

ESPERANTO

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SIXTY-THIRD CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H. RES. 415

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE STUDY OF ESPERANTO
AS AN AUXILIARY LANGUAGE

STATEMENTS OF
HON. RICHARD BARTHOLDT
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI
AND
PROF. A. CHRISTEN

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SIXTY-THIRD CONGRESS.

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ESPERANTO.

HOUSE

The committee this day met, Hon. Dudley M. Hughes (chairman) presiding.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD BARTHOLDT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI.

Mr. BARTHOLDT. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I do not wish to occupy your time, for the reason that I can be here almost any time, while Prof. Christen has made a special trip from New York for this purpose, and I should like to give him all the time you can afford to devote to this bill.

I merely wish to say, in explanation, that I have not, as you will notice, introduced this bill by request; I have assumed responsibility for it personally because I thoroughly believe in it. I first introduced the bill in the shape of a request to the Committee on Education to investigate the subject; that is, as to the practicability and advisability of introducing Esperanto as an auxiliary language in the public schools. That resolution was referred to the Committee on Rules and, of course, I could not get any action in that committee, and for that reason I introduced the bill in its present form, which merely provides that Esperanto be taught as a part of the course of study in the schools of Washington, this being the only jurisdiction we have in the matter of education.

We Americans are known the world over as being deficient in the knowledge of languages. I think we might as well admit that. While every other nation is teaching

two or three languages in its schools we have failed to do so, and yet the requirements of international trade and commerce make it absolutely essential that our young men should be taught at least one language or two languages besides their own. Now, this being the case and Esperanto now being taken up by nearly all the civilized countries as an auxiliary language, how easy it would be for us, instead of compelling our children in the schools to learn Spanish, French, and German, to simply take one lesson a week in Esperanto and thereby enable this nation to correspond and communicate in a common language with all the other nations of the world.

The CHAIRMAN. Your idea would be that the various nations would understand Esperanto, and that whenever they would use that language all would understand and comprehend it? Is that your idea?

Mr. BARTHOLDT. Yes. I want to say that there is a movement on foot in nearly every civilized country to make Esperanto a part of the course of study in the schools. If that were carried out, each country would learn its own language and Esperanto, in England English and Esperanto, and so on, so that the international language would really be Esperanto. As one who has studied languages to some extent I can feel the shortcomings and handicaps of a man who, for instance, having studied French for some time, comes to Paris. The very moment you open your mouth the people will notice that you are "a foreigner," no matter how well you speak French, so that the other man, the native, has a certain advantage over you. But if that Frenchman were obliged to speak Esperanto with you then you would be on a common level and neither would have an advantage over the other. I have read in several of the Esperanto newspapers that, for instance, in England the great manufacturing establishments are now printing their catalogues and price lists in Esperanto, and that other publications are sent all over the world printed in that language, in matters of trade and commerce. So you can see it is coming. And since we have not overcrowded the minds of our children with languages as yet, I think it would be advisable and profitable for us to start with Esperanto.

I want to add that it is a very easy language. I have learned it in four lessons. Of course I have not had the time to keep it up, and you must keep in practice.

The CHAIRMAN. Does Esperanto partake more of the Spanish language?

Mr. BARTHOLDT. No. For an English speaking person it is very easy to learn, because it is composed of words taken from the English language, some from the German language, and some from the Latin. But the whole construction of the language is so remarkably simple, that you will wonder why it is that a universal language of that kind has not been introduced before for the use of civilized men.

That is all I wish to say, gentlemen, and I take pleasure in introducing Prof. Christen, of New York, to you, whom I regard as one of the greatest living experts in that language and a missionary for Esperanto.

**STATEMENT OF PROF. A. CHRISTEN,
46 MANHATTAN AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY.**

Prof. CHRISTEN. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, this is quite a novel experience to me. I do not even know how these hearings are carried on, but I am entirely at your disposal and shall be very glad to answer questions. If I had my own way I would like to speak for at least an hour and a half or two hours, but I understand that you can not give me so much time. Therefore, it will be rather difficult to put in all the information I would like to lay before you. I should like to tell you something about the absurd and ridiculous linguistic chaos to which the world has been brought through those great agencies of progress which have now practically abolished distance and brought the ends of the earth nearer to each other than were the opposite frontiers of the smallest kingdom 400 years ago; (1)¹ then about the advisability, nay, the absolute necessity of an international language; how various attempts have been made to meet this growing demand for a special international language, not for home consumption but only for intercourse with all other nations, and why this one is, in my opinion and in that of many wiser men, bound to succeed, and that is because it absolutely fills the bill and is fool-proof; as a scientific and at the same time practical scheme, it can not be improved upon. Next, I should like to speak about the reason why neither English, nor any other living language, can ever become international. No living language can become international because they are all too difficult, too complicated, and not neutral; (2) and then, perhaps, I ought to give you a few outlines of the construction of Esperanto to show you why it is so easy, how it meets all the requirements of the case, and is going to succeed. However, I do not suppose I shall be able to do all of this, and, therefore, will merely take a few points.

¹See [additions](#) to verbatim report of hearing.

Dr. Bartholdt has mentioned to you the movement that is already in existence for Esperanto. Here is the official yearbook of the Universala Esperanto-Asocio (3), the best-organized international society that the movement has yet produced. This society is called the Universal Esperanto Association. It is not a propaganda society, but purely a commercial league for the coordinated use of the language, not merely for the spread of it, but for its practical use among those who have already learned it. This association has 698 branches throughout the world, and is in its sixth year. Here is a map showing the places in which the society is represented, and to-day, if I want any information on any industrial, commercial, educational, scientific, or any other matter—say, in Portugal, Russia, Japan, Spain, Belgium, Holland, or China, etc.—I

look up the place nearest to the district from which I want that information and find the address of the Esperanto center there. Then I write to the delegate and ask for the information in Esperanto, and no matter what language he speaks at home I will get a reply in Esperanto, and he will take any amount of trouble to satisfy my demands. This society has done a remarkable amount of excellent work in the last five years, and Esperanto is more and more used for all practical international purposes.

