoke of all possible hazards in Australia including bush fires which can be prevented. I made an issue No. 247 of my Semantography Series containing my talk on 21 long pages like these ones, and distributed copies to the industrial safety officers (about 100) but nothing came of my talk, and these are private industry men.

Enough of my lament. I shall now ^{show} my symbols as they are printed in Semantography Series No. 280, titled "Universal pictorial Blissymbols for the International Traveller." I attach to this memorandum this tourist folder as Enclosure 2. This tourist folder was designed by myself when the "tourist explosion" occurred, which showed every person interested in the tourist trade that the language barrier is the greatest hindrance to enjoyable travel, and that only pictorial symbols could bridge this barrier.

The result of this was the appearance of scholarly men and professors who asked for millions of dollars from their universities, foundations and governments for what? For "research into symbols," they say. We have such scholars here in Australia too. They ask for millions of dollars for research into the causes of road accidents. When they are told that such extensive researches have been done in other countries and invariably the result was that the deadly causes are speed, drink, and youth, they have answers ready. They say that those researches have been carried out in America, in Great Britain and elsewhere, but "Australia is different." New researches are needed for the peculiar Australian conditions. And usually the governments fall for this ruse and give away millions of dollars.

Prince Philip, the husband of our gracious Queen takes a great interest in the progress of industry. And he said this: when industrial and government officials don't want to go ahead with some sensible measures, they find a perfect excuse by saying "let's do research first." This may take 2 years, and the results are never conclusive. So, let's not do "research" in this case. I have done all the research needed already.

In order to show the catastrophic results of those scholarly researchers here is only one telling example. I maintain that the meaning of a symbol should always be printed underneath the symbol in the native language. If that native language is not English (the present international language of mankind) if it is say French, then the meaning in English and French should be printed underneath the symbol in small print. Adults and children will read the meaning in the language they know, realize what the symbol wants to convey and would recognize the symbol whenever they see it again. A few airports have indeed adopted this sensible idea used by IATA (International Air Transport Association). For instance an airport in Sweden shows above the symbol the meaning in English and underneath in Swedish, and similarly in other countries.

Now take a look at the few symbols shown in the new International Airport at Mascot. Some are adopted from Japanese symbols of a man or a woman, and when shown on a door can be easily recognize to mean a TOILET for men or women. But other symbols shown in Mascot, are utterly illegible because the meaning is not shown below. This idea of symbols without words underneath has been adopted in Japan at the Olympiad in 1964, at Montreal at Expo 67, and in Osaka at Expo 70 all with catastrophic results. When a sign appears in a fair ground showing a man with an arrow, few people know that it leads to toilets for men. Time May 12 1967, reported that visitors had to make desperate enquiries for toilets. The same was reported by the Asahi Evening News of Tokyo when the Osaka Expo opened in 1970. The management was forced to put up signs in a number of languages indicating TO THE TOILETS.

But the worst result of those scholars who want money for symbol "research" happened in Great Britain. Those "researchers" maintain that it should be possible to evolve symbols which can be understood at first glance. I usually harrass these researchers to show me how they would symbolize abstract meanings as for instance FLIGHT CANCELLED, or FLIGHT INSURANCE OBTAINABLE HERE, etc.etc. They hate me for this because they have no symbols for abstract meanings. Hence my demand that the meaning must be shown underneath symbols in the native language is anathema for them, because research is then simply not needed.

But they got the ear of the government officials in the Ministry of Transport in Great Britain. Consequently over 1,500,000 road warning signs were erected in Great Britain without a word underneath. After a few years an extensive enquiry among motorists showed that many of them still did not know the meanings of a number of symbols. The public was outraged, and the British humour magazine PUNCH brought a telling funny article, and the editors gave me permission to make a reprint of some parts of this article. I attach this reprint as Enclosure No. 3 (Semantography Series No. 306). I attach also my S.S. issue No. 303 as Enclosure No. 4 a memorandum directed TO ALL OFFICERS of Governments and private Institutions who want to introduce symbols for their special needs.

BLISSYMBOLS ARE A KIND OF "PICTORIAL ALPHABET" FOR ADULTS AND EVEN CHILDREN

In the tourist folder submitted I show how 30 internationally used symbols and 28 of my own simple pictorial symbols can be used to express thousands of meanings in international travel, even an international pictorial menu card. Similarly a few of my symbols can be combined in different ways to express all safety warnings on building sites. This I shall show on the next page.

Now, some conservative minds might think that this kind of picture alphabet to express meanings in combinations (in the same way as words are combinations of the phonetic alphabet signs) is a bit complex, and they would still prefer the use of pictures showing accidents, as for instance a man's hand getting into a circular saw, or a man's head being hit by a spanner coming from above and harming him, whereas a man with a safety helmet just laughs, etc. etc. Surely such pictures are good and fulfil their purpose, but only for a very short time. They are usually displayed on posters with a lot of text around it (text which means nothing to those who cannot read it). Worse however, is the fact that these usually small posters are not seen any more by the workers concerned. Consequently I recommend my simple outline symbols to be displayed on sheets of paper about one square yard in size which simply cannot be overlooked.

Furthermore, my copyright conditions demand that the meaning in one or two or more languages be displayed underneath. In the case of building sites in N.S.W. that may necessitate the printing of the words in perhaps 10 or more different languages. But these could be in small print, except the first word in English. Once the worker from Italy, or Germany, or Hungary, has been shown the word in his language, his national self-esteem would be satisfied, and moreover he would never look at the word again, because now he has learned the meaning of the symbol. Furthermore, the Ministry could print a small folder of say 4 pages showing the basic symbol elements and their combinations in a vertical row, and next to it in 10 vertical columns the words in the native languages of the workers involved. Such a little folder would be an interesting item for everyone, including children in N.S.W., and I am sure that magazines on safety would bring articles on these folders in many countries of the world. Thus, the valiant action of the Ministry of N.S.W. would show to the people of Australia and the World that we are doing something constructive in saving lives in the building industry. As for my personal aggrandisement, I am now in my 74th year and I have had my full share of public acclaim as an author, an artist and even a musician. I know that I shall soon die, but I would be happy to know that the Minister for Labour and Industry has taken up my work and other Ministers in other countries will follow.

I shall show now a few of my basic symbol elements and how they combine. However, I shall ask Mr. Faulkes to give me all possible warnings needed in the building industry so that I can show my symbol combination for them. In this page I shall only show those safety meanings which come into my mind right now.

A FEW SYMBOL ELEMENTS AND SOME COMBINATIONS

The Safety symbol  already internationally used in most countries and known

to almost everyone to mean SAFETY FIRST, or DANGER BEWARE ! I want to mention in passing that in Semantography, this equal-sided triangle has a wonderful meaning, which - though it does not concern us here - I would like to mention. This equal-sided triangle has been displayed for thousands of years on Temples, Churches and Synagogues to indicate Creation and Creator. The Greeks of old said that the geometrical configurations prove that there is a divine harmony and order in the Universe. Consequently, in my Semantography, this sign indicates a Creature of God or Nature, and this may be the onlooker who should be saved from any danger. But there is no need to tell this to building workers.

