

CONVERSATION WITH THE DEAF



THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF ADULT DEAF SOCIETIES

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WITH THE
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FOREWORD

THIS booklet has been produced by the Australian Federation of Adult Deaf Societies as a practical contribution towards helping communication with the totally deaf. Although the born deaf and severely deaf are, in all schools for the deaf in this country, educated by being taught to lip-read and to speak, yet the adult deaf find that lip-reading has certain limitations, for many words or groups of letters that sound quite different have almost the same movements of the lips; in such cases the sign language may be used for clarity in conveying thought and information. It is difficult for the deaf to follow a religious service or the proceedings of a public meeting by lip-reading alone, but finger-spelling and the sign language, as used by a practised interpreter, can make this comparatively easy.

It is natural for any human being to use gestures, and these signs that the deaf use are symbols that have been built up over many years, dating back to the Benedictine monks Pedro Ponce de Leon and Juan Pablo Bonet in Spain in the sixteenth century, and systematized by the Abbe de l'Epee in France in the eighteenth century. On the continent of Europe and in America a one-handed alphabet is commonly used; in Great Britain and here in Australia, the two-handed is universal among the totally deaf (although many use the one-handed alphabet), employed generally in conjunction with gesture and lip-reading, and this is the usual method of communication in societies which cater for the welfare of the adult deaf.

The weakness of the sign language or manual alphabet is that to the average hearing person it is a foreign language. The purpose of this book is to show that it is simple to learn and is an effective and accurate means of communicating with the totally deaf. Although it is simple to learn, this does not mean that any person who has acquired the manual alphabet can then be a welfare worker for the

deaf; this is a skilled occupation which requires some years of training and preparation.

The Australian Federation of Adult Deaf Societies is grateful to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, London, for the use of plates of the photographs in this book and to the Rev. Canon T. H. Sutcliffe, M.A., for his brilliant exposition of the art of finger-spelling and conversation with the deaf. Mr. Sutcliffe is a graduate of Cambridge, who himself became deaf after ordination, at first using hearing aids but gradually going totally deaf. He is Organizing Secretary of the Church of England Council for the Deaf (in Great Britian), and when he writes on deafness his words have the authentic ring of personal experience.

CONVERSATION WITH THE DEAF

By THE REV. CANON T. H. SUTCLIFFE, M.A. (Honorary Canon of
Canterbury, England)

APART from writing there are three ways of conversing with the totally deaf—finger-spelling, gestures and the use of lip-reading.

FINGER-SPELLING

This is merely a matter of placing the fingers in 26 different positions to signal the 26 letters of the alphabet. The one-handed alphabet is used in almost every country except England, Scotland and Wales, and is given in this book purely as a matter of interest. It need not be learned for conversing with the deaf in England. The English and Australian deaf almost always use the two-handed alphabet. A word or two may be said about it.

It is very easy to learn. The 26 different positions of the fingers can be memorized in less than an hour. After that it is a matter of practice to gain speed in spelling words. Quite quickly a reasonable speed can be reached. The much more difficult thing is to watch the movements of the fingers of the deaf man and to read the words he is spelling.

Practice over months and perhaps two or three years is necessary to read quick finger-spelling. But most deaf people are only too willing to spell slowly and deliberately if a friend will take the trouble to converse with them. Such slow, deliberate conversation can be carried out almost at once with some of the deaf.

In learning the letters one or two little points should be noticed. The five vowels are signalled by touching, with the right forefinger, the tip of the left thumb for A, the first finger for E, the middle one for I, the next for O, and the little finger for U. The vowels should be carefully mastered. Anyone who does not take trouble over them and frequently touches the wrong fingers makes it very difficult for

finger-reading. This is readily seen when it is realized that the wrong touch of a vowel finger can turn the word PAT into PET or PIT or POR or PUR. It might help if at first A and U are fixed in mind, as being the first and last vowels, and then the middle finger for I. If that is done then E and O soon fall into their proper place.

The next point to notice is that with the other letters of the alphabet, the position of the fingers roughly forms the shape of the printed letter. This is so with the following letters:

B (on its side), C, D, F, K, P, Q, T (bottom of left hand forming the cross stroke, forefinger of the right the down stroke), V, W, X, Y, Z (the arms making the top and bottom lines of the letter and the hand the diagonal stroke).

L, M and N can be remembered in this way: when printed as small letters (not capitals), L is one simple down stroke |, M is three down strokes | | |, and N is two down strokes | |; in finger-spelling L is one finger laid flat on the palm of the left hand, M is three fingers, N two fingers.

R is rather like the top of the written letter R without the little tail on it.

With 24 letters of the alphabet the fingers are placed in a fixed position which can be held as long as desired. But with two letters, namely J and H, there is a moving of the fingers from the beginning to the end of the letter. The movement is indicated in the diagram on page 17 by a small arrow. The letter J is rather like a long letter I with a curve at the bottom. The curve can be ignored and so the right forefinger touches the tip of the I finger and then is drawn down as if making it long. The letter H may be remembered in this way. In making H with a pen in block capitals the two down strokes are done first—| |—and then the last stroke is the small stroke across —. In finger-spelling the letter the whole of the right hand is simply passed *across* the left hand.

Although a pause of varying length may be made at the end of each word, thus adding greater expression, pauses are not necessary and the spelling usually runs like this:

GOODMORNINGNICEDAYTODAY.

It should, however, be mentioned that when a person is only just learning to read finger-spelling it is helpful if the person who is spelling goes slowly and makes a break at the end of each word; that is to say making sure each word is read before going on to the next one.

GESTURES OR SIGNS

Only a few gestures are held stationary. Most of them are *movements* of the hands and arms. This makes it necessary in the photographs to indicate the movements by arrows. It should not be forgotten that the expression shown on the face, whilst a gesture is performed, adds greatly to its execution and meaning.

The gestures used by the deaf vary from country to country and also vary a little in the different parts of England, Scotland and Wales, and Australia. In the judgment of the writer the American, and some of the other systems of signing are rather more elaborate than the British system. In Britain the majority of the signs are closely linked with the meaning and only a slight explanation is required to make the meaning of a gesture quite clear to a hearing person. There are only a few gestures which cannot be explained. This makes it fairly easy for relatives and friends of the deaf to learn a reasonable number of gestures and so to be able to carry on simple conversation with the deaf.

Here are a few general principles:

(a) Pointing in itself is gesturing. It may indicate an article in a shop window. It gives the pronouns I, YOU, HE or SHE; whilst a sweeping, pointing action gives WE, YOU, THEY. It can indicate something to be done, e.g. pointing to the coal scuttle and to the fire clearly means, *Put some coal on*.

