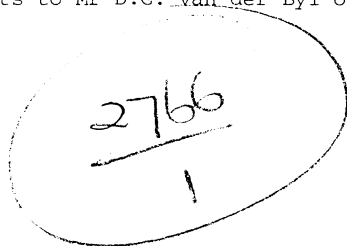


TAILPIECE

After the recent general election in South Africa, it is appropriate that we draw the attention of our readers to a word that aptly defines the behaviour generated in a climate of vociferous self-assertion. It is 'floccinaucinihilipilification', defined by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the action or habit of estimating as worthless'. The full entry reveals that the word became a part of vocabularies in about 1741 and (you will be relieved to learn) was used jocularly. It was a neologism, derived from the Latin words 'flocci', 'nauci', 'nihili' and 'pili' – all of which signify 'at little' or 'nothing'.

(With acknowledgements to Mr D.G. van der Byl of Irene.)

K.R.



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