The Exclamation symbol  already internationally used. I use it in combination to mean ATTENTION, as this will be shown in the following combination:

Combination:  meaning ATTENTION ! DANGER ! BEWARE ! SAFETY FIRST ! etc.

The Flame symbol  meaning FLAME, FIRE, INFLAMMABLE, FIRE HAZARD etc.

Combination:  meaning DANGER ! FIRE HAZARD, etc. This combination can be displayed on building sites where drums with gasoline, etc. are stored.

The Lightning symbol:  already internationally used for HIGH VOLTAGE, etc.

Combination:  meaning DANGER ! HIGH VOLTAGE ! to be displayed on building sites where electrical cables are laying around which can be cut by hydraulic hammers, or otherwise exposed.

The Eye symbol:  EYE, SIGHT, and combined to mean  LOOK OUT !

Combination:  LOOK OUT ! DANGER ! And with the arrow symbol (next page) to indicate where to look.

The Arrow symbol:  indicating a direction is internationally known

and used everywhere. In combination with the eye symbol element (foregoing page) we get a lot of safety warning signs, as for instance

Combination:   LOOK UP ! or    DANGER ! LOOK UP ! and also

  LOOK DOWN ! and   LOOK TO THE RIGHT ! and with the outline of

a corner at right it means    LOOK RIGHT, RIGHT CORNER !

Outline symbol:  meaning DOOR and in combination    LOOK UP LOW DOOR !

Outline symbol:  meaning STAIRS LEADING DOWN and    LOOK DOWN ! STEPS !

Outline symbols:  meaning DEEP SHAFT, HOLE, etc. and  SHALLOW SHAFT

and in combination:    LOOK DOWN ! DEEP SHAFT !

Symbol element:  meaning GROUND, EARTH, BASE, etc. combined with

Symbol element:  meaning THING, ANY THING (no matter what shape it is)

Combination:  THING ON GROUND and    LOOK DOWN THING ON GROUND

to make workers aware that they can stumble about anything low enough to be easily overlooked, but dangerous.

Now for a few symbols for passers-by near building sites. They must be warned of trucks, bulldozers, etc. coming out or going into the site, also they must be warned of cranes working overhead, and also against cables and boards straddling the pavement leading into the building site. For this, the foregoing combination THING ON GROUND, LOOK DOWN ! can be used. The other meanings are shown herebelow

Outline symbol:  MOTORCAR and  TRUCK, BUS, BULLDOZER, etc.

Combination:     LOOK OUT ! DANGER ! TRUCKS PASSING IN AND OUT !

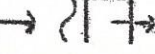
Combination:     LOOK UP ! THINGS COMING DOWN ! this symbol combination

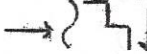
can be used for indicating that a crane is working overhead, or that demolition is in progress, and things are coming down, bricks, and large boulders, etc.

Combination of Line  and Arrow  to mean STOP  or STOP 

This combination can be displayed to the left or right of an entrance which must not be entered, or only on one side if the passer-by comes from the left or right. In the following lines the outline of the DOOR is used again.

Combination:  ENTRANCE, AND  EXIT and  STOP ! NO ENTRY !

Combination with fire (flame) and stairs (see above):  TO FIREEXIT !

 TO FIRE STAIRS DOWN !

These few symbol elements and their combinations should prove that my symbols can indeed express any meaning needed in building safety. The great advantage is that once the worker has grasped the meaning of a symbol as for instance the EYE symbol, he will recognize it in any symbol combination which tells him to use his eye to LOOK !

I am now submitting these sheets and am prepared to submit more sheets for any other meaning which the officials want to be seen in symbol combinations.

Lastly, a warning! Every time an official body introduces a measure to help overcome a need in public, there are savage letters to the editors in the papers criticising the measure, pointing out this or that disadvantage, etc. etc. Now, I am an engineer, and I know that every tool and every measure has advantages and disadvantages, and these must be weighted to find some way which is best under the circumstances. In the field of safety the aim is to save lives, to save fathers and husbands and sons, and against this overriding advantage all criticism must cease. I sincerely hope that my demonstration will help in better safety in the building industry of N.S.W. Australia and the world. I thank you!

Added: Enclosure 5, a reprint from the Australian Lithographer C.K. Bliss

In due course I receive the following letter from Mr. Foulkes

Dear Mr. Bliss,

29 Mar 1971

I do not want you to think that I have not kept my promise that I and the other two senior officers of the Department would forward our comments on your system for the Minister's consideration. I can assure that all three reports were submitted.

I think you will appreciate that the recent election and change of Minister for Labour and Industry have had a delaying effect in dealing with our reports. In my report I made certain recommendations to the Minister but of necessity we must, of course, await his decision in the matter.

In considering your symbol system I was intrigued by two particular aspects; firstly that you had developed a system of symbols in what could be considered as the second stage of hieroglyphic writing. I think I am correct in stating that in practically all hieroglyphic writing the initial stage is to clearly depict everyday objects in unmistakable form. The second stage of development is to stylise these forms to a simpler outline which is easier to inscribe. The process of Transition from stage 1 to stage 2 development is, of course, accepted and understood by the local population since it takes place over a period of time.

Since your system of symbols is virtually in hieroglyphic language in the second stage of development, obviously the populace has to be educated to understand a stylised form of hieroglyphics without having the advantage of being previously familiar with its original form. I do not see this as an insurmountable difficulty since many of your stylised symbols are already well known and accepted, while the others can be learned.

The second factor which does rather worry me is that western man has taken approximately 4,000 years to develop his present form of writing. I am under the impression that most modern forms of western writing developed from an hieroglyphic or cuneiform system. Why then should westernised man have an inclination to revert to even a modern version of hieroglyphics which suffers from exactly the same disadvantages as the old original system?

You have mentioned the written Chinese language as a form of symbolic writing which is universal throughout China. Is it not a fact that Chinese as a written language is notoriously difficult to learn and is not comprehended outside its own ethnic area?

You, as an educated man, are of course well aware of the Esperanto language. Surely if western man was ready for a universal language Esperanto would offer far more scope than a system of symbols? The failure of Esperanto after nearly 90 years of existence to gain any foothold in the education system of westernised or eastern man is only too well known. It would seem to me that a form of universal symbol writing or hieroglyphics would appear to have even less chance of acceptance.

Do not think that my approach to your system is entirely negative. I appreciate the ideal for which you are aiming and also the tremendous amount of thought which you have put into the system. However, one cannot escape the inevitable fact that it will be the assessment of your system and its acceptance or rejection by your fellowman which must be the ultimate gauge of its success.

I feel that in this letter to you and in my report to the Minister I have only raised those logical thoughts which must occur to any thinking man in considering the introduction of a universal sign language. I sincerely hope that you do not find my thoughts and queries too critical or discouraging.

Yours sincerely,

(S.V. Foulkes)
Chief Inspector.