(b) Expressions of the face, without becoming ugly grimacing, can show emotion, or can show enquiry, indicating that a question has been asked and an answer is awaited.

(c) Trades can be indicated as in charades, e.g. using a plane to indicate Carpenter, imitating sewing with a needle to indicate Tailor, and so on.

(d) The action of using a tool or object can indicate the object itself, e.g. taking an imaginary pencil from behind the ear and writing with it to indicate Pencil; the action of chopping to indicate Axe; cutting to indicate Knife.

(e) Some outstanding characteristic of an object can be indicated or figured in the air, e.g. horns for Bull or Cow; trunk for Elephant.

(f) Pointing to a part of an object or the object itself—to mean the object but some quality it possesses, e.g. pointing to the lips to mean Red.

The number of signs is limited. There are many words for which no signs have been found. Such words must therefore be finger-spelled.

THE USE OF LIP-READING

Almost all the deaf now learn to lip-read at school. The great drawback to lip-reading is its inexactness. A number of letters which *sound* quite different to a person who can hear, *look*, to a deaf person to be pronounced with almost exactly the same movements of the lips. Such groups of letters are: T, D and N; P, B, M; F and V; K, hard C, and G; J, SH, CH.

The reader may quickly see this for himself by a simple experiment. Let him stand in front of a mirror and, without voicing the words, let him silently move his lips to form the words TIP, DIP and NIP. He will see that the lip movements are almost identical and, therefore, these three words are looking just the same; the letters T, D and N are indistinguishable. He may then experiment with the words PET, BET and MET, showing P, B and M to be the same. The words FAN and VAN will do the same for F and V; THING and THINK for G and K; and JEWS, SHOES and CHOOSE for J, SH and CH.

This means that about nine out of every ten words have to be guessed by even the finest lip-reader in the country. This calls for continuous concentration and causes strain. For this reason few of the totally deaf like to depend on lip-reading alone. On the other hand quite a number of the totally deaf like, in conversation, to have the use of lip-reading *along with* signs and finger-spelling. They like to watch the lips and at the same time to see the signs and finger-spelling. Some people with a lack of knowledge think, and go as far as to assert emphatically, that this is impossible. It can, however, be firmly stated that such an attitude must be due to the fact that such people, either through lack of practice or because they are not familiar enough with signs and finger-spelling, cannot themselves do this simultaneous reading of lip-movements, signs and finger-spelling. But it is absurd for anyone to take the attitude—'because I cannot do this thing nobody else can'. In actual fact this process of simultaneously reading lip-movements, signs and finger-spelling is being done every day by a very large number of adult deaf.*

When the reader considers a moment he will see that it is well within the realms of possibility, for there are many similar things done by hearing people. For example, many men like to have a newspaper propped up at the breakfast table; now, without taking their eyes off the paper they will continue to read the print whilst they stretch out a hand for the marmalade; this they see out of the corner of the eye at the same time. Again a man may be sitting at a desk reading a book when someone comes in and says 'Here is a letter for you'. He may say 'Put it on the desk, will you please?' and continue with his reading and then, whilst still reading, he sees the hand of the person put the letter on his desk. The movement is clearly seen whilst the eyes are directed on to the book.

We have dwelt at length on this point because it is of some importance to the reader to understand what is involved in the use of this threefold medium for conveying thought.

Which method should be used?

Of the three methods of conversing with the deaf which should be used? The answer is surely this—*the method preferred by the*

* Note: The writer is here not giving second-hand opinions, he is writing from actual experience, having gradually become totally deaf himself. (See biographical note on page 2.)

individual deaf person. If we invite a friend to tea we usually ask, 'Do you like sugar in your tea?' And we act upon his answer. We do not say, 'Everybody here takes sugar and so we expect you to do the same'. Unfortunately the latter attitude is taken by most people towards the deaf—'We all converse by speaking and you are expected to do the same. We realize lip-reading is not so easy as hearing, but you must just do your best at it and if you miss things that is sad, but not our fault.' These words may seem blunt but they do sum up a general attitude towards the deaf.

On meeting a deaf person for the first time it would be helpful to ask which method he prefers. In dealing with a deaf member of the family the situation is different. The rest of the family will have known the person from childhood. But they should be ready to see any changes in his preference. For example, a tiny deaf child, knowing no words, will be bound to attempt to express his needs by gestures, even as the very small hearing child does before he learns to talk. Later on it is possible that under the influence of his school-teachers he may wish to converse by speech and lip-reading only. His wishes should be respected.

At this point I would not like to deal with the controversial matter as to whether the oral system of education, that is, by speech and lip-reading, is in the best interests of all deaf children. Families must form their own judgment on that matter and act accordingly.

It is possible that both a deaf person and his family may use the oral system of conversing throughout the deaf person's schooldays, but find that a year or two later a change seems desirable. The deaf person may have found that for ease in general conversation he finds signs and finger-spelling helpful. His family should observe his changing attitude, should ask what he desires and be ready to fall in with his wishes. It is for just such families that this book is provided.

Which method is a deaf person likely to desire?

There are some of the older generation of deaf who prefer to converse in finger-spelling alone. This is due to their being educated at a time when finger-spelling was widely used in schools for the deaf. But these deaf are dying out and there are very few of the modern generation of deaf who like finger-spelling on its own. The reasons for this are these. First it is dull. It corresponds to a person speaking on a monotone in the hearing world. His monotonous voice with little or no inflexion becomes, in time dull, boring, tiring.

Secondly, some of the deaf find it difficult to read quick continuous finger-spelling. The older generation of deaf learned finger-spelling in childhood and, like all accomplishments of childhood, it became part of themselves and an easy natural thing. When finger-spelling is not learned until the age of fifteen, it becomes more difficult to master; and it becomes more and more difficult to master as the years go on. Hence the modern generation of deaf, deprived

of finger-spelling in childhood, do not find quick, continuous finger-spelling the easy means of conversing that the older generation did.

Signs or gestures alone

Then we come to the use of gesturing alone. This is used only by a minority of the deaf who are backward in intelligence and education, perhaps due to having missed some, or all, their years at school. Gestures, being limited in number, these deaf have not an adequate instrument for expressing their thoughts. Their conversation is on an exceedingly low level. But these deaf need all the help, sympathy and understanding that their families can give them.

