

REVIEWS

David Farnham and John Pimlott. *Understanding Industrial Relations. Fifth Edition.* London: Cassell, 1995. 449pp. ISBN 0-304-33083-3.

Not long ago, and before the blitzkrieg of HRM into British university curricula, I was responsible for a paper in what was then referred to as Employee Relations. It was a core paper in the Diploma programme of the Institute of Personnel Management and the prescribed text was the fourth edition of *Farnham and Pimlott*. Unfortunately the response to the text from those on the course scaled a narrow range from mute ambivalence to vocal aversion. One comment which has remained forever etched on my mind was "we are busy people . . . the book has too many words". The complaint, and we are required to take these things seriously however ridiculous, reminded me of the comment at the end of one of Mozart's operas in the film *Amadeus*, "too many notes maestro, too many notes". It seemed the busy world of the personnel manager already had enough words to deal with and Diploma programmes should be, in consequence, relatively free of them. The purpose of this recollection is that I fed this and other responses back to the external examiner who was more perplexed and baffled than I was but promised to take another hard look at the text himself. The external examiner I refer to was, and possibly still is, David Farnham.

Some five years later I find myself reviewing the fifth edition of a book which has established itself as a standard text in the highly competitive British market. The opportunity is a welcome one. The terrains of the British industrial relations system have become increasingly diverse and no less complex since the step by step reforms of the various Thatcher administrations during the 1980s. Only recently has research been able to take a hard longitudinal look at the impact of these reforms on that system. The most important of these is the latest *Workplace Industrial Relations Survey* published in 1992 by Millward, et al. The fifth edition uses the findings of this survey, as well as others, to extensively update its empirical data. Like previous editions (looking across my shelves I discover I have a copy of edition three as well as four) the book is divided into four parts. Part one presents a general background to the British industrial relations system; part two examines the main institutional and organisational features of that system; part three concerns itself with the activities of the State in industrial relations and finally, part four examines industrial relations in practice. The most immediate improvement on the previous edition is the structure. Here I confess to some sympathy with the personnel managers I mentioned earlier. While quickly distancing myself from "too many words" the comprehensive use of subheadings, (something plainly lacking in previous editions) and an improved use of graphs and diagrams makes the current book far more accessible to the busy reader. In short the lay-out is a vast improvement on previous editions. The text remains in a large part the same as the last edition. The title *Understanding Industrial Relations* should really contain the adjective British, for it concentrates almost exclusively on the British system. However the new work introduces the now requisite European perspective. The Single European Act came into force in 1992 creating, at least in theory, a single Euro-wide labour market of some 300 million people free to seek employment in any EU country legally and without hindrance. Interesting but a long way from reality.

As Farnham and Pimlott point out, the difficulties with regional migration of labour within EU countries such as Britain makes a mockery of expectations for widespread labour movement between EU countries where language, cultural and social security differences compound the problem. Thus the role of the market mechanism in encouraging the movement of labour in response to wage-price signals is inhibited by social, cultural and personal circumstances. Nonetheless the EU labour market is undergoing some rapid and significant change. Women are a rising proportion of the labour force no less so in countries (predominantly Catholic countries such as Spain, Ireland and Italy) where social attitudes toward the working woman are becoming more enlightened. The rise of the service sector as a proportion of new employment contrasts markedly with the corresponding decline in agriculture, mining and manufacturing. Elsewhere Farnham and Pimlott examine the "keen internationalists but reluctant Europeans" of the British labour movement. This they do briefly but well. However to describe the invitation to Jacques Delors, the EC (as it was then referred to) President, to the TUC Congress in 1988 to which he made an impassioned speech on the social dimension of European integration as a point when the TUC's conversion to Europe was complete is, historically speaking, a little premature. The tensions within the TUC over Europe were still very real no less because the national unions were simply not geared up for it despite tentative links with other unions in Europe such as IG Metall in Germany. Advertising for a trade union official with two languages was a major step for the Transport and General Workers Union for example. Whether the officials and lay members of the British labour movement, as distinct from those of the TUC, are confirmed and active Europeans is a question still open to debate. More generally the decline in the power of the Conservative Government in Britain has, between the sleaze and the greed, always had a European dimension to it. After a decade and a half of ideological excess in which freeing the market has meant persistently high levels of unemployment, the abolition of wage councils, the legislative assault on trade unions and collective bargaining as well as economic stagnation, it is not surprising that the Conservative Government should resist social policies, and what's more European policies, that emphasise the role of organised labour and collective bargaining in their enactment. The examination of these influences and their relationship to changes in labour law is one of the strengths of the current edition.

This was always a competent book which if you had the time to forgive its editorial weaknesses represented a comprehensive introduction to the British system of industrial relations. The fact that it is now in its fifth edition suggests that many took that time and found it rewarding. The current edition with its improved layout and updated empirical data moves it from being a competent and detailed book to a good and accessible book. David Farnham always was a good listener.