Now, Dr. Bartholdt told you about many commercial houses in different countries already using Esperanto practically, that is to say, actually using it for their business purposes internationally, printing their circulars, price lists, catalogues, and so on, in Esperanto, and using it for correspondence.

I am reminded that seven years ago, in the north of Scotland, I saw a communication to a Scotch railroad company from a French railroad company written in English, but across the communication there were stamped the words, "We correspond in Esperanto." And that was six or seven years ago, and since that time Esperanto has made very great strides.

I have here a number of trade catalogues in Esperanto, and you will see from the nature of them that they are really very elaborate things and on which these firms have spent a great deal of money, which they would not do if they did not think the thing was actually paying. I have only about 40 such samples here because I can not carry them all about with me. For instance, here is a very elaborate, costly, and handsome catalogue from the biggest firm of photographic instrument makers in Germany, and, I believe, in the world.

Here is a pamphlet issued by the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, a very attractive pamphlet. That was published in order to attract European immigration to that portion of California, and that same chamber of commerce has made large use of Esperanto for that purpose. Two years ago they sent a man to lecture all over Europe and in some parts of Asia on the attractions of California. That lecturer visited 27 different countries; he lectured in 120 different towns during 18 months and every one of his lectures was given in Esperanto, and in several places he was obliged to give his lecture two or three times, because the crowds that came were so large that it was impossible for everybody who desired to hear the lecture to get in at the same time. There were large numbers of people in every place who actually understood him; all did not understand him, but a large number did in every town. For instance, in Paris and Barcelona there are many thousands who understand Esperanto. Here is another German firm in Berlin. Here is a bookseller in Paris issuing a catalogue entirely in Esperanto. Here is a leaflet about the Panama Exposition published in Esperanto. Here is the town of Baden, a watering place near Vienna. They publish a guide of their town in Esperanto. Here is a catalogue issued by the Oliver Typewriter Co. printed in

Esperanto. Cook's famous touring agency has used Esperanto for the last seven years. Here is a Scotch tea firm publishing a circular in Esperanto. Here is a bicycle-saddle maker in Germany using Esperanto for publicity. Here is a Berlin taximeter catalogue in Esperanto. Two years ago there was held in Leipsic the greatest hygienic exposition ever held anywhere. It was the most successful of its kind up to date, and hundreds of thousands of people attended from all over the world. In that exposition Esperanto was used to a great extent and the exhibition authorities published a guide to the exposition in Esperanto. Here is a railroad company that uses Esperanto. A great many railroad companies in Europe already use it. They issue regional guides to the most attractive parts of their districts in Esperanto. Here is a Paris automobile company with a circular in Esperanto. Here is the biggest iron works in England, the Consett Iron Co., of Durham, a firm that employs 30,000 hands, and that firm publishes its catalogues and price lists in Esperanto. This is only one of their Esperanto publications.

Here is a circular issued by a Paris department store. All the big department stores of Paris not only use Esperanto in their publications, but actually have interpreters for Esperanto in their stores. The biggest ink firm in the world—the Stephens Blue Ink Co., in London—use this language for their correspondence. About six years ago they began to use Esperanto and published their advertisements and their circulars for foreign trade entirely in Esperanto. The town of Antwerp publishes an illustrated guide of the town in Esperanto. Here is a very big Anglo-American firm of medical supplies, Burroughs, Wellcome & Co., and they use Esperanto in many of their circulars. The Government of Brazil three years ago sent a man to lecture in Europe as to the attractions of Brazil. That man lectured in Paris to an audience of 3,000 people entirely in Esperanto, and the Government published his lecture in that language. Here is a curious document. This was issued by the anti-alcohol congress in Italy last year, and you will notice that Esperanto is used, and that it is recommended as the only remedy against the language trouble which entirely hampered the deliberations of this congress, as it does all international conventions of every kind. I will hand this to Mrs. Crafts, because she will be able to tell you more about it, since she was there.

That is the commercial side of it, and these are only a very few samples of the actual and practical use being made of Esperanto in this one alone. I could produce, no doubt, a great many more such examples, but I can not carry them all about with me. Here are some 60 to 70 guide leaflets published by so many different towns in France, in Italy, in Austria, in Germany, in England, and in several other countries—leaflets printed in Esperanto for the use of foreigners and tourists. They give them information in Esperanto about the various things they might first need to know on arriving at those cities. For instance, here is Milan, Italy, and Poitiers, France, and Innsbruck, Austria, and Tavia, Italy, and Davos, Switzerland, and so on. In the same line here are

20 more elaborate guidebooks to various towns in Europe, published entirely in Esperanto by the local authorities. Of course, you will not have the time to look at all these things just now, but I will leave them with you. Then, again, I think I can safely say that there are over 100 periodicals published in Esperanto in different countries.

Esperanto is making very rapid progress in Japan and China; for instance, I have here an excellent Esperanto paper published by a native society in Japan.

The CHAIRMAN. In what nation is it progressing most rapidly?

Prof. CHRISTEN. That is difficult to say, but seven years ago France was at the head, and Germany did not take it up for a long time. Then about five or six years ago England shot ahead of France, and then suddenly Germany took it up, and now I think Germany is ahead of all the other countries in the practical use of Esperanto. But it is making good progress everywhere—in France, in England, in Denmark, in Bulgaria, in Spain, in South America, in Germany, in India, in China, and in Japan. In Germany the authorities and scientific people have very strongly espoused Esperanto. For instance, the Government of Saxony sustains financially an Esperanto institute in Dresden, and that does a great deal of good work. The Government of Saxony is also a large contributor to an Esperanto library, which is the biggest in the world, as yet. And in many towns in Spain, in Germany, and in France, especially in France, whenever an Esperanto lecturer goes into a town he gets a stipend from the town; the town pays out of the city funds the expenses of his propaganda, or partly pays them; they contribute 50 or 100 francs, and frequently more, according to the size of the place. That is the practice in many places in other countries besides France, but especially in France. Even the Russian Government gives financial aid to Esperanto propaganda.

