

# Spelling Progress Bulletin

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

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Editor and General Manager,  
Newell W. Tune,  
5848 Alcove Ave.  
No. Hollywood, Calif.

Contributions Editor,  
Helen Bowyer,  
1212 S. Bonnie Brae St,  
Los Angeles S. Calif.

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## Coming attractions

Our next issue will have some of the following articles:

- Spelling, Reading, and Juvenile Delinquency, by Jacob Chwast, Ph.D.
- Causes of Backwardness in Learning to Read.
- Progress Report of the Augmented Roman Project.
- The Best Means of Representing the Th-sounds.
- A Comparison of Three Dozen Proposed Phonetic Alphabet Systems.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp2,3]

## **Experimental Investigation of Use of a Phonemic Notation for the First Teaching of Reading and Writing, by Godfrey Dewey, Ed.D.**

For more than a century estimates have been made and evidence has been accumulated that normal English-speaking children can be taught to read and write using only a completely phonetic or rather phonemic notation until they have acquired a considerable degree of fluency and then making a gradual transfer to reading and writing with the conventional alphabet and spelling, and judging the end results strictly by present conventional standards, in at least a years less time than they can be taught by any established method using conventional spelling only - and with superior results.

Evidence for this astonishing and profoundly significant fact includes experiments in the schools of Waltham, Massachusetts from 1852 to 1860; using Pitman's 1847 phonetic alphabet; in the schools of St. Louis, Missouri from 1866 for at least 20 years, using a modified alphabet devised by Dr. Edwin Leigh, and in 16 different schools in Great Britain between 1915 and 1924, using the digraph notation, involving no new letters, developed by the British Simplified Spelling Society. All this evidence, however, antedates the modern era of statistically balanced control groups, objective measurement, and standardized tests, and therefore cannot be expected to convince the skeptic of the validity of so extraordinary a conclusion. The evidence and supporting estimates by presumable competent students of the problem should however suffice to convince the open-minded educator that there is here a profoundly important possibility amply sufficient to justify present-day investigation under rigorously controlled conditions.

Since most proposals in this field have been put forward by those who looked ahead to a thoroughgoing reform of English spelling which would eventually make the transition to conventional spelling standards unnecessary, it should be emphasized that as an educational experiment this project is completely divorced from spelling reform. The fact that the phonemic notation to be employed, as a teaching instrument only, would be entirely suitable for eventual spelling reform purposes should be of no more importance than the nature of any other audio-visual aids used for classroom teaching of languages or other subjects but discarded after their purpose has been served.

One of the first proposals of this technique of using simpler spelling as a teaching instrument was Zalmon Richards, first president of the National Education Association, who asserted that in 1844 he had taught reading with a phonetic alphabet in one quarter the time previously required. Richards' first effort at the NEA was a proposal at the 1859 convention that 'a committee be appointed on the subject of a phonetic alphabet'. His resolutions to this effect were presented in 1860 and unanimously adopted and his paper, "On a phonetic notation", covered effectively many of the points which would be made today.

Another early endorsement of reading instruction by means of a spelling reform system, followed by a transition to the conventional orthography, is to be found in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* for 1847, in a committee report entitled "A report upon phonotypy". This system, which employed the Pitman-Ellis phonetic alphabet of that period was introduced into some of the schools of Massachusetts thru the influence of Dr. James W. Stone of Boston. The instruction included public contests and prizes for proficiency. One such performance was attended by Horace Mann, who wrote to Dr. Stone on July 3, 1851.

Dear Sir: Having witnessed the exercises of a class of nine children under your care in reading phonograph, (or phonetic shorthand) and phonotypy, (or phonetic print) it gives me pleasure to assure you of the delight which their performances gave me. I think the nine Muses were never listened to by a more grateful audience. The children you exhibited had certainly made most wonderful proficiency, and were, in several of the essentials of good enunciation and reading, years in advance of most children who had been taught in the old way.

Yours truly;  
Horace Mann

The foregoing examples are selected from a number reported in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Columbia University 1958) *Spelling Reform in the United States*, by Abraham Tauber. The next is extracted from an unpublished Ed.M. thesis (Tufts College 1950) *Toward More Rational Spelling* by W. David Crockett, which quotes at some length from the "Annual Report of the General School Committee of the Town of Waltham, for the years 1852-53" by Thomas Hill, Thomas F Fabs, T. M Stone, Josiah Beard, and William P Childs. The key paragraph of this report reads as follows:

"We advocate Pitman's Phonetics simply as an aid in education, and as an introduction to ordinary orthography. It has been proved in repeated experiments that if a child upon his first learning his letters, is taught the Phonetic Alphabet; and is confined to Phonetic books for the first six or eight months of schooling; he will at the end of his first year's schooling, read in common print and *spell in common spelling* better than children ordinarily do at the end of four or five years instruction. It has also been proved by repeated experiments, that if an adult of ordinary intelligence is ignorant of his letters, he may learn to read the bible, or the newspaper in two months time, by giving his attention to Phonetics two hours a day for six weeks, and to common print for the remaining fortnight

The Waltham School Committee Reports give no clue to the duration or conclusion of these experiments but the report, of a committee of the American Philosophical Society in 1889 gives a significant summary and appraisal. It states:

"We tested it thoroughly for six or seven years in the town of Waltham, Massachusetts which then had about 800 children in the public schools, The effect upon the school life of the town was very marked, The saving of time in teaching the children to read and to spell enabled us to introduce exercises for the eye and the hand, thus cultivating habits of observation; skill in drawing and writing, and geometrical ability. The fonetic print corrected the brogue of the Irish children and the Yankee dialect of the American in a surprising manner. An improvement in the moral and intellectual tone of the schools was also noticeable, arising certainly in part from giving the children interesting reading instead of such absurd falsehoods as that of saying 'sea', 'you', 'pea', spells cup'.

"Fears were expressed that this method should injure the pupils spelling. In order to test that question, I took pains to procure, several times, lists of words which actually had been used in Boston, Roxbury, and other places, with the percentage of failures on each list. Springing these lists without warning, upon classes of the same grade in Waltham, we always found our percentage of errors very much smaller than in other towns, sometimes I think only one-third as large. We also questioned each pupil in our high school as to the amount of time which he or she had devoted in his or her whole school life to fonotypy and fonografy. Comparing these items with the percentage of errors in spelling, by the same scholars, we found that those who had read the most fonotype made the fewest mistakes."

The United States Bureau of Education Circular of Information No, 8, 1893, *The Spelling Reform* by Francis A. March, LL.D., L.H.D., which was a revision and enlargement of a similar pamphlet published by the U.S. Bureau of Education in 1881, gives two accounts (on pages 7-8 and 37-38) of a much larger-scale demonstration carried on in the schools of St. Louis; commencing in 1866 and continuing for at least twenty years. This method used a cumbersome transition alphabet invented by Dr. Edwin Leigh of that school system, containing over 70 characters instead of about 40. Nevertheless, the school authorities, including the superintendent, Dr. William T. Harris, later U.S. Commissioner of Education, were convinced that by this method they saved a year in learning to read; and in 1893 Dr. Harris, speaking as U.S. Commissioner of Education, estimated on the basis of available experience from 1845 to that date "that about two years may be saved in learning to read by the phonetic method". (Op. cit., page 6)

More recently, a pamphlet first published by the British Simplified Spelling Society in 1924 and reissued in 1942 as Pamphlet No, 7, *The Best Method of Teaching Children to Read and Write* reports on experiments conducted in sixteen British schools between 1915 and 1924, employing a no-new-letter digraph notation, essentially similar to the World English Spelling on which the British Simplified Spelling Society and the American Simpler Spelling Association reached

complete agreement in 1955. In these experiments there were no statistically matched control groups or standardized tests, and the amount of material available in the phonetic notation was much less than should have been provided for a valid controlled experiment. Nevertheless, the judgements of the teachers and school inspectors involved were unanimously favorable and their estimates of the time saved, with uniformly superior results, ranged from a half-year term to two years.

In the light of all the accumulated evidence, the British are preparing for a series of controlled experiments, to be announced within a few weeks, under the auspices of London University, using probably a form of World English Spelling which substitutes single type ligatures for the several digraphs of World English Spelling. It is to be hoped that means may be found to initiate in this country without delay a series of controlled experiments, designed to determine and measure objectively and incontrovertibly the results to be obtained by using a simple phonemic notation as a teaching instrument for the first teaching of reading and writing.

Godfrey Dewey, Lake Placid Club, New York 25th May, 1960.

*Editor's note:* The above previously unpublished memorandum is printed by permission of the author. Please note the date when it was written as this will explain the use of the future tense in the last paragraph

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#### **Some gems from the Let's Have Better Mottos Assoc.**

"Some minds are like concrete - all mixed-up and firmly set" - from Pat Hubbard,

"Wasted time is the worst of all possible losses" - from Rex Smith.

"Some people are like mummies - all wrapped up in themselves" - from Jeri Renken.

"Nothing is really work unless you would rather be doing something else".

"All work and no play makes Jack - with plenty of it in the bank for his widow."

"In America we can say what we think, and even if we can't think, we can say it anyhow" - Charles Kettering.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp4,5]

#### **Illiteracy, Its Cause and Cure, by Reginald Deans.**

Every year, half a million children in this country begin their school careers with the object of learning above all, to read and write. Yet after ten years of intensive effort on the part of their teachers, at least 100,000 will leave school almost unable to read, unable to spell, unable to write correctly a simple essay.

A test of reading ability made recent on 5000 children between the ages of 9 and 10 in a large English city showed that nearly 1000 were unable to read as well as children of 7 or 8. Of these, 7% were *unable to read at all*, though most of these were not unintelligent. When they reach the age of 20 to 25 years, 20% will be almost illiterate, that is, they will not be able to read as well as the average child of 9.

The affliction is not confined to Britain alone. Recently 450,000 high school pupils throughout the U.S.A. were tested. Only one in a hundred could write a five minute essay without making mistakes

in spelling or grammar. In Chicago, in a survey of 6000 pupils in the 9th grade, 22% were below 7th grade in reading ability. Similar results could be quoted from every English speaking country. But poor spelling is not confined to children. One could give glaring examples of bad spelling by college and university students even in their final honours papers. If poor spelling were a test of intelligence, most of us would have to confess to stupidity now and then.

It is impossible to overstress the importance of the problem. A quick accurate reader possesses a key which opens to him vast stores of knowledge. A poor reader soon acquires a feeling of inferiority and disappointment which he carries over to other subjects. (Hence older pupils are rarely backward *only* in reading). The problem of guessing illogical spellings distracts his attention from the meaning. Soon, his interest turns to dislike, not only of reading but of school, often leading to truancy and even delinquency. When he leaves school, he will find it difficult to mix with educated people and to a large extent he will be cut off from cultural, activities. Because spelling is no guide to pronunciation, a poor reader rarely speaks "good" standard English, and finds himself excluded from the most satisfying jobs.

The fault cannot all be with the teacher and the method of teaching. Recognizing the difficulty of the task, teachers have experimented with all kinds of reading systems, and more time and money is spent on this subject than on any other. For a long time children began by learning "to say" their ABC's and then *some* of the sounds the letters "said". But because many words are still spelt as they were spoken hundreds of years ago, they now have to be taught to recognise words as wholes, regardless of the spelling. Hence they do not realize that the order of the letters is of importance. The method is called "look and say" and has taught children to guess the sound of words instead of trying to analyse them, a habit they have carried over to other occupations. How would you teachers like it if the pupil were to guess the answer to an arithmetic problem instead of trying to figure it out? The "phonic" method pays some attention to the sounds of the letters, but in spite of every effort and every way it has been tried, it is not possible to feel well satisfied with the results. The basic cause of the difficulties has not been eliminated. It is the vast difference between the sounds in words and the many ways that these sounds are spelt. It is unreasonable to expect children *to write a language* they do not speak or to speak a language they *do not write*. It is the unchanged spelling of Caxton's time that is so ill suited to the many changes in pronunciation occurring since then.

What then is the remedy? It is to teach them to read and write only the language they speak. They must have specially printed books in which every word is spelt exactly as it sounds in proper English speech, with each letter (or letter combination) representing a generally recognized speech, sound. If every letter or letter combination had only one fixed and invariable sound, instead of the hundreds of conflicting sounds, pupils would learn to read in a few weeks, long words as well as short, *without having to learn to spell each word individually*. Then having no trouble with queer spellings they will not be distracted from the meaning of what they read (i.e., say to themselves). Moreover, when words are written just as they are pronounced by cultured people, children will soon acquire the proper way of speaking.

