

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION AND WRITING SYSTEMS

Paper presented by Cyprus*

The Special Committee of Cyprus Geographic Names submits the following:

The traditional orthography should form the basis of standardization of Cypriot geographical names;

* The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.24.

For purposes of the International Map of the World, names in the language of the minority should not be taken into consideration;

The basic principle should be strict transliteration in the Roman alphabet guided by the internationally accepted rules of transliteration of the Permanent Committee of Geographical Names of the Royal Geographical Society and the United States Board of Geographical Names.

GUIDE-LINES FOR PREPARING AND SUBMITTING PROPOSALS REGARDING DOMESTIC GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Paper presented by the United States of America¹

INTRODUCTION

Public Law 242, 80th Congress, approved on 25 July 1947, provided for a central authority to standardize geographical names for the purpose of eliminating duplication in standardizing such names among the federal departments, and for other purposes.

This central authority is the Secretary of the Interior acting conjointly with the Board on Geographic Names. The board is inter-departmental and, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, is authorized to formulate principles, policies and procedures to be followed with reference to both domestic and foreign geographic names; and to determine the choice, spelling and application of those names for official use.

The United States Board on Geographic Names and its predecessor agencies have long been responsible under executive orders and subsequent legislation for establishing the geographical names to be used on maps and other publications of the Federal Government. In carrying out this function the board depends, to a great extent, upon information furnished by government agencies which, in performing their normal functions, have occasion to investigate the local usage of nomenclature as well as documentary references thereto.

The Board on Geographic Names and the Secretary of the Interior have approved proposals of the Domestic Names Committee applicable to the United States, its territories and possessions. These proposals are aimed at expediting work on domestic names problems, developing standard procedures for all agencies to follow in their investigations of geographical names, and in reporting upon those problems requiring decisions or other actions by the board. One of the proposals concerned the designation of certain basic map and chart series as authoritative reference sources for geographical names in preparing new maps and other government documents for publication.

The statement which follows has been prepared primarily to assist government agencies in determining the kinds of name problems that should be referred to the board for appropriate action, but the procedures outlined will be useful to all persons concerned with problems of domestic geographical names. The statement is intended to facilitate investigation of the local usage of geographical names, as well as the documentary research thereon that is required in preparing new government maps and other publications. Emphasis has been placed upon standard

reference media and editorial procedures which are desirable to ensure that the geographical names published on the various government maps and other documents are in agreement regarding the respective features named, and in their spellings.

Thorough investigation of local usage and examination of references may reveal some controversy or confusion in name application or spelling. Complete information on such cases is required so the board can decide the usage that should be employed in government publications. Standard procedures for reporting names problems have been emphasized to ensure completeness of information and to facilitate consideration by the board. It is incumbent upon the agencies which produce and maintain the series of government maps and charts that have been selected as basic reference authorities on geographical names promptly to report any questions arising in regard to the validity of such names, in order that decisions can be expedited and necessary corrections made.

Communications regarding geographical name problems in the United States, its territories and possessions should be addressed to the following representative of the United States Board on Geographic Names: Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names, United States Geological Survey, Washington, D.C., 20242.

I. PRINCIPLES RELATING TO GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND POSSESSIONS

The board has followed long-established principles in considering name cases submitted to it for decision. Agencies concerned with names should be guided by these principles, although their application to specific cases must be determined by the board. A summary statement of these principles follows.²

1. Names in dominant local use generally are retained.
2. Euphonious and suitable names of Indian or foreign origin are retained.
3. Names suggested by peculiarities of topographic features—such as their form, vegetation, or animal life—are generally acceptable, but duplication of names within one state and especially within smaller areas should be avoided. Names such as "Elk", "Bald", "Beaver", "Cottonwood", "Mill", "Moose", "Muddy" and "Round" are numerous and commonly repetitive within limited areas.

¹ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.33.

² For more complete statements, see *Sixth report of the United States Geographic Board*, 1933.