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The South African Council for English Education was founded eighteen years ago by a group of English-speaking South Africans who were concerned about the serious shortage of English-speaking teachers and felt that steps should be taken "to stop the rot". The Council grew very rapidly with the establishment of branches in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban. Later a branch was established in Klerksdorp. A Central Executive Committee which represents all the branches is situated in Pretoria and controls all the general activities of the Council. Two administrative officials, the general secretary and the Director of Bursaries, attend to the day-to-day running of the Council.

The Council has as its most important aim the promotion of the use of clear and accurate English, in its spoken and written forms, in South Africa. The implementation of this aim includes the maintenance, promotion and encouragement of English education. It envisages the development of interest in and knowledge of the teaching of English from the initial stages of the primary school to the University. Finally, it encourages the awakening of parents to the importance of a good standard of spoken English in the home and to the development of the reading of good literature by both parents and their children.

Shortly after the founding of the Council it was realised that the Council's aims could be achieved only if there was a well-trained and well-qualified force of English teachers working in the schools. It was decided to to embark upon a programme of fund-raising with the object of providing bursaries for young people who, while keen on teaching, were unable for financial reasons to undergo the necessary training at either a University or College of Education. An appeal for financial support was made annually to commerce, industry, schools and to members of the association. The response each year has been most heartening and has enabled the Council to allot during the past seventeen years the sum of over one hundred and sixty-five thousand rands to the bursary project. In 1958, the initial year of the scheme, four bursaries were awarded for post-matriculation teacher training, but with the passage of years this number increased considerably. The peak years were 1962 to 1966 when awards averaged forty per annum. In recent years the number of awards has decreased considerably, due in large measure to the increase in training grants and bursaries made to students by the provincial education departments. As a result of the reduced demand for these post-matriculation bursaries, the Council has been able to diversify the type of bursary it has to offer. To the post-matricuation bursary from one to four year falling within the framework of a teacher-training course with or without a bachelor's degree, there have been added special grants for honours degrees at local universities, grants for further study at universities in the United Kingdom, grants for teachers in service wishing to improve their qualifications, grants for teachers wishing to attend special courses overseas and finally Travelling Fellowships Awards. The total number of awards made up to 1975 amounts to 504 — this includes five travelling fellowships for 1975. During the three years from 1971-1974 nine in-service bursaries were awarded. The Travelling Fellowship project is assuming more and more importance in the bursary project. Some comments on the travelling fellowship are necessary. The Fellowship is intended to assist teachers who are desirous of obtaining some overseas ex-

perience in the teaching of English. Teachers are assisted financially with travelling and living expenses in Britain for a period of one school term. Their visit is planned by he British Council and includes teaching in schools visiting educational exhibitions and attending courses or conferences on the teaching of their subject. On the Fellow's return to South Africa, he or she is required to compile a full report on his experiences and in addition he or she may be called upon to deliver lectures or talks to teachers or other interested groups. These reports have proved invaluable in that they have been used at Departmental Conferences and also published in official periodicals.

An important development in the bursary project took place at the National Conference of the Council, held in Cape Town in 1974. It was decided that the bursary project be opened to all nationalities in South Africa. As a result of this change, three Indian teachers from Natal are included in the group of Fellows which will be proceeding overseas in January 1976.

The Central Executive Committee actively assists projects initiated by the branches. The establishment of an English University and a second English College of Education in Pretoria, which were initiated by the Pretoria branch has received strong support from the Central Executive. This support has involved approaching the English Academy and the University of the Witwatersrand on the planning of the projects and discussion of the projects with the Minister of Education, and the Director of the Transvaal Education Department.

In the Transvaal the Central Executive has made approaches to the Provincial Administration with regard to expediting the erection of new buildings of the Johannesburg College of Education. Further, it is endeavouring to encourage English-speaking teachers to work in country schools. Ways and means of accommodating these teachers in the country towns are being examined at present.

Another project, which was dealt with on a national scale, was the provision of reading material, mainly books, for the members of the forces undergoing training in military camps. Some seven to eight thousand books have been presented to the officer-in-charge of the Defence Force Libraries.

The domestic activities of each branch are many and varied. The Johannesburg Branch holds an annual spelling competition and a choral verse speaking festival for schools. An average of 5 000 pupils takes part annually in the spelling competition and 2 000 pupils participate in the verse speaking festival. An annual English month is held which is designed to stimulate the interest of the general public in English. A noteworthy festival was held in 1970 to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the 1820 Settlers. A direct development from this festival was the publication of the book "Better than they knew", which represents the fruits of the co-operation between the English Academy and the Council. The Pretoria branch, among its many activities, conducts an annual highly successful drama festival. The Cape Town branch produces yearly a collection of pupils' writings, under the title "English Alive". This project is open to pupils throughout the Republic and stimulates their interest in the writing of poetry and prose. Much excellent material has appeared in this publication. It has been approved for inclusion in school libraries. The Port Elizabeth branch is actively engaged in improving the standard of spoken English amongst the non-Whites in the city area.

The foregoing is but a brief introduction to the activities of the Council throughout the country. It must be stressed that the Council co-operates with all organisations interested in the propagation of English — The English Academy, the Guild of Speech Teachers, Teachers' Associations and Cultural Societies. The activities of the Council have brought much benefit to many teachers, and focussed the interest of parents and their children on the importance of English and the beauty and power of their mother tongue.