Only when they have learnt to read and write with the most fluency need they be allowed to read our archaic spelling. Then, so familiar will they become with words and phrases that they will be able to guess what the old English spellings mean. But this does not mean such a delay as you might think. Since the children will learn to read fluently in a few months instead of their limited and very restricted reading ability now acquired after several painful years, a net saving of 1½ to 2 years will result. Often the child will make the transition by himself, because sufficient words in the old English spelling will be almost the same as in the new, thus giving him a basis to use the context to figure out the meanings of irregularly spelt words. Even when the child continues to use the simplified spellings, which they probably will because they are logically devised, it can easily be read by anyone of moderate intelligence and goodwill, without instruction.

Dr. Michael West, in "Learning to Read" wrote: "If it were possible to teach children to read, (of course with correct pronunciation) sufficiently fluently to make him enjoy reading and read a reasonably large amount before permitting him to attempt any great amount of speech, a child would when he came to speech lessons have a sense of the language and a feeling of what is idiomatic which would greatly diminish his liability to error and greatly accelerate his progress.

The purpose of speaking and writing is to give information. Hence, no useful object is served by writing barely spoken sounds, such as the g in -ing, or the o in "button". There should be no double letters unless they are actually pronounced. The spelling would closely follow the correct pronunciation. Hence, it would be much easier and quicker to learn to write than what Bernard Shaw called Johnsonese.

Another advantage of scientific spelling is that it would enable foreigners to learn our language more easily and to pronounce every word correctly. Indeed, this scientific spelling could be used as a world language. There are well over 2000 languages in use today. In Africa there are at least 700 and in India 180 as well as innumerable dialects. The ease with which people can travel from one country to another makes a common language absolutely essential if people are to live in peace with one another. Already, English is the intermediate language for hundreds of races. Surely it is our duty to remove from it all those difficulties for which there is no longer any justification.

According to Sir Joshua Fitch, M.A., L.L.D., lecturer in teaching and H.M. Inspector of Training Colleges: "our anomalous alphabet has every fault an alphabet can have. A perfect alphabet should have a single and fixed character for every single indivisible elementary sound... The notion of the extreme importance attached to orthodox spelling is comparatively modern."

Prof. Leonard Bloomfield, in his book "Language" said: "There would be no serious difficulty about devising a simple effective orthography for all types of standard English. The use of it would save an enormous amount of time and labour and far from injuring our language, would raise the general level of standard speech, both by reassuring native speakers and by removing the tendency to spelling-pronunciations."

For more information about this scientific system of spelling, write to the World Language Assoc., Leeds, England, or Dr. D. N. Everingham, Rockhampton, Queens, Australia.



[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 p6]

**But There is no Peace,  
reprinted from the CBE Bulletin, published by the Council for Basic Education**

Paul Woodring, in a long editorial called "Can Johnny Read?" in the *Saturday Review* (January 20), attempts to pour oil on the turbulent waters of the current reading controversy, a controversy which he deplors. In considering the *look-and-say* versus *phonics* argument Mr. Woodring at times adopts a plague-on-both-your-houses tone, and at other times seems to be saying that there is something to be said for and against both sides, although, if we read him correctly, he is more inclined to uphold the virtues of *look-and-say* than the sins of Flesch. That our interpretation of his position may be the correct one seems confirmed by the response of *Saturday Review* readers to the editorial. Significantly, one letter came from an officer of the firm which publishes the leading *look-and-say* basal readers, who called the editorial "superb"; and another came from the president-elect of the solidly orthodox International Reading Association, who found it to be "the sanest and finest" article on reading of the past ten years.

Mr. Woodring's deploring of "polemics" and his insistence that reading should not be a "battleground", will certainly fall on sympathetic ears among the representatives of the status quo. The *look-and-say* theorists in the schools of education who train teachers and the perpetrators of those little bores, Dick and Jane and Spot and Puff and their like, do not want reading to be a battleground either. They long for a return to the times of peace, to the period when they held unchallenged sway, before that upstart Rudolph Flesch started a sniping action which has since turned into a major assault. No one is more hot for peace than your entrenched monopolist.

One can sympathize with Mr. Woodring's plea for less heat on both sides. As firm believers in systematic phonics as the proper method of beginning reading, we know, and regret, that some of those who have devised phonics systems are just as fanatical as the defenders of *look-and-say* are close-minded. But it seems to us that anyone who suggests, even by indirection, that the present reading controversy does not involve fundamental issues but is merely a reflection of temperamental differences between reading theorists, misreads the true nature of the controversy. There is a real war on in reading, and for the future wellbeing of American education, it is important that the right side win.

Editor's note: The Spelling Progress Bulletin takes issue with both sides and says: a plague on both of your houses. Does not common sense and logic tell you that the MAJOR CULPRIT is not the poor teacher (take it either way you like) nor how they teach (altho this does have considerable bearing), but the substance they have to teach - our irregular, inconsistent, illogical system of spelling (if it can be dignified by the title "system"). No real great progress in spelling or reading can really be achieved until the teachers' organizations revolt against the status quo of English spelling and join the growing demands on Congressmen that they do something about the Spelling Reform Bill. (P.S. If our information serves us rightly, the I.R.A. is not so entirely solid in its orthodoxy).

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 p6]

**Reading Reformers Organize**

Another indication that the reading controversy is not going to subside is the announcement that a nationwide campaign to replace the widely used "whole-word" method with a phonics approach has

been inaugurated by the Reading Reform Foundation, New York City. Says Watson Washburn, speaking for the trustees of the new non-profit organization: "All American parents who have been frustrated by the inability of their youngsters to sound out words phonetically and have seen their children referred year after year to remedial classes recognize that something is wrong with the present method of instruction." The Foundation has laid plans to establish state and local affiliates throughout the country.

Serving on the Advisory Council of the Foundation many educators and writers, including Arthur Bestor, Van Wyck Brooks, Douglas Bush, John Dos Passos, Rudolf Flesch, Edith Hamilton, William Ernest Hocking, Joseph Wood Krutch, Helen R., Lowe, Samuel Eliot Morison, Mortimer Smith, Edward Streeter, Josephine B. Timberlake, Arther S. Trace, Jr., and Charles Child Walcott.

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### **Relics -, by Rolf L. Veenstra.**

Reprinted from *The Banner*, the Weekly Magazine of the Christian Reformed Church, volume 97,n8, February 23, 1962.

One of the most bootless debates of all time is the current controversy, "Why can't Johnny read (or spell)?" The long-suffering teaching profession has been blamed for this fault, as have our even longer-suffering children.

The fault, of course, lies in the mixed-up subject matter. English is on all counts the most mongrel language of human history, with the result that some letters can be pronounced and some single sounds be spelled in half a dozen different ways. Imagine trying to teach arithmetic if the number two were equal to four in one problem, six in another, and perhaps ten in a third!

If modern writers want to make a contribution to literature by being different, they could hardly do better than by spelling their material phonetically instead of indulging in such tricks as eliminating capital letters and ignoring conventional punctuation. One admires such countries as the Netherlands for having the courage and self-discipline to revise its spelling some years ago. If the National Educational Association had some spunk it would spike the constant flood of criticism coming its way by resolving that hereafter its members will teach English as it ought to be spelled - or somebody else can teach Johnny.

Similar observations may be made as to our horrible system of weights, measures, distances, and the like, in contrast to the efficient and uniform, easily-mastered metric system. It is no insuperable task to change all this, as proved by the recent decision in South Africa to convert completely its monetary system, involving not only new currency but cash registers, bookkeeping machines, and so forth.

In the race for survival, it is possible that some of these reforms will be thrust upon us willy-nilly; but since they are steps that cannot be effected overnight, when the need for change is inevitable, it will likely be too late.

Rev. Rolf L Veenstra, who has written a column in *The Banner* for a number of years, is an influential missionary in West Africa., His address is.  
Sudan United Mission, Nigeria, West Africa.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp7,8]

### **Augmented Roeman Nuez, by S. S. Eustace.**

Reprinted from the publication by that name, by John Downing University of London Institute of Education. Since we do not have the A.R. type in which it is printed, this will be printed in Traditional Orthography,

augmented roman is striking roots. all the reports tell the same tale. none of the teachers in the experiment have any regrets, and some who decided not to take part last september are asking if they can come into the scheme. one head mistress wishes all her children had been brought up on it. the alfabet, and the spellings with it, have been adversely criticized. but the criticism misses the point, for au. r. is not intended as an accurate fonetic transcription of any one kind of english, but as a transcription which, while remaining as close as possible to traditional orthography, enables children to recognize and read words which they already know in their spoken language. we live in an age of scientific cautions; every claim, every prognostication, must be checked and counterchecked. but so far, every thing goes to show that the teachers using au. r. are well content with it. the old beaten track has often lead to reading failure even after great and prolonged efforts. teachers who have made this new departure are engaged on an enterprising and courageous venture.

#### **progress of the experiment**

by next september, 50 or 60 infant schools will be taking part, and by July 1963 about 2500 children will be involved,, excluding those in remedial schools.

all the children have now had an intelligence test. the tests used were Raven's colored progressive matrices (completing patterns) and the Creighton vocabulary scale (open ended definitions of words). a number of children are to be retested, as a check on the reliability of the tests.

the children have also been given one of the Bristol social adjustment guides, to investigate any connection between maladjustment and failure to read which the project may disclose. in this test the teacher has to say how far a child exhibits the sort of behavior which is associated with "maladjustment" according to a certain definition.

the teachers have been trained by psychologists how to give tests, on half-day courses at a number of midland towns.

reading tests were begun on feb. 21 for 600 au. r. children, and 1000 in control groups traditionally taught. the test is the Burt-Vernon graded word reading test; it contains 130 words arranged in order of increasing difficulty (and diminishing size of print), in au. r. and t.o. (traditional orthography), the result is embodied in a reading quotient, analogous to the intelligence quotient. teachers are instructed exactly how to conduct the test.

because children are not tested until they have made up for their absences, the testing must be spred over several months, and the results will not be out till the summer. they will tell us whether the au. r. pupils have made better progress than the control group pupils.

this test is concerned solely with the sound of words, not with the meaning. there will probably be comprehension tests later on.

testing is now being supervised by Barbara Jones, who recently joined the au. r. staff. she has a first class honors degree in psychology at Birkbeck college. she is also trained as a teacher of infants, and has experimented on the learning ability of rats, without, however, confusing the two.

### **a new au. r. reading scheme**

a new reading scheme is being prepared which will take advantage of the special qualities of au. r., such as greater emphasis on the subject matter. for this purpose a spelling analysis has been done classifying words most often used by children (as ascertained by Q.E.R.Burroughs) according to the initial, medial and final occurrence of au. r. letters in them.

### **control-group refresher courses**

the teachers of the control-groups have not been neglected refresher courses in teaching methods have been held for them at Stafford and Oldham, with outside speakers, so that their enthusiasm shall not be wasted.

### **backward readers**

au. r. probably has a supplementary future as a remedy for backwardness in reading. it has already been tried for this purpose in more than one place, and a report of one of these experiments appears below. the results of another such experiment, conducted with full scientific rigor, will be reported in the next issue of "*Educational Research*", journal of the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales. the article will be summarized in the next issue of the "*augmented roman news*".

### **au. r. is spreading**

the first experiment of teaching au. r. to american children is to begin shortly at the U.S.A.F. school at Bushy Park, Teddington. courses for the teachers have been held in London.

au. r. has even reached siberia. a minister Kolesovsky in irkutsk has been using it in teaching english to a class of 6 to 8 year-olds. his wife also tried it. he got to hear of it thru the "*daily worker*".

### **books in au. r.**

there are now over 200 published titles in au, r., and another 60 in preparation, by many different publishers. they are either straightforward printed books by english publishers, or else paste-overs of books by foreign publishers in the latter, the stories have been translated into english, and the au. r. text is printed on loose sheets which are cut up and stuck over the foreign language text. they are very suitable for those picture books of which only one copy per school is required for the book corner. books are retailed by the University of London Institute of Education. miss Robinson of the U.L.I.E. also does paste-overs from manuscript by electronic stencil. thus some titles are available in large quantity, one copy for each pupil, while others are available in small quantity, one for each book corner.