This letter burnt me up because I have heard the arguments about Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Chinese characters, and Esperanto so often as counter arguments concerning my work. I sat down to write a detailed letter to Mr. Faulkes as a last effort to convince him as his arguments do not apply to my work. Unfortunately, my letter extended over 12 pages and I decided to let a short letter go as an introduction. Here it is

Mr. S.V. Faulkes,
Chief Inspector,
Department of Labour and Industry,
132 George Street, Sydney.

Sydney 12 April 1971
Your letter of March 29
Safety Symbols for Industry

Dear Mr. Faulkes,

This short letter is an introduction to the long litany of 12 pages underneath. Please don't read them during your hectic office hours. Read them at home, read them again because they try to show how our teachers and professors have saddled us with false arguments about Egyptian Hieroglyphics, about the Difficulties of Chinese Writing, and about the Uselessness of Esperanto. All false.

I could not find one word of your readiness in your letter, that you may be willing to have a try with my symbols. Instead it appears to me that you have used intelligent reasons couched in kind words in order to sincerely soften the blow to me when my work will be rejected by you, your senior officers and by the minister. In this long letter, I propose a test, just a test.

Meanwhile, the maiming and the crippling and the killing on construction sites goes on and the Building Industry Safety Council has cried out for Safety SYMBOLS, not pictures on blackboards and not pictures in your Safety Journal which foreign workers can't read. I propose 12 symbols of which 5 are already international, and the other 7 are pictorial which even children can grasp within minutes. If the minister and you and your senior officers refuse me even a test, then you all must bear the responsibility for the unnecessary deaths. I am Sincerely yours,
C.K.Bliss

Now the long letter

S.V. Faulkes Esq.,
Chief Inspector,
Department of Labour & Industry,
Sydney.

Sydney 7 April, 71
Your letter SVF:CA of March 29
Re: Safety Symbols for Industry

Dear Mr. Faulkes,

I wish to thank you for your kind, detailed and thoughtful letter and wish to state again that never in my 22 years of approaches to national and international government officials have I found a man like you. I treasure your letters. Allow me then at least to answer your letter in the same spirit, and let me put my paragraphs under the special headings for easier recognition of the subject discussed.

My nineographed 5 page Memorandum on Safety Signs in the Building Industry of N.S.W. As more officials may read this letter, it is imperative for them to read first my memorandum as I have dealt there with factors important in this case, and as I have shown also the symbols which I propose for safety in the building industry. I need therefore not to repeat myself here.

What do I propose for N.S.W.? Not more than 12 symbols of which 5 are already international, namely the triangle meaning SAFETY FIRST, the arrow meaning a direction, the lightning outline meaning HIGH VOLTAGE, the outline of a flame to mean INFLAMMABLE, and the old exclamation mark! which we all use daily.

The new symbols which I propose are pictorial outlines of an EYE, a DOOR, a STAIRCASE, a solid THING, the GROUND, and a MOTORCAR (or truck, bulldozer, etc.)

Does this mean that I propose a whole international language?

Surely not, the 5 international symbols are used all over the world. The 7 pictorial symbols are recognised quickly. What is new is my method of combination by which these symbol elements are combined by putting them together to mean different concepts.

The test of the matter. I propose the following test. I would show these few symbols to children in the first grade of the primary school and I will prove that they will pick up the idea within a few minutes and that they will even recognise combinations they have never seen before. Surely what small children can grasp at a glance within a few minutes, should not be difficult for adults even if they are illiterates in their own language be it Italian, or Spanish, or any other language spoken in N.S.W. on building sites.

Have I approached you? Not at all. The story begins with the lecture of Mr. F.O'Sullivan president of the N.S.W. branch of the Building Workers Industrial Union who said that "the Building Industry Safety Council investigating the possibility of establishing some form of universal safety symbols. These would be easily understood and thus would reduce the accident risk.

The next step was taken by the Member of the Federal Parliament Dr. D.N. Everingham, who wrote to the Minister. When he sent me a copy of his letter, I cried out "Not again! 22 years of frustrating approaches to government institutions are enough for a man of 74 years of age." But as this work deals with the saving of men, sons, husbands, and fathers, I wrote to the Minister, but was quite rude. I wrote "I shall not talk to an underling. I shall not even talk to you alone. I shall only talk to a panel of the officials concerned." etc.

It was then you who in a compassionate letter expressed your understanding and it was you who arranged that panel of you and 2 senior officers. Please accept my sincere thanks.

Immediate result so far. You have submitted your consideration and those of your two senior officers to the Minister, and I suppose that your considerations follow somehow the arguments you have expressed in your letter to me. Now at last we come

to the gist of your contentions. Here they are.

Is the drawback to hieroglyphic writing not a retrograde step?

Is Chinese writing not a very difficult writing to acquire?

Is the failure of Esperanto not a warning against your ideas?

Common fallacies common with even almost all professors except those who have made a thorough study of the history of writing. I confess unashamedly that your objections, and thoughts have been mine too when I was still a factory manager in Vienna. Indeed, your objections are the same I have had to listen-to expressed by many a professor. One of them, a professor of geography (who should know better) even expressed them in writing when the Sydney Morning Herald brought an account on my work on the leader page on the 1st January 52 (see Semantography Series No.61, Letters to the Editor). Let me therefore refute these arguments one by one in the hope that you will not be offended by being told what any professor doesn't know anyway.

Egyptian hieroglyphics are NOT a pictorial symbol writing.

Incredible as it may seem, almost nobody (except the Egyptologes) know that the Egyptian hieroglyphics are a fully fledged alphabetical writing in which the pictures express just one letter of the alphabet. Take for instance the hieroglyphics expressing the name of Cleopatra as shown below

Here I pasted in the picture of the hieroglyphics showing the name of Cleopatra from page 274 of my new book "The Invention and Discovery". I then continued

Please count the pictures beginning with 1. quadrant, 2. Lion etc. and realise that the quadrant means the letter C, the lion (Labo in old Egyptian) means the letter L, as it appear as the second letter in the name of CleopAtra. And the ultimate proof: the 6th and the 9th letter in the name of CleopAtra is expressed by the same picture of an eagle which therefore has to appear twice. Indeed, if you ask an egytologist he will tell you that even the oldest Egyptian writings and carvings never show a symbol writing (as I have in mind). Since abt 5000 B.C. when the oldest writings are dated, there is not the faintest trace of a symbol writing. Conclusion: hieroglyphics have nothing to do with my idea. To silence critics, I wish to point out that sometimes the Egyptian priests used a picture to make the meaning clear. If for instance a word (written alphabetically in hieroglyphics) could mean dancing or drinking (a synonym) then sometimes the picture of a dancing girl, or a drinking man is added. Sometimes they make a pun, as for instance when they speak about the leg of a chair and draw a real leg in addition to the pictures expressing the Egyptian word for c-h-a-i-r-l-e-g. But otherwise hieroglyphics are an alphabetical writing and nothing more. Consequently my idea has nothing to do with hieroglyphics. But, you may ask, did the Egyptians of old always write their letters and memoranda in the cumbersome way of drawing pictures? Not at all. The hieroglyphics (meaning in Greek a sacred writing) were purely ceremonial carvings reserved for temples and their Gods, among the Gods the reigning monarch. For everyday correspondences they used a quite different writing called demotic. This was a kind of shorthand writing in which the original pictures were not more discernible.