A combination of finger-spelling and signs

Next we come to a combination of finger-spelling and gesture. This method is used by those deaf who are such poor lip-readers that speech and lip-reading are completely valueless to them. But this method is also used by the average lip-reading deaf when they desire to tell an interesting or amusing happening. It is very much a matter of pure miming with just a very little finger-spelling to help out. For example, in describing an amusing episode on a railway platform a deaf person would, as it were, set his stage and act the part of each character in turn—a real one-man show. It would go something like this: Railway station. There's the ticket-barrier. He imitates walking up to the ticket-collector and handing his ticket. Immediately he becomes the ticket-collector, takes the ticket, punches it and hands it back. Whereupon he at once becomes himself and picks up his bag and walks along the platform. He puts down his bag and looks around. Over there, by another platform, there is a train standing. (All this is gestured.) There is a porter piling luggage on a truck. He becomes the porter for a moment. Then along the platform comes a man with a suitcase in one hand and a paper in the other—an elegant man with a tall hat, morning coat, striped trousers and spats. The deaf man describes all this in gestures and himself becomes the man. He walks along and then sets down his suitcase and stands by it, waiting for the train. Meanwhile the porter has finished loading his truck and now pushes it along the platform. The deaf man again becomes the porter. He pushes his truck towards the elegant man who does not notice this. The deaf man is again the elegant man in the tall hat, looking the other way. Rapidly again he is the porter. The porter shouts. Now, as the elegant man, he turns sharply, tries to step aside, falls over his bag (not himself actually falling but indicating this), and sprawls on top of his paper bag. Question put to those watching—'What was in the bag?' Answer—'Eggs!' The elegant man scrambles to his feet with a look on his face which many a stage comedian would envy—*Curtain!*

Now all this, of course, is done without any expression in words. It is pure pantomime and is far better than any grammatical descrip-

tion in words. This kind of gesturing is of course a delight to the deaf, both to do and to watch. But it is not an object of this book to deal with it. We are concerned to help hearing people to have a method of conversing with the deaf. They could not attempt this.

A combination of finger-spelling, gesture and lip-reading

Finally, we have a combination of finger-spelling, gesture and lip-reading. This threefold method is probably the one most used by the deaf amongst themselves and the method they would prefer hearing friends to use in conversing with them. It is the method most used by W.O.D.'s (Welfare Officers to the Deaf) in conversing with the deaf and is used in conducting church services for the deaf. How does it work? It works like this. Each word or phrase as it is spoken is accompanied by the appropriate gesture. The deaf person watches the lips and is continuously at work lip-reading. But at the same time the hands are observed. Hands and lips help each other. Let us take examples.

On the lips the words **BACK** and **BAG** look exactly alike. Suppose then this is said, 'I slipped and fell and a man just behind me kicked my bag'. It would not be possible for the finest lip-reader to know whether the man had kicked the speaker's bag or back. But if all this had been gestured as well as spoken the gesture of holding a suitcase would have been used to denote 'bag' or else the right hand would have been pointed round to the 'back'. The gesture would have clearly shown which word was spoken. Here gestures would help lips.

The same sign is used both for **FOOTBALL** and **WORLD**. It is the gesture of putting the hands on top of a ball or sphere about the size of a football and bringing them round to the bottom of it, roughly making the form of a ball in the air. But in the sentences 'Will you play football on Saturday?' and 'My brother is a sailor and goes all over the world' the movements of the lips in saying **Football** would be quite different from the movement of the lips in saying **World** and would show the deaf person which word was being gestured. Here lip-reading would help gestures.

We may here notice an interesting point. The general meaning of a sentence will often help to make clear both similar movement of lips and also gestures with two or more meanings. We may say that the context shows the meaning. Here are examples of this.

On the lips **CAP** and **GAP** look alike. But in the sentence 'The boy put on his . . . and went out of the house', the blank is obviously **Cap** and not **Gap**. The rest of the sentence makes it clear.

Similarly, a sign used both for **ELECTRICITY** and **LIGHTNING** is the right forefinger moved in the air as if drawing a zig-zag line on an imaginary blackboard. But in the sentence 'Our bill for . . . is more than it was last time', obviously the blank is **Electricity** and not **Lightning**.

In this use of a threefold medium for conveying thought the

process of the rest of the sentence helping to make clear the meanings of signs and lip-movements is going on continuously. But the much more important process is that throughout conversation lip-movements are helping to make ambiguous or uncertain gestures clear, and gestures are helping to make ambiguous or uncertain lip-movements clear. And finger-spelling comes in when gestures are non-existent. Here then we have a process where every possible method is being used to take away strain from conversation, to make it easeful and to convey the meaning clearly. This is the reason why so many deaf prefer this threefold medium.

But where then does finger-spelling come in? It comes in in this way. There are only a *limited number* of signs. There are not nearly enough to express all our words or ideas. So then, whenever a word is spoken for which there is no sign, that word is finger-spelled. For example, the gesture for TEA is that of drinking tea from a teacup; that being the commonest thing drunk from a cup. But there is no sign for cocoa. That word therefore must be spelled.

It will be seen that by this method of conversing with the deaf any thought can be expressed. But, of course, everything depends on the deaf person's standard of intelligence, education and general knowledge, as to whether he will understand the thought expressed. Let us explain this point a little more.

It is sometimes said that the use of finger-spelling and gesture limits thought to a very low level and hinders a deaf man from progressing. After what has been said above this will be seen obviously to be a mistaken view. By the threefold method just described, wherever the spoken word can be accompanied by a gesture such a gesture is made; where no gesture exists for any particular word or phrase then finger-spelling is used. Now all spoken words can be written or printed or *finger-spelled*. Finger-spelling, equally with writing or printing, is capable of conveying even the most lengthy, abstract, difficult or technical words.

Let us make this quite clear. The following part of a sentence, which is sufficient for our purpose, is taken from the book entitled 'The Mind and its place in Nature', by C. D. Broad, p. 75:

'No physiologist in practice professes to reduce the laws of living matter simply from what he knows of the properties which the constituents of living bodies, or substances more or less like them exhibit in non-living wholes.'

In that sentence the words in italics would be signed as well as spoken. The sign for Simply would be the sign used for Only and for Exhibit the sign used for Show. In the case of a good lip-reader that would help him to gain the exact word from the lips. In the case of an indifferent lip-reader the words would be spelled. All the rest of this rather technical sentence would be finger-spelled as well as spoken.

The point is that that somewhat technical sentences *can be conveyed* by the threefold method.