### **reports from teachers**

*from a primary school headmaster in the midlands*

"it was known that one class in this school would contain 28 children drawn from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years (i.e. aged 6 to 8). all the children were backward - some of them severely so, to the point of not even knowing their letters or being able to do the simplest numerical calculations even by practical means. one boy had severe speech disability, being in the care of the speech therapist for he had been referred for special education. but it had been decided to leave him in this school for a further trial period, two were receiving psychiatric treatment.

much of the backwardness was due to inert dulness, but it was all accentuated by changes of residence; changes of school, and poor home background. in all but a few instances, mothers were out at work, and in several cases owing to shift work the family rarely assembled as a unit. the children who came from our infant department had been subjected to thirteen staff changes during

their last year in that school. eleven of the children had come from other schools during the previous eighteen months. three came from homes where there were irregular relationships on the part of the parents. one boy in addition was cared for by an aunt, his mother being in the care of a psychiatrist. he suffered from the most involved domestic background i have ever come across; he has been in hospital for two months with suspected tubercular kidney.

in view of recent research into the development of personality thru oral work, written work of all sorts was to be cut to a minimum. our aim was to develop coherent oral expression, which was so deficient, and to produce a feeling of self-confidence and purpose also sadly lacking. almost without exception; the children in this class were completely lack-luster.

when i first became aware of the au. r. scheme, i was inclined to be highly critical; amongst the objections which i had was that it would cause untold confusion to children already disposed to be confused by anything novel and that transition to t.o. would present almost insuperable difficulties. altho one must always be wary of mistaking for success the glow of self-satisfaction which derives from working on a special project with a small group and seeing enthusiasm where there was apathy, and progress where there was only frustration, i feel able to commit myself to the view that transition is the least troublesome aspect of this scheme, and can be achieved incidentally. indeed some of the children already pride themselves on being able to write and read in "our alphabet and in "traditional". i also feel able to be quite dogmatic that it is neither desirable nor practicable for children to attend special schools. a most effective scheme of remedial education could be conducted within the school using au. r. and cuisenaire number. i also hope that work will be done with au. r. reading at secondary and adult level.

most of the children not in the special group learned to read au. r. in a very short time. as a matter of interest, i took a few au. r. lessons with other classes in the school, as a result of which i have become confident that far from anything being lost, a good deal of benefit would derive from a small amount of work in this direction with even the most intelligent children.

it could be that some of the apparent progress will be due to the normal progress of maturing, and to the special interest shown in the selected group, the obvious question which must spring to the mind is, would the same progress have been made with a t.o. scheme and the same degree of attention? i think it fair to answer in the negative. i feel that the incentive of something "which none of the children had seen before, and the feeling of "our" alphabet, have been powerful spurs. there has obviously been a growth of self confidence and there is much more liveliness generally. most of the children were persistent absentees before; now there is no significant absence. one boy has learnt to read so well that he will return to the ordinary class group after the holidays. children who literally could not read a word before are now reading the first three books of *janet and john* and the associated supplementaries. the majority, who at the end of last term could not get beyond the first five words of the Schonell graded spelling test, can now cope with 20 or 30 and in some cases even more.

there have been two cases in which there has been little if any progress. one boy (8.0 on 1.9.61) still has the utmost difficulty in recalling the symbols, i suspect this is a genuine case of not having reached the age of reading readiness. one girl (10.1 on 1.9.61), who last july could still not recognize letters with any degree of consistency, can now read, but has not progressed as well as i had hoped. in other cases i am sure that more progress would have been made had i myself been as competent in handling au. r. at the beginning as at the end of the term. nevertheless i put my own developing skill as one of the items of progress.

it has been a most salutary experience to be placed in the same learning situation as the children, feeling the same bewilderment as they must often do. most of my original objections to the scheme

have been met, and i feel that beyond the narrow objective of remedial teaching of reading, it has a great deal to offer where the overriding aim is the social and emotional development of the child,"

*from a head teacher in wallsall*

"my general impression of the au. r. alphabet with my first year juniors is that it has been very successful, the children are interested, alert and willing to learn; they have a confidence in school which is most unusual, the most striking progress has been in their general verbal fluency in the classroom. all the children have made more than usual progress, and one boy has shown remarkable fluency on transfer to traditional spelling. after one week at it he could read the first four books of the Griffin series, and has a reading ability of at least average for his class, yet he was a non-reader in october.

the children are adopting a phonetic approach to reading, but they also use contextual clues to a great extent. i shall be very interested to see if a good start can be maintained."

*from a school in staffordshire*

"here are the impressions of the class teacher regarding the au. r. scheme. her mixed class of 34 children started school in september 1961. all of them were five by the end of the first term. she is convinced that by the use of this method, the children have begun to read at an earlier age.

the children do seem to be making better progress than usual. they really know the words as opposed to "remembering" them. they are eager to find out words for themselves, and can do this more easily than ever possible with t.o, this seems to encourage them and they like reading and working alone. a few can write from memory the words they have come across look-and-say and fonic methods are used. the children like the fonic method and usually understand without difficulty."

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 p9]

### **Learning to Read, by Beatrice Tudor-Hart**

Almost all existing written languages are phonetic. Chinese is the exception. Far back in history man succeeded in analysing spoken language into a number of basic sounds, sufficiently small to be easily memorized by the human brain and yet large enough to make up, when combined in various ways, the total number of words used in the spoken language. This discovery was one of the miracles of human thought.

Recent trends in the teaching of reading in our country implicitly deny the validity of this discovery of visual symbols of sound by denying the need to relate simple visual patterns with basic sounds. In accurately phonetic languages such as Russian, German, Swedish, Danish, etc., letters or groups of letters represent one sound and one sound only in writing; sometimes a letter may have its sound changed by some addition to it, such as a small ring or two dots over it, as in German or Swedish.

English, however, for various reasons, has become very irregular in the last few hundred years; pronunciation has changed without any changes in spelling and vice-versa. For that reason it has become a difficult language to learn to read. It is also probably because of this, that educators, attempting to teach children to read at too early an age, have turned to "look and say", denying the need to learn first the shapes and sounds of the basic alphabet.

The Pitman 49-character alphabet, has corrected the irregularities of our written language and made it as easy to learn as the other alphabetic languages. For with this enlarged alphabet, English is once more truly phonetic, and children can, without constant contradiction, learn the ways to make up the thousands of words of their mother tongue. And this they must do if they are to learn to read.

It is quite impossible for a small child to memorize the patterns made by more than a dozen or so words *if he is ignorant of and the shape and sound value of each separate letter* used in the words. Child may, and often do, learn off by heart single words and strings of words in sentences, but this does not constitute recognition of the various written symbols.

For those adults who believe that it is possible to learn to read by the "look and say" method, I would like to suggest the following experiment, which they can practice on themselves. Take one hundred words in a language with a different alphabet from ours, say Hebrew or Arabic. Obtain the English equivalent. Then try to recognize the differences between all these words. Having done so, match the correct English equivalent for each one.

When they have attempted this feat, these people will know the nature of the task with which we face young children when we ask them to learn to read a written language without any knowledge of the letters and their sounds.

Learning the alphabet can be fun because it can be done by way of picture lotto games. So can the learning of some hundred or so common names of concrete objects. By the time the children have learned all these they are familiar with the alphabet and its sounds and written words.

Then they are ready to begin reading books. With the Pitman alphabet which obviates the need for learning the double letter sounds which keep changing quite arbitrarily and disconcertingly, most children would learn within a year, some within six months.



[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp10,11]

### **Primary Reading Program, Washington School Dist. # 6, Phoenix, Ariz. edited by Gerald Olson.**

Prior to the 1960-61 school year, the primary reading program of the Washington District Schools had included the teaching of word analysis skills along with the skills to improve comprehension and interpretation of written language. To accomplish this purpose the district had used as a basic reading series the Scott, Foresman basal reading program with many supplementary books, materials and aids. At the beginning of the 1960-61 school year our district added to the reading program of grades 1 and 2 the Economy Company S. "*Phonetic Keys to Reading*" materials. The

following information identifies our purpose, the *Phonetic Keys* approach, test results, and our observations and statistical treatment of these results.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of the inclusion of *Phonetic Keys to Reading* Program into the Washington District's established primary reading program was to strengthen the reading program and to assist in the building of independence. This method was added as a supplement to the basic reading program. The title "*Phonetic Keys to Reading*" is somewhat misleading in that one may think it is only a phonetic method. Actually, it is a complete program and includes instruction in all other good reading skills along with a strong phonetic approach.

### *Synopsis of the Phonetic Key Approach:*

1. Word perception and comprehension skills involved in the new method are similar to the ones we had been using, but varied in the method of approach, in timing and emphasis.
2. The new method differs in approach and timing because it develops the auditory perception of the letters from the words in the child's speaking vocabulary, and word analysis is begun *before* a sight vocabulary has been built.
3. Structural analysis and a study of word form, including a systematic program of syllabication and analysis of prefixes and suffixes are an important part of this program.
4. All teachers continue to use grouping techniques to care for individual differences, and to adjust the rate of presentation to meet these needs.
5. An alternate plan is available and is being used in some of our second and third grade classrooms. This plan allows the teacher freedom to vary the presentation of the *Phonetic Keys* material and the Scott, Foresman materials to better meet the needs of her class.

The present plan for the use of reading materials in the district schools is as follows:

#### First Grade:

Scott, Foresman Reading Readiness Book: *Before We read*, used simultaneously with *Tag*, *Phonetic Keys to Reading* Book,. This requires about eight weeks.

Scott, Foresman *Pre-Primers* with the additional supplementary pre-primers as needed and desired. Time about two weeks.

*Dot and Jim*. *Phonetic Keys*. Time about six weeks.

Basic Scott Foresman *Fun with Dick and Jane*. Time about six weeks. Supplementary primers as needed and desired.

*All Around with Dot and Jim*, *Phonetic: Keys to Reading*. Time about seven weeks.

*Our New Friends*, Scott, Foresman basic reader. Time about seven weeks with supplementary material.

*Our Big Book*, Scott; Foresman. This book is no longer used except in special cases such as with bilingual children. Training in sounds and phonetic principles is introduced in *Tag* and extended in *Dot and Jim* and *All Around with Dot and Jim*.

Second Grade:

*Through Happy Hours*, Phonetic Keys to Reading. Time about five or six weeks

*As Days Go By*, Phonetic Keys to Reading Time about five or six weeks

*The New Friends and Neighbors*, Scott, Foresman, with the *Think and Do Book*.

*The More New Friends and Neighbors*, Scott, Foresman, with the *Think and Do Book*.

Supplementary books as needed or desired. Time required for these is about twenty-four to twenty-six weeks.

To assist in the evaluation of the success of the Phonetic Keys material in our reading program, Metropolitan Achievement Tests were given in May, 1961 for all first and second grade pupils. Following this a complete summary of achievement score distribution was made. The results of this statistical summary were analyzed to answer the following questions:

1. How did children of the Washington District in Grades 1 and 2 score on these nationally standardized tests?
2. How did children of the Washington District compare with scores of the standard population?
3. What change in achievement pattern, which could be attributed to a change in the basic reading program, did occur?
4. Did any changes, appearing in the achievement pattern in reading of the second grade pupils, also reflect in other subject areas?
5. Did the children of Grades 1 and 2 achieve better in the skills measured by this achievement test than they have in the past years?

The tables in the analysis show the national norms of pupil distribution. The number of pupils and the percentage of gain in Grade 2 in each of the stanine brackets are indicated. We also used median scores as a comparison of total achievement. It should be pointed out that for the first grade there is no test comparison with the exception of the comparison to the probability for success as evidenced by the reading readiness scores and previous reading score distributions.

#### *Conclusions*

1. The Washington District scores were *far in excess* of standard norm distribution.
2. The first grade scores *far exceeded* the expectation on the basis of reading readiness scores.
3. There was a definite change in achievement pattern indicated in Grade 2. This change in achievement pattern in reading was also reflected in spelling and arithmetic.
4. Though there are differences in the attendance boundaries, the general results were consistent..

The following observations, though not contained in the statistical analysis of test scores, are related and worthy of mention in this report.

1. First and second grade teachers along with primary supervisors noted a definite ability of first grade pupils to write independently earlier in the first grade program. This was also observed in Grade 2.

2. Children were ready for formal spelling at an earlier date and it was also observed that spelling lists were not as great a challenge for the pupils of Grade 2.

3. Primary children read many more books *on their own*. This was observed by both primary teachers, supervisors and librarians. Many groups read more supplementary materials.

4. Many parents commented that their children were attacking and trying to read materials not related to their school books. Parents who had had older children who had already passed through the primary reading program made special mention of this.

5. The majority of teachers found that the children developed comprehension and interpretive skills along with skills for independent word attack

6. "*Phonetic Keys to Reading*" proved a fine addition to the established reading program, and it and the state-adopted basic series worked together well in developing word perception, comprehension and interpretation skills.

*Questions Yet to be Answered*

1. Does the same pattern of growth in these skills, as tested by the Metropolitan Reading Test, continue through Grade 3?

2. What are the implications for curricular study in other subject areas?

*Editor's note:*

As it is too difficult to reproduce the tables, a description of them with some examples as a comparison will have to suffice.

Chart No. 1

This chart about stanines is provided to show exactly what the value of placement means. Stanines almost automatically indicate a pupil's standing in a subject in comparison with other pupils of similar grade placement. A pupil of stanine 7, 8, or 9 is well above the typical pupil in his grade in the subject in question, while the pupil in stanine 1, 2, or 3 is definitely below.