You surely have read about the importance of the Rosetta Stone. A French officer with Napoleon's army of invasion in Egypt discovered a piece of black basalt used to make up part of a wall in a house. He saw 3 different writings, the first hieroglyphics, and underneath a writing unknown to him (it was demotics) and the third writing in Greek letters. He guessed correctly that, may be, all 3 writings expressed the same story. And so it was. Champollion found that the word of the king Ramses was written in Greek letters and apparently in pictures which represented phonetic letters. He told an amazing world that hieroglyphics are an alphabetical writing, but old falsehoods die hard.

The Chinese writing seems bewildering to the foreigner by their complexity. But have you seen a Chinese writing say an invoice? He uses again a kind of shorthand writing, and he writes it so quickly - much quicker indeed as we write laboriously alphabetical letters to form a word, because one of his signs means a whole word. His writing is a kind of demotic writing. And this brings me to your second argument:

Is Chinese writing not very difficult to learn? It is not. On the contrary. It is easier to acquire than alphabetical writing. I have with me an 8mm movie which I took in China and which I titled STREET LIBRARIES. And I can show it to you if you should not believe what I say. What does a child of say 3 years in Australia, or for that in any other Western country, do when you give it a penny. It will go straight to the grocer and buy a bubblegum or a candy. But not in China, In Shanghai I saw old Chinese men tending to such toddlers with his street library. He will sit in the sun, and around him sit those 3 and 4 years children and for penny he let them read those fairy tales and stories of the Chinese Red Riding Hood, and Robin Hood, etc. Have they been taught to read Chinese characters? Not at all. They look at the accompanying pictures

pictures and guess the meanings of the symbols because these symbols are still partially pictorial. For instance, every word which in combination refers to water is expressed by these 3 drops of water ; . Next time you pass by a Chinese Restaurant in Sydney, and the English name is say EASTERN OCEAN RESTAURANT, watch the 3 drops of water in the second character meaning OCEAN. And the word EASTERN shows a tree and the sun behind, just as you can see the sun rising through the trees in the East. Now try to explain to a Spaniard the English word E-A-S-T. You may fumble with your arms, point to the East and to the West, point to the sun - and he will not understand what you mean. But it is child's play for a Chinese child. It sees the sun rising behind the tree.

I am writing this letter for you dear Mr. Foulkes, only for you. I consider you a learned man, willing to learn, willing to give up false ideas. If you have no degree, listen to the great philosopher Immanuel Kant who said 200 years ago that no institutions have produced more idiots than the universities. This statement is even more true today than 200 years ago. Today there are millions available from the governments and foundations for university researchers who get a lot of money for writing "papers" which nobody reads and nobody needs. So I am writing for you to tell you of a gigantic fallacy which is besetting the idiots in the universities.

Are Western university men just idiots when it comes to the alphabet or are they victims of their own determination not to learn.

Please turn to the first page of this letter and read the headlines and the text in the left margin. This new letterhead of mine is born out of desperation. Most people want to believe that my work is just only a "picture writing" (how childish, they think). Indeed it seems to be childish to think that our modern society, so dependent on the written and printed word, can use for the expression of all the subtle shades of meaning a "picture writing" even for the complexities of industry and science. Yet, most professors whom I approached, whom I submitted my large book just don't want to give me just 5 minutes of time to explain whatever they want to ^{have} explain. But they don't want to be told something they don't know. They are supposed to know all the answers.

But in my lectures to students in Sydney University it was a different story. They were ready to learn. They were ready to listen to a man with a new idea. And I challenged them to challenge me with any scientific concept they have in mind, and see how I "picture" it in my writing. Then I asked them to take out the newspaper of today and to read any sentence spoken by a minister of the government, or a minister of a church, or a union leader, or a professor and I showed them with my symbols that we can easily recognise any ambiguity, any vagueness, and even any honest lie (believed by the speaker to be true) by using the symbolic logic inherent in my symbols. (This of course has nothing to do with safety symbols on the building sites, but it is important to know.)

And this is what I said in the left margin of my letterhead under aspect 2:

2. A simple symbolic logic which even children can learn to use in their daily problems.

Now you will agree that the most important school item to be learned is "how to reason logically". Yet, no such subject is taught in any primary school and high school of the world. At the university only those few students who subscribe to the futile study of philosophy must also subscribe to the futile study of university logic which is either a scholastic fossil, or a mathematical monstrosity. This is the reason why university authorities all over the world do not submit their hapless students to learn this sort of lunatic logic (as I call it). Yet, the future judges, lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc. etc. need desperately a workable practical method how to think logically.

Well, I have developed such a logic which is so simple that even children can learn it already - yes, already in the kindergarten. But when I tell professors about it, when I ask them to give me five minutes of their time, they usually refuse - simply because they realise that I seem sane enough to know what I am talking about, and that I may have indeed something they don't know.

And so it happened in the 1950s that the then Director General of Education Mr. Wyndham put his Wyndham commission together to enquire into secondary school education in N.S.W. The Minister of Education Mr. Heffron said in a public statement that "anyone who has a new idea which should be incorporated into secondary school education should come forth and explain it to the commission". Well, I applied to be heard. But Mr. Wyndham turned me down. I then referred to the words of Mr. Heffron, and so he had to give in and let me appear. Now there is something which I must say now, namely;

I said not a word of my writing being a kind of universal medium for understanding across all languages. I said not a word, though the nearness of Asia, where more than a thousand different languages are spoken, should be enough to make educators realise the importance of aspect 1 of my work (see letterhead).

Instead I concentrated solely on the symbolic logic of my symbols and showed that they would enable highschool boys and girls to learn how to reason logically. After the end of my speech I invited questions and counter arguments. Nobody of the commission of over 10 people said a word. It was very embarrassing. And so one "man of God" who was a member, stood up and said a prayer thanking God for having given us the alphabet. I was stunned. He hasn't understood a word I said. What do the professorial "Apostles of the Alphabet" say to the Japanese and Chinese? From time to time professors from America and other countries visit Japan or China as a kind of foreign "aid" program, and they tell the Japanese to give up their backward writing in symbols and revert to the Western method of the alphabet. The Japanese listen to them politely and thank them with lots of deep bows for their honourable opinion - and marvel in their mind how ignorant these professors really are. The fact is that Japan has an alphabetical writing since the 9th century, no they have even two, the Katakana and the Hiragana, and they use it indeed. But they have taken over 1500 characters from the Chinese many centuries ago, and they use them too.

See, said the professors, 1500 Chinese characters against the simplicity of our 26 letters of the alphabet.

How ignorant they are, or how stubborn they are not to see what they should see and know. And here I come to the crux of the matter. But before, let me tell you that Western professors who teach at Japanese and Chinese universities think differently. They know for instance that the Chinese Governments, believing that Western supremacy is due to their alphabetical writing, have tried century after century to introduce alphabetical writing - and have failed all the time. Why? Was it inertia, the unwillingness to learn something new. Not at all.

Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain explained it all in his books "Things Chinese" and "Things Japanese". He was a professor at Tokyo University. And he said that whenever phonetic writing has to compete with ideographic writing in the same area, ideographic writing wins. But why? He tries to explain this to Westerners saying: which is the simpler way of writing "583 or five hundred eighty three?" Ah well, Westerners answer, this is mathematics, not speech. So let me explain it what Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain said when he prophesied

"Ideographic writing will achieve the final victory over phonetic writing." This seems unbelievable, but I will prove it in a moment. But first a question:

What has all this to do with safety signs on building sites in N.S.W.?

Very much. Though I propose only 12 symbols for the multitude (over 50%) of the non-English speaking workers on building sites in this State.

Suppose, the unbelievable happens and you submit to the Minister a proposal to have a try on my symbols. What have you to lose? Nothing. It would be the same as the City of Sydney initiating a trial run of the Martins Plaza, resolved to have the idea withdrawn should it prove unworkable. The result was an astounding success, and workers are at present tearing up the pavement to make a really memorable plaza for the people of Sydney. And already the council talks of doing the same with the area around the Town Hall and St. Andrew's Cathedral.

But this idea of public plazas is not an Australian idea. It is an established practice in Europe, and quite a number of American towns have established "Malls" where all traffic is banned, and only the public is allowed to walk around.

Now imagine for a moment that you, with the approval of the Minister, instal my proposed safety signs in a number of construction sites in the inner city, and that all the foreign workers get a folder (not larger than this sheet of paper) in which my 12 symbols are shown and in vertical columns their meaning is explained in say 10 or 20 languages. In addition, large boards are displayed on the sites showing the symbols and underneath in large letters the word DANGER CRANE OPERATING OVERHEAD and the same meaning in the 10 or 20 languages in much smaller print underneath. What's going to happen with this test?

The first thing will be that every newspaper and every magazine in Australia will bring a copy of that folder with all the columns in different languages. Tens of thousands of school children will want a copy too. And every journal on SAFETY in all countries of the world, and even many newspapers and magazines will bring it under the heading: COURAGEOUS INITIATIVE OF THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES, Australia.

Should the Minister for Labour and Industry instal a few symbols in N.S.W. he would only do what is already happening in all countries around the world.

On the motor roads of the whole world safety signs in the native languages are taken down and replaced by symbols. BUT, and it is a great BUT, alas there is no conformity - though this is a matter of life and death for many millions of motorists. Would you believe the incredible situation that in different States of the United States (not so united) of America, different States have different safety symbols. Or take a look at the safety symbols in the different States of Australia, again the same terrible situation. Why is it so? Is it because of stupid bureaucrats? Not at all. It is because of a special irrationality of the

human mind not to admit that another guy in another State has a better idea for a better symbol. And because that official would look foolish to admit it, and because the Government is not going to uproot thousands of safety signs simply because Victoria or Texas has better signposts.

But there is another irrationality involved. Government officials have to be careful of their job. If they instal a new measure (which is already in use for decades in other countries, as for instance the breathalyzer, which I saw with the Canadian Police in 1940, (more than 30 years ago) they are aware that learned and lay idiots will write irascible letters to the editors pointing out the imaginary disadvantages of the scheme (as they did and still do with the introduction of the breathalyzer in N.S.W.), and this criticism may damage the image of the minister, and hence must be avoided at all cost.

The usual subterfuge in such a difficult situation is to call in experts, to instal a commission and a committee and to draw into this committee every possible expert who could have a say or so. For instance, the committee for better safety symbols must include a professor of physiology, preferably in eye physiology who will immediately demand lots of money for carrying out elaborate research into eye adaption and visibility at night etc, etc. In desperation you tell him that such tests have been already done in America, Britain and in other countries. "Ah, yes," he would counter, "but Australia's conditions are different" and he would not be idle to point out to sandstorms in the never never, to mirages and haze and mist, and he would even conduct tests with thousands of Australians and would try to establish that Queenslanders are more exposed to a glaring sun than Tasmanians, etc. etc.

What is this all about? Nothing but the personal avariciousness of that professor, to get a lot of money into his pocket for "research" and to get higher status and hence can command a higher salary, etc. etc.

But suppose the committee of experts agree that first "research^{is} needed." They are all busy men. It was a hell of a job to get them together for that initial conference, and they want to get away from it as quickly as possible, because the attendance money is ridiculous. They will agree that "research" is needed. They would ask the Government to give that professor say 100,000 dollars and they would then immediately adjourn for how long? AT LEAST FOR 2 YEARS because it would take as long for that professor to do the research he wants to do. Moreover, he has other fingers in financial research pies. Shall I quote eminent men to confirm this story? I can do this, but you know that what I am saying is the truth.

Result of this truth? The installation of better safety signs will be postponed INDEFINITELY - even when the research results are in. That professor will hand over to all members on the committee a thick volume of graphs and graphs and statistics which prove that 29.45% of the population are so and so, but 34.89% are not so and so, and also that 65.34% would act this way and 24.89 are such and such. The end result would be that the government and the officials and the committee would be as wise as before, except the professor and his academic cronies who had pocketed about 100,000 dollars out of the treasury, that is out of the pockets of the men and women of N.S.W. who will go on dying and being maimed and massacred on the highways of this State. And this is indeed what is happening in all countries of the world.

But suppose the committee has come to some conclusion as to what symbols it wants. The next step would be to call in other experts, the designers, the artists who are experts in designing pleasing and good visible symbols for safety. And here we come to another disturbing mental quirk of the human mind.

Designers are artists, and artists just abhor copies of other artists, of imitations, of reproductions of other symbols in other countries. They will prove (at least to themselves) that their symbols are better, much better, than those of that designer in Toronto or Tokyo. The result is a new BABEL of symbols. In my Memorandum I have referred to the grotesque happenings in the grounds of Expo 67 in Montreal, of Expo 70 in Osaka, and in other places where great throngs of an international population gathers, as for instance in the new international airport at Mascot. Their designers have all designed different symbols representing a man and a woman to mean TOILETS. The results were (as I referred to the dates of articles in the newspapers) that people just could not find the toilets, and that the organisers had to put up innumerable signs in alphabetical writing in a few languages (to be sure, but not in other languages) to tell people to find the toilets - but where? Aha, here they used a symbol which is already understood in all parts of the world - the arrow.

Now how does the symbol in the international airport at Mascot look which is to direct sick and invalid persons where to go to get preferential treatment for being serviced to go to the planes? Take a look at the symbol as I draw it here at left. What does it mean? You will have great difficulty to know what it means - unless you are being told what it means in words underneath. BUT here the artist is adamant.

No words underneath a symbol he commands. The symbol itself should be self-explanatory. In my Memorandum submitted to you, I have told that the British Ministry of Transport fell victim of these experts and put over one and a half millions of safety signs all over Great Britain WITHOUT A MERCIFUL EXPLANATORY WORD UNDERNEATH. The result was that after a number of years motorists questioned about the meaning of these pictorial symbols could not say what ^{some} really mean, and this in a field where understanding the symbols is a MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH, as it is on the building sites of N.S.W.