But everything depends on whether a deaf man is capable of understanding the words or phrases conveyed by the method. A well educated man, going totally deaf at the age of 30 would understand the meaning of that sentence. It is probable that 99.9 per cent. of the born-deaf would not understand it. Indeed many hearing people of average education might have to ponder a little before the meaning of that sentence became clear to them. This point of the understanding of words brings us to a most important part of our subject: *the language difficulty of the deaf and the need for clear and direct thought.*

CLEAR THINKING AND LANGUAGE

A person who did not go deaf until he was twelve or fifteen years of age would have a complete knowledge of the English language as it is used in everyday conversation. In conversing with such a person the threefold method of lip-reading, gesture and finger-spelling can be used in exactly the same kind of conversation as with a hearing person.

But where a person has been totally deaf from birth or early infancy his knowledge of the meaning of ordinary English words has been learned only with painful labour and great difficulty. Many ordinary words are quite outside his understanding, and many ordinary phrases are confusing and need putting in a shorter, more direct form.

Let us make this clear by an example. A person not acquainted with the deaf might ask a question like this:

'When you went to the hospital how did you find your wife?'

Deaf man replies—'Thursday'.

What is the explanation of this? It is quite simple. Many of the deaf are so accustomed to missing parts of what is spoken to them, or of misunderstanding, that when they get hold of something they feel sure of, they seize it and ignore the rest. Here the deaf man seized on 'when—you went to the hospital' and probably the word 'wife'. That stood out in his mind as a question and he jumped to it as meaning 'When did you go to the hospital?' He therefore answered 'Thursday'. The questioner, without knowing the real reason, would no doubt realize that somehow the deaf man had misunderstood. He might therefore try again, 'On Thursday at the hospital how did you find your wife?'

The deaf man replies, 'I asked the man at the gate, he told me Ward C 4'. The explanation is, of course, obvious. The deaf man has taken the word 'find' in the sense of finding something which is being looked for. He thinks the question then was 'How did you find where your wife was?'

Now notice how simple it all can be to one accustomed to the deaf and who has made some effort to understand their way of

thinking. Suppose he wishes to know both when the deaf man saw his wife and how she was.

'You went to the hospital to see your wife?' (accompanied by the sign for a question or by an enquiring look on the face).

Deaf man replies 'Yes'.

Questioner—'When?'

Deaf man—'Thursday'.

Questioner—'Was she better or worse?'

Deaf man—'Better'.

What is required then for conversation with the deaf? The following are the main requirements:

1. Very clear thinking. This is essential when any matter of real importance is to be discussed.

2. Simple words, used only with their commonest or chief meanings. (An example of misunderstanding the simple word 'find' was given above.)

3. Short, direct sentences.

4. All unnecessary words and phrases should be left out, as they only tend to confuse.

Perhaps it may be helpful if, in order to give some guidance and something to aim at, it were suggested that *conversation should be turned as much as possible into the style of a telegram with just enough words added to make it grammatical.*

Let us take another example from a hospital situation. Here is what a person in hospital might say to a hearing friend visiting him: 'Yes, I feel much better now that my operation is over. I am hoping to be back at work soon after I get home, which will be next week perhaps. At least that is what the doctor said he thought.' Now imagine this had to be sent by telegram. It might be worded like this: 'Operation finished. Feel much better. Doctor thinks perhaps home next week. Hope at work soon afterwards.'

Now, fill this out in the proper grammatical English and we have this: 'My operation is finished and I feel much better. The doctor thinks that perhaps I shall go home next week. I hope to be at work soon afterwards.'

It should be noticed that the order is logical—everything coming at its proper time. For example, the operation comes first and feeling better second. They are better put in that order. The doctor's opinion comes before the going home, and that before the getting back to work. These then are better expressed in that order. This all makes for easier understanding. Conversation which moves forwards and then backwards can be very confusing.

It must be said here that the deaf themselves do not always converse in this short, direct and logical fashion. At times they are

certainly so short and direct that they appear blunt, if not actually rude. (This, of course, needs overlooking as being due to their inability to find words to soften their expressions.) Often, however, their inability to find the right words to convey their thoughts leads to much wandering conversation before they get to the point of what they mean to say. But hearing people should not imitate their wandering style of conversation.

Let us take another example to make this clear. Imagine a rather pedantic and academic uncle writing to give advice to his thirteen-year-old nephew who has quite normal hearing. He writes in this way: 'When the appropriate time arrives and you are making a decision on the choice of your future career, a choice which may mean many years of felicity, or may mean a long period or even permanently remaining in an occupation where you feel your abilities are not matched by the requirements of your duties, thereby causing a sense of frustration, it will be recognized that any precipitate action is to be deprecated; the whole situation should be viewed with circumspection and a cautious and deliberate decision should be made.'

The nephew might well say to his father, 'I can never understand what uncle is talking about when he writes like this; what does he mean?' The father might take pencil and paper, saying 'I will write it out for you in simpler words'. Later he hands this to his son:

'When a suitable time comes for you to decide on the choice of your future work, the choice may be such as to give you many happy hours of work which you enjoy, or it may give you a position where you feel that your gifts are not being properly used in the work, so making you feel dissatisfied and your gifts wasted. So it will be seen that a quick or sudden decision should be avoided. As many things as possible connected with the choice of work, should be properly considered and a careful and deliberate decision made.'

An intelligent boy with normal hearing should understand that. But to a totally deaf boy of sixteen it would be as difficult as the original letter from the uncle. This simplification would have to be further simplified for the deaf boy.

First let us put it into 'telegram language' again and in the simplest words. All but the essentials must be eliminated. Further, a concrete example will help to make it plain. The telegram might be as follows: 'Soon must choose work. Choose rightly, happy. Choose wrongly, unhappy. Boy liking animals happy on farm unhappy tailoring. Sudden quick choice wrong. Think carefully before choosing.'

If the boy is backward in education, even for a deaf boy, it might be left like that. The essential thoughts are there in the briefest manner. The addition of further unnecessary words might only confuse him. But if he has received, at the school for the deaf, enough education to think in grammatical English, then the telegram form might be filled out into proper sentences in this way:

Soon (you) must choose (your) work. (If you) choose rightly

(you will be) happy. (If you) choose wrongly (you will be) unhappy. (A) boy liking animals (would be) happy on a farm (but) unhappy (at) tailoring. (A) sudden, quick choice (is) wrong. (You should) think carefully before (you) choose.'

This simplifying for the deaf may seem, when set out in print, to be an easy thing. In practice it may be found, at any rate at first, to be quite difficult. It is hoped that as time goes on it may become easier.

One or two points may be made.

1. This telegram suggestion is only made so as to set the ideal before friends of the deaf. It is something to aim at.

2. There should not be two attempts made to arrange thoughts. That is to say, a person should not first think out a telegram and secondly add words to make it fall into grammatical sentences. That has only been done above in order to show, in detail, how to simplify.