*Meaning of stanines: Sta- Standard Score: A-nine-step scale.*

*Percentage of cases at each Stanine level:*

9 (4%)    high (4%)

8 (7%)    above average (19%)

7 (12%)

6 (17%)

5 (20%)    average (54%)

4 (17%)

3 (12%)    below average (19%)

2 (7%)

1 (4%)    low (4%)

In Table 2 District Summary comparison of the Metropolitan Achievement Test administered in Ma, 1961 to Grade 1, showed that the number of pupils in Stanine 9 (high) as tested in Word

Knowledge, Word Discrimination amounted to 31-32%, while Reading had 39% of the pupils, compared with the National Norm of 4%. Those in Stanine 8 in the same three categories amounted to 13-14%., while those in Stanine 5 (average) were only 8% of the total pupils. Also significant was the fact that although the National Norm of below average comes to 19%, the District had only 8%, 12%; and 6% respectively in Word Knowledge, Word Discrimination, and Reading Ability. The Stanine 1 (low) had only 2%, 1%; 1% compared with the National Norm of 4%. The Median Stanine of the District in W.K., W.D. and Reading was 7%, 7%, and 8% respectively, compared with the National Norm of 5. This is based upon a total enrollment of 1360 pupils.

These impressive figures speak very well for the efficacy of the Phonetic Keys to Reading system.

Now let us see what results were achieved in Grade 2 using only the Basal Reading Program. Those in Stanine 9 amounted to 8%, 5%, and 5%, in W.K., W.D., and Reading, those in Stanine 8 amounted to 4%, 7% and 8% respectively, on a total enrollment of 1095 pupils. And at the same time Stanine 5 had 15%, 17%, and 29%, which averages no better than the National Norms. Compare this with Grade 2 using in addition to the Basal Reading Program, the Phonetic Keys to Reading; in which the Stanine 9 had 23%, 18% and 13% respectively, and Stanine 8 had 21% for all three - W.K., W.D. and Reading. The low stanines were also drastically reduced.

The Grade Equivalent of each of the stanines was also considerably improved over what it was as a result of using only the Basal reading Program. Stanine 9 Grade Equivalent was raised from 3.8 to 4.7 and the other stanines were all raised proportionally. The Median Stanine in Oct. 1960 (at the start of the District test) was 5, while the Primary II had improved to a Median Stanine 7 as a result of the addition of the Phonetic Keys to Reading.

The complete report with its comprehensive tables is available from.  
The Arizona Citizens for Strengthening Public School Education, Scottsdale, Arizona.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp12-15]

### **What Ivan Knows That Johnny Doesn't, reviewed by Helen Bowyer.**

Here is a book which the Bulletin staff closes with both admiration and regret. Admiration for the forthrightness with which its author lays bare the gulf between the functional literacy of Russia's young and ours. Regret that for the closing of this gulf he has nothing more promising than "back to phonics". Phonics to be sure, used on primers and readers of a much wider vocabulary, a much higher level of content and much more grace of construction than those on which our children are now putting in their time. But phonics, none the less, - applied to the same old lost most, dost, tease, seize, sneeze - her, sir, fur, myrrh; which for centuries have defied its application in the primary grades; and applied to the rhapsody, Pharisee, pharmacy rhythm schism, seism, which the wail from the colleges indicates are still defying it there.

The author is Dr. Arthur S Trace Jr., Associate Professor of English at John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, and a faculty member of its new Institute for Soviet Studies. The publisher is Random House to whom we offer our thanks for the sheer pleasure with which we read its telling summary on the jacket of the book. "By the time American school children get Jack and Jill up that hill," it begins, "Soviet children of the same age will probably be discussing the hill's altitude, mineral deposits and geo-political role in world affairs." This profoundly disturbing book is a comparison of American and Soviet school curricula and textbooks. It proves that the sciences and mathematics are not the only subjects in which our children lag behind. By the time an American

fourth grader has learned to read 1,500 words from his typical classroom reader, a Soviet student in the fourth grade will be expected to read at least ten thousand words, and will be ready to plunge into history, geography and science. Why does Ivan have a reading vocabulary so much larger than Johnny's? Could it have anything to do with the fact that from his first Reader on, Ivan reads Tolstoy, Pushkin and Gogol, while Johnny follows the adventures of Jerry and the little rabbit that goes, "hop, hop, hop?"

We hasten to register the conviction that it has a very great deal to do with it. BUT, if Johnny is to read English authors of comparable greatness, they must come to him in a spelling as consistent, predictable and, *ipso facto*, mind gratifying, as that with which Ivan is blessed.

Not that Russian print is perfectly one-sign, one-sound. Where on this planet do you find print that is? -at least among its major tongues. But it comes close enough to this ideal to make correct word-sounding almost automatic to the normal child, once he knows his alphabet.

This he gets, Dr. Trace tells us from a big, attractively illustrated *Bukvar* whose business it is to teach him to read, write and spell his first 300 words of the thousands he already speaks and understands. And in doing this to begin his introduction to his country's great literature - at this stage, in the form of children's classics such as this.

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman who had a rooster and a dog. One day, the dog said to the rooster, "Petya let's go into the forest for a stroll."

"Fine," said the rooster.

And so, the two friends went into the forest. They walked the whole day. It grew dark. The two friends chose a large tree with a hollow. The rooster flew up onto a bough, and the dog climbed into the hollow. They fell asleep.

Early next morning the rooster cried out, "Cock-a-doodle-do."

A fox heard the rooster.

The fox came up to the tree and began to call the rooster to him.

"Come and be a guest at my house."

"Fine," said the rooster. "Only I have a comrade with me. He is sleeping in the hollow."

The fox rushed up to the hollow and the dog caught him by the snout.

It takes Ivan but a few weeks to absorb his *Bukvar* and graduate into his first reader, which, Dr Trace tells us is entitled *Rodnaya Rech* (Native Language). It has a vocabulary of 2000 different words and literary selections which grow longer and longer until they reach 500 running words in Tolstoy's version of the Three Bears. Along with his reader, the first grader begins *Book One of the Text Books of the Russian Language*, a series he will study through the seventh grade. Russian grammar, says Dr. Trace in an article in the March, 1962 *Phi Delta Kappan*, is so complex that by comparison English may be said to have almost no grammar at all. Therefore, Russian children must begin its study very early in order to be able to write - or even read - their mother tongue. Their first grade text contains 80 pages with 200 exercises which acquaint them with syllabication, hyphenation, capitalization, punctuation, the declarative and interrogative sentence the position of words, and give them further practice in writing Russian script.

It may be concluded then, Dr. Trace summarizes, that these three books give Ivan a rather thorough introduction to his mother tongue by the end of the 34 weeks which with two 12 day vacations, make up his first school year.

Its second grade reader steps up its vocabulary to some 4000 different words. Of its 22 poems, 7 are from such pre-Soviet writers as Tolstoy, Pushkin, Chekov, Prylov, Neckrassov. As 14 of its prose selections come, likewise, from the literary great of Czarist days, one can take Dr. Trace's word for

the high quality of most of its content. Along with this *Second Rodnaya Rech* Ivan studies Book II of the Russian Languages - packed with still more exercises on the proper use of the Russian tongue.

The Third Reader is an imposing book of 384 pages, 100,000 words of text, and a vocabulary of well over 8000 words. It is divided into three sections: literature, geography and science history. The first of these, our author tells us, is highly literary, the second highly informative, and the third highly slanted toward the Marxist-Leninist view of history. Since Soviet schools teach history and geography as separate subjects in grade four, the Fourth Grade Reader consists mostly of literary selections which are very literary indeed. Though for three years more, Ivan will continue to study the grammar and syntax of his native language, his formal training in reading, as such, comes to an end - with the completion of this grade, He has now the skill to read, write and spell *practically every word* he will meet in his textbooks the next six years, and in the extensive outside reading all Soviet pupils are required to do.

In the Kappan article already mentioned, Dr. Trace closes his exposition of the Soviet reading program with a statement to this highly telling effect:

"The reorganization of Soviet curricula now underway in favor of greater attention to mechanics and technology, does not call for any changes in the reading program which would make it less demanding. Likewise the newest editions of the readers and language books do not differ significantly from those used five years ago. Evidently, the Soviet school authorities are fairly well satisfied that the program is effective and efficient. It may be there is very good reason to think it is."

But there is every good reason to believe that ours is NOT. The blame for this Dr. Trace places primarily, on the pre-primers primers, supplementary primers readers and supplementary readers on whose starveling vocabularies and inane content our children get such training as they do in reading, in those crucial four years in which their Soviet grademates acquire their practically adult proficiency. These concoctions come in some 20 or more basal series, most of them running through the sixth grade which compete with one another for adoption by the state and local school authorities of the land.

It imports little to the child, his teacher, or his worried parents which series his school adopts. Any differences among them are swallowed up in their deadly similarities. For the whole of the first year, most of them offer a vocabulary of only 300-400 words - little more than does the *Bukvar* which the Soviet beginner masters in his first few weeks of school. In the second year, most of the series add some 300-350 to the first year words, bringing the American child's classroom exposure by the end of his second June to around 700-750 in contrast to the Soviet 4000. The third year readers may bring his accumulated word recognition to 1200-1500, as against the Soviet 8000 and the fourth *may* step it up to 1500-1800 in contrast to the 10,000 of the corresponding *Rodnaya Rech*. As for the amount of text contained, one typical and widely used series supplies the information that its pre-primers, primers, first, second, third and fourth readers provide a total count of 66,071 words! Less by 33,000 than Ivan gets in just one *Rodnava Rech* - *his* third.

What sort of stories, poems, bits of worthwhile information can you concoct for a first grade reader out of 300-400 words? Perhaps those who turn them out should be congratulated on their endowment of whatever it takes to arrive at nothing more wooden headed than the sample which follows. Which of us could produce much more *elan* with a total of only 30 different words?

"Alice, Alice!" said Jerry,  
"Come here! Come here!"

I see something brown."  
Alice looked down.  
She saw something little.  
She saw something brown.  
She saw a little brown rabbit.  
"Oh, look, Jerry," said Alice.  
Little rabbit saw Jerry.  
She saw Alice, too.  
Hop, went the rabbit.  
Hop, hop hop!  
Alice and Jerry ran and ran.  
Little rabbit saw something.  
She saw a hole,  
A little brown rabbit hole!  
Down she went.  
"Oh," said Alice and Jerry.

This contrast, declares our author, "must not - dare not - continue. In view of the tremendous importance of education in the struggle between Communism and the free world, the last disparity between Soviet and American schools in the teaching of mathematics and the basic sciences is more than a little terrifying." But "In a profound sense," he continues, "the reading program is the backbone of these studies. Not only they, but history, geography and virtually every other subject the pupil studies, demands that he read textbooks; and that he read them easily and accurately enough to *get what they say*."

No fifth grade history or geography can be written up to the aural comprehension of normal eleven-year-olds in less than a vocabulary of 6000 words. Yet most of ours enter upon these studies with the reading recognition of only the 1500-1800 with which they finished fourth grade. No seventh grade literature text on anything approaching the level of the corresponding Russian text can be put together with a vocabulary of less than 10,000 words. Yet the average American 12-year-old leaves the sixth grade with a print command of less than half that number.

How does Dr. Trace propose to deal with this crucial *impasse*? The Bulletin staff raises its viva to to the boldness of his therapy. It is nothing less than to scrap every last one of the basal series of readers which content themselves with these starveling offerings and do our children the elementary justice of giving them classroom texts much more comparable to vocabulary word count and range and quality of content to those of their Soviet counterparts.

As to vocabulary, he proposes 2000 words for the second grade and 5000 for the fourth, tho he does not tell us what the first and the third should be. Though formal instruction in reading ends in Russia with grade four, it continues here through six. For this grade, he recommends an "absolute minimum" of 10,000 words, tho again he does not say what increment grade five should contribute to this total.

"To teach students to read at this rate, is neither impossible nor even difficult," he avers, "The McGuffey readers of the last century assumed that students can learn to read at least as quickly as I have suggested." "School administrators may argue among themselves as to the best method of teaching from second grade readers with a vocabulary of 2000 words and a sixth grade reader with a 10,000 to 15,000 word vocabulary. The only intolerable argument is that it cannot be done."

The S.P. Bulletin does not like to advance intolerable arguments, especially against a stand so inherently congenial to its staff. But it must register the gravest doubt whether first and sixth grade

vocabularies of 2000 and 10,000 words can be taught to any large majority of American children in the spelling of today.

For the simple reason that they never have - not even in the heyday of the McGuffey Readers, no matter what those readers assumed.