Now what does the symbol for INCAPACITATED TRAVELLERS which I drew at left really mean. The artist drew the outline of a chair, and the circle should mean a wheel, and the whole should mean a wheelchair. Now go out to Mascot and question people what that symbol really means, and find out the truth. But even if the picture of a wheelchair is unmistakably drawn to show all people a wheelchair, and only a wheelchair, NEW CONFUSION will arise. People on crutches, people at the moment sick, women in pregnancy would not dare to enter there because the sign unmistakably shows that only people on wheelchairs will be admitted. But does this sign really say this? Not at all. Indeed it could equally mean that behind the doors are stacks of wheelchairs to be taken out for passengers who need them.

Where do I come in in this gigantic muddle created by artists and experts?

I am the only man in the world who has constructed a simple and satisfying system of only about 100 symbols (of which the first 30 are already international) for every need to tell people who speak different languages what they want to know and where to go to get it. True enough, you will say, but my symbols must be learned - and LOOK AT THE FAILURE OF ESPERANTO you wrote. But realise that the first 10 symbols of my Semantography are these: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0, and realise that it takes years of learning the meaning of these symbols and how to operate them when you want to check the machinations of your grocer. Or take a look at that SELF-EXPLANATORY SYMBOL THE ARROW. Is it really so self-explanatory? It does not convey the meaning of an arrow even to an African bushman who still hunts with bow and arrow. The tail feathers are missing. This is not an arrow he would say. Now try to explain to him that it really does not picture an arrow but it only means a DIRECTION SIGN. He would not understand it. And this is happening with every toddler in every country. If the child has not an understanding father or mother, or if it simply does not ask then "What is this?" he will have to learn by experience, by seeing the arrow hundreds of times together with the words TO THE EXIT, TO THE TOILETS, etc. until it dawns upon him that every time he sees an arrow he has to follow the direction into which it points.

In other words: everything in this world of ours has to be learned, even the opening of a sliding door, or the opening of a glass door which maims people running into it in all countries of the world. Why? Because no symbol has yet been devised to warn of the danger of an invisible glass door. But I have such a symbol, the international triangle meaning danger, safety first.

In other words, dear Mr. Faulkes, I am the expert supreme. If you turn me down, there will be more and more public outcries about the unnecessary death of young men, sons, husbands and fathers who are unnecessarily killed and maimed on the building sites of N.S.W. Now suppose you and your senior officials and the minister concerned will do something to subdue and silence the public outcry: You all will initiate a committee to enquire into new safety symbols on N.S.W. construction sites. Then it will happen what I have already described in the forgoing pages. Prince Philip, husband of our gracious Queen, is quite outspoken (not as that humble prince-regent Albert, husband of Queen Victoria). Philip drenches reporters with hoses, he tells pop singers that they must have pebbles in their mouth and stomach pains when they contort their faces and their bodies when they purport to sing. And this is what Philip tells the government officials who instal committees (see my Memorandum). He tells them that if Government officials don't want to do anything new, they say "Let's do a little research first" and everything remains as before, the maiming and killing of innocent children, husbands and wives, parents and grandparents on the roads.

You can engage a Professor of the University of Sydney, or N.S.W. to make research. If you do so, please meet first Professor Krampen who is an expert on symbols (though that blasted blabberer has not designed a single symbol by himself). He is Professor at the University of Design at Ulm Germany. He got thousands of dollars from the international airtravel organisations for enquiries into symbols. Let me bring you the idiotic questionnaires and the idiotic scrawls which people questioned at airports think of this or that meaning. And let me bring you the heavy volume of the results of his research with lots and lots of graphs and statistics - and all to no avail, and all for money only. But to give you the proper perspective of this man and others like him, please realise that every such academic research result has to have a BIBLIOGRAPHY at the end which shows a list of many books which he has consulted. And realise that Krampen, and with him other such academic symbol researchers leave out my own books in their bibliography,

in order to avoid that the men who give them the bags of the taxpayers money may enquire: "what's that Semantography of that Mr. Bliss? What has he done in the field of symbols?" Yes, dear Mr. Faulkes, my lot is a hard lot. I must not only fight Government inertia, I must also fight the academics who want only one thing: MONEY, and nothing but MONEY.

In contrast, I have said time and again through 29 years: I don't want a penny, I don't want a post. I don't want personal fame. I only want to save lives. Now to the idiocy of the simplicity of the 26 symbols versus the Chinese characters and my 100 symbol elements.

You have my large book Semantography. Please open it at page 101 and read the chapter titled "The 100 Symbols versus the 26 Letters." Or don't read it if you have no time. Here is the gist of it. I tell you there of G.B. Shaw's Professor Higgins of "Pygmalion" and "My Fair Lady" fame. He is a linguist and phoneticist and he can recognise the differences between the local speech in different streets in East End or for that in the West End of London. Now, one day an eskimo comes to him and wants to take lessons in the correct pronunciation of the English language. He doesn't know a word of English. Now Prof. Higgins tells him how to pronounce the letter a and b and c and d and e down to the last letter z of the alphabet. His task would be easier if it would not be English, but Italian or Spanish. Because these 2 languages are descendants of the Roman pronunciations of the 26 letters and in Latin an a is always an a, pronounced as in astronout. An i is always an i like in idiot. And so on throughout in all Latin words.

But our Prof. Higgins is paid to teach him the pronunciation of English. And here anarchy and bedlam takes over. He has to tell him that there are 3 a's in the word Australia, but each is pronounced differently. He has to tell him that the i is pronounced differently in Christian and in Christ. And so on with thousands of idiotic rules of English pronunciation.

But Higgins is Higgins. If he has wrought the miracle of making poor Eliza the flowergirl from the East End pronounce perfectly West End English, he makes an equal success with his Eskimo. In the end he can read a page of the Times in impeccable English. But has he understood it? NOT ONE WORD.

Higgins told his pupil only the pronunciation of letter combinations. But he has not told him of the meaning of these combinations. He has told his pupil only the pronunciation, but not the meaning of words. This is what semantics is all about, the study of the meaning of the words.

But what is a **WORD**? A word is (hold onto your seat) a symbol. A symbol of what? A sound symbol, a sound we make with our mouth, tongue, teeth, larynx, etc. It is a sound, only a sound. But how does this sound come about? By the combination of the 26 letters. So the 26 letters are used in combination for various sounds we make. Our eskimo can make these sounds perfectly, but he ^{has} no idea what they mean. He can pronounce the sounds snow, fish, dog, wife very well, but he ^{has} not the slightest idea what they mean, though they mean the most vital things in the world to him. So our eskimo is totally illiterate in the English language, though he can pronounce perfectly every word of English. How many sound symbols do you know, or any other official in your department?

