



## TRANSCRIPTION OF PLACES NAMES

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**A**T the International Hydrographic Conference held in London in 1919, the following resolution was made :

(Section I, Resolution P).

*Transcription of names, and authorities to be consulted thereon.*

I. — It is agreed that generally the literal transcription and not the phonetic is to be adopted.

II. — It is agreed that for countries and islands that have not an official method of transcription the transcription as adopted by the controlling Power should be used.

III. — It is agreed that, in the case of those countries using characters other than Roman, the International Hydrographic Bureau, when formed, should as soon as possible prepare an international system of transliteration and transcription of names.

With the object of obtaining the names and addresses of the Authorities responsible, in each State, for coastal nomenclature and the spelling thereof referred to in paragraphs I and II of the Resolution, a Circular-Letter (No. 36 of 28th. September 1922) was addressed to the Hydrographic Offices of the States Members requesting that this information be supplied to the Bureau.

The majority of the Members have now sent replies to this Circular-Letter and the following summary thereof is published as, in the opinion of the Directing Committee, it is of interest, not only to Hydrographic Offices, but also to many other organisations.

### **Argentine.**

No special scientific body exists for the purpose of controlling the general nomenclature but the Hydrographic Division of the Department

of Navigation and Communications, Ministry of Marine, Buenos-Aires, is in charge of the nomenclature and spelling of names of places on the coast.

### **Brazil.**

The Department of Navigation, Ilha Fiscal, Rio de Janeiro, is responsible for the spelling of all names which appear on the charts published thereby.

### **Canada.**

The Chief Hydrographer of Canada has kindly informed the Bureau that the Geographic Board of Canada is the responsible authority and that this Board includes a representative from his Office.

The address of the Secretary of the Geographic Board is : —

Department of the Interior  
OTTAWA.

### **Chile.**

The Office of Hydrography and Navigation, Valparaiso, is the Authority responsible for the spelling of all names which appear on charts.

*Note.* — The Chilean Hydrographer in his reply quotes Art. 9 of the Regulations of his Office which reads as follows : —

“ Care should be taken in writing geographical names that priority should be given to those imposed by foreign explorers on localities which were not previously named, and it is not permitted that, on plans or works intended for publication, the previously adopted names should be changed. The native names shall be preserved in every case. The Director is empowered to give names to those localities which have none shown on plans which are sent to the Department, but he should select a name which is appropriate and which characterises the locality or object. ”

### **China.**

The Director of the Hydrographic Dept. whose address is : WOO-SUNG, *via* SHANGHAI, states that that Department will now deal with the matter of the transcription of place names.

### **Denmark.**

The Hydrographer states that there is no Government Department, or scientific institution responsible for nomenclature and orthography.

## **Egypt.**

The Survey of Egypt, GIZA (MUDIRIYA), undertakes responsibility for the spelling of all place-names shown on the maps of Egypt including those of coastal regions.

## **France.**

The Director of the Hydrographic Service states that there is neither a Government Service nor any other authority in France which is responsible for the orthography of place-names.

## **Great Britain.**

The Hydrographic Department, Admiralty, LONDON S. W. 1 is responsible for coastal nomenclature and spelling which appear on Admiralty Charts. As regards nomenclature of places outside the British Isles, the Department consults the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names which is administered by the Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, LONDON. S. W. 7.

## **Greece.**

The Hydrographic Service, Ministry of Marine, ATHENS is responsible generally for the coastal nomenclature and its orthography. Since the establishment of the Service (in 1920) a certain amount of work in this connection has been done but this has been seriously impeded owing to the state of war which existed.

## **Italy.**

The Director of the Hydrographic Institute, GENOA, states that there is no particular Office in Italy for naming points on the coast and the spelling of such names but : —

(a) For the coasts of the Kingdom (within the old boundaries) and for the Colonies (Libia, Somaliland and Eritrea) the charts of the Royal Hydrographic Institute are taken as the standards.

(b) For inland names (within the old boundaries and in the colonies) the maps of the Military Geographic Institute of Florence are the standards, and

(c) For the coasts and territories of the new provinces a suitable Commission has been appointed which should present its report shortly to the Military Geographic Institute, Florence.

**Japan.**

Coastal nomenclature and the spelling thereof are generally decided by discussion between the Government Departments principally concerned in each case. The Hydrographer states that enquiries on such matters should be addressed to the Hydrographic Department of the Imperial Navy, TOKIO, which will endeavour to send a prompt reply after consultation with the Departments concerned.

**Netherlands.**

The Hydrographer states that no Government Department or scientific body is responsible for coastal nomenclature and the spelling thereof. However the Royal Geographical Society, 28 Saxen Weimarlaan AMSTERDAM, has published a "Glossary of Geographical names in the Netherlands" (now in its fourth edition). This book is considered to have a semi-official character and its use is recommended by the Department of the Interior.

For the Netherlands East Indies there is an official publication entitled "List of the principal Geographical names in the Netherlands-Indies" the second edition of which was issued by the Department of Public Instruction and Religion, BATAVIA, in 1923.

Nothing has been done in this connection in the Netherlands West Indies.

**Norway.**

The Hydrographer states that the Sjøkartverk, KRISTIANIA, is responsible, for the coastal nomenclature on the charts published thereby, the spelling being determined by experts.

**Portugal.**

The Section of Hydrography and Navigation, Ministry of Marine, LISBON, is responsible for coastal nomenclature and the spelling thereof.

**Siam.**

The Hydrographer states that no Government Department or scientific body exists which is responsible for the nomenclature and spelling of place names.

**Sweden.**

The Hydrographer informs the Bureau that a Royal Commission on Place Names is systematically investigating the matter as affecting the whole country but that, so far, it has dealt with some of the inland provinces only. It will take many years before the commission completes its work and meanwhile the Hydrographic Office consults with certain experts, the most widely known being Professor Adolf NOREEN, University of UPSALA, who has been for many years Chairman of the above mentioned Royal Commission.

**United States of America.**

The Hydrographer states that the U. S. Geographic Board is responsible for nomenclature and spelling. The Secretary's address is :

Building D.  
Four-and-a-half Street and Missouri Avenue  
WASHINGTON D. C.

With reference to paragraph III of the Resolution, as has been stated on page 14, the carrying out thereof in its entirety would entail a very great amount of labour and it appears that the best procedure would be to bring the matter before the next Hydrographic Conference in order that the Representatives of those States which are specially interested may have an opportunity to discuss it.

It is hoped that those States which have not yet replied to the Circular-Letter (No. 36 of 28th September 1922) will do so shortly.

G. S. S.

