





## CONVENTIONAL SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS FOR USE ON CHARTS.

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE DIRECTING COMMITTEE.

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THE "Index to the Abbreviations and Features adopted in the Hydrographical Surveys of Great Britain", compiled by Captain B. DRURY R.N. in 1852, shown on the opposite page, is an interesting and quaint example of an early attempt to produce what is now termed a chart of "Signs and Abbreviations".

The first sheet of "Abbreviations adopted in the Charts", published by the British Admiralty, appeared in the year 1835, but it merely gave a list of 35 of the principal forms used, with abbreviations denoting the quality of the bottom, and was a very small and simple production.

Doubtless there were earlier forms of dealing with this subject, produced either separately or contained in some publication in connection with Nautical Surveying; "A Treatise on Marine Surveying", published by Murdoch MACKENZIE in 1819, contains a Supplement by James HORSBURGH, the well known Hydrographer to the East India Company, which includes a small plate showing 22 Conventional Signs, all of which are practically identical with those in use to-day, the only peculiarity being that of the Title, which is "Marks and Diversities to be represented in Draughts".

Among the subjects discussed at the "Conférence Internationale Maritime", held at St. Petersburg in 1912, was that of the Conventional Signs and Abbreviations to be used on charts, but, unfortunately, from a variety of causes, no definite results were arrived at.

However, the matter was included in the Agenda of the International Hydrographic Conference, held in London in 1919, and a considerable amount of interesting and useful discussion took place, with the result that a number of Conventional Signs and Abbreviations were unanimously adopted (*see* pages 23 to 25 of the "Report of Proceedings of the International Hydrographic Conference of 1919").

There are still a number of Signs which it would appear can eventually be satisfactorily standardized, and several of these are now under consideration by the Members ; among these may be specially mentioned the desirability of arriving at some clear method of indicating depth-contours for both shoal and deep water ; a suitable symbol to indicate the existence of "Leader Cables" has recently been decided upon, while a common form for the delineation of submerged wrecks lying at varying depths has also been agreed to, (*see* Circular-Letter N° 27-H. of 7th December 1923).

Complete agreement on such a subject as the delineation of the depth-contours, mentioned above, is obviously a much more difficult matter to arrive at than obtaining uniformity as to Leader Cables ; in the former case, old established practice is often seriously affected, alterations in which would involve much time and expense, whereas in the latter case, where the object to be delineated is entirely new, the matter is comparatively simple of solution ; it is hoped that the different Hydrographic Offices will endeavour to meet the suggestions put forward on such subjects in order to enable complete agreement to be arrived at.

As a direct result of the discussion of Signs and Abbreviations, it is satisfactory to note that most of the chart-producing Nations have recently issued new publications or new editions of the charts or pamphlets on this subject, *viz* : — 1921, Greece, Netherlands and Sweden ; 1922, Argentine, Japan and the U. S. of America (Hydrographic Office) ; and 1923, Brazil, Great Britain, Italy and Norway.

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| CHILE.   | The last edition of this chart is dated 1912 and a new edition is in course of preparation.  |
| CHINA.   | Publishes no special list but uses at present the symbols, etc., of the British Hydrographic Office. Will produce a chart eventually.                        |
| DENMARK. | The date of the last edition of this chart is 1908, additions up to 1923 have been received for use in the Bureau ; a new chart is in course of preparation. |

- EGYPT. Publishes no maritime charts at present, but in the event of so doing will use the symbols, etc., of the British Hydrographic Office.
- FRANCE. Published its information in book form in 1914; this publication was produced in such an elaborate manner and in such detail that a new edition on similar lines is clearly a matter not to be lightly undertaken; in the meantime, a copy of this book, corrected up to 1923, has been received for the use of the Bureau.
- FINLAND. On Finnish charts the symbols and abbreviations used are partly similar to those used on Russian and Swedish charts; no list has yet been compiled.
- GERMANY. Enquiries are being made but no information has yet been received.
- NETHERLANDS. A copy of the 1921 edition of this chart, with corrections up to date, has been received for the use of the Bureau.
- PERU. No information has yet been received.
- PORTUGAL. A small pamphlet of symbols, etc., was published in the year 1914; a new edition is now in course of preparation.
- RUSSIA. The General Administration of Hydrography of the Admiralty, Petrograd, has forwarded a list of symbols and abbreviations in book form, dated 1910.
- SIAM. Publishes no special list at present but uses the symbols and abbreviations adopted by the I. H. C. of 1919; a chart is now in course of preparation.
- SPAIN. The only edition of this chart was published in the year 1873; in 1911 a small sheet of additional symbols, etc., was published.
- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. I. *Hydrographic Office*. — A "Manual" on this subject was published in 1903. A Board has now been appointed to standardize methods and procedure connected with all mapping activities in the United States which will include the subject of Conventional Symbols and Abbreviations; after the conclusion of the work of this Board a new edition of the "Manual" will be published. It will be noted that a chart was published by this Office in 1922.
- II. *Coast and Geodetic Survey*. — The chart used by this Survey is that of the Geographic Board; the last edition was published in 1917, corrections to this chart up to 1923 have been received for the use of the Bureau.

The Bureau is now engaged in the compilation of a work which will illustrate the Symbols and Abbreviations in use upon charts of all maritime countries; it is, therefore, essential that every country;

whether a Member of the Bureau or not, should supply the information required, and the Republics of Germany, Finland and Russia have accordingly been communicated with.

The subject of the Abbreviations for use on charts in connection with languages, was referred to on pages 57 and 58 of the first "Hydrographic Review", where it was stated that the Directing Committee of the Bureau, after lengthy consideration, decided that the only satisfactory solution of this question is the adoption of abbreviations of words belonging to one of the so-called International Auxiliary Languages; this decision still holds good, and, until such an agreement can be arrived at, abbreviations must remain in the same form, in each language, as hitherto used.

