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Washington, D. C.,

FGC:jds

February 28, 1918.

Secretary,

British Esperanto Association,  
17 Hart St., London, W. C. 1.,  
England.

Dear Sir:

The writer has been preparing, for the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, a brief review of the history of the international language problem, centering it somewhat about the recent death of Dr. Zamenhof, although treating of earlier and later projects as well, somewhat in fact as an abridgement of Clark's "International Language, Past, Present and Future", as far as this went, and bringing it down to date from that point out of the literature available, including the controversy between Esperanto and Ido and the present status of the movement as a whole. This has been much delayed by press of other duties, and is just being turned over to the editor of the Institution's publications.

It has been suggested by the Smithsonian authorities that a few photographs might materially enhance the general public interest in the publication, and the fact that several of the most prominent figures in this field have passed away within the last few years make it seem particularly appropriate to bring together their photographs in this manner. We had particularly in mind Abbe Schleyer, the author of Volapük, who died in 1912; Dr. Zamenhof, author of Esperanto, who died in 1917; Prof. Louis Couturat, one of the leaders of the Ido movement, who died in 1914; Mr. H. Bolingbroke-Madie, president of the British Esperanto Association, who died in 1917; Prof. Emile Boiras, president of the Esperanto Academy, who died in 1917, and Mr. Th. Rousseau, one of the founders of the Central Esperanto Office and of the Universal Esperanto Association, who died in 1916.

We can undoubtedly secure a good photograph of Dr. Zamenhof from a studio here in Washington, which took it at the time of the 1910 congress; but, with regard to the others, I shall have to make a further search. I wish to ask you specifically if you can furnish us with a good photograph of Mr. Bolingbroke-Madie. In addition, we would greatly appreciate

any help you can give us in securing the others. As the manuscript must go to press rather promptly, it is desirable to have these photographs as early as possible. However, as it is my idea that they be put on separate pages from the text proper and probably be accompanied by a brief biographical note, the completion of final page-proof of the text will not need to be delayed awaiting their receipt. We shall, of course, be glad to see to it that all these photographs are carefully returned to the people furnishing them.

If there are any special data which you feel should be especially included in the biographical notes accompanying the portraits, we would be glad to have a memorandum of the same, as I am having to rely otherwise upon the general literature which happens to be available to me. In the cases of Abbe Schleyer and Dr. Zamenhof much fuller biographical data appear in the main text of the article.

I am rather in hopes that the present article may be the means of attracting the attention of the Smithsonian Institution to the importance of the international language problem, possibly to the extent of some formal recognition in their regular activities, even if nothing more at the outset than the serious collection of a complete library dealing with the international language problem in all its phases -- something which is certainly very much needed here at present.

Thanking you very much for any help you can give us in the above matters, I remain,

Very truly yours,



P. S.-- Address reply to F. G. Cottrell, U. S. Bureau of Mines, Washington, D. C.