3. With very backward deaf the slightly ungrammatical form exactly as in a telegram may be used, so as to leave out every unnecessary word and be absolutely definite and clear.

4. With deaf sufficiently educated for it, conversation might be as near the telegram form as possible, but with just enough words to make it grammatical.

The golden rule is, *in conversing with the deaf leave out all unnecessary words and use the simplest words you can.*

NUMBERS

The methods by which the deaf signal numbers vary not only in the north and south but also from county to county. This is confusing and regrettable but difficult to alter. The variation is largely due to using the fingers of one hand only. The best method of indicating numbers above five which will be clear to all the deaf is to use the fingers of both hands.

Thus, to signal 17, one finger is held up and then seven fingers. For 92, nine fingers are held up and then two. It will be seen that in this way a number of any size can be indicated. The figure 8,361 is simply a matter of holding up in turn eight, then three, then six fingers and finally one finger.

For nought, as in 10, 30, 60, etc., the tips of the first finger and thumb of the right hand are brought together, as in making the loop at the top of the letter P when finger-spelling it, making a round 0. The Australian numerals appear on page 42.

EXAMPLES OF SIMPLIFYING

Try to keep all tenses to the simple past, present and future, e.g. I walked, I walk, I will walk.

Instead of 'I will be walking' say 'I will walk'.

Instead of 'I was walking' say 'I walked'.

In order to avoid such tenses as 'I had seen' or 'I will have seen' the whole sentence may have to be altered, for example:

'When I met my sister on Wednesday, I *had* already *seen* my brother, on Monday and discussed the matter with him.'

might be altered to:

'I *saw* my brother on Monday and talked with him about this thing; afterwards I *saw* my sister on Wednesday and talked about it with her.'

'Next Wednesday when I see my sister I *will* already *have seen* my brother and have discussed the matter with him.'

might be altered to:

'I *will see* my brother on Monday and talk to him about this thing; afterwards I *will see* my sister on Wednesday and talk to her about it.'

Avoid the use of 'do' and 'did'.

Instead of 'I did like' say 'I liked'.

Instead of 'I do like' say 'I like'.

In questions, rather than use 'do' and 'did', make the statement and sign a question mark at the end to show plainly that you are asking a question, e.g.

Instead of 'Did you go?' say 'You went?'

Instead of 'Do you like?' say 'You like?'

It also helps if the face shows an enquiring look.

Avoid the passive tense as the little word 'be' is often overlooked. Instead of 'You *will be paid* tomorrow', which might make a deaf man think that he himself had to do some paying, saying, 'So and so *will pay* you tomorrow'.

Use one direct word wherever possible, instead of a roundabout phrase, e.g.

Instead of 'make a decision' say 'decide'.

Instead of 'have an idea' say 'think'.

Instead of 'make a request' say 'ask'.

A WARNING

It would be well to end with this warning. No one who is not a fully qualified worker for the adult deaf should act as interpreter upon any public or important occasion. Let us elaborate this. A person who uses this book may find that, with practice, he can carry

on conversation with a deaf friend or relative reasonably well. He may therefore conclude that he is able to help a deaf person on all and every occasion. This would be quite wrong.

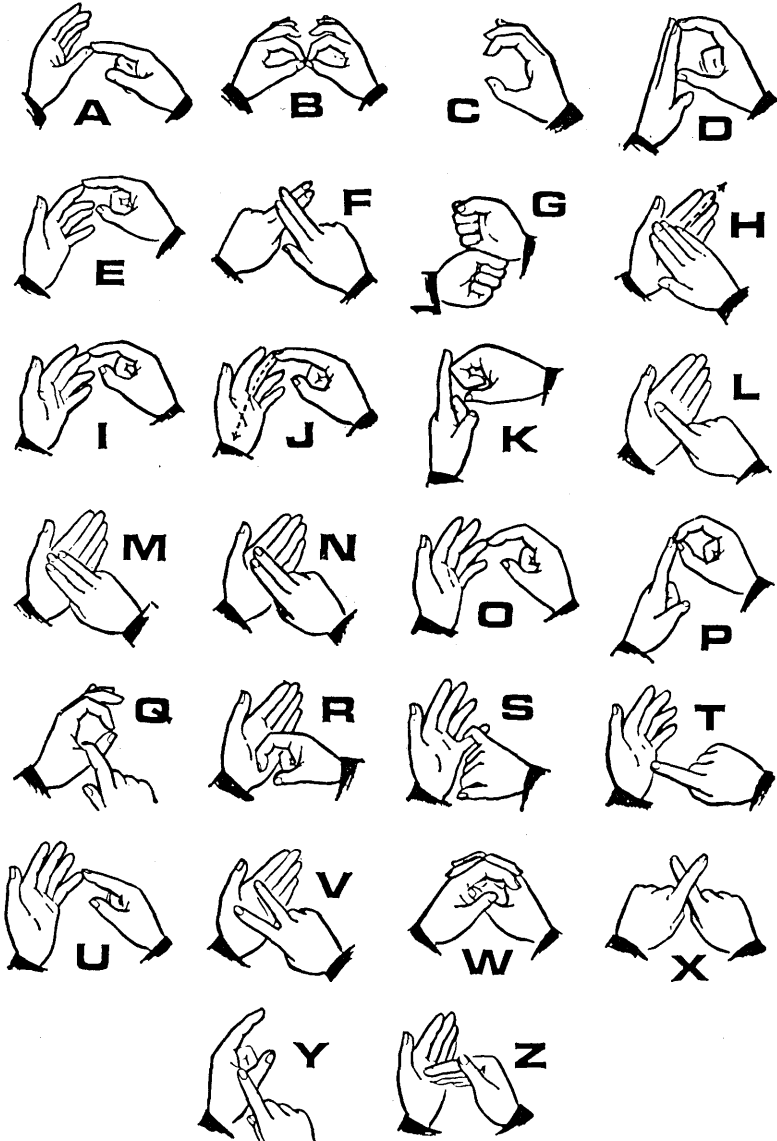
Workers with the adult deaf have to spend at least three years in training, spending many hours each day in conversing with *all* types of deaf people and then they have to pass an examination in the practical art of interpretation. On passing the examination they are awarded, by the Deaf Welfare Examination Board, a diploma or certificate. Only such diploma/certificate holders should interpret in hospitals, at the doctor's, at an inquest, in a law court. (The only difference between the two is that the diploma holder has studied spiritual ministrations to the deaf where the certificate holder has not.)