The CHAIRMAN. As I understand it, this is not supposed to be a universal language?

Prof. CHRISTEN. No; an international language.

The CHAIRMAN. But at the same time it is a language in which all the universe can meet upon a common plane and converse?

Prof. CHRISTEN. That is the intention, to give the whole of the civilized world one and the same secondary language.

The CHAIRMAN. In which they can all meet on a common plane?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes; no matter where you may go, if you know Esperanto, you shall not be a foreigner anywhere. The intention is to do away with this terrible handicap of

being unable to converse with your fellow men of the various countries you may visit unless you learn all or most of those languages, a thing which, as you know, is in most cases quite impossible. It is the intention to have all the nations understand Esperanto, and by that means make it possible for all the peoples of the world to commune directly with each other. The time has come in the world's history when a common vehicle of human expression is absolutely necessary, and the barrier of Babel must fall, as mostly all other obstacles to free intercourse have already fallen, before the triumphant advance of modern science and technology. It is positively fatuous and futile to ask the modern man, be he in commerce or science or what not, to become an expert in his particular line of endeavor and a polyglot besides. It can not be done. Languages are too many and each one too complicated for our crowded curricula. The obligatory study of foreign languages belongs to a remote past when there existed no sciences and no industrial arts, when life was less crowded and when there were fewer world languages. Even less than a hundred years ago a man was an accomplished cosmopolitan if he knew French and his own mother tongue. To-day he wants and ought to be conversant with French, German, and Spanish, at the very least, besides English, and before long he will have to tackle Russian and Japanese. As a matter of fact in some of the European countries and in South America the school children actually spend from 35 to 60 per cent of the school time in acquiring that sort of an education, which is really not education at all but only a means to an end.

The CHAIRMAN. What progress has Esperanto made in the United States?

Prof. CHRISTEN. In this matter the United States is behind all other progressive countries. There have been many sporadic efforts made and there are Esperanto groups in different places from New York and Boston to Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, etc., but as a national movement it is not what it should be, and the difficulty is, to far as I can make it out, the enormous size of the country. It is difficult for a society, without very large funds, to carry on an effective propaganda all over the country.

Then another difficulty is that Americans are not generally very much given to what I should call ethical ideas of this kind, that offer no immediate and sudden cash returns, until they really become a craze or until a certain class, perhaps, takes them up. (4) Let us not forget also that the American people are not so much in touch with the language difficulty as are other countries, and they do not yet appreciate the enormous use that Esperanto will be to them, for, in my opinion, no white people will benefit more from Esperanto than will the American people, chiefly because like all English-speaking nations they are very poor linguists. Then it is becoming more and more acknowledged among educational people that the English language is the only language that can not be taught. It is well known that if you put educated people from different countries together the Anglo-Saxon will invariably be the one who

understands his own language least. That is due to the peculiar construction of the English language.

However, Esperanto would not be difficult for the American people because it is so scientific, so logical, and entirely free of all irregularities. Prof. Mayer, of the University of Oxford, learned Esperanto in his seventy-ninth year. I heard him make a speech in the language about six or seven days after he took it up, and he declared that Esperanto ought to be introduced into the educational system of the country. He was professor of the Latin language at the Oxford University. He declared Esperanto ought to be introduced into the schools, into the kindergartens, where children of 5 years of age should begin with Esperanto, and I hold with him, because if children were to learn Esperanto it would be of help to them in their English. It is extremely easy to learn and can be learned in a very pleasant fashion, because it is so scientific and so simple. (5)

If children understood Esperanto, they would understand English better, and much of the time we waste in trying to teach them English would be profitably spent, for they would have something to go upon, something to compare English with, and that something so scientific and so logical as Esperanto. Take, for instance, analysis. I will not say it is difficult but I will say it is impossible to analyze an English word, because every word can be so many things. It can generally be an adjective, a noun, a verb, a preposition, a conjunction, and an interjection, that is, the same word, without any structural change, so that it is difficult for a child to discriminate and label the word. Take the word "benefited." That might be used in the past tense (I benefited), or as a past participle: (We may have benefited), and it is impossible for a child to sense the difference, and such confusion occurs to a great extent with most words in the English language.

I am a teacher of languages and have done nothing all my life but study and impart languages. If I had to teach you gentlemen, say, French upon the theory that you were going on an important mission this day 12 months, and that it was absolutely necessary that you should speak French (or any other language that I could impart you) by that time, I would say it was impossible for a number of busy men to acquire a new language inside one year; that I could not guarantee useful results, but that if you would take two months to start with for the learning of Esperanto, then I might be able to teach you the other language in the rest of the time, because Esperanto is the best foundation for learning any language. And, as I say, an English-speaking student, be he young or old, knowing Esperanto would more easily distinguish the parts of speech in English and possess a real and valuable "linguistic feeling" (which he now entirely lacks) because of his Esperanto.

The CHAIRMAN. Is Esperanto made up of the derivatives of the various languages?

Prof. CHRISTEN. I will explain that, if you like, in a very few words. Esperanto is the work of a Polish scholar, Dr. Ludovico L. Zamenhof, who started with an inspired mind. I should say he was a great genius. He had studied a large number of languages, for, as a boy, nay, as a child in the cradle, he spoke four languages, because so many different languages were actually spoken in his home town. Then at school he learned several more and it is due to this polyglot experience and the evils caused daily by Babel in his own circle that as a child, almost, he conceived the idea of constructing a language that should at once and for all time put an end to a foolish and intolerable situation. He must have been inspired in what he did, because he at once hit upon the only possible solution of the thing, and he hit upon it without knowing that scores of others, older and more learned, had tried the same thing and failed. His first stroke of genius was in the composing of his entire vocabulary by borrowing all his words from well-known sources. With the true insight of the genius he decided that the words of an artificial international language must be taken from international sources, and so he first of all hit upon the good idea to use first of all those words which are already common to most languages, and there are a great many more such words than we have dreamed of. He decided that that should be the starting point of his world tongue, because everybody would know those words to start with. Take the names of animals and produce that come from certain parts of the world and carry their names with them, such as elephant, tiger, lion, camel, and a great many more. Take the rose: the rose is a rose in every language; so an orange, a lemon, a nut, and tea, coffee, and tobacco, etc., are the same in most languages. They may not be spelled the same or pronounced the same, but they are international, and therefore they are Esperanto. That was the foundation of the vocabulary in Zamenhof's new language—take words that everybody would know and use them in Esperanto (6).

