

SIMPLIFIED SPELLING SOCIETY

PATRON H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH, K.G., K.T.

NEWS SHEET 6

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1. EDITORIAL

Members may be happy to know that I am still Secretary of the Society, and am willing to continue in the office until the elections are over. The Committee voted against accepting my resignation at its meeting on 26th June. I had, also, had two letters from our President, Professor John Downing, urging me to remain in office on the grounds that he felt it is "necessary to have practical people organising the Society's affairs."

I am sorry if Mr Lawler has been upset by my explanation of my resignation in NEWS SHEET 5. There was no intention whatever on my part to say anything by which he might be hurt and I am very sorry indeed if he has been. I have the highest opinion of Mr Lawler as an Officer of the Society and hope that he will agree to remain in office for many more years. Mr Lawler has always been willing to help actively when called upon, and has on several occasions put forward plans to spread the Society's influence. I wish we had many more equally cooperative and helpful members.

I am sorry also to have to say that this will be the last editorial you will read from me. There will, I hope, be a new Publications Secretary, after the elections, who will be responsible for both of the Society's journals. I wish him (or her) luck and will, of course, be willing always to do anything I can to help.

My appeal in NEWS SHEET 5 for members to spread the news of the Society received dramatic and powerful support from Mr K. Tillema of Ontario, Canada. Mr Tillema has launched into sudden and forceful action. He has sent letters (see below) to 1600 papers in

USA and Canada. He has also circularised the 400 members of the Canadian Linguistic Association. So far his letters have had 50 publications. He has sent me a long list of folk who want information about the Society. If we had a few more members like Mr Tillema our troubles would be over and spelling reform would begin to look like a more immediately realisable purpose. Won't *you* emulate Mr Tillema? THANKS.

We must again thank Mr Raymond Elser New Jersey, U.S.A. for further generous donations to the Publications Fund. Raymond is anxious to hear from inventors of new alphabets with copies of their work.

NEW MEMBERS

There are two new members since NEWS SHEET 5:

1198 Mrs G.Williams, Croydon.

1208 Mrs A.Rashley, IOW..

MR TILLEMA'S LETTER

Editor,

Our present socially acceptable spelling is unteachable, mind-stunting, handicapping and deceiving. It stifles common-sense, blocks reading, represses literacy, creates delinquency and squanders energy. It impedes typing prevents alphabetic voice printing, causes mispronunciation and retards learning.

The 40 sounds in English have more than 500 different spellings. Each vowel sound has an average of 18 different spellings. English spelling is malignant, lawless, erratic, mal-evolved, pseudo-historical, antiquated and laborious.

You are invited to join the efforts to revise the current conventional spelling with sound spelling.

K. Tillema.

We have been paid a full year's subscription in the name of KIRKALDIE but have no details of the payer. Would anyone who knows please tell us.

Will all members whose subscriptions are in arrears please pay up in time to take part in the annual elections and polls of members?

2. ELECTIONS

The elections are upon us again and it is, perhaps, not out of place for us to take a look at the jobs we ask our officers to do on our behalf throughout the year to try to discern if, indeed, some of them are not being asked to do too much for a spare-time official.

The PRESIDENT of the Society should be a distinguished person in the academic world. His duties have deliberately been left vague so that he may be as active as he himself wishes to be in his office. He would be expected to represent the Society on important occasions just as our incumbent president conducted the negotiations which led to the Duke of Edinburgh graciously agreeing to become our Patron.

The duties of the CHAIRMAN are very light. His only active duty is responsibility for the meetings of the Society and the Committee. He should ensure that meetings are properly tailed, that proper notices are sent out in good time. He should preside over these meetings making sure that he is equipped with the documents necessary to make his chairmanship effective. No provision is made for him to delegate his responsibility but he may, if they are agreeable, call on other officers for help.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN's office is also very light. He is called upon to act only when the Chairman and President are both absent.

The office of SECRETARY was formerly the most laborious of all the Society's offices. With the splitting of a large part of his former duties to the Financial Secretary, Publications Secretary and Records Secretary, the Secretary of the Society need no longer be considered overworked.

The TREASURER's job is still fairly strenuous and needs a dedicated person to fill it. It involves some work all the year round, work as new members join; payments are made; financial information supplied to enquiring officers and members; books kept up to date. It is at present the office of greatest material benefit to the Society and one which needs devotion and care.

The EDUCATION SECRETARY's mandate is the widest among the Society's officers. There is really much too much for one man to do in this office. It may become necessary to split this office into several offices in future but we should await a report from the present incumbent before doing so. In the meantime I would suggest that he be assisted by a sub-committee each member of which would be appointed by the Education Secretary himself to fulfil a specific function. At the end of two years we should have the information necessary to make any changes which might be found necessary. This would enable us to use our strength reasonably and without rushing into ill-thought out constitutional changes.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY is a new office and, perhaps, the most important in the Society. It is he who puts cash figures to the plans of the Society as a whole and of its individual members; and who says what we can afford to do and what we cannot. He is our guide to the amount of progress which is possible and our mentor against over expenditure. One of the reasons for a good deal of the failure of this Society in the past has been the lack of adequate financial planning. We may now hope that this epoch is over and that we may safely go ahead under the guidance of the new office of Financial Secretary. The job calls for activity at only certain times of the year (from the beginning of May onwards for some four or five months). The circulation of the ESTIMATES of expenditure is now done by the Electoral Reform Society. I do not think this job although very responsible imposes too much of a work load on the incumbent but no doubt he will tell us when the time comes what he thinks about it.

The PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY's office did not appear to be over strenuous when I first planned it. Nevertheless there is a great deal more work in it than I had conceived. There are two journals to produce each twice a year and the material to fill them is difficult to collect and assemble. There is also a good deal of correspondence. Authors are temperamental folk and often need very diplomatic and sometimes time consuming handling. Then, last but not least, is the business of seeing publications through the press with all the accompanying burden of proof-reading, etc. I would say that the Publications Secretary should be allowed the help of a subcommittee of at least one person to divide the work of NEWS SHEET and READING & SPELLING for the time being. Later after a couple of years experience we should have enough information to make rational well-thought out changes.

RECORDS SECRETARY is another new and important office. The present holder has already shown the value of this office in the quality of the minutes he has provided. Records have been badly kept in this Society in the past (not least by myself) but this was the fault of the system which expected the Secretary to do almost everything. I put the term of office of Records Secretary at three years as an indication of the importance of the post. It is no exaggeration to say that the progress of every movement lies in its past. A good Records Secretary can help keep us from making again mistakes which we have already made in the past (without learning from them) and keep us pointed in the direction of the future by helping us build on the past. I do not think this office is overloaded with work but no doubt the Records Secretary will be willing to tell us more about this when his period of office is over.

3. THE CONSTITUTION

Our present constitution was voted on by the Members of the Society last August. It has thus been in force for only some nine months. It brought in a large vote — only three members of the Society voted *against* it.

Since it has been in force the constitution has given the Society excellent service; it has not failed in practice in any single instance.

Before it was approved by such a large majority last August the Constitution had been on trial for one complete year. This was arranged so that if members wished changes made they could put them forward during this year (1974–75) by a free vote of the Society and without the need for the deliberately rather slow process of making a constitutional changes.

The effect of the Constitution is explicitly to put all responsibility for policy and finance back to general meetings of members — where in fact it has always belonged. There was once a period when the committee seemed to be acting as if it were a kind of governing body of the Society. A search through the existing records reveals that no powers to act in this fashion ever were given to the committee by the general membership. This usurpation of unjustified powers led to a great deal of internal strife. The earlier constitution, such as it was, was not in general circulation. The AGM of 1974 revealed only two copies among the members. Every member of the Society has a copy of the present Constitution.

One did not expect the Constitution to go on forever without change. But one did expect that changes would be made reasonably only when, and where, the Constitution had failed the Society in some situation. The Constitution has not failed the Society in any situation up to now and has, indeed, shown itself capable of dealing with any situation that has occurred.

I did warn in NEWS SHEET 5 (page 16) that changes might easily be proposed without any real cause — especially in Section 16. Section 16 especially its last Paragraph was thought out carefully and deliberately inserted in the Constitution to protect the Society from the activities of a certain class of person; the over egotistic alphabeteer. By this I mean the kind of person who has composed his own special alphabet and who wants desperately to get for it some kind of official recognition (and sometimes financial aid) from the Society. There is, of course, nothing wrong with composing an alphabet, it is entirely in itself a laudable project. In fact probably most members of the Society have at one time or another engaged on such an activity and *many* members have their own alphabets which they value highly. This is all fine and members of the Society should be encouraged to discuss and demonstrate their alphabets at the meetings of the Society, in the Society's journals, etc. What is NOT right is for some Member to attempt to impose his special alphabet in some way on the Society and thus upon those members who have their own (perhaps equally good or even better) alphabets. Much of the trouble the Society has had in the past has sprung from the attempts by certain members to get a privileged status for their own special alphabets. Much time has been wasted in meetings when other members have resisted such attempts at gaining special privilege. Anger and bad blood, even, have been generated.

Section 16 was thought out to free the Society from such unconstructive conflict. That it is, in fact, able to do this was shown at last year's AGM and Postal Vote, when a motion to establish New Spelling 1948 as the alphabet of the Society was withdrawn by its proposers after it had been claimed that this was out-of-order under Section 16. This was done even though the motion had won a majority of votes — see NEWS SHEET 5, page 7.

Section 16 of the Constitution affords a very special kind of protection to the Society. It ought not to be altered in any way unless it fails the Society in some important matter. Up to now Section 16 has given clear proof that it works very well.

Another section of the Constitution which is under assault is Section 16, which regulates constitutional amendments. Below is the full text of a constitutional amendment which has been sent in to be considered by the committee. It will be noted that this amendment has been put forward by someone who does *not even know the proper name of the Society*. This is typical of the sloppy thought which characterises many suggestions put forward for constitutional changes.

SPELLING REFORM SOCIETY
PROPOSAL for Amendment of Constitution

Amend Clause 18 to read:

18. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Any proposition for amending this constitution shall be submitted in writing, duly proposed and seconded, to the Secretary, who shall bring it to the notice of the Committee. The Committee, as soon as practicable and not later than 6 months after its receipt by the Secretary shall arrange for its circularisation to Members. The Committee may attach any comments or recommendations thereon as it thinks fit.

The proposition may be discussed at the next ensuing general meeting of the Society but may not be adopted as an approved amendment.

The Committee shall request an independent authority having no connection with the Society (such as the Electoral Reform Society) to conduct a poll of Members.

If that authority reports that not less than 66% of the votes cast are in favour of the proposition, the constitution shall thereupon be amended in accordance with the proposition.