To take involved legal and medical sentences containing difficult words and phrases, to translate them into short, simple sentences, graded to the understanding of a particular deaf person, and to convey such sentences in the threefold medium of carefully spoken words for lip-reading, of gestures and of finger-spelling, is no work for an amateur; it calls for a professional man, fully qualified.

In this book only a very small number of signs are given out of some thousands. The book is intended to give the reader an insight into signing or as it were to give the flavour of signing. The reader having gained some idea of what signs are and how they are used may then ask a deaf friend or relation to show him other gestures. When a deaf friend demonstrates a new gesture he should be asked at the same time to give an explanation. The gesture will then be fully understood and easily remembered.

That our booklet has been found helpful and interesting is proved. There is more sympathy for the deaf today than there has ever been, and the growing desire to communicate with them in their own language is something all of us connected with the work, not to mention the deaf themselves, are profoundly grateful for.

THE STANDARD MANUAL ALPHABET



This is the two-handed manual alphabet used for finger-spelling to the sighted deaf in Australia and many parts of the world. Note how each symbol forms, or at least suggests, the letter it represents. Other manual alphabets are shown on pages 40 and 41.



AGREE



ANGRY



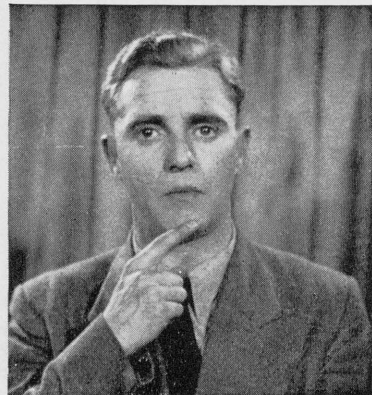
AEROPLANE



BABY



BIRD



BOY



BROTHER



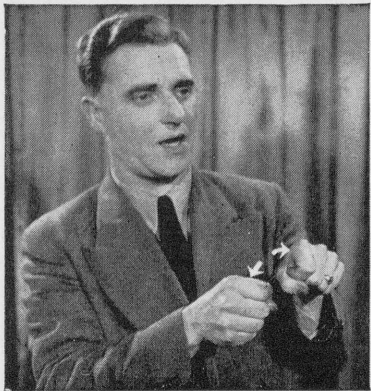
BIG



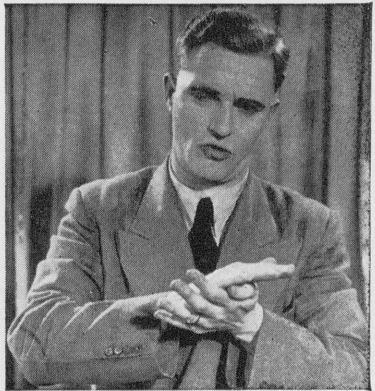
BRING or FETCH



BAD



BREAK



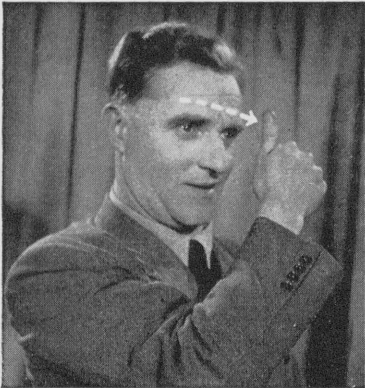
CRUSH



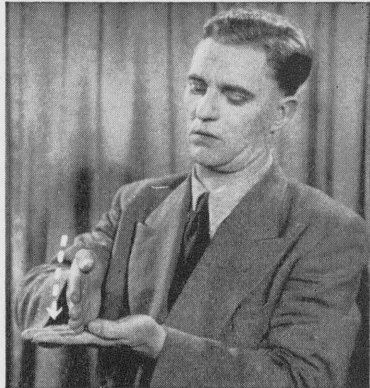
CAREFUL



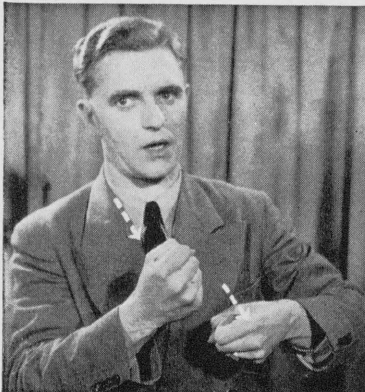
CINEMA



CLEVER



CORRECT or TRUE



CHURCH (Tolling bell)



CHANGE or ALTER



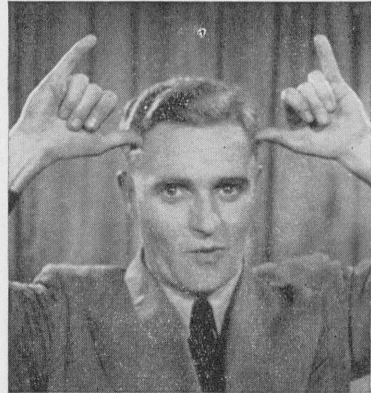
CUP of TEA



COME



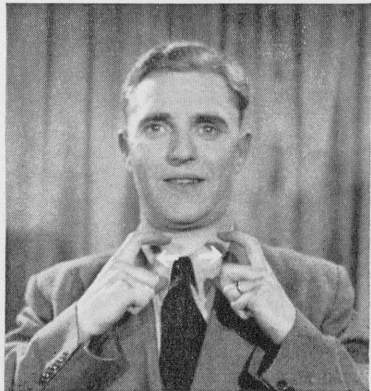
CLOTHES



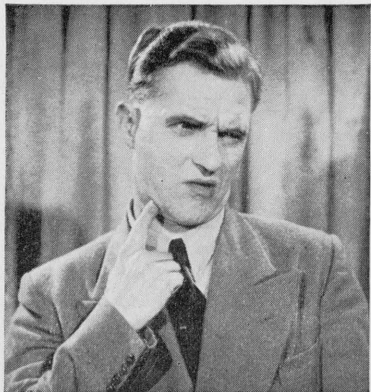
COW or BULL



CARPENTER



CLERGYMAN or CHAPLAIN



CRUEL



DRINK



DON'T



DIFFERENT



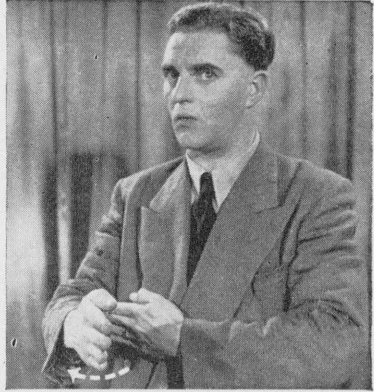
DOCTOR



DAY or LIGHT



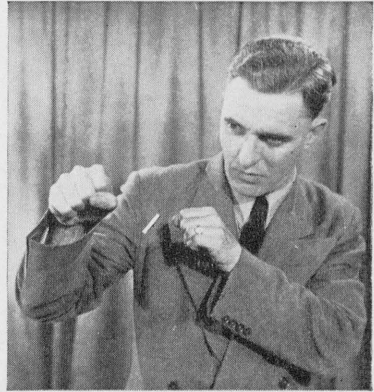
DOWN



DOOR (opening)



