

surveys of the inland and coastal waters of Bangladesh and is responsible for the publication of nautical charts. While publishing the nautical charts, the Department of

Hydrography, in collaboration with the Survey of Bangladesh, enters the geographical names for maritime features in the charts.

REPORT PRESENTED BY LIBERIA*

Liberia's first formally standardized geographical names list was prepared in 1955 by the Liberian Board of Geographic Names commissioned by the President of Liberia under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Sherman, the then Director of Bureau of Mines. Among other members were the Director of the Liberian Cartographic Service and representatives from the Ministries of Education and of Local Governments Rural Development and Urban Reconstruction (the then Departments of Education and of the Interior, respectively).

Although two of Liberia's 27 linguistic groups have their own scripts, with characters that differ from any others in the world, Liberia from its inception adopted the English language as the lingua franca, using Roman letters. This arrangement facilitates our interrelationships in the comity of nations. The spelling of words in the list followed, for the most part, the international phonetic arrangement. The exceptions were spellings of major towns that had had long usage.

This first list has been expanded considerably and we now have a gazetteer, showing in alphabetical sequence the standardized spelling and geographic position of 11,000 names. The United States Defense Mapping Agency was of great assistance.

This standardization is one of the factors in achieving

unity of approach in the unification and integration of the many elements that make up the Liberian Republic. Maps help considerably in bringing the standardized spelling to the public. The process of expanding the gazetteer with additional names continues.

It is necessary, when deciding upon the correct spelling, to know the meaning of the word in the language of the locality. Such knowledge would enable the Board to utilize the correct tones, cadences and accents. The difficulty of this task is obvious if one bears in mind the country's 27 different linguistic groupings. The principal members of the Board must therefore be persons who have travelled considerably throughout Liberia and who have at their command several of the languages. Having access to such experienced persons both within and outside of the Board, the Board could then be expected to review effectively the name cards presented by the surveyors who make the field photo classification of the aerial photographs.

It can be readily seen that the gazetteer will need revision as more experienced linguists become available and as more places are identified. Towns and farms named after chiefs or farmers often change names to those of the successor. These also make it necessary to have revised editions. In order to be more meaningful to the layman, the next edition should, in addition to giving location in latitude and longitude, show the chiefdoms, districts and counties in which the places named are situated.

* The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF 69/L 146

REPORT PRESENTED BY BOTSWANA*

INTRODUCTION

In May 1965 the Surveyor-General proposed that a Place Names Commission be appointed for the purpose of examining names that occurred on existing maps, with a view to ascertaining their authenticity and ensuring their correct spelling. Prior to this proposal the Surveyor-General's Department had relied upon information obtained from District Commissioners, Government departments and their field officers, but this means of verification had been found wanting in many respects.

A decision to establish a Place Names Commission was not finally made until October 1967. Commissioners were appointed on the basis of their knowledge of the country,

its history and the various languages and dialects spoken in different areas. No terms of reference were provided. The Commission met for the first time in January 1968.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PLACE NAMES COMMISSION, 1968-1977

The Commission has met over 60 times during the last nine years and has examined most of the standard maps of Botswana, in particular the 1:125,000 sheets. It has also examined a number of new maps prior to their publication.

After 26 meetings the Commission published in 1970 a booklet containing over 1,000 place names with their recommended or accepted spellings. This list of names has formed the basis for the provision of authentic names and correct spellings on maps produced since that date. During the last six years much attention has been devoted

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to more specialized maps and to district maps. About 1,500 further names have been verified and a new list is now being compiled. This list will contain all the names so far examined by the Commission, including those that appeared in the first list.

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The Director of Surveys and Lands selects those maps he considers to require attention most urgently. In addition, maps are sent to the Commission by departments or even private organizations such as the railways. The Commission's secretary extracts all the names from the maps and places them on a schedule, which also includes alternative names and spellings that have occurred on other maps or have previously been recommended by the Commission. Such schedules are supplied, with their base maps, to the commissioners and are also sent to people living in the areas who have indicated a willingness to assist the Commission.

The Commission meets approximately eight times a year. The schedules of names are examined in conjunction with the appropriate maps and discussed by the Commission. Whenever possible, persons with local knowledge who are not Commissioners are co-opted to assist the Commission.