Comment 1. The purposes of the proposition are:

- (a) to simplify the procedure, making it more workable and easier to follow;
- (b) to reduce the time scale involved in making amendments;
- (c) to eliminate difficulties of interpretation under the present wording;
- (d) to reduce the wording (299 words down to 152).

Comment 2. If this proposition is adopted, I consider the procedure still rather costly for the Society, because it really involves a treble circularisation to Members: (i) the original proposition; (ii) the poll by the independent authority; (iii) notification to members of the result of the poll. However, I have preferred as a first step to concentrate upon a simplification of other parts of the procedure."

The proposal to amend Section 16 is accompanied by several comments by its author. Comment 1(a) is "to simplify the procedure." It ought NOT be simple to alter the Constitution: a Constitution is intended to lay down a firm foundation for the activities of the Society. Comment 1(b) is "to reduce the time scale involved in making amendments." This probably, if it means anything, is a rather pompous way of saying "to get amendments made quicker". But it ought NOT to be possible to get amendments made hastily. Some time ought to be spent by members in thinking over constitutional amendments in order that rational decisions be reached about the need for them and about their effect. Time must be allowed to members to think and put forward their own ideas. The present Constitution allows this time. Comment 1(c) is "to eliminate difficulties of interpretation under (sic) the present wording". This, if again it means anything at all, seems to be a verbose way of saying "to make it easier to understand." Yet the author has not offered one single example of where the present Constitution is difficult to understand. No member of the Society has offered even one example of difficulty during the year in which the Constitution was on trial. Comment 1(d) is "to reduce the wording (299 words down to 152)." I am tempted to levity about this comment but presumably the author meant it seriously and so is entitled to respectful treatment. I have always believed that the right number of words for any document is that number which allows it to say clearly what is intended. I do not believe that there is any virtue in brevity for its own sake. We cannot work on a "Me Tarzan — you Jane" basis. If we are asked to alter the Constitution for the sake of saving 77 words it might be wise to think of the probable consequences of this action. Think of the fun that future nitpickers and logic choppers are going to have in proposing dozens of new Constitutional Amendments. We will be able to forget about spelling reform and spend all our future meetings tearing at the Society's guts. It is no good pretending this won't happen. It always has in the past. One can see what will happen from the list of proposed amendments printed in another place in this issue of NEWS SHEET.

Another thing members should remember is that when this Constitution was first written it was very carefully examined by Mr Leslie Blake who was then our Treasurer. For the benefit of folk who do not know Mr Blake I should say that he has an Honours degree in Law. He is also a fully qualified Barrister at Law and now teaches law at a London Polytechnic. Mr Blake carefully examined the script of the proposed Constitution and made some suggestions for changes. These were included and Mr Blake felt that the result was a very good Constitution. It was duplicated (at no expense to the Society through the courtesy of Mr Herbert Wilkinson) circulated to the Members and approved by the AGM of 1974 for one year's trial in practice. It was approved as the permanent Constitution of the Society by the poll of members for the AGM of 1975.

At present, for the first time ever, every single member of the Society has his/her own copy of the Constitution and so knows what it is about. Quite apart from the expense involved

(and this will be large in relation to our scanty and now devalued funds) a great deal of time and work will be involved in circulating these amendments to get them known to the members should any of them be passed. The options will be the production of a new constitutional booklet or of a set of paste-over slips. The booklet will be the most effective — but the more expensive. The paste-overs will have to be stuck into the 300 copies in stock by the Secretary or by paid labour. It's an unpleasant job as I know from sticking down 120 envelopes to send out our journals. Most of the members who get them will forget to stick them into place and so they will be wasted.

Although it is reasonable to expect that over passing time the need for revision of some parts of the Constitution will become obvious, it is *not* reasonable to expect that changes are needed less than a year after it was voted into force by the members, I accordingly suggest to members that they should reject all amendments proposed (until the Constitution has been tried out in practice) for a period of at least two more years. If members keep this in mind when voting (or refraining) on proposed constitutional amendments, it will prevent some silly action.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET OUR [SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE](#) IN THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST 1977

HAVE YOU YET ORDERED YOUR COPY OF READING & SPELLING?

MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

We are now entering an expansive phase and we should act accordingly. The Society has had publicity from articles in the Manchester Evening News, from press releases about the Duke of Edinburgh joining the Society as Patron and conference coverage. Even the American Globe has commissioned an article from one of its agents.

Our energies will be divided between devising ways of selecting systems for the spelling trials, comparing texts and finding schools willing to participate in running trials.

It is important that we move with the times and test systems in a scientific manner before we inflict the originators systems on the public.

If we are to retain credibility we must proceed with due care and attention and neglect no necessary checks. Also we need something tangible to show to visitors and somewhere to show it to them.

This year's budget has been drawn from a consensus of opinion of the Society's members.

Good luck in your endeavours.