EAT or FOOD



FIGHT



FIX



FAR



FRIEND



FATHER



GIVE



GOOD



GOOD HEALTH or WELL



GO



HATE



HAVE



HEAVY



HERE



HAPPY



HARD or DIFFICULT



HOUSE



HELP



HOSPITAL or NURSE



HEAVEN



IN or UNDER



KNIFE or CUT



KEY or LOCK



KEEP



KNOW



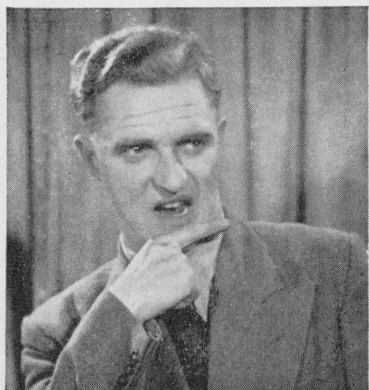
KNIT



LOST or LOSE



LIGHT (in weight)



LIE or LIAR



LITTLE



LAST or END



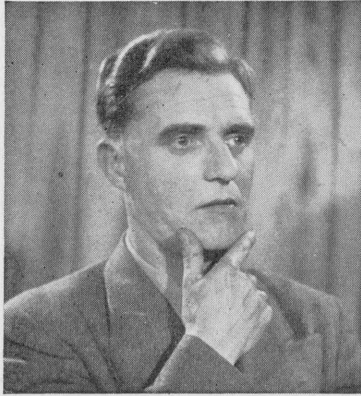
LEAD



LOVE



MAKE



MAN



MOTHER



ME



MINE



MISSIONER or W.O.D.