It is none too easy to discuss the McGuffey Readers. Between 1836, when the first one appeared, and 1879, when the whole series went through that thorough revision in which the American Book Company publishes them today, they underwent alterations - changes of gradation, redistribution of old material, introduction of new, etc. - to an extent of which no one now ventures a detailed account. I am myself relying on a *Words list* of the primer and six readers copyrighted in 1886 by Van Anterp, Bragg and Co, the last of the succession of McGuffey publishers who preceded the American Book Co. The *Lists* were compiled by Scott H. and Ben Blewett, both principals in the school system of St Louis, Mo. They show a total of 1392 different words for the 71 lessons of the *Second Reader*, 3112 for the 90 lessons of the *Fourth*, 1499 for the 137 lessons of the *Sixth*. But if one can assume that all of these are new words, and that each lesson is using, also, what it needs from the vocabulary of all preceding ones, then the *Second*, *Fourth* and *Sixth* of these last century *Readers* did perhaps offer the vocabularies which Dr Trace recommends for today.

Or did they? It depends on what for his purpose constitutes a word. Should *boy*, *boys*, *boy's*, *boys'* count as four words or as one? And how about *walk*, *walks*, *walked*, *walking*? The Blewetts list such regular selections as each a word in its own right. What inroads an opposite decision would make on the total elementary vocabulary they record, I haven't gone to the labor of computing. An alphabetic arrangement of the whole McGuffey vocabulary would gently lighten the job, but if such a thing exists. I haven't yet unearthed it.

Not that a few hundred words more or less in the total vocabulary of this series of our recent past would have much to do with our dubiousness as to the one Dr. Trace recommends for our immediate future.

That is, if printed in our present orthography.

Spite of what he says - just once - about leaving the method of teaching his new readers to administrators and teachers, everywhere else in his book he makes it clear that "phonics" is the only one he considers effective. Well, nothing could be more phonic than the way these Blewett lists are presented to the teacher and the child. Here is page one of the primer list.

#### McGUFFEY'S PRIMER

|           |           |              |            |            |
|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Lesson 1. | Lesson 6. | Töm<br>cätch | pönd<br>Ī  | Lesson 17. |
| a         | Nät's     | hĭs          | dűeks      | bĭrd       |
| răt       | făt       | hē           | wĭł        | trēe       |
| căt       | dög       | nöt          | fēed       | thère      |
| ănd       | Răb       | hĭm          | thēm       | fĭve       |
| Lesson 2. | Lesson 7. | Lesson 11.   | Lesson 14. | do         |
| the       | lög       | böx          | blĭnd      | röb        |
| hăs       | frög      | nĕst         | Mă'ry      | Lesson 18. |
| răn       | sēe       | thĭs         | höldz      | pĕt        |
| ăt        | ön        | hĕn          | hănd       | lĭves      |
| Ănă       | sēeş      | ĭn           | kĭnd       | căge       |

|                          |                                  |                                 |   |  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Lesson 3.                | Lesson 8.                        | shē<br>ëggs<br>gēt              | to<br>Lesson 16.                                | Sūe's<br>sīng<br>love's<br>sō<br>love                      |
| fān<br>hāt<br>Nāt<br>cān | māt<br>stānd<br>lāmp<br>īt<br>īs | Lesson 12.<br>ōld<br>fōx<br>rūn | Sūe<br>dōll<br>new (nū)<br>drēss<br>lēt<br>hōld | Lesson 19.<br>yoæ<br>boys<br>plāy<br>yēs<br>āre<br>ōf (ōv) |
| Lesson 4.                | Lesson 9                         | Lesson 13.                      | hēr<br>hānds                                    |  |
| cāp<br>lād<br>mān<br>sāt | nāg<br>Tōm's                     | Nēll<br>by                      |   |  |

[Hard *g* should have a macron above it; hard *c* should have a dot in the middle the curve; *o* of *to*, *do* should have an umlaut below it; the *o* of *love* should have one dot above it; the *y* of *by* should have a macron.]

As you can see, every word is doctored to indicate the value of its vowels; hard and soft *c, g, a* are unmistakably differentiated and the too intractable words respelled. The crossing out of silent letters ends with the last lesson of the second reader, but every other aid to "word-calling" is continued through the sixth, so if the phonic method was ever capable of teaching any large majority American children to master vocabularies which progressed to 10,000 words by the end of grade six, you would suppose that the McGuffey readers would have demonstrated this. But it was during those decades when they reigned in the schools of most of this land, outside New England that the crusade for spelling reform crescended to a height never since attained.

And the reason for this was the failure of the schools, in or out of New England, to teach their pupils to read, write and spell.

As long ago as 1881, The U.S. Bureau of Education published a pamphlet on this subject written by the eminent Dr. Francis March of Lafayette College. Some dozen years later, so serious had the "reading problem" become, that the Bureau devoted 80 closely printed pages to a revision and enlargement of this earlier publication, designating it *Circular of Information No. 8*, 1893. It is now, also, out of print, but if an extant copy of it should lie buried in the attic of any of our "back-to-phonics" advocates, would that he would rummage it forth and read it.

It takes an early swing back to 1874, when the American Philological Society held its annual meeting in Hartford, Conn. By then the McGuffey Readers had been whacking away for some 36 years at the phonic teaching of our first two R's, but if the President of the Association was less then thrilled by the results, he was no whit surprised. What method *could* deal effectively, as far as the majority of the nation's children were concerned, with the chaos of *city, kitty, pretty - any, penny - give, dive - have, behave - dim, limb, hymn - time, climb, rhyme - are, far, bazaar - her, sir, fur, whirr, myrrh*, and the thousands of other such mis-transcriptions of the words these children spoke and heard.

"It is of no use he said in his opening address, "to try to characterise with fitting epithet, the monstrous spelling of the English language. The time lost by it is a large part of the school time of the mass of men. Take the doors which each man spends learning to read at school, the hours which he wastes through life from the hindrance of easy reading; the hours wasted at school in learning to spell; the hours spent through life in keeping up and perfecting this knowledge of spelling, in

consulting dictionaries; the hours that he spends in writing silent letters - and multiply this lost time by the number of persons who speak English, and we shall have a total of millions of years wasted by each generation."

Each generation's life being short at the best, is there a back-to-phonics advocate who wouldn't admit that this is quite a lot of it to lose? But since 1874, almost three generations have passed through the schools of the English-speaking world, each generation made up of millions more individuals than the one before. Computation is not my strong point, but will some statistician among our readers send us at least a minimum estimate of what the wastage may have zoomed to by December, 1961, when *What Ivan Knows* came off the press?

Wasted by the first two of these generations in trying to make "phonics" work on hopelessly malphonetic spelling. Wasted by the third is a still sillier attempt to line up the printed with the spoken word.

What might not the culture of American be today, if the educators who heard and read this speech of 1874 had turned to each other with: Then, why the deuce.." and straitway organized a National Language Commission to do for our otherwise beautiful tongue what Spanish Royal Academy had so long been doing for the whole Spanish world? At the very least, would we now be finding so "profoundly disturbing" Dr. Trace's realistic exposition of the Soviet reading program?

Among the many, quotations from outstanding educators with which the Bureau follows this pronouncement of 1874, is one from Andrew D. White, first President of Cornell University, He too, lashes out against "the fearful waste of time on the part of millions of children in learning the most illogical mode of spelling, perhaps, that this world has ever seen." Adding: "The only real result being to weary them of books and blunt their reasoning faculties."

It is for further warning against this last - and most irremedial - consequence, I quote Dr. W.T. Harris, then Superintendent of the St. Louis schools, later, the very Commissioner of Education under whom *Circular No. 8* issued from the Bureau in 1893. Among the high benefits of a consistently phonetic spelling he claims, "the development of logical power of mind in the pupil. He can safely be taught to analyse a word into its sounds and find the letters representing them, whereas, under the ordinary orthography, it is an insult to his reason to assure him that a sound is (dependably) represented by any particular letter," (A case in point., let me here interpose, being the long i-sound in *I, my, buy, pie, eye, sigh, aisle, guile, rhyme, indict*, (which your dictionary has the good sense to respell as *ī, mī, bī, pī, ī, sī, īl, gīl, rīm, indīt*.) "Hence, continues Dr. Harris, "analytic power is trained by phonetic spelling, instead of mere memory, from the day of his entrance into school - and analytic power is the basis of all thinking activity."

It follows then that, as he puts it, "The logical inconsistencies of the ordinary alphabet makes the old system a very injurious discipline for the young mind. The earliest studies should be the most logical and consistent."

This, I remind Dr. Trace, was spoken in the very noonday of the McGuffey phonics. This and similar judgements not only from many other outstanding scholars of that era, but from thousands and thousands of classroom teachers who in state and local conventions over much of the U.S., supported the plea of the Philologists for a National Language Commission. What has he to say to it? Do today's children average an intelligence so much higher than those who passed through our schools before the issuance of this Circular, that we can safely continue this blunting of their reasoning faculties, this day-in, day-out rough-shodding of their burgeoning sense of consistency, of analogy, of cause and affect? More to the immediate point, perhaps, does the I.Q of our American primaries average so much higher than those of Russia that we can safely launch them into the same

inpredictable future regardless of what we do to their minds thru the most formative four years of their whole school life?

It is not as if phonetic spelling would be at all difficult to introduce into the elementary grades. In fact, it is there already. Pick up a Thorndike-Barnhart Beginning Dictionary, and look up *have*, *half*, *- many*, *meant*, *scent* - *phlegm*, *gem*, *- limb*, *wren*, *damn*, and what do you find in their parentheses? Respelling to the rockbottom pronouncibility of *hav*, *haf*, *laf*, *graf* - *meni*, *ment*, *sent* - *flem*, *jem* - *lim*, *ren*, *dam*. Not an equivocal vowel among, them not a silent consonant muscling in, not a *gh* or *ph* usurping the office of a simple and sufficient *f*, not a *g* doing ditto for a *j*. In short, every letter in every one of these examples sticking meticulously to the depiction of the one and only one, basic speech sound assigned to it in the dictionary key.

It is true of course, that when it comes to the long vowels, and those we hear in *bar*, *ball*, *bull*, the dictionary resorts to diacritics, and diacritics are impracticable for handwriting and typing. But what could be easier than transcribing each of these eight sounds by a vowel digraph never used for any other and writing them, for instance, as in *laid*, *lee*, *lie*, *loam*, *loom* - *baa*,; *baul*, *buul*? By this simple device (proposed by no less an authority than Sir Isaac Pitman way back at the end of last century) such demons as *gauge*, *weight* - *people*, *sieze* - *sign*, *guide* - *bowl*, *yolk* - *lose*, *rhubarb*, would then transfigure themselves into *gaij*, *wait* - *peepl*, *seez* - *sien*, *gied* - *boat*, *yoak* - *looz*, *roobarb* - and smile up at even the first grade moppet with "Just sound me out. Ie am hoali troo too yoor sound-simbl kee."

Here, then, in a fourth grade dictionary, in wide use thruout the land, we have the way out of our children's dangerous reading, writing and spelling lag behind their Soviet grademates. Yet even in this fourth year of their training in these fundamental skills, we use it only as a last resort, and keep right on wasting their time, burdening their memories, frustrating their reason with a spelling, which we know in advance few of them can really master, and at which all too many will deleteriously fail. Has it ever so much as ocured to the moguls of our vast educational system that a simple reversal of the entries and respellings of our school dictionaries - to the tune of *kaf* (calf), *aik* (ache); *det* (debt); *bizi* (busy); *yot* (yacht); *tuf* (tough), would cut to the very roots of our reading problem. And incidentally check the incredulous quirk of the lip, the shrug of the shoulders with which their Soviet counterparts must read even such an arresting book as *What Ivan Knows*. Arresting *here*, that is to say. To them the most revolutionary of its recommendations must fall far short of what we hide-bound Amerikanskis should have been startled into the very day their first Sputnik crossed our skys.

What (one can almost hear them scoffing), about that 2000 word vocabulary for the second grade, rising to only 5000 for the fourth? While from Leningrad to Vladivistok, the corresponding Soviet grades tackle twice that number. And this, despite the fact that, apart from its spelling, the Russian language is so much more complex than English. Why then, don't those endless superintendents, supervisors, reading specialists of theirs fairly fall over one another to phonemicize their spelling and set their vocabularies, grade for grade, not pitifully below, but proudly above the utmost which Russia's ubiquitous inflections and difficult grammar allow her to attain?

Why indeed? Don't let's hear any more about public inertia, or the active opposition of the man in the street. When, in the whole 45 years, during which Soviet education has been crescending to its present perturbing height has there been any honest and adequate effort to overcome this inertia, this opposition (to the extent the latter really exists)? And if the inauguration of such an effort is not the responsibility of our educational leadership, whose responsibility is it?

It is because, of our very real admiration for what - short of this effort - his book is achieving, the Bulletin addresses this question, first of all, to Dr. Trace.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 p16]

## **An Analysis of the A. R. Project, by Leo G. Davis.**

Dear Mr. Tune

I wish to make the following analysis of Sir James Pitman's comments on his Augment Roman alfabet, as set forth in the March issue of the S. P. Bulletin.

