



The Dominion Post
06/05/2009
Page: 5
Features
Region: Wellington
Circulation: 94598
Type: Metro
Size: 334.28 sq.cms
MTWTF--

Troubled times may effect an increase in offshoring



Dianne Bardsley

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

TWO TERMS that have been referred to me recently as apparently new are offshoring – the outsourcing of work overseas – and superable – an adjective used to describe earnings upon which superannuation income is assessed.

Although relatively new in New Zealand, both terms have been used overseas for some time, and are clear examples of contemporary demands for appropriate new terms.

Nearshoring is the term given to the practice of outsourcing work to a neighbouring country, as happens in the North American and European continents.

A correspondent wrote: "I am currently having a grizzle about the poor use of the English language in advertisements, in particular [a] full-page advert for the 'Recession Effected' sale at Munns. I was taught effect is the noun, affect is the verb."

This simple advice is often given, but is not complete. Effect is also used as a verb, meaning to cause, produce, or bring about, as in, "We want to effect a change." So the Munns advertisement was actually correct. The terms are also confused in pronunciation, when we usually hear "affect" rather than the intended "effect".

What many of us are affected by and, with negative effects sometimes, is the naming and renaming of a locality. The renaming can be official or of a colloquial origin, but whatever, it takes some getting used to and often meets resistance.

We seem to have a habit of renaming in New Zealand. It began

early with Petone, originally known officially as Britannia. All three of the country's main islands have had several changes of name.

Nelson was known as Sleepy Hollow as early as 1851 and we have 22 citations for that usage, the latest being 1957. Recent changes

effected by the Geographic Board, which include roads, rivers and other localities, are made for a range of reasons, including the correction of spelling, and the recent debate over the inconsistent spelling of Whanganui is a case in point.

Perhaps we accept these changes more readily than we think. How quickly the term Egmont has gone from our vocabulary – it's Mt Taranaki from all directions now.

Place names also lend themselves unwittingly to objects, style, or trends: the Remuera, Fendalton, or Karori tractor; Queen St or Cashel St farmer, along with Ponsonby handshake, as noted in an earlier column (aka the Te Kuiti handshake). Ashvegans, Westies,

Hutties, Grey Lynners, Far Downers, and Cartertonics inhabit the land and the cities. Recently I was glad to be able to record another written citation for KKK, the thought-to-be superior suburbs of Karori, Kelburn and Khandallah, a term used often in conversation, but more rarely seen in written language.

Wellington is called anything from the Cardy Capital or Caffeine Capital to the Cultural Capital. And while on capital claims, what of Woodville, the wind farm capital of New Zealand, or Carterton's dafodil capital of New Zealand? Fatuous or fun?

In February, a Napier correspondent wrote to *The Dominion Post* pleading for a new start in "grammar and enunciation" from

politicians, media presenters, and journalists. "On Saturday nights we invariably play 'Loddo'," he tells us. That elusive T is often missing in the speech of many varieties of English, not just ours.

Our Napier correspondent, on a visit to Taranaki, could be invited to a padio party in Padea. And as for that town Hoagatigger, would A A Milne have been amused or bemused?

Karl du Fresne often comments on language use and recently (March 17) he shared his disdain for the changing use of the term "client". He claims that beneficiaries are not clients of Work and Income. A client is one who receives or uses services, not just one who pays for services.

In actual fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives as a specific sense and definition for the word: "a person helped by a social worker; a case". This sense has been cited in use since 1925, long before the days of political correctness, which du Fresne suggests is responsible for changing definitions in dictionaries.

Dictionaries, as much as appropriately possible, describe rather than prescribe usage. But when it comes to "affect", the better dictionaries are clearly explicit, to good "effect".

■ Dianne Bardsley is director of the New Zealand Dictionary Centre at Victoria University's school of linguistics and applied language studies.

■ Send your questions to words@dompost.co.nz