Mr. TOWNER. How do you determine those common names?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Well, he formed his vocabulary; he selected these words because they were international—to the exclusion of anything else.

Mr. TOWNER. Well, that was not definite; it might be enlarged?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Oh, yes.

Mr. TOWNER. What was the vocabulary that he first issued?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Offhand, I think, about 963 words.

Mr. TOWNER. What is the vocabulary now?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Probably about 3,000 words. Now, I have dealt with the so-called international words; but the bulk of every language consists of what I would call home words, which every country has for its own; and the only way to bring equivalents for such words into the language was to select them from all the principal languages under consideration, which means, of course, the European languages and to select these words on the principle of greatest internationality—that is to say, such verbs as to come, to do, to write, etc., or the nouns, hand, knife, water, table, etc., or adjectives, like good, bad, healthy, etc. Before he put these words into his vocabulary, Zamenhof had their equivalents in all the European languages before him, and then he took from the whole list the root which was the most prominent, the root that occurred oftenest, and this became Esperanto, the idea being that the words selected should be common to at least four or five different languages.

Mr. TOWNER. You do not mean that, do you? You do not mean that the only words you would put into the Esperanto vocabulary would be those that might be common to at least four or five of the principal languages?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes; whenever it is possible to find such words, and the words do not conflict with the general harmony of the language.

Mr. TOWNER. That is what I thought you meant.

Prof. CHRISTEN. The consequence is that a language formed on these lines must be a Latin or Romance language because Latin gave birth to at least six languages: French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Roumanian, and English, and besides, Latin and French have influenced and enriched the literature and languages of every other modern nation. The dictionary of Latin words contained, for instance, in Russian or German would be a very large volume indeed. It is a fact that all modern attempts at making an artificial language, and their name is legion, especially since the acknowledged success of Esperanto, are based on Latin. Consequently also, the international language must be largely English, because mostly those Latin words will be chosen that are common at least to French and English. I have lectured to hundreds of English audiences, and I have given them numerous examples of Esperanto words in my lectures that could be easily understood by everybody. Take the words "skribi," to write; "lerni," to learn; "manĝi," to eat; "trinki," to drink; "tablo," a table; "glaso," a glass; "nazo," the nose, and "buŝo," the mouth; "mano," the hand; take the adjectives, bona, bela, granda, kapabla, etc. Few, indeed, are the Esperanto words that do not connect at all with the English; in most cases, in at least 87 cases out of 100, you will find those words connect with one or many English words.

Mr. TOWNER. You mean that 87 per cent of the words now in the Esperanto vocabulary are formative words?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes: they are connected with the English language, and from each Esperanto word you can form mechanically absolutely every word that sense and logic can possibly connect with the one and only meaning of the original Esperanto word. I am accustomed to lecturing before audiences and making this statement, which I make without fear of contradiction, that "if all of you were to take up Esperanto now and carry it on until you were as expert in it as I am, you would not in the whole of your studies come across more than 60 words, probably not more than 50 words, which are entirely new to you."

Mr. TOWNER. Of course, a vocabulary of 3,000 words is a very limited vocabulary; it is a primitive vocabulary?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes?

Mr. TOWNER. How are you going to increase it? For instance, how are you going to make it a literary language? How are you going to write poems?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Personally I should not want an international language for poetry, although Esperanto does in fact lend itself excellently to the purposes of the muses. But to answer your question: First of all, the Esperanto language does not contain any words at all; I think there are only 138 full-fledged words, prepositions, adverbs, and conjunctions, but the rest of the vocabulary is formed of roots only. Let us take the words "to sew," "to stitch." The root is "kudr." It is only a root, and that alone stands in the vocabulary. Now, if you want to make this root into a noun "o" is added to it, "kudro": if you want to make it an adjective, you add "a" to it, "kudra"; if you want to make it an adverb you add "e," kudre, which would mean by or through sewing, "sewingly," if it could be so expressed in English; and if you want to make it a verb it would be "kudri," because every infinitive ends in "i." You see, with that root to begin with you can form four words, and you can express a great deal more in Esperanto than anybody can possibly imagine; in fact Esperanto is, on account of its perfect and absolutely complete flexibility, more precise and more comprehensive than any language under the sun. As I said before, you can form four words from every root at the start if sense allows it, and sense allows you a great deal more leeway in Esperanto than anybody can possibly know about, because in no language are you allowed to proceed by sense. The English language does not allow it, nor does any other, not even German or Greek, but it is allowed in this most logical of all languages, Esperanto. (7)

Mr. TOWNER. Take the illustration you have just used. We say "The sewing is beautiful." and "We find her sewing assiduously." Now, we use the same word, but the formation of the sentence determines whether or not it is a noun or a verb.

Prof. CHRISTEN. You mean the distinction between the participle and the noun?

Mr. TOWNER. Yes.

Prof. CHRISTEN. With your permission I will not answer that particularly, but will deal with the whole subject. I want to say that from every root you form four words, the four principal parts of speech. And the first thing to remember is this positive stroke of genius—that every noun ends with "o," every adjective with "a," every derived adverb with "e," and every infinitive with "i."

Mr. TOWNER. How would you carry that to proper names?

Prof. CHRISTEN. London would be Londono; Robert is Roberto, but proper names you are at liberty to do with as you please; give them the Esperanto ending or leave them in the original form.

Mr. TOWNER. What about Washington?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Washingtono.

Mr. TOWNER. I mean, you would really change it?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes; if you prefer it; that is, if it sounds better.

Mr. TOWNER. In the language?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes.

Mr. TOWNER. For instance, if you were speaking about the city of Washington, you would not say Washington, but Washingtono?