What comes now will be hard to grasp and even harder to swallow. Suppose our eskimo leaves Prof. Higgins and goes to a semanticist, to a professor who can teach him the meaning of the sounds he has learned to make. How does this professor go about to teach him the meanings of the sounds. The professor does not know one word of the eskimo language. How then can he teach him the meanings of the sounds snow, fish, dog, and wife? Our professor has to use (hold onto your seat again) he has to show him pictures. Pictures of snow, pictures of sledge dogs, pictures of fishes, and perhaps the photograph of the eskimo and his wife, pictures, pictures, pictures, all the way. It would have been easier for that eskimo to come to me first, because I would have shown him pictures in my drawings.

Now, suppose our eskimo knows exactly the meaning of the sounds snow, fish, dog, and wife. As I said before, written words are sound symbols. So how many sound symbols does our eskimo know now? Exactly not more than 4 symbols. Now a question. How many sound symbols does an aborigine of Alice Springs know? How many symbols ~~symbols~~ an Australian white man working in the outback? How many symbols does a worker in Sydney know? How many a tradesman? And how many do you know and any other man in your department? And how many symbols does an intellectual know? And how many a professor? Now hold onto your seat again.

The aborigine in Alice Springs may know about 500 symbols, that is the meanings of the sound symbols called words. The man in the outback may know 1500 symbols if he doesn't read newspapers. If he does, he may know about 3000 symbols. A worker in Sydney with wife and kids may know about 5000 to 8000 symbols. A tradesman perhaps 2000 symbols more, referring to his trade. An intellectual with or without university study may know about 15,000 to 25,000 symbols. You dear Mr. Foulkes may fall into this category. And a professor of the university may know perhaps 50,000 symbols, or at best not more than about 100,000 symbols. And imagine that

that Websters or the Oxford Dictionary lists the meanings of more than half a million sound symbols. But this is not the whole story, because every sound symbol has a host of different meanings all nicely numbered in the dictionary, in short, WE NEED THOUSANDS OF SOUND SYMBOLS TO GET ALONG IN OUR WORLD. Where then is the simplicity of the 26 letters? Nowhere. It is a fallacy, a falsehood to speak of them, as they are only used for the combination of sounds to one sound, which symbolizes something, but what?

Let's make this test. What does the sound symbol board really mean? It means a lot of different things, consequently it is not only one sound symbol, it represents a number of such sound symbols as for instance, the Board of trade, a board of director, a board of timber, a board school, board and lodging, etc.etc. And these different meanings have to be learned the hard way, the very hard way in school of years of study, and in life through years of reading and experience.

Now take the same meaning in Chinese symbols or in my symbols. A board in Chinese symbols or mine means a board of persons, and it shows the outline of persons, a board of timber, shows the outline of a tree in Chinese, and in my symbols, a board school means a bed, because this ^{is} what boarding school means. And board and lodging, shows food in my symbols and also in Chinese.

Now you can realize the falsehood in the belief that our alphabet is so much superior to the Egyptian Hieroglyphics, to Chinese characters, and to my writing. It remains therefore to dismember the last argument in your letter, that

The Failure of Esperanto proves that people won't take to an international ^{language} ~~be it~~ Esperanto, or Blissymbolics. Wrong again. Dead wrong. And wrong for 2 reasons. First, I can show you quotations by prominent linguists that the teaching of foreign languages, and for that of the native language is a catastrophic failure in all countries. We go to school and learn and learn, and most of us are still illiterate in many ways. Why? Because the teachers and professors of languages are utter failures themselves. They simply can't teach. They burden us with useless grammatical rules, they burden us with conjugations, irregular rules in irregular spelling, pronunciation and meanings. They foist upon us the readings of Shakespeare's old English words which have been used 300 years ago, but which are outdated today. And all this is in respect of the native language OUR ENGLISH. It is ten times worse with their idiotic teachings of foreign languages. The catastrophic result is that most girls and boys after years of study cannot ask correctly for a glass of water in Latin, or French or German. The teachers, and only the teachers, the professors, and only the professors are to be blamed for their catastrophic teachings, which is no teaching.

Now it is true, that people like to babble in their mother tongue, and the billions of illiterates can babble very well, and they don't give a damn whether they use a noun, or a pronoun, or a personal pronoun or a possessive pronoun. But there is Esperanto. It is very easy to learn, because ^{there} are no irregularities, there are simple logical rules without illogical exceptions to the rules. Suppose Esperanto lessons are given as an obligatory school subject in the primary schools all over the world. In spite of the catastrophic inability of our teachers what would happen then? All children all over the world, and those who are grown to adulthood would know at least a smattering of Esperanto. Should they have to travel into a foreign country they could easily approach anyone in the street and ask a question in Esperanto, no matter how incorrect. The person approached would have learned Esperanto in school and he would be able to understand the question and he would be able to answer in Esperanto, not very correct, but enough to be understood, because both persons know a smattering of Esperanto from their schooldays, just as we remember some French or German from our schooldays. But this again is not the whole story.

Our newspapers tend to all interests of all potential newspaper buyers. They tend to the women who buy most consumer goods and they tend to their fashions. They tend to teenagers, and their popsingers, they tend even to the idiots who believe in astrology. Now, when I was a little boy, Esperanto came upon the world and it was a sensation. Everyone began to learn Esperanto, and I remember vividly that our local paper had daily short Esperanto lessons.

Suppose this trend would be sustained and compulsory Esperanto lessons would be given in all primary and secondary schools in the world. Then commerce would follow. In Vienna you can see innumerable shops with the inscriptions: ENGLISH SPOKEN HERE, ON PARLÉ FRANCAIS, etc. No matter how bad the English or French of that shopkeeper is, he can understand and can quote the prices of his goods in English or French, etc.

Now, if Esperanto lessons are obligatory in all schools of the world, all shops in all countries of the world would have inscriptions in Esperanto, all shopkeepers would be able to converse in Esperanto. Furthermore, advertisements in the newspapers would contain also lines in Esperanto. And all illustrated magazines all over the world ^{would} have subcaptions under all their pictures in Esperanto. You dear Mr. Foulkes would have the easiest job in the world by simply having warning signs in Esperanto on all your construction sites, because even the illiterate migrants

migrants from Italy, or Spain, or Greece have heard Esperanto words all the time, and they will know a smattering of it.

Well, why did this not happen? Has Esperanto died down, because it is just an artificial language and hence it has no future?

Esperanto is not dead. On the contrary. It flourishes all over the world. There are over 14 million Esperantists who pay their membership dues in all countries. There are hundreds of Esperanto journals. There are thousand upon thousand of books in Esperanto, the translation of some of the greatest works of literature. And there are millions of Esperantists, some pay their membership^{fee}, but most others avoid the expenditure, but they all write millions of letters to Esperantists in other countries. I know the authenticated story of a German Esperantist who through his Esperanto journal began to correspond with an Australian girl in Esperanto and then came here and married her. In short Esperanto is thriving. And yet, why is Esperanto not the international language of mankind already?