Richard James Lawler (Financial Secretary SSS)

4. AGENDA OF MEETING ON 26 JUNE. 1976

1. Edward Smith proposes that Ralph Cropper be a trustee.
2. Smith proposes that Angus Cheyne Dalgleish be a trustee.
3. Smith proposes that Stanley Gibbs be a trustee.
4. Smith proposes that Maurice Harrison be a trustee.
5. Smith proposes that Sir James Pitman retire from the office of trustee.
6. Smith proposes that Sinclair Eustace should be acting Secretary.
7. Richard J. Lawler proposes that G.H. Unsworth Mitchell be co-opted to the Committee.
8. George O'Halloran proposes that the Committee fix exact dates for our Second International Conference and also for the 1977 AGM as soon as possible.
9. O'Halloran proposes that the Committee invite the Duke of Edinburgh to write a foreword to **READING & SPELLING**, the Proceedings of the 1975 Conference.
10. O'Halloran proposes that the Committee invite the Duke of Edinburgh to perform the opening ceremony at our Second International Conference.
11. O'Halloran proposes that the Committee co-opt Jack Windsor Lewis.
12. O'Halloran proposes that the Chairman be responsible for calling meetings of the Committee.
13. O'Halloran proposes that the Chairman be requested to ensure that copies of (i) the Constitution (ii) the Financial Regulations (iii) the current Budget (iv) the Rules of the Society (when they are completed) be available at all meetings of the Committee and of the Society.
14. O'Halloran proposes that the Records Secretary be requested to gather together into a single document all resolutions which have permanent effect of both Committee and Society.
15. O'Halloran proposes that the resolutions in (13) be published in single pamphlet under the title of "Rules of the Society."
16. If resolutions 1–5 do not pass unamended Smith proposes that O'Halloran be appointed to find new solicitors and carry out the work associated with appointing new trustees.
17. Smith proposes that the Editorial Board created 30 October 1971 (with Editor, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer ex officio members) should be responsible for the content of **NEWS SHEET** and any other periodicals produced by the Society.
18. Smith proposes that all Committee resolutions not of a confidential nature should be reported in **NEWS SHEET** and, if requested by any Committee member, with a record of how each member voted.

Smith proposes the following Constitutional Amendments to be recommended to the Society:

19. The elected members of the Committee shall hold office for one year.
20. A quorum of the Committee shall be one quarter of the members but no less than four.
21. All honorary officers except the President shall be elected for a period of one year.
22. Section 7 — delete.
23. Section 14 — delete paragraph 3 and add:

"Any resolution for an expenditure of more than £25 must have been on an agenda circulated at least one week before the meeting. The only amendment to such a

resolution that can be introduced at the meeting is a reduction in the proposed expenditure.

24. Section 15 — delete.
25. Section 16 — delete.
26. Section 17 — delete.

Other resolutions:

27. O'Halloran proposes that the names of all the officers of the Society be included on the Society's formal stationery.
28. If 27 does not pass O'Halloran proposes that no officer's names be included.
29. O'Halloran proposes that when discussion of a particular topic has persisted for more than twenty minutes at any committee meeting, any member can ask that the discussion of this topic close. If a majority agree further discussion of this topic shall not take place at that meeting and no vote shall be taken. This does not preclude the topic from being raised at another meeting.
30. Any other business.

Please study carefully the enclosed letter from our solicitor.

John Fergus McBride has not answered letters asking for information vital for the appointment of new trustees.

31. Smith proposes that John Fergus McBride be suspended from the committee. (This proposal will be withdrawn if McBride contacts Smith).
32. Smith proposes that the committee recommend to the Society for adoption the Constitutional Amendment suggested by Ralph Cropper.
33. The committee will discuss the views of our Patron on spelling reform

Our President writes

"I have been negotiating with the International Reading Association (IRA) and I believe that the Simplified Spelling Society will be invited to put on a one hour meeting at the next IRA convention at Miami Beach, Florida, on May 2–6, 1977.

"This will be a great opportunity for the Society and it will be a great help to teachers interested in Simplified spelling from the British point of view."

34. Smith proposes that the committee approve Prof. Downings actions in trying to arrange this co-operation with IRA.
- 35–40. 7 further proposals circulated separately by O'Halloran.
41. Any other business.

At the Institute of Education we are supposed to finish at 12:30. Therefore we must start at 10.00 o'clock sharp to get through the agenda. Please be on time.

Edward Smith,
Chairman.

Now follows verbatim the agenda for the Committee Meeting on July 10th 1976.

1. Edward Smith proposes: "Resolved that Ralph Cropper, Angus Cheyne Dalglish, Stanley Gibbs and Maurice Harrison be appointed trustees of the trust deed dated 30th May 1940 in place of Sir James Pitman and resolved that the resignation of Sir James Pitman as trustee be accepted by the Society."

(This is necessary again because I failed to include deed date etcetera in the resolutions of 26 June, for which I apologise — Edward Smith). The underlining [replaced by italics] is mine — Editor.

2. Smith proposes that all committee resolutions not of a confidential nature should be reported in NEWS SHEET.
3. Smith proposes that any member may object at a committee meeting if he believes another member is making an unjustified or irrelevant statement about any other person. The chairman must determine whether the majority of those present agree. The second time in any one meeting that any member is convicted the Chairman must determine whether the majority of those present wish to expel the offender from the meeting. Following a third conviction (sic) in one meeting, expulsion from the meeting is mandatory and the responsibility of the chairman. Expulsion from a meeting does not affect a member's right to attend subsequent meetings.
4. Mr George O'Halloran proposes that when the discussion of a particular topic has persisted for more than 20 minutes at any committee meeting, any member can ask that discussion of this topic close. If a majority agree further discussion of this topic shall not take place at that meeting and no vote shall be taken.

This does not preclude the topic being raised at another meeting.

5. Mr Stanley Gibbs proposes that resolution 19 passed at the Committee meeting of 26 June 1976 shall be amended with the addition of: "persons present."