MONEY



MARRY, HUSBAND, WIFE



MILK



MATCH



NEWSPAPER



NEAR or OPPOSITE



NEW



NOTHING



NIGHT or DARK



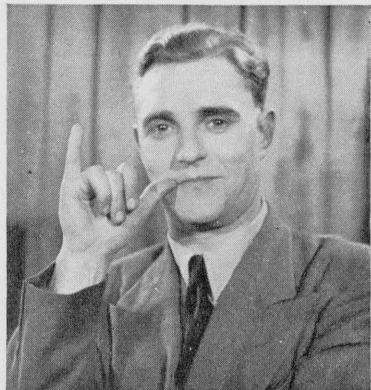
OLD



PLEASE or THANK YOU



PERHAPS



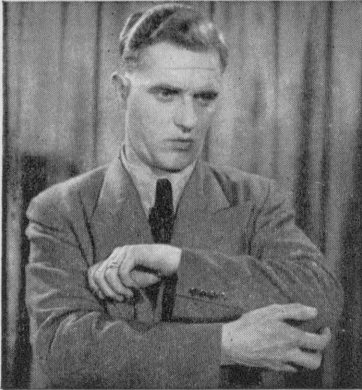
PIPE



PAIN



PITY



POOR



PUNISH



PREACH



QUEEN or KING



READ or BOOK



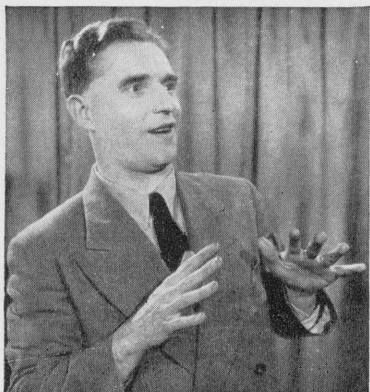
REST



RICH



REMEMBER



SURPRISE



STRONG



SEE



SISTER



SHIP



SEW



STAMP or LETTER



STREET or ROAD



SEND or AWAY



SICK



SLEEP



STUPID



SELL



SEPARATE



TELEPHONE



TIRED or BORED



THINK



TIME or CLOCK



TROUBLE



THROUGH



TRAIN



THERE



UP



WHAT



WHO



WHEN



WHY



WHERE



WITH



WANT



WIN or WON



WORK



WOMAN or GIRL



WIRELESS



WALK



WRITE

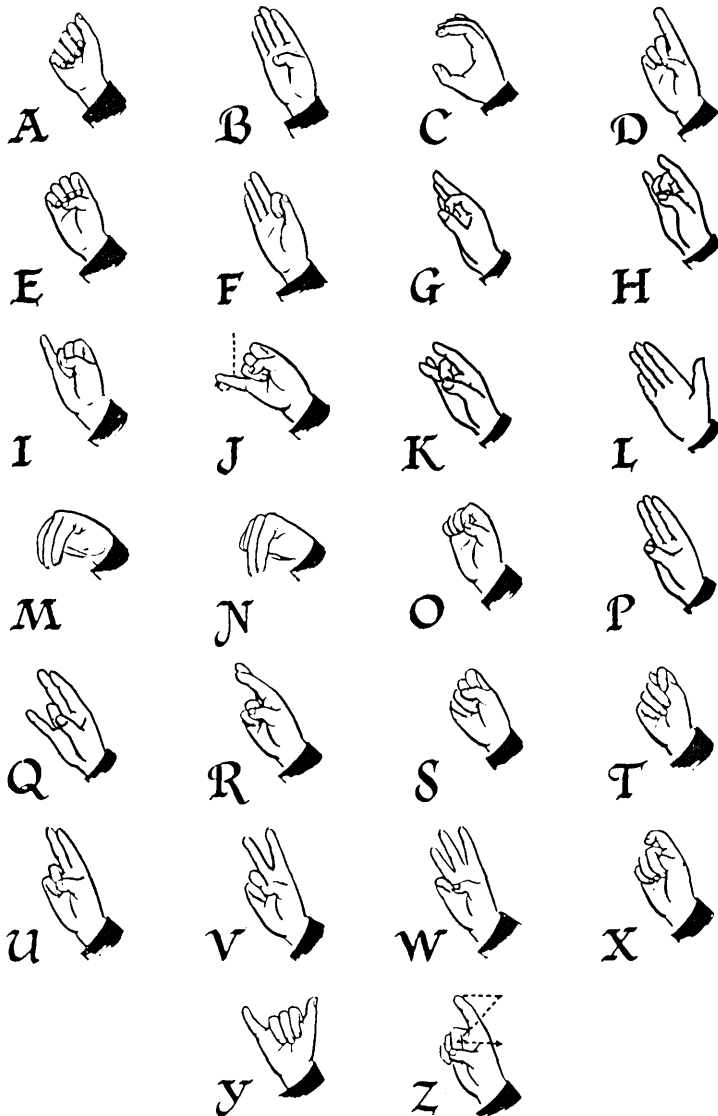


YOURS



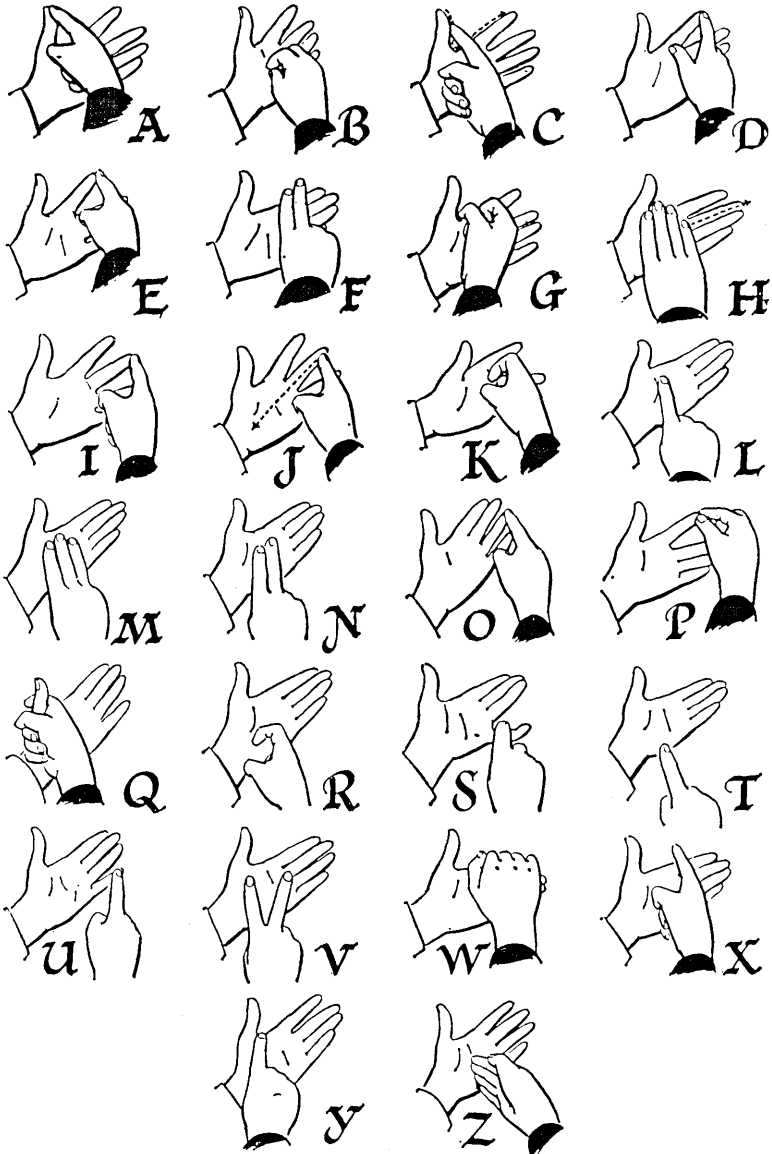
YOU

THE ONE-HAND MANUAL ALPHABET



This is the one-hand manual alphabet used for finger-spelling to the sighted deaf in Australia. It differs in six places from the American system (i.e. in the letters — G, H, K, L, P, Q). Although there are occasional resemblances, the symbols are not so clearly related to the written letter shapes nor can they so easily be read at a distance.

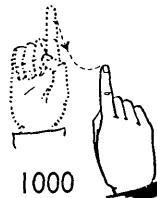
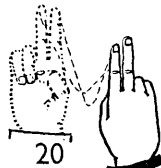
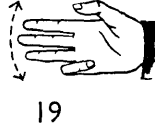
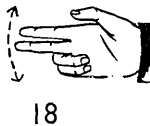
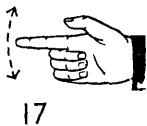
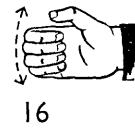
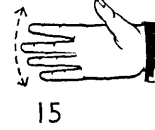
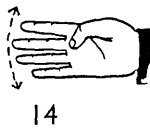
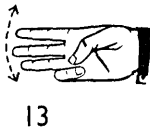
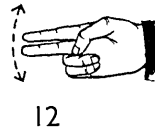
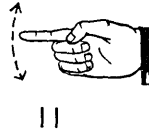
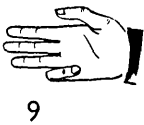
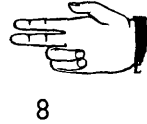
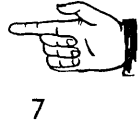
THE DEAF-BLIND MANUAL ALPHABET



This alphabet is designed for use with the deaf-blind whose understanding can be reached only through the sense of touch. The left hand is that of the deaf-blind person, the right that of the speaker, pressed firmly against it. An easier method is to 'write' ordinary Roman capitals with one finger on the palm of the reader.

AUSTRALIAN NUMERALS

In numbers 11-19 inclusive whole of hand is moved approximately three times in quick succession in direction indicated by arrows.



A meeting in 1964 resolved to avoid the Australia-wide confusion created by the use of several differing sets of numeral signs. As a result the above system was agreed upon for use throughout Australia.

State Organizations of the Australian Federation of Adult Deaf Societies

The following State Organizations are members of the Australian Federation of Adult Deaf Societies. All have trained Welfare Staff and facilities to assist the Adult Deaf. Should any assistance be required do not hesitate to contact these bodies:

Adult Deaf Society of New South Wales, 123 Cambridge Street,
Stanmore 2048.

Adult Deaf Society of Victoria (Incorporated), Jolimont Square,
101 Wellington Parade South, East Melbourne 3002.

Queensland Deaf Society (Incorporated), 34 Davidson Street,
Newmarket 4051.

South Australian Adult Deaf Society (Incorporated), 262 South
Terrace, Adelaide 5000.

The Western Australian Deaf Society (Incorporated), 292 Hay
Street East, Perth 6000.

Royal Tasmanian Society for the Blind and Deaf (Incorporated),
Argyle and Lewis Street, Hobart 7000.