Prof. CHRISTEN. You will find it frequently printed as Washingtono.

Mr. TOWNER. Why do you do that, because Washingtono is not the name of the city?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Let me say that you say London in English, but that is not French.

Mr. TOWNER. But we always spell Paris the French way, although we do not pronounce it the same way; that is, "Paree."

Prof. CHRISTEN. But London is not London in French; it is "Londres" in French.

Mr. TOWNER. Do you mean to say that if a letter were addressed to London from Paris the Frenchman would not pronounce and write it London but Londres?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes.

Mr. TOWNER. He does not say London?

Prof. CHRISTEN. No, he says Londres. And the same is true with Dover; Dover is not French; The French would be Douvres. However, I want to say this, that after the first three or four years after I took up Esperanto geographical or proper names were left optional and they were not given any particular spelling in the Esperanto language and are not now. Many Esperantists now would say Washington and London. But you can make the change if you want to.

Mr. TOWNER. Internationally, has not that come to be the custom, to pronounce the geographical names and proper names in the way they are pronounced in the country in which they originate?

Prof. CHRISTEN. I think so. As I said, there is no arbitrary rule about personal names or geographical names. Now, let me proceed with this marvelous scheme and repeat that every part of speech is distinctive in itself; that is the reason a child, when it follows Esperanto, will not find English so hard and will understand English better than in any other way. Such a child will understand English far better than if it did not understand Esperanto, and that is a statement I often make in my lectures.

Mr. RIPLEY. We had a man here the other day who has a language which he claims is an improvement on Esperanto.

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes?

Mr. RIPLEY. He is from Ohio, I believe.

Prof. CHRISTEN. I know. Since Esperanto began to move forward there have been at least 30 to 40 different schemes elaborated, and that is easily done. You can do it overnight. But there is no scheme that has ever touched and no scheme that can ever touch Esperanto, because it has hit the mark from the first. (8)

Mr. TOWNER. What do you do with adverbs? Do they have a definite form?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Every derived adverb ends in "e."

Mr. TOWNER. So you could not distinguish from the form between a verb and an adverb, could you?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Perfectly. The adverb ends in "e" and the infinitive ends in "i."

Mr. RIPLEY. It is your contention that children will do better in English if they acquire a knowledge of Esperanto?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Undoubtedly; this is a statement I make in my lectures: If you gentlemen will give me a number of children aged 4 or 5 years I will give them a quarter of an hour's pleasant explanation about grammar, that is Esperanto grammar, and they will understand it after a quarter of an hour's explanation; then I will jumble together a number of blocks, with various words on these blocks, and I will say to these children "pick out every noun," and they will be able to do it—that is, pick the nouns from the adjectives—and so with every part of speech.

The CHAIRMAN. Because they will know to a certainty?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes; every word tells its own tale on account of its distinctive ending. Now, that is a thing you can not do in English; that nobody can do in English, because we can not tell the parts of speech simply by the appearance of the words; we can only know from the context and that is not always easy!

The CHAIRMAN. How does that apply to other languages?

Prof. CHRISTEN. The same thing applies more or less to all, because they are all irregular; they were not formed; they have "growd" like Topsy.

Mr. TOWNER. The Latin language is more regular?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Yes: but it does not begin to compare with Esperanto. Now, we have had these four words, and I want to proceed a little further, and I will take up something that will help me to answer your questions. If I had to teach you gentlemen French I would have to make you commit to memory 2,667 endings and contractions for the verb alone; it would take you months and months to learn that alone. The same absurdities and even worse occur in Italian, in Spanish, in German, in English, and in all so-called natural languages.

Mr. TOWNER. And we never could learn these irregularities and exceptions.

Prof. CHRISTEN. Well, if you did learn them you would never remember them at the right time because the whole scheme is so complicated. This is only one of the many

reasons which make us so shy at speaking foreign languages. Now, the same thing is true of German, and of all other languages, but it is not true of Esperanto. I will teach you the whole Esperanto conjugation in five minutes and you will never forget it, because there is nothing to remember. You already know that a noun ends in "o" and that the infinitive ends in "i," and so on: there is absolutely no difficulty whatever. (9) Now, I am sorry I have to speak so rapidly, because I would like to give you more information.

The CHAIRMAN. We would be glad to have you add to your remarks.

Mr. TOWNER. You can extend your remarks.

Prof. CHRISTEN. Since my time is up and, indeed, far exceeded, I will be very glad to do so. But before I leave you, let me read one or two items, which will only take two minutes more. Here is a quotation from the British Esperantist, of November, 1913, showing the progress Esperanto is making:

The central Esperanto bureau, of Paris, gives the following statistics: In 1889, there had been published 29 books in Esperanto; in 1899, 128; in 1910, 1,554; in 1912 (to August 30), 1,837. Enough already to keep most readers going for full five years of Sundays, and the output, both of bookshop and of press, is increasing daily.

Mr. TOWNER. In a general way, what is the character of this literature?

Prof. CHRISTEN. Up to now chiefly textbooks for learning Esperanto, such as this little book [indicating], which can be purchased for 10 cents. You can learn the whole mechanism of the language from one of these little books. Then there are a great many other publications, translations, scientific articles, etc., and we have already several novels originally written in the new language.

Mrs. CRAFTS. May I say a word right here? I hold in my hand the New Testament, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society together with the Scotch Bible Society. It is a translation from Nestle's Greek Testament, and the Old Testament is now being translated by one of the most eminent Hebrew scholars in the world.

Prof. CHRISTEN. Here is the next item, which I would like to read to you:

Evening classes for the study of Esperanto under the auspices of the L. C. C. (London county council) are being held at the Halstow Road Nonvocational Institute, Greenwich, S. E., on Thursday, 7.30-9.30 p. m., and at Bloomfield

Road Commercial Institute, Plumstead, S. E., on Fridays, 7.20-10.50 p. m. Instructor Mr. William H. Dennis, B. D. E. A., 108, Eglinton Road, Plumstead, S. E., from whom any information may be obtained. These classes are designed especially to meet the requirements of the serious student, beginner or advanced. ([10](#))

That is from London. Then I have another quotation which I want to read from Edinburgh:

The chief constable of Edinburgh has interested himself in Esperanto, especially in view of the 1915 congress. The chief constable has ordered a copy of "Esperanto For All," to be sent to the 650 members of the Edinburgh police force, with a recommendation that the police learn the language. A class for policemen is being arranged, for which 14 names have been received.