Smith proposes the following constitutional amendments to be recommended to the Society

6. The Education Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year.
- or 7. The Education Secretary shall be elected for a period of 2 years (withdrawn if 6 passes).
8. The Records Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year.
- or 9. The Records Secretary shall be elected for a period of two years.
10. Section 14 — Delete all reference to proxy voting.
11. Section 14 — Replace the last two sentences with the following "Any expenditure of more than £50 must have been on an agenda circulated at least one week before the meeting. The only amendment to such a resolution that can be introduced at the meeting is a reduction in the proposed expenditure."
12. Section 5, Publications Secretary: delete "and shall be Editor of its journals."
13. Delete section 15. 14) Delete section 16. 16. 15) Delete Section 17.
16. Amend section 18 as proposed by Mr Ralph Cropper.

Edward Smith, Chairman

5. WITHOUT COMMENT — Part 1

Some time very early in the year our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith, brought to me at home very late one night (1) correspondence which had gone on between himself and another member, Mr O. Masson, and (2) an item entitled Syllabic //I. He said that both were for publication in the next NEWS SHEET. As Editor I read both but it did not seem to me that there was any particular merit in either contribution which made early (or any) publication imperative.

I later received a letter from our Chairman, Mr Smith, which included the following paragraph:

"I am sure you have very good reason for not having "put in NEWS SHEET 5 my bit on syllabic I as well as the thing between Masson and me on internal open juncture. Kindly let me know what this very good reason is." (10th April 1976)

I received another letter dated 14th April which included the paragraph:

"The dialogue between Masson and me was a bit long, but my thing on syllabic I was not long and I thought was much more important than some of the waffle you did include in the NEWS SHEET. While we are resolving the duties and responsibilities of the chairman *I shall include a resolution enabling the chairman to order the publications secretor to include matter in the Society's periodical*".

There was later a further letter from our chairman, Mr Smith, dated 21st April 1976. This included the paragraph:

"It is very kind of you to invite me to write a new article for NEWS SHEET, but I am still waiting to see published the note on syllabic /I I gave you ages ago. Have you lost it? If so, please say so, have a good look and tell me if you can't find it. It is less than a page long."

I decided to print the piece on Syllabic //I in the first number of our new journal READING & SPELLING. Members may read it there on page 24 and make up their own minds if it was worth all the correspondence that went on about it.

WITHOUT COMMENT — Part 2

Then followed resolutions for the Committee and proposed constitutional amendments.

(a) For the Committee meeting 26th June

"Smith proposes that the editorial board created 30 October 1971 (with editor, chairman, secretary and treasurer ex officio members) should be responsible for the contents of NEWS SHEET and any other periodicals produced by the Society."

(The effect would have been to remove responsibility from me as Editor and spread it over a board).

At the meeting it was explained to Mr Smith that the resolution he had quoted had apparently been superseded by a later resolution (May 3rd 1973) which proposed members of a board by name. It was also pointed out that such resolution was against Section 5 page 6 Publications Secretary of the Constitution, which states, inter alia, "The Publications Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year. He shall be responsible for the production of all the Society's publications and *shall be Editor of its journals*."

A resolution which infringes the Constitution cannot, of course, be passed by the Committee.)

The next step was a proposal included in the agenda for a committee meeting on 10th July.

This read: "Smith proposes the following constitutional amendments to be recommended to the Society: No.12) Section 5. Publications Secretary. delete 'and shall be Editor of its journals.' "

(The effect of this would be to remove responsibility for the journals from the Publications Secretary and give it to nobody — since no alternative is specified in the proposal).

I believe that the above is a fair and factual statement. I have quoted only the relevant parts of our Chairman's letters but if any member wishes to have a copy of the full text of any letter I will be happy to send a copy provided costs are provided. I should say that Mr Smith's letters and resolutions are mainly but not invariably in his own alphabet. I have given the bare bones of the facts and leave it to members to draw their own conclusions from them.

COMMENT

I want here to make some comments on the very large number of constitutional amendments that have been proposed by Mr Smith. In the main they are badly drafted and badly thought out, without much regard for the consequences which may flow from them.

The first group to which I should draw attention are:

Proposal 20 of 26th June reading:

"All the honorary officers except the President shall be elected for a period of one year"

Proposals 6, 7, 8 and 9 of 10th July reading:

"6) The Education Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year.

"or 7) The Education Secretary shall be elected for a period of 2 years. (Withdrawn if 6) passes)

"8) The Records Secretary shall be elected for a period of one year

"or 9) The Records Secretary shall be elected for a period of 2 years.

One wonders how 'all' (underlined [italicised] by me) in proposal 20 above can be reconciled with 7 and 9 above. All were put forward by our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith.

The only thing in common between Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 appears to be a desire to change at all costs away from the present Constitution, — which says 3 years. It is a bad reason for making a change especially when such good reasons led to fixing the original periods.

So far as the Education Secretary is concerned much of the reason for the 3 year period is set out in his/her duties as set out on pp. 5 and 6 of the Constitution. In the course of these duties he could be expected to get to know and to become friendly with persons important to the Society's aims. He would get to know important education officials at the Ministry of Education (here and overseas); with local education officials; with editors of educational and other papers; with broadcasters; with officers of grant-making foundations; with officers of other Societies. Such friendly contacts *over a fairly lengthy period* lead to mutual confidence

and trust and will thus help the work of the Society. It is not likely that this kind of relation could be achieved in a short period.