I have thought for years about this why, until I found the answer. The millions of Esperantists have besieged the educational authorities in all countries of the world to make Esperanto a compulsory subject in the primary and secondary schools of the world. It would have been the easiest thing in the world to do this, because we learn a lot of useless stuff in school. We could^{do} with say 2 hours a week of Esperanto. Why has Esperanto not been made compulsory?

You may answer that some schools teach Esperanto. True, but what schools? These are usually private schools, evening classes for workers and people, and these small Esperanto classes are not compulsory. They tend only to those who have recognized the value of Esperanto, and who learn it in order to get in^{to} correspondence with stamp collectors to exchange stamps, or with boy scouts, and the like. There are many millions of these Esperantists already. But WHY DON'T TEACHERS TEACH ESPERANTO AS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT TO ALL CHILDREN?

To introduce Esperanto lessons as an obligatory subject in all schools of the world for say 2 hours a week would be the easiest thing in the world. And it could be introduced with the next term, which may be tomorrow. WHY, O LORD WHY do the teachers and professors and the educational authorities in all countries REFUSE the pleas of millions upon millions of Esperantists in all countries? Why have they done this for nearly one century? WHY, O LORD WHY?

There is only one answer to this, and the answer has been given by the professor of Education Carleton Washburne from New York, who said as Guest of Honour over the National ABC network

"We educators resist any change, we even pride ourselves with the antiquity of our educational innovations."

BUT WHY AGAIN? Why are they so adamant to learn and teach something new? There is only one dreadful answer to this. If Esperanto is taught in all schools of the world, if it is made the international language of mankind, then MILLIONS OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS WOULD BE OUT OF A JOB. THAT'S WHY!

Now dear Mr. Foulkes I have demolished all your arguments. What are you going to do now?? There is not a word of hope for me in your last letter. I don't even know what your other two senior officers said, but it should be obvious what they said. Because if there is a glimmer of readiness to accept my work, you would have said so. Instead, you are apparently trying to soften the final blow to me by bringing forth false counter-arguments. What are you going to do now?

The Building Industry Safety Council demands the introduction of symbols. SYMBOLS FOR SAFETY. Symbols, not pictures on posters and your Safety Journal, which nobody of the foreign workers read, nor are they going to study the elaborate pictures on your blackboards. SYMBOLS, AND ONLY SYMBOLS. Where are you going to get them? WHERE?

ONLY I HAVE GOT THE SYMBOLS YOU NEED. Only I propose just 12 symbols of which 5 are already international. And I propose a test with 7 years old children, and with any of your foreign workers on construction sites, that they will grasp the meaning of my pictorial symbols within minutes, WITHIN MINUTES I SAY !!!

WHAT ARE YOU AND YOUR SENIOR OFFICERS AND THE MINISTER GOING TO DO? Are you going to do what Prince Philip has already castigated? Are you and the minister going to form a committee to study the matter, and to do research and to come together say two years hence with no definite and decisive recommendation of what to do then?

MEANWHILE THE UNSAFETY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES WILL GO ON. THERE WILL BE MANY DEATHS AND MANY MORE INJURIES, AND THEY WILL AFFECT OLD AND NEW AUSTRALIANS, SONS, HUSBANDS AND FATHERS. What are you going to do? The answer is the usual answer when it comes to bureaucratic measures. The answer is DOING NOTHING, AND LET THE DYING GO ON!

I PROPOSE A TEST SIMILAR TO THE TEST WITH THE MARINS PLACE PLAZA. Instal my symbols on say 5 construction sites. Print a short leaflet, give a talk or let me give the talk to construction workers, And be sure that under all my symbols on large placards should be the English text^{bold} and ^{and} languages in small letters and

And see what will happen. See that the introduction of my symbols will be the easiest thing in the world. But an even easier thing will be to do NOTHING.

WHY HAVE I WRITTEN MY HEART OUT IN FUTILE WRITING THIS LONG LETTER TRYING TO CONVINCE YOU?

Why have I done so? Only to convince you, your senior officers and the minister? No. I have written this important letter for others to read within or after our lifetime. All my letters to officials in the governments and the universities of the world are already collected and preserved by important libraries. This my letter will find its way there to, if all my endeavours on purely altruistic reasons come to naught. You may be lauded, or you may be condemned, and this within your lifetime. Understand the unhappy mind of a pioneer of a new idea who sees around him many people dying. Understand what I try to say, and act upon it, before it is too late for more victims

Yours sincerely

C.K.Bliss

Mr. Foulkes was not very pleased with my proofs, that he is quite wrong by pointing to an Egyptian hieroglyphics, Chinese writing, and Esperanto and he answered in the following way.

Dear Mr. Bliss,

15 April 1971

Your long years of frustration have made you over suspicious of the general good intent of people. Had I rejected your system out of hand, I would not have bothered to have written to you in the terms of my letter of 29th March, 1971. I would, in fact, have told you so directly but as sympathetically as possible.

You must well realise that it is much easier for both public and private senior officials to reject new ideas than accept the burden of trying to understand them and undertaking all the necessary promotional work to obtain their acceptance. I have not rejected your basic principles and have indeed made recommendations to the Minister which should give them reasonable hope of serious consideration by industry.

Please do not underestimate the difficulties which face me in even fostering consideration of the simplest principles which you propose. You of all people should be well aware of this problem.

Let me also say that I am not interested in establishing special committees. I am already chairman of enough committees and have no interest in committees which do not achieve anything. As I said in my earlier letter, the acceptance of your system will be a matter for the judgement of your fellow-men no matter how hard you or I try to influence their opinions.

In my letter of 29th March, 1971 I deliberately avoided trying to raise your hopes unduly. You have suffered a great deal of frustration in the pursuit of your ideal and I do not wish to add to your unhappiness. Any decision to pursue the course which I have recommended will rest with the Minister and at this stage I am not in a position to disclose to you just what I have proposed to him.

I have not had time to thoroughly read and digest all the material in your long twelve page litany. At a quick glance it does in fact answer some of the queries which I raised. These, as you will realise, were mainly directed at the universal acceptance of a system of standard symbols and not at the development of a simplified system of warning signs. In this latter field I feel there is possible hope but the promotion of even this germ of thought to the industry of N.S.W. and then of Australia will be a long process - even if we obtain any acceptance whatsoever.

Please do not lose heart but do not unduly optimistic, and finally, please do not lay blame at the feet of myself and the officers of my Department, whose work is so sincerely devoted to the prevention of injury and accident in industry, that we cannot transform the thinking of other individuals overnight.

Rest assure that I shall read your letter thoroughly and will be in touch with you again just as soon as I have the Minister's decision.

Yours sincerely,

(S.V. Foulkes)
Chief Inspector.

I sent off the following letter

Dear Mr. Foulkes,

22 April 71

Many thanks for your kind letter. I will^{be} patient and await the verdict and the sentence, because I am afraid this is what it will be. However, hope springs eternal.

I hope you had the time to read my overlong letter, which I wrote in my desire to convince you that the objections against my work are not applicable to it.

Thanking you for every thought and every second you give to my work I remain C.K.Bliss
AND THIS WAS INDEED THE LAST LETTER AND THE END OF ALL MY EFFORTS.