Esperanto classes for policemen have been conducted for several years in several towns in Germany, in France, in Spain, etc., and even during their hours of duty classes are going on in Esperanto so that policemen may learn Esperanto without the loss of their own personal time. I thank you, gentlemen, for bearing with me so long.

Mr. BARTHOLDT. I should like to have an opportunity, if possible, at some future time to have you give us about 10 or 15 minutes to hear Mrs. Crafts.

The CHAIRMAN. We shall be very glad indeed to give you that time.

(The additional matter submitted by Prof. Christen follows:)

([1](#)) We are apt to lose sight of the fact that the whole world's business is daily becoming more and more internationalized and that what in former centuries was done parochially is now more and more done internationally.

The first public international convention ever held took place less than 75 years ago; it is a significant fact that this was a peace convention. To-day there are over 300 societies: Commercial, scientific, religious, sociological, industrial, sporting, etc., organized internationally. During those seventy-odd years over 2,000 international congresses of one kind or another have actually taken place, and now a days not one year passes without several scores being added to the total. An incomplete list for 1914 gives 49 such prospective international gatherings and over one score of exhibitions, fairs, and festivals of an international character.

What lamentable and foolish and provoking situation at such gatherings is due to the multitude of tongues only those know who have wasted time and money in attending them. Usually three or more languages are officially accepted and most of the time is irretrievably lost in misunderstandings and more or less inadequate translations.

Compare with this the nine yearly international Esperanto congresses held at Boulogne, Geneva, Cambridge, Dresden, Barcelona, Washington, Cracow, Antwerp, and Berne, at which from 800 to 1,500 delegates from 20 to 30 different countries spent a week in complete communion through this wonderful language. Orations, discussions, sermons, concerts, theatrical performances, and general fellowship among the members being freely enjoyed by all, and often by individuals who had only had a few weeks of acquaintance with the language.

An international language of some sort has become an absolute necessity of our new era of universal solidarity.

A hopeful sign of progress is that many international organizations have already declared in favor of Esperanto for their future meetings.

(2) The impossibility of ever making any national language international will at once become clear if we imagine the whole youth of the United States condemned to become proficient in French or Spanish or German. Say we take the easiest of them, Spanish: does anyone dream the thing possible? Only an infinitesimal fraction of our young people could attain even a smattering, and that at the cost of from two to three years' study; and even then it is quite unlikely that other nations would adopt the same language. But if they all did this impossible thing the Spanish speaking peoples would still have the pull on them all because they grow up with the language and have not to acquire it artificially.

What holds good for Spanish holds good for even other so called natural language, including English, and more with English than any other on account of its barbarous spelling and pronunciation.

None of these objections, neither structural nor national, apply to Esperanto, which is entirely neutral and ideally simple.

(3) The U. E. A. (Universala Esperanto Asocio) has its central office at 10 Rue de la Bourse, Geneva, Switzerland. Yearly dues 50 cents for private members, \$2.50 for business firms. These contributions entitle the members to use the machinery of the association for the acquisition of information—free of cost, except postage—on any subject whatever (except confidential matters), the only condition being that the request be written in Esperanto. A sufficient amount of Esperanto for this purpose can

be acquired by anyone in a few days, or even in a few hours. It is not even necessary to have a teacher, the textbooks being very easy to master. In America, if local booksellers do not yet stock Esperanto literature, the would-be student may apply to Peter Reilly, Esperanto bookseller, 133 North Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

A growing number of Esperantists all over the world are using the services of the U. E. A., not only in correspondence, but actually traveling through many countries for pleasure or profit by means of Esperanto alone, and finding everywhere helpful hints and congenial surroundings in the local Esperanto groups.

In addition to the U. E. A. there is an international Esperanto society for the propaganda of the language; this has its world center at 51 Rue de Clichy, Paris, France, and powerful national societies in France (240 branches), in England (118 branches), in Germany (over 250 branches), etc.

(4) I should, however, add, in justice to the American people, that wherever Esperanto has been brought to their notice by press or platform it has been well received. I have myself lectured to large and sympathetic audiences in Chautauqua, Buffalo, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington. Public schools, high schools, and universities have frequently opened their doors to Esperanto, and in my own case the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Columbia have shown their open-mindedness to the extent of engaging a paid lecturer for a prolonged course.

So has the Department of Education of the city of New York.

In the Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C., a considerable number of scientists have declared in favor of Esperanto, and are adepts of the language.

My experience is that in this country the informed public warmly approves of Esperanto and the ideals it stands for, but expects the spread of the language to come through the schools. There is consequently in this country a special inertia in this matter, in spite of approval; this makes organised propaganda extremely difficult in such a vast territory.

Accordingly the national organization, the E. A. N. A. (Esperanto Association of North America), central offices, Newton Center, Mass., has so far had but a checkered and precarious existence.

A rival society, the U. S. E. A. (United States Esperanto Association) has its headquarters at Shaller, Iowa.

(5) If I were asked how Esperanto could best be introduced into the schools, I should suggest that a limited course of lecture lessons, say, from 6 to 12, to the teachers would suffice to give them all that is necessary to enable them to practice the language until complete proficiency is attained. In many places there is even now a supply of local Esperantists ready to cooperate with the schools.

After a month's study any teacher should be able to teach others and perfect himself in the process. At that I would teach the language only to the pupils in their last year of school; many of them could make immediate use of Esperanto on entering business; most of them would probably get enough of the language during the last session at school to engage them to keep up the practice afterwards according to local opportunities.

Please do not judge of this probability by your experience with other languages, which most students drop as soon as possible. Their endless complications make the study and practice irksome and futile, while Esperanto is positively fascinating.