Reasons of continuity apply also to the work of the Records Secretary.

Passing any of these amendments would, quite apart from their self contained absurdity, seriously damage the Society's work.

Constitutional amendment 10 of 10 July proposed by our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith, is a particularly badly thought out proposal. It may also be illegal. It certainly would be illegal if the Society were to be an incorporated body. Amendment 10 reads:

"Section 14 — delete all reference to proxy voting."

This would have the effect of disfranchising all Members of the Society who were unable to attend in person to vote in person at meetings of the Society. In practice this would mean that the affairs of the Society would be conducted by a small group of its members. Probably those living in the South-East of England — the area in which Mr Smith resides — would be the only members able to attend with any regularity. This amendment would deprive most members of the Society of any opportunity of taking part in *their* Society's business. If Dr Gassner, for example, wished to record his vote on an issue in which he had an interest he would have to make a journey from Australia to do so. This would cost him about £800 — a very expensive vote — where it now costs him a few pence for a stamp to play his part in the Society's affairs.

At present 30 of the Society's listed members live overseas i.e. 25% of the total. These overseas members have played an active part in the Society's affairs. Our First International Conference would not have been a success without their support. At present their orders and cash for the Proceedings of the Conference outnumber those of resident members by 22 to 1. Are we going to deprive them of their votes in return for their past help to the Society?

Some 40 home-based members of the Society live outside the South-East corner of England. Several live as far away as Scotland. These constitute some 30% of the membership. Very much the same circumstances apply to these members as to overseas members.

There are also a number of members who are ill or old and who will find it very hard to attend in person. There is, for example, one member of the Society who has always attended the Society's functions but who this year has had a serious accident which will prevent his attendance at the AGM and Committee meetings. Is he to be prevented from taking his usual active part — by proxy, because of his illness? There are several other members in similar case.

Thus, rather more than 50% of the members of the Society will have their active membership of the Society made more difficult if this constitutional amendment passes. Will any of these members feel it is not worthwhile paying the increased subscription to remain a *nonparticipating* member of the Society? What effect will this amendment have on the recruitment of new members? The membership figures of the Society show that the number of our members has increased greatly since the introduction of proxy voting in the 1974 Constitution. Will they decrease again if this very recent provision for giving members an active part in the Society's affairs is so very hastily withdrawn?

Amendment 10 of agenda 10 July has clearly not been very well thought out and members should reject it.

At the Committee Meeting of 26 June Mr Smith, our Chairman, proposed another constitutional amendment as follows:

"22) Section 14 — delete paragraph 3 and add 'Any resolution for an expenditure of more than £25 must have been on an agenda circulated at least one week before the meeting.

The only amendment to such a resolution that can be introduced at the meeting is a reduction in the proposed expenditure'."

At the meeting on 10 July he proposed:

"11) Section 14 — replace the last two sentences with the following: 'Any resolution for an expenditure of more than £50 must have been on an agenda at least one week before the meeting. *The only amendment to such a resolution that can be introduced at the meeting is a reduction in proposed expenditure'.*"

(I should state that the underlining [*italics*] is mine — Editor)

The later 10 July motion must be an attempt at a rethink. It is not a very successful attempt. The confusion in meaning between "resolution" (sic) and "proposal" (or some similar word) remains — as also does the inelegant and confusing last sentence (underlined by me). It seems to me that both versions of this proposed 'amendment' are redundant and unnecessary. There is already in existence a resolution passed at the AGM of 1974 which states that all expenditure of more than £50 must be approved in advance by the Committee. I suggest that members reject whichever of these proposals is put forward.

There are two more groups of constitutional amendments proposed more than once by our chairman, Mr Edward Smith. These are in the agenda of 26 June:

"23) Section 15 — delete

24) Section 16 — delete

25) Section 17 — delete

They re-appear in the agenda of 10 July as:

13) Delete section 15.

14) Delete section 16.

15) Delete section 17."

One wonders a bit about the plurality. I should say that the deletion of Section 15 could be fraught with great danger for the Society. Section 15 was included for two reasons. One reason was that it provided the outline of a plan for future action. Some of these items have been realised. Nos. 2,4,6,9,12,16,17 of the list have been put into effect during my period as Secretary. We hope the remaining ten items will shortly go into effect.

The second and more important reason is concerned with obtaining tax-free charity status for the Society. This very carefully worded Section 15 was put into help advance our claims to tax-free status on the grounds of public benefit under the new law. At present the Society pays direct tax of about £150 a year on its investments. We also lose some £400 a year Corporation Tax which is paid by the companies in which our funds are invested. We could reclaim some of this if we had tax-free status. This would make an improvement of about

£500 a year in the Society's finances. It was felt that the inclusion in the Society's Constitution of a list of activities of public benefit, especially if most of these had already been realised, would constitute powerful support to a claim for tax-free status. We have already made a good deal of progress.

The only argument that Mr Smith has been able to put forward to justify his amendment is that it would shorten the Constitution and, perhaps, more members might read it. One doesn't want to be derisive but I believe there is good reason for rejecting Mr Smith's amendment.

On Mr Smith's proposed constitutional amendment
"Delete Section 16"

I ought to say in addition to what has been said earlier that I foretold in [NEWS SHEET 5](#) Item 6 that attempts would be made to amend this important section of the Constitution. 'This has now happened and in the way I forecast. Members ought not to deprive the Society of the protection this important section of the constitution gives to the Society.

