

**A Practical Ndebele Dictionary** By J. N. Pelling. Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, revised edit. 1971, 154pp., Rh\$2,60.

**Lessons in Ndebele** By J. N. and P. Pelling. Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1974, 210pp., Rh\$3,20.

**Ndebele Work Book** By P. Pelling. Bulawayo, J. and P. Pelling, 1975, 198pp., Rh\$2,40.

Besides serving a long-standing practical need, these three substantial contributions from the Revd and Mrs James Pelling will be particularly welcome in Rhodesia since they mark a turning point in the acknowledgement and recognition of Ndebele as a language in its own right and not just as a 'poor relation' of Zulu. Compared with many of the other languages of Southern Africa, Ndebele has in the past been very poorly served regarding linguistic publications. The first Xhosa and Zulu grammars appeared in 1832 and 1850, respectively; and for Zulu, since that time, at least 11 dictionaries and 30 grammatical works have been published. For Ndebele, before the Pellings' present contributions, the scene was indeed bleak: despite Dr R. Moffat's pioneering efforts, over a century ago, towards treating Ndebele quite separately from Zulu, the only linguistic works produced appear to have been W. A. Elliott's *Notes for a Sindebele Dictionary and Grammar* in 1911 (after an earlier rudimentary vocabulary), and J. O'Neil's *Grammar of the Sindebele Dialect of Zulu* in 1912, plus a pamphlet, *A Sindebele Phrase Book* by S. Mpofo and T. Harvey in 1962 (Bulawayo, Pilgrim Press). The scarcity is of course explainable by the 'convenient' availability of published material for Zulu, which was used instead. There are arguments both for and against a policy of dialectal unification. Latterly, particularly over the past years, feelings have been very strong in Rhodesia that Ndebele should depend less upon Zulu and become self-reliant.

Pelling's *Practical Ndebele Dictionary*, which originally appeared in 1966, is an excellently produced little work, of modest proportions and attractively low price. The present revised edition contains additional entries including a supplementary list of more specialized terms. The first half of the book provides Ndebele-English, and the second English-Ndebele. Appendices 1 and 2 contain very brief grammatical notes, and Appendix 3 provides a short selection of Ndebele proverbs. The book is clearly not intended to fulfil all the critical demands of linguistic specialists, but rather to serve as a handy practical aid for those who wish to communicate, and it certainly goes a long way towards meeting this fundamental need. Like many concise works of this kind, a fair amount of supplementary self-help by the user is called for. Firstly, the very brief introductory notes on pronunciation (offered as 'a guide only') should not be relied upon without obtaining help from other sources — and it is to be hoped that in so doing, users will discover that tone is semantic: there is no mention of this in the book. Of course, without tone-marking, certain words appear to be homonyms when they are not: like the verbs 'sinda' (be heavy or escape) and 'sinda' (smear a floor). These are in fact tonal opposites: high-low and low-high, respectively, *sinda* and *sindá*.) It would be unfair to labour this point, however, since there is considerable precedent for such shortcomings in Southern Africa. Incidentally, when checking back from the English-Ndebele side, neither of the English entries 'heavy' or 'escape' gives us 'sinda'.

Providing that outside help with pronunciation is readily available, and that the user already has some idea of the essentials of Bantu grammatical

structure, this little dictionary should prove invaluable; but those with no inkling of Bantu languages at all might be deeply puzzled to find no entries whatever for 'I, me, we, us, you, he, him, she, her, it, they or them'. Appendix 2 does not in fact offer a cryptic solution, with a bare list of 'personal pronouns and concords for all noun classes', but there is no clue at all as to how these are used (i.e. whether or not they get attached to a verb, and to which end of it). In the circumstances, absolute beginners may be relieved to find that the Pellings' *Lessons in Ndebele* provides just the kind of grounding they need in order to make best use of the Dictionary.

*Lessons in Ndebele* is a beginner's manual that represents the outcome of many years of practical experience in teaching Ndebele to English speakers. The benefit of such experience is clearly evident throughout. The presentation of material is excellently organized: elements of structure, and essential vocabulary, are introduced in a series of concise, well-ordered instalments, with an absolute minimum of grammatical jargon, and are put to immediate use in providing a good stock of useful and practical sentences. No exercises are included, but this need is admirably supplied in the companion volume produced by Mrs Pelling, entitled *Ndebele Work Book*, which contains practical exercises relating precisely to each of the lessons in the main book.

Used either as a basis for class work, or individually, these two volumes should provide the basis for an excellent and thorough grounding in the language, provided — and this is important — that outside guidance is sought concerning pronunciation, as the authors do indeed advocate. A very rough guide to pronunciation is offered in Lesson 1 but this is sometimes rather wide of the mark. For example there is a paragraph of instructions for making the implosive 'b' — 'a very difficult sound to articulate'. In my own experience, this sound, though common in Zulu, does not actually occur in Ndebele at all: instead, they use something like a 'w' (but without lip-rounding), so learners might be well advised not to disregard the initial injunction in Lesson 1, namely that 'it is essential for the student to spend time with a Ndebele person, practising the speech sounds, and imitating intonations of words and sentences'.

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**Rhodesian Company Law** By M. Tett and N. Chadwick with Contributions by W. J. Millar and Members of the Rhodesia Society of Chartered Accountants. Salisbury, Rhodesian Law Journal, 1976, 296pp., Rh\$14.30.

**Rhodesian Income Tax** By E. E. Skeet. Salisbury, The Chartered Accountants of Rhodesia Education Trust, 1976, 157pp., Rh\$10.00.

**Basic Guide to Rhodesian Income Tax** By A. Katz. Salisbury, Pioneer Head, revised edit., 1976, 62pp., Rh\$2.00.

It seems that in Rhodesia, Company Law, like much else, stands still. In England and South Africa substantive changes have been made in the past 25 years, but the Rhodesian Companies Act, modelled on the English Act of 1948, has remained materially unchanged. These developments elsewhere and the lively debate accompanying them have been largely passed over by the