

Sydney University

Physical Society

# A LUNCH-HOUR ADDRESS

will be given on

“Physics, Semantics, and Semantography”

TUESDAY, JULY 31st, 1951

1.10 p.m. in the Physics Building

by

C. K. Bliss

Author of “Semantography”



As an introduction, the author offers the following quotations:

**SIR RICHARD PAGET, Fellow of the Physical Society and the Institute of Physics, London**

“WE ARE IN THE ALARMING POSITION of having enormous control over the forces of nature, and very little reasoning power to guide our actions—in fact, very much LIKE A LOT OF CHILDREN PLAYING WITH LOADED GUNS. Man, it appears, is still handicapped by his . . . muddled way of thinking. May it not be that much of this unreasonable muddle is due to the simple fact that our symbols for thought—language—are not yet set in order; that in the matter of thought symbolism we are still much in the same state of confusion as the Romans were in their arithmetic? We should be horrified at the difficulty of multiplying MDCCIX by LVII; to the educated Roman it seemed natural and inevitable, but his arithmetical powers suffered in consequence.”

“Human thought requires an efficient method of symbolism such as no language yet supplies. If the keepers of our language maintain a die-hard attitude and succeed in preventing reasoned improvement the result will, I suggest, be that language will be less and less used for intellectual and rational purposes and relegated to an altogether inferior status as the symbol of sentiment and small talk. All accurate thinking will have to be carried out by means of some other symbolism like that of mathematics.”

“This idea is also not new . . . Leibnitz realised the need of a reformed symbolism and method of thought. He imagined a universal symbolism of thought which would be understood by all nations, and by which thought itself would become accurate and quantitative.”

**GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNITZ (1646-1716) Mathematician and Philosopher**

“A Universal Characteristic, very popular . . . might be introduced if small figures were employed in the place of words, which would represent visible things by their lines and the invisible, by the visible, which accompany them.”

“This true method of a Universal Symbolism would . . . guide the mind as do the lines drawn in geometry, and the formulas in arithmetic . . .”

“This would be of service at first for easy communication with distant nations; but if introduced also among us, WITHOUT HOWEVER, RENOUNCING ORDINARY WRITING . . . would be useful in GIVING THOUGHT LESS SURD AND VERBAL THAN WE NOW HAVE . . .”

“I think these thoughts will some day be carried out, so agreeable and natural appears to me this writing . . . for rendering our conceptions more real.”

**BERTRAND RUSSELL, O.M.**

“Semantography . . . I think very highly of it. The logical analysis is good. The symbols are ingenious and easy to understand . . . an important service to Mankind.”