

Correspondence

From Mr A.K. Scholes, North Rand:

It is some time since I last wrote to you but I would like to record how much I have appreciated and enjoyed recent issues of *English Usage in Southern Africa*. Your most recent issue, Volume 9, No 1, is of especial interest and I would congratulate you ... on managing to cover such a wide spread of subjects.

As regards the article on 'Current Abbreviations in Southern Africa' I have to point out that your reference to AE&CI is incorrect. The correct and full name of this Company has been 'AECI Limited' for the last two-to-three years and the letters of the acronym no longer stand for 'African Explosives and Chemical Industries'. This appears to be a world-wide trend and, in my opinion, a sensible one where the original name was long.

However here is an addition for your list: a company in the AECI Group is South African Nylon Spinners (Pty) Ltd, and it is now widely known by the acronym 'SANS'.

Two other common abbreviations which occur to me are:

MRC – Medical Research Council

MARSA – Microfilm Association of the Republic of South Africa

From Mr E.R. Jenkins, Pretoria:

There are two points in your last issue (Vol 9 No 1, May 1978) to which I should like to reply.

- (1) On p. 15 you say that the educational authorities have apparently not yet given official recognition to the abbreviation Ms. In fact, the Study Committee for English First Language of the Transvaal Education Department has given this recognition, in a study guide issued to teachers in September 1977, which was subsequently reprinted in CRUX, Vol 12 No 1, January 1978.
- (2) Dr P.E. Raper refers in his article to the 'Bantu races', of whom he says on p. 3 that 'a portion moved southwards, reaching the eastern parts of South Africa in the eighteenth century'. There are two matters at issue here: the use of the terms 'Bantu races' and 'Bantu' by the writer; and the date.

The name 'Bantu' actually refers to a family of languages, and is used in scientific contexts in English only in terms such as

'Bantu-speaking people'. H.W. Hitzeroth, in his survey of literature on the anthropology of South African peoples, says,

Bantoeneger of *negroïede Bantoe* word as terme gebruik om die Bantoesprekende Negroïede van Afrika van anderstalige Negroïede te onderskei. In die Engelstalige literatuur word dikwels na hulle as die *South African negro* verwys.

In order to find out when the first Bantu-speaking people reached South Africa, their physical remains have to be identified and then dated. Most authorities are agreed that there is a correlation between the arrival in South Africa of the Bantu-speaking people and the Early Iron Age. Hitzeroth sums up the present state of knowledge on the subject:

Die koms van die Bantoeneger het in hoofsaak ook 'n nuwe kultuurfase, naamlik die Ystertydperk, gebring.

The earliest date obtained by the Radiocarbon dating method for Iron Age settlements in South Africa is 270 A.D., which was obtained for the site Silver Leaves near Tzaneen in the North Eastern Transvaal by Dr J.C. Vogel of the CSIR. This antedates Dr Raper's date for the arrival of Bantu-speaking peoples by some 1 500 years.

References

- Hitzeroth, H.W., *Fisiese antropologie van die inheemse mense in suidelike Afrika*. Pretoria: Mededeling van die Afrika-Instituut, Nr 18, 1972, (Unnumbered page and p. 151).
- Klapwijk, Menno, A preliminary report on pottery from the North-eastern Transvaal, South Africa, *S.A. Archaeological Bulletin*, Vol XXIX, No 113, June 1974, 19-23 (p. 22).