In my opinion two lessons of 45 minutes a week would amply suffice to secure practical results never dreamed of in the French, German, or Spanish classes. After a very short course of study, the boys and girls would get an opportunity to correspond with scholars of their own age and station in many lands. There are even now hundreds of school boys and girls in France, Germany, Austria, Spain, and even in China and Japan eager for such interchange of thoughts by means of Esperanto.

The hour or hour and a half spent weekly on this subject would be amply repaid by the increased intelligence and linguistic feeling of the pupils, and ultimately the subject could be taught with great benefit to the whole school, doing away with the necessity of ineffectual attempts at teaching foreign languages to all and sundry, regardless of taste and capacity.

(6) Perhaps a few remarks may be in place here to substantiate still more clearly the postulate that Esperanto fulfills absolutely the ideal requirement of a language that means to be introduced throughout the world as a secondary or auxiliary language: Facility of acquirement to all nations.

(a) There is not one difficult sound, such as our th, our obscure vowels, the French nasals, the German ä, ö, ü, etc. The vowels are a, e, i, o, and u. Each has but one sound value, and that long and full, approximately as in the phrase: "Pa may we go, too?"

(b) The tonic accent, an insuperable difficulty in English, on account of its irregularity and elusiveness, is in Esperanto invariably on the last vowel but one.

(c) The grammar is reduced to a minimum, the whole mechanism of Esperanto being compassed within 16 rules which any one can grasp and assimilate inside one hour.

(d) The vocabulary is extremely small, less than 1,000 roots, mostly common to every Aryan tongue, being sufficient for all ordinary purposes of language.

This is due to the marvelously ingenious system of word building, which enables anyone to derive from a dozen to one hundred and more words from every root, there being to this derivation no limit but that of common sense.

Of course, the vocabulary for science and technology is considerably larger, but equally flexible.

(e) There are no troublesome genders; sex is expressed by the insertion of "in" before the "o" ending of nouns, and of course only in the case of animate creation. For instance, "viro" is man, "virino" woman, "frato" brother, "fratino" sister, "kuzo" male cousin, "kuzino" female cousin, etc. And here Esperanto has over all other languages not only the signal advantage that there are no irregularities, but the far more important advantage that the scheme is applicable to all cases. For instance, although we have in English from 30 to 40 different ways of forming the feminine such as father, mother; brother, sister; uncle, aunt; bull, cow; stallion, mare; fox, vixen; etc., yet in most cases we possess no decent or sensible way to indicate the sex of the individuals; as, for instance, in the cases of teacher, doctor, friend, cousin, neighbor, witness, elephant, camel, goat, typist, stenographer, companion, president, chairman, etc.

Last, but not least, every word parses itself by its distinctive ending.

(7) The stupendous flexibility of Esperanto will be still better understood if I state here that it possesses some 30 particles (prefixes and suffixes), each with a definite meaning and each available whenever you want to attach that particular meaning to any word.

We have already seen that the suffix "in" expresses the female sex whenever it may be desirable to give it expression. So "id" denotes the offspring, "il" the tool or instrument, "isto" the profession, "ul" the person or individual, "ec" the quality (abstract), "aĵ" the concrete thing, product, or result, "eg" means large, and "et" small, etc. Now, let us see how this works out in practice. Bovo is bull; bovino, cow; bovido, calf; bovaĵo, beef; bovidino, female calf. And you may say bovego, boveto, bovinego, bovineto, bovidego, bovideto, bovidinego, and bovidineto if you wish to add the idea of size or smallness to the original or to the derived word.

Again: "Lern" is the root for learning. We first get lerni, to learn; lerna, learned; lerne, learnedly; lerno, learning. Next, using a few of the particles we can make: lernebla, capable of being learned; lernema, inclined to learn (studious); lerninda, worth learning; lernilo, a text book (a tool); lernisto (a professional learner), a student; lernulo, a learned person, a scholar; lerneco, learning in the abstract; lernaĵo, the matter to be learned (concrete), etc. And once more note that what you can do with one root you can do with every root in the vocabulary. So that the originally available number of words is multiplied ten and hundred fold. Which simply means a tremendous saving of labor in learning words and forms and yet secures a range of expression and a degree of precision undreamed of in any other language.

(8) On the possible rivals, past, present, or future, to Esperanto see closing remarks.

(9) To complete what I said on the verb during the hearing I give here the entire paradigm of the verb in Esperanto.

Paroli, to speak; parolanta, speaking; parolata, spoken.

Present, I speak, etc.: Mi parolas, vi parolas, li parolas, ŝi parolas, ni parolas, vi parolas, ili parolas, oni (one) parolas, ĝi (it) parolas.

There is thus only one ending "as" for the present of every verb and the same for every person.

In the past the ending is "is": mi parolis, I spoke, etc.

In the future "os" mi parolos, I shall speak, etc. In the conditional "us": mi parolus, I should speak, etc. In the subjunctive "u": ke mi parolu, that I may or might speak, the tense being sufficiently indicated by the antecedent verb.

For the imperative we use the subjunctive without conjunction and generally without subject.

The participle has a most ingenious flexibility, it having three forms, anta, inta, onta for the active, and ata, ita, ota for the passive; parolanta, speaking now; parolinta, having spoken; parolonta, about to be speaking; parolata, being spoken now; parolita, spoken formerly; parolota, to be spoken later.

Only practice can reveal the wonderful usefulness of this scheme, again, of course, applicable to all verbs.

One interesting sequel is, that as every word can be turned into a noun—if sense demands it—by simply changing the ending into o, we therefore get: parolanto, the present speaker; parolinto, the past speaker; parolonto, the future speaker.

Let no one say that such richness and possibility of precision is of no importance; many a life's jeopardy has turned on less. Nor can it be said that this unlimited capacity of expression makes the mechanism of the language cumbersome, for the whole scheme of Esperanto can be thoroughly mastered in a few hours.

(10) In England Esperanto has been on the school rates for several years; any technical or continuation school can apply to the board of education for permission to put Esperanto on its program. In 1909 it was already thus taught in 33 centers.