Mr Smith's only argument is that deletion would make the Constitution shorter. Clearly, of course, it would but it would also make it less effective.

Our Chairman, Mr Edward Smith, has also proposed as a constitutional amendment
"Delete Section 17"

Mr Smith's only argument is again that it would shorten the Constitution. I can only point out the large amount of good Section 17 has already brought about. Only once up to now has anyone been appointed under this section. This was Mr Vic Paulsen of San Francisco who wanted some status in order to be able to help in organising speakers and members for our First International Conference. The result was a sizeable influx of visitors to the Conference and several particularly good papers on the programme. I believe that a new occasion for the use of Section 17 may be in the offing as a follow-on to Mr Tillema's efforts in Ontario. It would be silly to give up this section.

Mr Smith, our Chairman, has proposed several additional constitutional amendments but I have unfortunately not the time nor space to comment. It seems to me that most are equally ill-considered and improvident and I would urge all members, especially those overseas, to make use of their votes to reject *all of them*. It seems to me that less than one year after it became our agreed Constitution is much too early to be playing around with the Constitution.

I URGE MEMBERS STRONGLY TO REJECT ALL PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS UNTIL A SUFFICIENT PERIOD OF TIME HAS ELAPSED TO ALLOW MEMBERS TO FORM MATURE AND WELL THOUGHT OUT OPINIONS ON ANY REAL MERIT THE AMENDMENTS MAY HAVE.

6. REPORT OF THE RESEARCH CONTROLLER FOR THE MEETING OF JUNE 26th, 1976

The two questions to which this report is addressed are

- (1) what should be the scope and size of a trial of the alphabets to be investigated and
- (2) what kind of finance is needed to see the trial through,

Basic Plan and Scope

The basic plan of the trial can be seen in the accompanying table entitled "allocation of media". The reasons behind this particular plan derive from the literature following experiments with the initial teaching alphabet. Alternative plans with fewer groups taught with the medium of traditional orthography are conceivable. But they would call for a very complicated experimental design, and seem impracticable.

The design indicated allows for "absolute" differences to show if individual alphabets are superior to t.o., and then comparing the size of such differences (a relative comparison) would be the basis for deciding the relative merits of the different alphabets, although suitable statistical techniques are now widespread and would allow direct comparisons with statistical control.

For the sake of brevity, the reasons behind this plan ought not to be discussed at length in this report, since they would involve a review of the literature of criticism of previous trials with i.t.a. However, where it differs from what might be anticipated when thinking of the number of alphabets concerns the scope of the trial.

The scope of the trial must not only cover issues that might be discussed inside the society, but must allow for results that will jolt those who may be antipathetic. This is why the design must allow an initial establishment of the superiority of individual alphabets (if the superiority exists) over t.o., before the questions about the relative merits of the alphabets are addressed. There is a bonus here. There would be enough children taught with t.o. in the trial to enable any testing to establish a t.o. achievement norm that would be specific to the purpose of comparing alphabets. However standard tests need to be used as well, and the literature on i.t.a. trials facilitates choices there.

Making the school class the experimental unit, and having two alphabets (t.o. and a rival) in each school is a widely praised method of matching on incidental variables like social class and school facilities. The alphabet which showed greater superiority over t.o. than novel rivals would be "the winner".

It is very difficult to describe a trial plan without slipping into jargon, but hopefully the general idea is clear enough, and maybe the basis, which is to avoid equivocal results and stay in the realm of what is practicable.

Size of the trial. It is fairly clear from the table that the enterprise is likely to involve some eighteen or so schools. The number of alphabets is not as important as it may seem at first sight. The fewer the alphabets, the more schools would be needed to get a convincing result. With this number of alphabets three schools per alphabet should give enough data to compare alphabets as well as decide what the effect of medium of instruction is in general. The real size problem is the amount of material needed in a trial of this kind.

Problems with Drawing up a Budget

As far as the budget goes, scope again is important.

The trial needs to be such that people outside the Society will take it very seriously. But since it must involve the cooperation of practising teachers, it must also be taken very seriously by experienced classroom teachers. Getting teachers to do some of the testing saves on personnel, and so does the use of teachers who would be teaching children to read anyway. But then to ensure their genuine involvement, the materials used must be comparable to what is generally in use, especially when the crucial variable is a change in alphabet. The big items are where materials are concerned, but I shall go through the items of a notional budget in my customary order.

Personnel. I think the Society is wise to have a University lecturer as research controller in that the project then becomes part of his "personal" research which gives access to facilities for research which Universities customarily provide. For instance, there is no need to buy computer time, and some bodies will provide finance only to institutions like universities. However, besides taking advantage of the lecturer's obligation to engage in research, there is the consideration of the overlap of university terms with school terms.

A research assistant would cost up to £3000 a year and employee benefits are 20% of salary. The trial would have to be followed for three years, and doing without an assistant for the middle year might be possible, but there would be a loss of continuity.

Report typing and drafting report forms would require secretarial assistance at, say, £600 over three years.

Travel. According to where participants in the trial are recruited, travel could be very expensive. The figure of £600 comes to mind, with most of it being spent in the first and last years.

Equipment. There is not likely to be heavy expenditure here. Maybe a tape-recorder for recordings of children reading would be justified, but that would be uneconomical.