Frankly, his comments seem to be based on two very dubious premises, - that digrafts are confusing to beginners, - and that adults would have to use the revolutionary spellings. On page 12, line 4, he states, "From this it may be safely *supposed* (my italics) that augmentations must be preferable to digraphs..." Thus he inadvertently admits that his arguments are based on theory rather than practice.

However, I didn't stumble over the digrafts, as a child. Did you? And I doubt if Mr. Pitman did either. It is quite probable that he was never a primary teacher, and I doubt if he made any survey among primary teachers retarding difficulties in this field. At least I never experienced any difficulty teaching the digrafts. Thus it is my opinion that if "*ch, gu, oo, ng, qu, sh, th, wh, zh, x* and final-*y*" were the only inconsistencies in our orthograpy, nobody would give reform a second thot. It's the useless, silent letters and the erratic interchanging of symbols that causes 99.9% of the confusion. Thus, it seems to me that Mr. Pitman is on the wrong track. He wants to eliminate the harmless consonant digrafts but makes no effort to offer individual symbols for the more important long vowels.

Inasmuch as even the mere elimination of useless silent letters would be an improvement, Mr. Pitman's experiment is sure to show favorable results, but it can neither prove or disprove the value of his augmenting "monograms". In order to determine the value of his augmentations, he should have divided his classes into two groups, - one using the unmodified World English, and the other the augmented.

As to the difficulties in switching to revolutionary spelling - even tho revised spelling were introduced in our schools tomorrow, there would be no impelling need for current adults to change their spelling habits in the least. As a matter of orderly procedure, any revolutionary orthograpy should be introduced at the primary level and extended to the higher grades only as the initial generation of new spellers advances. Thus no current adults - except those compiling revised texts, would have any occasion to use the new spellings. Most of us are going to continue spelling very much as we now do, come what may! There would be very little revolutionary copy submitted for publication until the new spellers begin to take over the typesetting and proofreading. As a matter of convenience, Junior would take a short course in "Old Reading", while grandpa would learn to read the new orthograpy thru mere "exposure", thus either could read what the other writes. Therefore, there would merely be an indefinite transition period of "optional spellings" during which oldsters would cling to the old and youngsters to the new. Thus the old spellings would pass away with the old folks and revised spelling would become a reality without compulsion or confusion on the part of anyone. It isn't a matter of anybody changing their spelling habits, but a matter of merely changing textbooks, so that coming generations may learn to spell sensibly.

Mr. Pitman is quite realistic in pointing out that we must be tolerant of one another's speech and spellings, but we cannot provide for minority pronunciations. It isn't a question of how our grand-*parents* spoke in thrusting the various dialects on us, but a question of how we may teach our grand-*children* to spell in order that they may all speak the *same* dialect. And he made one very pertinent observation in pointing out that "naughty" and "knotty" sound the same in many localities. It has

been my observation that the *ah* and *aw* fonemes are arbitrarily interchanged by the majority of speakers with little or no regard for what the teachers or the dictionaries say, yet there is never the slightest misunderstanding. For these reasons it would simplify things if we let the short-o symbol serve both shades of this basic foneme, - leaving it up to diacritics in the dictionary to perpetuate any desired distinction.

Thus I would like to accept his challenge to set forth something which Frank Epperson, Emma Johnson, Dill Murphy Louis Boyle and I believe would be better than his Augmented Roman. The five of us favor using distinctive "faces" of type for the long and short vowels, and we are supported by the fonetic alfabet devised by the Simpler Spelling Assoc., as well as by the various international alfabets. I am sure that my five contemporaries would join me in suggesting that the *Bulletin* set forth Augmented Roman and new vowel letter transcriptions of a given passage for comparative study and discussion by its readers. I am in a position to make the stencils for both or either.  
Leo G. Davis, Box 682, Santa Paula Calif. U.S.A.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin June 1962 pp16-18]

### **A Dedicated Spelling Reformer's Answer to Pitman's Augmented Roman Alphabet, by Sam Seegay.**

In an effort to separate teaching spelling and teaching reading our friend Sir James Pitman has so thoroughly mauled both concepts around with such delicate delineation that in the end I find him right back where he started. How else are we to interpret "any alphabet plays its beneficial part"? Beneficial to what? Of course, beneficial to learning spelling and reading; and as directly and eventually to teaching spelling and reading! You'd hardly dare uphold the opinion that learning an alphabet is an end in itself. In English, more so than in any other language, teaching and learning spelling is the path, the one and major path, that leads to learning and teaching reading.

Nor am I willing to concede that a digraph presents any greater difficulty than an augmentation. Such logic, if carried but one step farther, would contend that the least difficult would be an entirely new symbol. In my opinion; this is altogether erroneous although I would gladly go along with the position that a completely new entire set of symbols would be better. Aside from the obvious mechanical benefit in retaining digrafs in place of augmented or original denotations; and aside from the irrelevance of removing the difficulty from adult craftsmen and by the definition of the relevance of removing the difficulty from the beginning child, I say that any proper digraph is certainly as desirable and as effective as any proper augmentation or any proper accretion; so why not settle for the least disruptive and least expensive? Besides, take a look at the augmentations and you will find that they are no more and no less really, digraphs! Altho each of the two augmented *th's* has a linking stroke it is nevertheless a digraph of *t* and *h*; altho the Augmented *ie* and *ch* are linked and ligatured they are nevertheless digraphs of *i* and *e* and of *c* and *h*. So the argument against digraphs falls flat on its face.

To go on with this further it, seems to me that the values of *t* in *tie* and *t* in *thy* are not exactly as heterotypic as Sir Pitman would have us to believe them but considerably kindred or at least quite consanguine since *t* in *thin* is the acknowledged aspirated variation of *t* in *tin*, and *th* in *thy* is the acknowledged cognate of *th* in *thin*. Thus all three and *d*, the cognate of *t*, make four genuine kissing cousins at the very least. Actually the two different *th's* in augmented are not nearly as distinctive as traditional *t* and *d* and by the same token not nearly as distinctive as the spelling reformer's digraphs *th* and *dh*. The argument that they are closer to traditional is irrelevant - beginning children have not been indoctrinated as yet.

Mr. Pitman goes to great lengths to analyze the nature of augmentation as opposed to digraphs, totally oblivious to the real fact that, the augmentations are really and in fact digraphs, with all the characteristics of digraphs, the good ones retaining the good and the poor ones just as poor. Finally he offers the example of his "fathers" claiming that it is closer to the traditional than is the spelling reformer's digraphic *faadherz*. Let us examine them both and see. The word *fathers* consists of five sounds: the voiced labiodental fricative consonant *f*, the low back pure vowel *o* of *not*, the voiced lingual-alveolar aspirated continuant consonant *dh* the voiced lingual-velar continuant consonant *r* for those speakers who habitually articulate it, or the mid-high back pure vowel *u* of *nut* for those speakers who habitually elide the *r* whenever possible, and finally the voiced lingual-dental sibilant consonant *z*. For this word, Augmented uses six symbols *f*, *a*, *th*, *e*, *r*, and a reversed *s*, which in no way surpasses the form of or varies in theory from the six symbols of the spelling reformer's *f*, *aa*, *dh*, *e*, *r*, *z*. His retention of an *a* is as bad a concession to the French or Continental influence as is the arbitrary doubling of the *a* in reform; his offer of a reversed *s* for *z* is a downright confession of pusillanimity, for the sound is an undisputed *z*; it merely constitutes the implementation of an entirely new additional and altogether unnecessary symbol to add to the present eleven spellings for the sound of *z* in traditional orthography. Now listen, both of these corruptions are much inferior to my scientifically and physiologically accurate 5-symbol rendition, of the word as *f-o-dh-r-z*, *fodhrz*.

Sir James Pitman has lost cognizance of the fact that there are hundreds of alphabets; that each and every one will do the job of transcribing language equally well pending upon organization, that the individual letter or character or symbol is not pertinent, that what matters is the use that is made of the symbol, so that in the long run we may as well use our regular Roman character alphabet and such digraphs as may be essential, rather than introduce or create new or distorted or reversed or foreign symbols or diacritics. (That is what the International Phonetic Alphabet did, with the result that although it is the finest instrument ever devised for a professional examination and transcription of human speech in writing, it is nevertheless much too technical and practically useless for popular consumption). (Also, rather than permit the inclusion of even one novel symbol, it would be more acceptable to introduce a completely new non-roman alphabet of considerably increased ease of performance in line with the Shaw proposal. Even this concept has been defiled and corrupted by a blind obedience to tradition and precedent).

In regard to the various and varying tolerances in the enunciation of speech as given in the six renditions of the word *and*, I hope that Sir Pitman does not mean to suggest that every reader must have all of these renditions for each writer. Oh no, what he has done was to give us a professional phoneticist's eye view of what several different classes of writers and readers would see if they had spoken the words offered. But no reader (except a drooling and mumbling neophyte) mouths the letters of the words he reads, the words stand only as images of a concept in the process of communication. So that it does not matter whether we print *and* or *und* or *ind* or *an'* or *r-and* or *'n'*, the concept is the conjunction *and*. And of course, we do regularly use this established image unless we are examining and describing speech enunciation or making a direct and exact quotation. This applies to the varying pronunciation of all words. Sir James knows this, and it was only with tongue in cheek that he brought up the matter of how a spelling reformer would indicate *leather* or *tomato* in view of the dialectal or colloquial variations in their pronunciations. He knows well enough that we shall accept the decision of the outstanding dictionary editor; or even better, the decision of a Spelling Commission, if we are ever so fortunate as to get one. In the search for a satisfactory system of spelling reform we are not concerned with the range of differences in the pronunciation of a given word; we are interested only in one preferred or standard or most commonly used rendition of that word which becomes the only acceptable spelling or "touchstone" writing-wise, even as this matter stands today.

The Pitman view makes no allowance for another phenomenon in discussing the transcription of language both written and spoken. Written language does not glide or slur or waver. It can vary only in one respect: either it is well printed and legible, or it is poorly printed and less decipherable. Each word stands alone; it is the accepted image of the pertinent concept. But in speech words are subject to many fluctuations in their rendition according to the physiologic and acoustic nature of the combinations of their separate and constituent sounds. For example, we can readily explain the six varieties of *and* that were mentioned above. The first one starts with an initial and clearly defined short *a* as *and*; the second one follows a back sound, perhaps a *k* or hard *g*, so that it comes out with a back short *u* or *und*; the third one follows a front consonant, perhaps a *w* or *f* or *t*, and comes out with the front short *i* or *ind*, the fourth is made by a sloppy speaker who has perverted the conjunction of the two vowels by the extraneous insertion of an *r* or *r-and*; the fifth is caused by a more meticulous speaker in the conjunction of these two vowels by eliding the third vowel *a* to give us *'nd*; and the sixth, because of the rapidity with which he utters this exceptionally familiar phrase, does not take the time to remove his tongue from the *n* position to enunciate the *a*, and since he has held the *n* position for double its normal span he glides away from the *d* position which is adjacent so that he actually uses only the *n*. As complicated as all this seems to be in its explanation, unconsciously the experienced listener has become accustomed to it and suffers no confusion in understanding all six for the one word *and*; just as he has become accustomed to seeing the written words and no matter if in its spoken form it might just as well turn out to be any one of the six variations.

Since Mr. Pitman is so deeply concerned with tolerances in speech and makes so fervent a plea for comparable tolerance in writing, I should like to remind him that writing has its complete set of tolerances. Almost any printed word in a sentence may have one of its letters missing or an extra letter added, or a different letter substituted, and still usually fail to obscure or alter the sense or meaning of the sentence. I have successfully read Augmented and I have successfully read a hundred systems of spelling reform, no matter how differently the words were spelled, provided only that there was some semblance of organization in the system. Daily we find innumerable typographical errors in newspapers and periodicals; nonetheless misunderstanding of the words themselves is so rare as to be practically negligible.