The Commission records what it considers to be the correct name with its correct spelling. Should the Commission be doubtful about the authenticity or spelling of a name it is marked for further checking. In addition the meanings or derivations of names are recorded whenever possible. Lists of recommended spellings are submitted to Cabinet.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

When the first list of recommended spellings was submitted to the Cabinet it became apparent that some proper guidelines should be laid down for determining the way names should be written. The Cabinet, at that stage, rejected some of the Commission's recommendations without giving reasons for its decision. It was obvious, however, that the decision was based mainly on common usage and did not involve any basic principles. As a result, the Commission proposed terms of reference for itself, which were eventually accepted. The terms of reference set out the composition of the Commission, the number of Commissioners necessary to form a quorum, provision for co-option of persons to assist the Commission, the minimum number of meetings to be held annually, the need for the Commission to submit its findings to the Cabinet and the Commission's objectives. Because of their importance, the objectives are listed here in full:

(a) To examine all geographical place names shown on any map sheets relating to this country with a view to ascertaining the correct spelling.

(b) The criteria for this examination shall be:

- (i) The language from which the name derives;
- (ii) The local pronunciation;
- (iii) The recognized meaning;

- (iv) The historical background and the place to which the name is ascribed; and
- (v) Conformity with recognized orthographies.

These terms of reference now form the basis for all recommendations made by the Commission.

REMAINING PROBLEMS

Two major problems still remain to be overcome. The first involves the difficulty of ascertaining the correctness for names of places that are extremely remote and generally unknown outside their immediate neighbourhood. The Commission has adopted two methods for verification: the first is for a commissioner to visit the place, but this is often difficult and expensive; the second and more common method is to seek someone with local knowledge. To obtain such people the Commission has run a series of programmes over Radio Botswana and in the local paper, the *Daily News*, explaining the work of the Commission and its importance in the compilation of accurate maps. Interested listeners and readers, particularly those living in remote areas, have been asked to submit their names. A further method has been for the Commission to ask such departments as the police, and Wildlife Department and National Parks Department, who draw staff from remote areas to work in the capital, to make such staff available to the Commission. The general public is also asked to comment on the Commission's recommendations when they are published.

The second problem involves the multiplicity of languages in use in the country and the lack of a recognized orthography for many of these. Two of the main languages, Setswana and Sekgalagadi, are similar in many respects, having evolved from the same protolanguage in the past. Because Setswana is the language most widely understood, Sekgalagadi names have tended in the past to be written in the more commonly accepted Setswana orthography. In the same way, names appearing in, for instance, Chiyei, an unwritten language belonging to Central rather than Southern Africa, have been recorded in the orthography of Setswana, whereas it might well be better to write them in the orthography determined for the Central African Bantu language group. (To cite a single concrete problem that has emerged, for example, the symbol used in Setswana for an unvoiced fricative is used in Chiyei for a voiced palatal stop, though the two sounds are totally unrelated).

A further problem occurs with the large number of names that have a Khosian (Bushman or Hottentot) origin. These languages involve a number of phonemes that cannot easily be converted into Roman lettering: there are, for instance, 15 different click sounds, nine of which are, in Southern Africa, generally expressed by "c", "q" and "x" with a combination of other letters to denote if they are voiced or aspirated, thus "Xangqane" and "Caecae". However, if written in the recognized orthography for such languages, the International Phonetic Alphabet, then they appear as: "ʘ/angʘane" and "ʘae/ae", which would look strange on a map and would be incomprehensible to the average map reader.

Since something like 80 languages or dialects are in use in Botswana (although some of these relate to a very few people) it will be necessary to evolve an orthography that, while not clashing with existing orthographies, will make it possible for the average person to achieve some semblance of the correct pronunciation of a name.

CONCLUSION

From the number of maps that have been submitted to the Commission and the volume of correspondence it receives, it is apparent that at the time of its inception in 1968 the formation of the Commission was long overdue

and that its work has considerable relevance in mapping.

The publication of the next list of approximately 2,500 names will provide a basis for much of Botswana's future mapping. Most of the names of inhabited places listed in the 1971 census will be included, as will the names of most major geographical features. This does not mean that the work of the Commission will be drawing to a close; the Commission recognizes that many thousands of "new" names will appear as mapping becomes more detailed. It is also aware that the last word has not been pronounced on all of its previous recommendations and that some of these are bound to reappear for reconsideration; some, in fact, have already done so.