The London Chamber of Commerce holds examinations in Esperanto every year, and has done so since 1907. The United Kingdom Association of Teachers prepares for the certificate of proficiency in Esperanto.

In the town of Lille, France, Esperanto has been taught in the high schools for at least nine years; about 1,500 pupils benefiting yearly from this. The same is true of Rio de Janeiro, in Brasil.

In conclusion, I wish to register my opinion as an unbiased student of the whole movement for the adoption of an international language that Esperanto has nothing to fear from any rival scheme—present, past, or future.

Of upward of 150 different projects that have seen the light since the seventeenth century, not one was born with a life worth saving but Esperanto; not one has ever attained one-hundredth part the power and vogue and vitality that Esperanto has achieved.

One only of all these schemes has ever come prominently before the public before Esperanto came into the field, Volapük, and this failed of its own defects.

One only among some 20 or 30 imitations of Esperanto, namely, Ido, succeeded for a time in creating a diversion in the Esperanto camp. If Volapük died of its defects, it is permissible to say that Ido never lived on account of its numerous authors' everlasting chase after theoretical perfection, each one having a different opinion—and changing the same with every wind—as to what constitutes perfection in every one of a thousand features of a human language. Accordingly, the Idoists have altered their mock Esperanto a hundred times in six years, so that no one has been able to keep track of the changes, and the adherents of the secession themselves have never been able to learn, speak, and use the language.

During these six years Esperanto has succeeded in establishing itself and getting a firm hold in every civilized country from China to Peru and from Greenland to Zanzibar, because it is a live and growing language, perfect in so far that it is endowed from the start with all the power of evolution without the need of any internal changes in its wonderfully simple structure.

Here are a few quotations from great thinkers as to the need for an auxiliary language:

The diversity of languages is fatal for genius and progress. If there were a universal language, we should save a third of life. (Leibnitz.)

The interrelationships of the peoples are so great that they most certainly need a universal language. (Montesquieu.)

One of the greatest torments of life is the diversity of language. (Voltaire.)

What an immeasurable profit it would be for the human race if we were able to intercommunicate by means of one language. (Volney.)

It seems to me quite possible—probable even—than an artificial language to be universally used will be greed upon. (Herbert Spencer.)

The learning of many languages fills the memory with words instead of facts and thoughts, and this is a vessel which, with every person, can only contain certain limited amount of records. Therefore the learning of many languages is injudicious, inasmuch as it arouses the belief in the possession of dexterity, and, as a matter of fact, it lends a kind of delusive importance to social intercourse. It is also injurious in that it opposes the acquirement of solid knowledge and the intention to win the respect of men in an honest way. Finally, it is the ax which is laid at the root of a delicate sense of language in our mother tongue, which thereby is incurably injured and destroyed. The two nations which have produced the greatest stylists, the Greeks and the French, learned no foreign languages; but as human intercourse grows more cosmopolitan, and as, for instance, a good merchant in London must now be able to read and write eight languages, the learning of many tongues has certainly become a necessary evil; but which, when finally carried to an extreme, will compel mankind to find a remedy, and in some far off future there will be a new language used at first as a language of commerce, then as a language of intellectual intercourse, then for all, as surely as some time or other there will be aviation. Why else should philology have studied the laws of language for a whole century and have estimated the necessary, the valuable, and the successful portion of each separate language? (Nietsche.)

In this connection it may be well to repeat once more that Esperanto is only an "auxiliary" language. Nobody dreams of it being a "universal language."

EXAMPLES OF ESPERANTO.

Simpla, fleksebla, belsona, vere internacia en siaj elementoj¹, la lingvo Esperanto prezentas al la mondo civilizita la sole veran solvon² de lingvo internacia: ĉar³, tre facila por homoj nemulte instruitaj, Esperanto estas komprenata sen peno de la personoj bone edukitaj. Mil faktoj atestas la meriton praktikan de la nomita lingvo.

¹"j" has the sound of English "y", as in boy, and is the sign for the plural of nouns and adjectives.

²"n" is the mark of the accusative or object of the verb.

³The diacritic sign ^ occurs on c, g, h, j, s and has the force of an h after the first and the last—ch, sh. ĝ is pronounced like English g in George, which g without sign has the value of g in good. ĵ is pronounced like s in pleasure, while j simple has the sound of y in yes, esp. jes. ĥ occurs rarely and is doomed to disappear in favor of k.

Kaj se vi preĝas, vi ne devas esti kiel la hipokrituloj, kiuj volonte staras kaj preĝas en la lernejoj, kaj apud la anguloj de la stratetoj; por ke ili estu vidataj de la homoj. Vere, mi diras al vi: Ili ricevis sian pagon. Sed se vi preĝas, iru en la ĉambreton kaj fermu la pordon, kaj preĝu al via patro en la kaŝito, kaj via patro, kiu vidas en la kaŝiton, rekompencos ĝin al vi publike. Kaj se vi preĝas, vi ne devas multe babili, kiel la idolistoj, ĉar ili opinias ke ĝi estos akceptata, se ili faras multe da paroloj. Tial vi ne devas simili al ili. Via patro scias, kion vi bezonas, antaŭ ol vi petas lin. Tial vi devas preĝi tiamaniere. Patro nia en la ĉielo. Via nomo estu sanktigata. Via regno venu. Via volo fariĝu sur la tero, kiel en la ĉielo. Nian panon ĉiutagan donu al ni hodiaŭ. Kaj pardonu al ni niajn kulpojn, kiel ni pardonas niajn kulpulojn. Kaj ne konduku nin en tenton, sed savu nin de la malbono. Ĉar via estas la regno, kaj la forto, kaj la gloro en eterneco. Amen. Ĉar se vi pardonos al la homoj iliajn kulpojn, tiam via ĉiela patro pardonos ankaŭ al vi. Sed se vi ne pardonos al la homoj iliajn kulpojn, tiam via ĉiela patro ankaŭ ne pardonos al vi viajn kulpojn. (La Evangelio Sankta Mateo VI, 5-16.)

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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION ***

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