The problem of the pronunciation of words brought up by the inclusion of the words *Perthshire*, *want*, *schedule*, *airplane*, *knotty*, *naughty*, *feud*, *food*, *clerk*, *type*, *typical*, can be solved in only one way; by a recognized and fully empowered authority; until we have one such authority instead of a dozen competing dictionary standards, so it is a waste of time to discuss it. Even with the accepted authority, the problem will remain unless and until we learn to use our written symbols in an exact and unwavering one-to-one correspondence with our spoken sounds. I venture to say that one or two or at the most three generations of strictly phonetic transcription of English speech will more than likely remove a major portion of the disputed variations. I do not believe, as Mr. Pitman does, that the reason for the evolution of variations in pronunciation is due entirely to a "close" resemblance in the sounds involved. In respect to the sounds short *a* of *man* and broad *a* of North Ireland *man*, the vowel sounds of *naughty* and *knotty* and of *feud* and *food*, each of these sounds is a clearly different and obviously distinctive sound entity. The reason why differences in pronunciation have emerged is because in traditional orthography the symbols employed for each of these sounds are also employed, in some cases equally frequently for the alternative sounds. Thus *a* serves for both short *a* in *and* and broad *a* in *are*; *au* serves for both *knotty* and *port*; *eu* serves for both *feud* and *sleuth*, *oo* serves not only for *food*, but also for *good* and *flood* and *floor*. The elimination of all instances of such duplicity depends wholly upon the institution of a strictly one-to-one correspondence in the system of denotation. This is what Augmented Roman and every other current system of spelling reform lacks, and we can never succeed in achieving a strictly phonetic orthography until we realize it. And the sooner - the better, and the better - the better for all of us; that is, no compromises, no exceptions for the sake of tradition, no concessions for the sake of

etymology, and no tribute to authoritarianism. Why should we tolerate *cat* and *kit*, and *until* and *till*, when it is just as simple and just as easy without any loss in time or comprehension or any handicap, to use *kat* and *kit*, and *until* and *til*?

All the benefits that Mr. Pitman claims for the suitability of Augmented, for the acceptance of Augmented, for the efficiency of Augmented, for the preservation of the single conventional form apply equally to almost any digraph system of reform. In toto, I cannot see where Augmented has anything new or better to offer. On the contrary, Augmented Roman would appear to me to be responsible for the perpetration of three crimes against all future English-speaking and -reading generations:

1. It is responsible for enforcing the loss of millions of dollars by making obsolete all present-day transcription machinery, and enforcing the expenditure of millions more dollars for the substitution of new equipment - IF, in the completely suppressed but fervently hoped aspiration of the sponsors, Augmented Roman may one day replace tradition. (Ed. note: This is only his opinion).
2. It is responsible for a futile and unnecessarily arduous loss of time-consuming effort in its mastery - IF it is really to be used only as a transitional measure to terminate in a return to the abominable and universally deplored traditional. (Ed. note: The truth or fallacy of this statement is one of the objectives of the project).
3. In sum and substance, Augmented Roman merely adds another score of denotations to the more than 250 that already plague and confuse readers of traditional, and that prevent millions of our youth from learning to read: and since its aim is only transitional, it makes no effort to remove even one of the faulty traditional denotations; instead it perpetuates the traditional anomalies.

To all intents and purposes it is the considered opinion of this author that Augmented Roman is concocted by well meaning but hopelessly resigned spelling reformers to delude the authoritarian and entrenched custodians of traditional orthography into believing that this purported transient regimen will alleviate the viciousness and insanity of learning and teaching traditional. In my opinion it will not, or at the best it may do so to a very slight and temporary extent. Augmented Roman augments only the size and the difficulty of the burden of learning and teaching reading.

Now, after having unburdened myself of all these derogatory and carping and bilious comments, it is only meet that I make some ameliorative effort to convince the reader that I am not only a stern and unrelenting critic, but that I have also thought out this problem to some helpful and constructive measure too.

So I hasten to say that there is only one practical solution; a complete and avowed renunciation, with our eyes wide open, of traditional orthography, and the substitution and adoption of a strictly phonetic alphabet of exactly 39 sounds. We can employ 23 of our current and standard roman lower case characters; and by altering the values of two more to make a 25 character alphabet provide for two sounds that are not included in our present category of alphabetic sounds. Finally, we add 14 digraphs of these same characters according to the principles of the physiologic articulation of the sounds. We will not only discard the traditional orthography, but we will refuse to make any concession to it. Neither will we spell a word according to its orthography, but we will refuse to make any concession to it. Neither will we spell a word according to its etymology, nor according to historical shifts, nor in agreement with its national origin if it is inconsistent. We shall obey but one law: within the limits of our alphabet (not the narrow transcriptions of the professional phoneticist) we shall spell and pronounce and read and write every word exactly as it is properly spoken - the true and accurate written mirror image of the orally spoken form.

Sam Seegay, New York.

## Comments on the A. R. Alphabet by Ellen Henderson.

The people who are haunting the A.R.A count on securing interest first. They would have children learn one way and re-learn another in order to be able to read the current printed matter. This would be necessary even tho there were many first books printed in A.R.A.

There is no need for *securing* interest. Children go to school expecting to learn to read, and they *would* learn to read

(1) if teachers could use *content* which has sense such as Helen Bowyer describes in *From the Carribean*, on pages 14-16 of the October issue of the S.P.B.

(2) if teachers had the strength of character (pardon me) to show the children how to learn to read in the joyful way which results when children do read for the compelling motive of the story interest in reading,

(3) if there were some sense in the way our words are spelled, and

(4) if some enterprising publishing company would bombard parents with the information parents must have if their children are to be ready to learn to read when they reach the mental reading age, and if it is to be possible for them to learn to read so that they can be free from frustrations.

Those four may not cover the entire matter, but they are important.

The A.R.A. plan as it is described would certainly seem to me to develop word-by-word reading. It is imperative that *from the first* the learners do *not develop* the eye-speech habits which tie the appearance of the word to its pronunciation. They are developing this habit in our first grades in spite of the fact that teachers have been told that phrase reading should be done from the very first. Children who don't learn to read by phrases are slow readers, or perhaps don't read at all.

Far too many teachers think of only one kind of phrase, the prepositional. They show children phrases like *on the table, under the table*. That is all right as far as it goes, but they don't tie such phrases to the meaning phrase or the sight phrase.

Meaning phrase: the pencil, (because here is a meaning)

Eye phrase: the pencil is, (waiting for meaning)

Meaning phrase: the pencil is on the desk.

Two meaning phrases: the yellow pencil is on the desk..

Forty years ago the top "educators" - W S Gray and Buzwell, at the Univ. of Chicago - were right in discarding the poor use of phonics and poor oral reading. But they discarded the good along with the bad, and advocated "sight" learning. Now, sight learning is right for children to learn when they see STOP, Walk, Poison, their names, and other geographic names, etcetera. But those so-called educators didn't know - or didn't try to find out - how people who read use the letters of which words are made. The poor men didn't analyze the problem thoroly and didn't read "*How To Teach Reading in The Public School*", which was in the U. of Chicago library, and authored by S.H.Clark, then at the U. of Chicago. Neither did the others who told parents not to teach the alphabet to their children.

As a matter of fact, it has been shown that children who learn to read easily and quickly *already know* the alphabet and are already printing their names before they go to school.

I predict the A.R.A. will have the same fate that came to the New York City experiment of 20 years ago, under the charge of Dr. Raubichek. Books were printed with the International Phonetic

Alphabet symbols. Several schools participated.. The children learned but they had to re-learn before they could read conventional. The result was that the learners found the shift to conventional spelling was too difficult.

At the time, I was Chairman of the Elementary Committee of the National Assoc. of Teachers of Speech - now Speech and Hearing. I pointed out the double learning problem. But Dr. R, was then at the head of the N Y, City schools.

Here is my reason for being willing to use no new symbols. Mature readers who meet a new word sound thru the consonants from the first of the word to the end without wondering too much about vowels, syllables or accent. Early habit takes care of syllables and accent. My pet stumbling word: *Schistocephalus*. And the nature of our way of speaking takes care of the sounds of the vowels. The vowel sound seems to come naturally in between the consonant sounds. My pet examples: the two m's in *remember*, the vowels in *v-w-l*, *sk-l-t-n*, *t-l-ph-n-*, *L-s -ng-l-s*, *C-l-f-rn-*.

Perhaps at this point I should hold forth about inner speech. Everyone who attempts to understand a new word uses inner speech. The eyes see a letter or combination of letters and the speech muscles begin to articulate the sounds. Some of this is present in thinking. I have seen X-ray motion pictures of movements magnified to be studied. The same movements are present in a higher-lower scale when people speak the same thoughts.

If mature readers pronounce a new word of which they do not know the meaning they either took it up in a dictionary, ask someone for its meaning, or decide that their estimated meaning is sufficient. First grade teachers have been told for 40 years - perhaps more - that they must be sure the children are already using the vocabulary they are trying to learn to read.

Fortunately, the speech muscles don't have to completely articulate the sounds. They will not if the learners have the habit of passing rapidly from left to right while thinking the meaning.

My way of teaching differs in two ways;

1. I show people how to use inner speech.
2. I prove that we don't need to know about the vowel sounds, because the needed sound comes without our knowing which is which. The many vowel-consonant combinations we have learned orally give us these sounds.

In spelling, I stress the 25 consonant letters which more dependably spell the sound that is heard.

If we speak clearly, the breath comes from the throat and is modified into vowels and consonants by changes in the shape of the mouth cavity - obstructed by the mouth parts to produce the consonants.

I think it would be a definite advantage to have people to learn to speak clearly and distinctly. How silly this is: The gahd is in the gahden. God in the garden might do for some but who but r'less folk get *guard* out of God?

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How odd is the spelling of *iron*!  
For a better recording I yearn.  
I might mention that Byron  
Rhymes well with environ,  
But I give up and say, "Let's adjourn".

Faith M. Daltry.

## **Our Mentor, Homer W. Wood, by Frank W. Epperson.**

In 1956, Homer W. Wood published an interesting booklet, "*Plan for U.S Official Dictionary with Reformed Spelling.*" In the foreword he said: "I am one of the oldest newspaper publishers in California and a retired lawyer. For many years I have thought of writing a booklet with a plan on how to bring about reformed and simplified spelling, always with the hope that some other person or group would start a movement for its accomplishment."

Since that time Homer Wood has probably done more for spelling reform than any other living person. He has retired as Editor of the Porterville Evening Recorder, and unselfishly devoted his time, money and talents for this great cause.

Noah Webster was also a newspaper publisher and lawyer. He started the revolution against the irrational spelling of the "King's English", giving us many simplified words in his dictionary (labour, cheques, etc.). A British dictionary in 1878 stated: "Dr. Webster and his American copyist attempted to introduce some orthographical novelties into the English language, but as they are entirely opposed to the recognized usage of our country, they have been altogether rejected, and the general system of our best writers adopted.

For a time Mr. Wood worked alone, writing pamphlets which he printed and distributed nation-wide at his own expense. There were times nation-wide of discouragement, but now there is a growing recognition that reform in our spelling is essential. Support is coming from many different sources and from many different states.

Quoting in part from one of the many reports Mr. Wood published (written by Ralph D. Owen, Ph.D., Professor of Education, retired, Temple Univ. Philadelphia); "A smart business man is willing to learn from his rivals. Recently we were shocked by the realization that Russia under Communist rule has made great progress in literacy, general education and scientific research, let's see how she did it... When in November, 1917, the Communists under the leadership of Lenin came to power, they set themselves the goal to catch up with the West. Item Number One was to reduce illiteracy. Lenin accepted the proposals for reforming the alphabet with the result that present day Russian spelling is better than ninety per cent efficient... English spelling has an efficiency of less than twenty per cent... In 1953, the British Parliament approved of simplified spelling. Our British friends are waiting for us to catch up!"

In 1960 Mr. Wood published a twelve page impressive "Argument Brief for H.R. 2165. A Bill to Establish a National Grammar Commission to reform the spelling of English words, to publish the U.S. Official Dictionary..." Congressman Harlan Hagen had introduced the Bill for Mr. Wood. In the Brief Mr. Wood stated: "We come to Congress, spelling our own time and money, seeking no reward... I am simply working for it because I know the good it will do... When President Theodore Roosevelt advocated reformed spelling and asked the National Printing Office to spell 300 words in a simplified way... He should have asked Congress to legalize a grammar commission with the proper authority... Americans want better and easier spelling methods." He urged everyone to write to their Congressman, urging adoption of this Bill. A later Bill introduced by Congressman Hagen changes the subject matter to National Spelling Commission, and at this time the bill is H.R. 2476.

Mr Wood's plan has been endorsed by many organizations including the 400 member California Newspaper Publishers Association. In 1961, the California State Senate unanimously passed the following resolution: "That the President of the United States and the National Congress are

requested and urged to establish a National Spelling Commission... and establish the U.S. Official Dictionary with reformed and simplified spelling..."

State Senator J. Howard Williams, who introduced the resolution, sent an official copy to the Governor of each state suggesting that similar action be taken in other states. Governors of many states responded expressing interest in the proposed national legislation. One of the most enthusiastic came from Gov. William Quinn of Hawaii. Others showing great interest are Gov. Grant Sawyer of Nevada, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller of New York, Gov. J. Millard Tawes of Maryland, Gov. Wesley Powell of New Hampshire, Gov. John Volpe of Massachusetts, Gov. Ross R. Burnett of Mississippi.