Materials and reproduction. The main change in the school situation since the more famous i.t.a. trials has been the enormous increase in the number of t.o. reading schemes that have become popular. There is talk of "individualised reading", which means that instead of schools having one scheme, they buy in a range, and gauge children's progress by the number of books of different levels they have read. I think this poses a great problem. Instead of transliterating popular schemes, it is necessary to consider transliterating a range of books at different levels. At the moment, I am going into the question of how widespread

"individualised" approaches are on my own. Their existence means that if special materials are written for the trial, they must be in such a quantity that a school would not hesitate to use them exclusively, even though they have been used to a wide selection of t.o. books before the trial.

Reproduction must result in materials that look as attractive to teachers as what they would be using if they were not in the trial. "To teachers" means that pasting over pages in existing books is in order, since every teacher must be used to well-worn books. But results from a trial where duplicated material is used would not nowadays be taken seriously.

Some kind of printed reproduction does not rule out processes like off-set litho. Duplication could be used for some of the test materials, and for records teachers would be asked to keep, but once the trial is involved in printed materials, the order of expenditure is not increased by having more of the same.

Communication. The circulars that would recruit schools and then keep participants informed would involve considerable postage expenditure. I am sure the Society's secretary can supply a figure here.

ALLOCATION OF MEDIA IN DESIGN OF TRIAL

(Odd numbered classes would be treatment groups; even numbered classes would serve as matched controls)

School	Experimental Reception Classes	Control Reception Classes.
1.	1. New Spelling 1948	2. Traditional orthography
2.	3. "	4. t.o.
3.	5. "	6. t.o.
4.	7. Torskript	8. t.o.
5.	9. "	10. t.o.
6.	11. "	12. t.o.
7.	13. Consistent spelling	14. t.o.
8.	15. "	16. t.o.
9.	17. "	18. t.o.
10.	19. Readspell	20. t.o.
11.	21. "	22. t.o.
12.	23. "	24. t.o.
13.	25. Ed. Smith's script	26. t.o.
14.	27. "	28. t.o.
15.	29. "	30. t.o.
16.	31. Initial teaching alphabet	32. t.o.
17.	33. i.t.a.	34. t.o.
18.	35. i.t.a.	36. t.o.

Notes

1. Credentials of individual alphabets would be established, as far as the trial would go, by showing the experimental classes to be superior to the matched control classes.
2. The relative merits of successful (as above) alphabets would be assessed by comparing how much experimental classes differed from the controls. With appropriate techniques of analysis direct comparisons of alphabet groups could also be made.
3. Besides providing control of incidental variables, the number of t.o. groups allows comparisons against achievement norms calculated from people in the experiment, as well as against published norms.

Summary and Recommendations

1. A practicable and watertight design can be conceived but it would involve some eighteen schools and assistance for the research controller to the tune of £10,000 over three years.
2. Economy of scale of expenditure on reproduction of materials is difficult to justify on research grounds. It might result in teachers who co-operate regarding what they were doing unfavourably, and much work must be done by well disposed teachers in a trial of this kind. (They would have to keep records, do testing and the like, when they would not necessarily need to outside the trial.)
3. It is difficult to gauge what preparing and reproducing materials would cost, but it must be as much as the personnel and travel costs, and other expenditures altogether.
4. Bodies outside the Society must be approached to fund the trial, but first more information on costs of materials is needed, and the likelihood of the cooperation of a sufficient number of schools.

ELECTIONS 1976

Candidate for CHAIRMAN — George O'Halloran

Teaching since thirties. In War-time Forces ran a voluntary school for African soldiers in Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. Experimented with literacy in phonic African languages — and gained interest in spelling reform.

Later in H.M. Colonial Service (as Education Officer i/c the Gambian Protectorate) gave to the Mandingo language its first official alphabet — is thus probably the only member of the Society who has had the real experience of developing a new alphabet through all its stages from invention, through trials, to official acceptance and use. This has been subject of a Parliamentary Report in Blue Book: Colonial Development 1947/8.

Gained business, financial and administrative experience as Managing Director in West Africa of a large American company and later with a British/Dutch company.

Joined i.t.a. Foundation as General Secretary. Responsible for top level negotiation (with UNESCO, home and overseas governments etc.). Produced English course in i.t.a. whose satisfactory working has been confirmed by the West African Examinations Council. Set up largest trial ever of teaching English as a foreign language in West Africa.

Now teaches reading in London.

Committee member of S.S.S. since 1972. Hon. Secretary since 1974 and (combined) Publications Secretary since 1975. Designed Society's new Constitution; Financial Regulations; Filing System; Letterhead. Organised and ran our first (very successful) International Conference. Responsible for Society's journals NEWS SHEET and READING & SPELLING. First put forward the idea of Prince Philip's becoming our Patron. Gained our first grant from a funding Foundation (Thomson, London, 1975). Currently engaged on production of the Proceedings of the 1975 Conference.

Has published several books, courses, articles — on topics relevant; has broadcast on radio/TV in Britain, Ireland, Germany, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Cameroons — on topics relevant to Spelling Reform.

Now wishes office where his experience may help Society to develop still unrealised potential.

ELECTIONS 1976

Candidate for CHAIRMAN — Edward Smith

(I have asked Mr Smith twice: once in my circular to all members and also in my E27 dated 14.6.76 to Mr Smith to send in an election statement in accordance with the Constitution (ELECTIONS page 7: bottom). Mr Smith has acknowledged receipt of my letter E27 but has not yet sent a statement.)