The Tulare County Bar Association and the California Press Associations are also among the many organizations which have endorsed Mr. Wood's plan.

A Special Senate Resolution No. 80 (1961) states in resume: "Whereas Homer W. Wood of Porterville California reached the venerable age of eighty years on October 18, 1960; and whereas Homer W. Wood was born October 18, 1880, in Oroville, California, where he spent his boyhood and learned the newspaper business from his father ... and whereas, in April, 1905, he was appointed first clerk of the Third Court of Appeal ... he resigned to begin practice of law in San Francisco ... On November 12, 1908 in San Francisco he founded the second Rotary Club ever established, and a few months later the Oakland Rotary Club... being the forerunner of the great growth and development of Rotary International and related service club movement throughout the world ... On June 12, 1912, Homer W. Wood married while in the newspaper business in Salinas, and two years later purchased the Petaluma Daily Courier, and in January, 1928, purchased and has since published the Porterville Evening Recorder, in which he still maintains co-ownership, and whereas, Homer W. Wood and his wife Cora, are the parents of Homer J Wood and Peggy Wood Romeis, and are now looking forward to their golden wedding anniversary next year; now, therefore be it Resolved ... That the members of this Senate congratulate Homer W. Wood upon his eightieth birthday anniversary, heartily commend him for the great contribution he has made to his community and State ... and extend to Homer W. Wood and his wife best wishes for a joyful celebration of their golden wedding anniversary in 1962, and for many more years continual happiness..."

On June 5, 1962 he was honored by a rousing standing ovation at the convention of the Rotary International in Los Angeles, in recognition of his early efforts for the Rotary Club.

Their golden wedding anniversary was celebrated by a family banquet attended by 15 members of the family; including 3 grandchildren and 2 grandnephews.

May we also echo our best wishes and congratulations and hope that he and his wife live to see the realization of his goal - the passage of the Spelling Reform Bill by Congress.

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Frank W. Epperson, President, the Society for Phonic English Letters, Oakland, Calif.

## Some Thoughts on Spelling Reform, by Albert Eagle.

Dear Mr. Tune

Some of the things from some of your contributors I strongly disagree with. Most of all with S.C. Seegay's "never failing to remember that each speech sound must be indicated by one and only one denotation", which is about the most harmful nonsense on spelling reform anyone could write.

Our Queen does NOT "rain" over us (reign could be rayn) and when she does go out riding much as she may want a fine day; she has no power at all to "hold the reins" (reins can be raens). (Both reign and rein are of course frightful horrors).

Who in their senses wants *maid* and *made* alike, or *fair & fare* or *male & mail* or *tale & tail*? Or who wants *pale ales & pail ails* spelt alike? Certainly not the brewers who would soon invent a new spelling for their product and couldn't be prevented from doing so.

For primitive people who have a very small vocabulary S.C.S.'s dictum would not be very harmful. But for all cultured people it is harmful almost to the point of insanity. The main *purpose & object* of the language on paper is to put *information* on record not to put *sounds* on record. Tape recorders and gramophone discs do the latter.

Several decades ago spelling reformers were chiefly impressed with the difficulty English children had in learning English spelling when they went to school, so S.C.S.'s "one spelling for one sound" seemed reasonable. Now educationalists realize, what they should have done long ago, is that our present spelling is a frightful brain torturing strain to children when learning to read. To right this wrong does not mean that we must have only one spelling per sound, but it *does mean* that every spelling must seem a natural spelling for that sound like *meet, meat, mete*, are all natural spellings for mēt, and *bait, bayt, bate, and baet*, would be for bāt, and *coal, cole, & even cohl*, would be for cōl.

Many reformers propose *aa* for the vowel in *father*. This is not at all natural, the natural usage would be *ah*, so *fahthers* and not *faathers*, which would instinctively be pronounced like *faither*. In *all* my proposals on vowel usage in my book, I have *paid great attention* to adopting what almost everyone would think the *most natural & correct usage*. Many other people seem to lay down quite arbitrary rules in an almost wooden headed manner.

Another point on which I am in disagreement with most other spelling reformers, is over their desire to abolish a final silent *e* lengthening the previous vowel if the intervening consonant is not doubled. This may not be logical from the point of view of academic phonetics but it is a very important - almost essential - trait in the very genius of the English language, and to want to abolish it is not *reforming* our language - it is *butchering*, or even *murdering* it. It is a brilliant idea in that it reduces by six the number of different letters needed in our alphabet. See how it differentiates words like:

|            |           |           |            |             |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| bit, bite  | cop, cope | fat, fate | mill, mile | pal, pale   |
| bill, bile | cot, cote | hat, hate | men, mene  | rat, rate   |
| ball, bale | cut, cute | kit, kite | not, note  | rod, rode   |
| bud, Bude  | col, cole | mat, mate | nil, Nile  | sit, site   |
| bad, bade  | dot, dote | met, mete | pat, pate  | slat, slate |
| cap, cape  | den, dene | mit, mite | pill, pile | tub, tube   |

Of course, where the preceding vowel is not long as *give, native, have & are*, and quite a few others, are horrors in which the final *e* must be struck off.

If spelling reformers can't or won't give up these two things to which I so strongly object, I am afraid I have no sympathy whatever with their efforts - only antipathy.

I didn't intend this for publication in your S.P.B. but you can make whatever use of any ideas I express in any form you like. I want to see English spelling reformed as much as anybody, but not in the way most people seem to want to do it.

Yours very truly,  
Albert Eagle.

The Little Red Hen, in Literary Phonetic English.

Wunce<sup>1</sup> upon a time<sup>2</sup> little<sup>3</sup> red hen livd in a barn with her five<sup>2</sup> chicks. A pig, a cat and a duck made<sup>2</sup> thair<sup>4</sup> home<sup>2</sup> in the same<sup>2</sup> barn. Each day little red hen led her chicks out to look for foode but the pig, the cat and the duck woodd<sup>5</sup> not look for foode.

- Notes: 1. Wuns looks like a plural and about 9 out of 10 persons would pronounce it *wunz* like *bunz* or *hunz* for buns and huns,  
2. All of these words ending in silent e (time, five, are perfect as they are and they must not be changed.  
3. There is no strong enough reason to strike off the e of little. If altered, it should be littul.  
4. The words *air* & *hair* show that *their* should be spelt *thair*.  
5. *Would* must be spelt *woodd*, or it would be confused with wood for timber.

My version is easier for any child to learn to read than the three versions given in the January Parents magazine, and yet it makes *incomparably less* alteration in our ordinary spelling. A.E.

### Observations by F. E. Arctier.

Dear Mr. Tune

May I offer a few comments on that letter of Albert Eagle which you let me read and which he gave you full permission to publish as you wish?

I class him in that category of "half-a-loaf" reformers who want to straighten out only *some* of the anomalies of Traditional Orthography, and excoriate as "harmful almost to the point of insanity" those of us who are aiming at nothing less than the phonemic ideal of one spelling unit, and one only, for each basic speech sound of our mother tongue.

Like so many "half-a-loafers", he fights for the retention of various spellings for words of the same sound but different meanings. I don't know who else "in their senses" wants *maid, made, fair, fare, mail, male*, spelt alike, but I do. True, as he says, his Queen *reigns* over England, she does not *rain*. That is, she does not in today's script or print. But what about oral communication? If somebody just spoke this sentence to Mr. Eagle, would his reason totter on its throne? Would he envisage his sovereign as pouring down from the heavens as H<sub>2</sub>O and no longer at the head of her realm? Then why must he have two separate sight symbols for the sound ran to ensure the functioning of his mind to the point where he can get its meaning from the context? I do Mr. Eagle the honor to

believe that in his aspersions on the good sense of us "whole-loafers", he is here greatly underestimating his own life-long achievement with these one-sound, different meaning words. Can this underestimation arise from the fact that he has never noticed that the great majority of words adhere to the same spelling through both - or all - their diverse definitions. Look, for example, at: *cast, charge, clear, close, cross, draw, flat, make, open, ring, scale, school, spring*. An unabridged dictionary lists their multiple meanings at from 27 to 62 each. Even the usual desk dictionary gives them range as somewhere near half that. Yet I venture that Mr. Eagle's uptake rarely fails him on encountering any one on the list in everyday print. Take the last one if he were to read that Her Majesty had been "*born in the spring,*" would he conceive of her as achieving her birth in some upsurge of ground water? Or in a big metal coil? Or in a flying leap of her progenitress from one spot to another?

My conviction is that he would not. Nor would any of his fellow half-a-loafers. Still, if he wishes to deregularize his own spelling with the variant forms in which *some* multiple meaning words transcribe themselves, that is quite O.K. with me. But I protest his wishing this deregularization on children whose time, attention and memory is urgently needed for studies much more vital to their well being now and in the years ahead of them. And whose higher mental faculties - their sense of consistency of analogy, of cause and effect - stand in need of all the training a one-sign-one-sound orthography can give them. Give them, incidentally, almost automatically, give them that is to say in the most effective and enduring manner known to man.

Now for that *aa* with which World English transcribes the *a* of *father*. Why would *ah* (*fahther*) be more natural? True, we are used to it in the exclamatory words *ah* & *bah*, but are we not equally used to as in *baa, bazaar, salaam*? And the most cursory leafing of the dictionary brings to light some less common examples such as *aardwolf, kaaba, haaf*. If one prefers to transcribe this vowel sound by a vowel digraph rather than a vowel consonant combination what is arbitrary, "unnatural", "wooden headed" about it?

Which leads to another point on which Mr. Eagle waxes aspersive - that of tail-end-*e* when used to lengthen a preceding vowel as in *mate, mete, mite, mote, mute*. Why is it butchering or even murdering the language to scrap it and employ some other device to insure that hope, for instance, shall be pronounced hōp and not hōp? What is the matter with revamping its spelling into *hoap*, on the analogy of the current and entirely acceptable *soap*? Every well intentioned long vowel should intern itself within its syllable - and to do them what justice one can, most of them do this about as often as not. Vide: *maelstrom, main - seen, bean - soak, soul - moot, youth*. They thereby eliminate all that indecision about suffixes which the tag-end-*e* imposes. When Johnny is faced with adding *ing, able* or *ly*, to *like*, should he first knock off this appendage and write *liking, likable* and *likly*? Or leave it on and come out with *likeing, likeable* and *likely*? If the latter, what a queer way to spell *ing* and *able*. If the former, wouldn't *likly* invite the pronunciation *lickly*? Why should we impose even this much worry on a child when we could give him the "all-clear" of the easy, never varying long vowel transcription which the dictionary key provides in *măt, mět, mīt, mōt, mūt*, and World English transliterates into *maet, meet, miet, moet, muet*.

Obviously, as Mr. Eagle claims, his half-a-loaf system makes "incomparably less alterations in our ordinary spelling" than does World English or any other close approximation to the phonemic ideal of *one spelling and only one* for each of our speech sounds, But it doesn't follow in the least that this makes his system easier for any child to learn to read than would a much greater departure from current orthography. Mr. Eagle seems to forget that the child beginning school has no spelling of any sort - and those entering second grade hardly enough to matter. So they have nothing, or very little, to change. What they will respond to most speedily, easily, happily, is those alterations, however numerous in today's written language which makes the transition of symbol into sound most unfailingly predictable to them.

Yours for nothing short of full phonemicism.

E.E.Arctier

P.S. Incidentally does Mr Eagle have that invaluable bit of research of yours: Partial list of words with multiple meanings? I wouldn't be without it! E E A.

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### **Lament of Professor P. Dantick, (on the imminent advent of spelling reform).**

Farewell, farewell, sweet double L  
Now gracing follow, fall and fell;  
Adieu, adieu, dear G in Gnu.  
They say you're wholly needless, too.  
Goodbye, goodbye, gh in sigh,  
Which now must spell in line with die,  
And you ph from classic Greece,  
Must change to the crude f of fleece.

Alas, fair W in whom,  
Complete discard will be your doom,  
Your rôle in blew and grew and drew  
Give way to droo and groo and bloo;  
And not a child will shed a tear  
If weir revamps in line with deer;  
And not a parent wail, "Ah, me!"  
If johnny's spelling jumps to B  
At the sad cost of dropping P  
From pseudo, psalm, psychiatry

And still worse....

If T be wrenched from listen, soften,  
I will ask forlornly just how often  
Will journalists more badly sleep,  
Will even some professors weep,  
For the inroad on tradition,  
The downslide of erudition,  
The mayhem on the Johnsonese  
In which they got their Ph.D's?

Ah, well. . . I can swear that ever  
To keep our spelling as of yore  
I have made my best endeavor.  
"Angels can no more".\*

Helen Bowyer.

\*The writer has not been able to trace the source of this last line which she got from the lips of a famous speaker who used it as a quotation. Can any reader give us its origin?