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John Mathews. Catching the Wave: Workplace Reform in Australia. New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 1994. 359pp. ISBN 1-86373-717-0. (Also published by ILR Press, Ithaca, New York ISBN 0-87546-706-7)

The discussion and practice of workplace reform in New Zealand owes much to changes in the Australian industrial relations system since the negotiation of the Accord between the ALP and the ACTU in the early 1980s. In contrast to the "hands-off" approach to industrial relations taken by the Government and its official apparatus in New Zealand, the Australians have taken an alternative route to workplace change and enterprise bargaining that has aptly been described as "managed decentralism" (McDonald and Rimmer, 1989). As part of this process, the Industrial Relations Commission has, since June 1986, attempted to facilitate productivity improvements at workplaces, assisted in the process of award restructuring, and as a result of the Commission's decision in the 1991 National Wage Case, promoted enterprise bargaining.

An important part of these initiatives has been encouraging an alternative approach to increasing productivity, than the traditional one of cost-cutting. Rather than throwing the parties in at the deep end, however, the Australian government, through the federal Department of Industrial Relations and its state equivalents, have dedicated considerable resources to education and training, and demonstration projects, for employers and unions on changing work structures and organisation, skill formation, introducing new technology, payment systems, and a host of other topics. As part of this educative process, Workplace Australia held a conference on the topic of "Workplace Reform" in 1990, which a group of managers, employees, and union officials from New Zealand also attended. The relevance of these ideas for New Zealand was felt to be so significant, that upon their return, they established a similar organisation known as Workplace New Zealand, which held a similar conference in Rotorua in 1992. The international guests present at that conference included a number of Australians who had experience in implementing change programmes in a range of workplaces. Since that time the cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two countries has continued, with frequent return visits across the Tasman by "vertical slice" teams (i.e., groups of employees from all levels of an organisation) from individual companies, as well as unionists, consultants and academics.

Given the interest in New Zealand in Australian experiences with workplace reform, Mathews' book is bound to be of interest to many. Mathews, from the School of Industrial Relations and Organisational Behaviour at the University of New South Wales, has written extensively on the subject of workplace reform for nearly a decade, and is regarded in Australia as one of the foremost proponents of reform. Following on from his earlier book *Tools of Change*, published in 1989, *Catching the Wave* will, therefore, undoubtedly be seen as a description of the state of play of workplace reform in Australia.

The "wave" referred to in the title of the book is one of technical and organisational change that is ". . . washing through both manufacturing and service activities in the industrialised world." (p.1) In considering these changes, Mathews divides the book into three sections. Part 1 sets out the rise of mass production as a system of production, and hypothesises that companies now have a choice between continuing to operate according to the principles of that system, or two alternatives which Mathews terms Lean Production Systems (LPS) and Sociotechnical Production Systems (STPS). These alternatives will be familiar to those who

have attempted to keep up with the debate on new production systems, the first being based on the Toyota model, and the second deriving from sociotechnical systems theory and the work of the Tavistock Institute. Chapter 3 goes on to look at the key organisational changes implied by a move away from mass production systems, particularly the centrality of teams (or "production cells") as the basic organisational unit, in contrast to the individualism of Taylorist production. Part 2, which forms the bulk of the book is made up of seven case studies of organisational change in Australia. While the predominance of workplace reform in manufacturing sector workplaces is reflected in the inclusion of Bendix Mintex, Ford Plastics, and CIG Gas Cylinders, it is pleasing to note that some effort has been made to ensure that parts of the service sector are also represented by Colonial Mutual, TCG (a technical and computer graphics company), the mail sorting centre of Australia Post, and the Australian Taxation Office. Part 3 then goes on to look at the implications of workplace reform for industrial relations, and organisational innovation and learning.

Without doubt, the most useful section of the book is the case studies. Each provides a background on each of the organisations, description of the imperatives that led to change, the processes that were used to move to an alternative way of organising work, and the key issues that were faced along the way. The case studies show the realities of workplace reform in that they also cover mistakes that were made, and the fact that organisations often approached the prospect of change in a less than ideal, non-textbook way. In this sense, the case studies stand in contrast to the ideal type put forward in the rest of the book, of organisations that engage in comprehensive and integrated reform in a strategic and participative manner.

While the case studies are interesting and provide a variety of useful material, the rest of the book is disappointing for readers looking for further theoretical development in this area. Two particular issues merit comment. The first is the concentration on issues of work organisation and job design. Given Mathews' assertion that the key to successful workplace reform is in the integration of all aspects of organisational functioning according to a new productive paradigm, it seems strange that greater attention is not paid to a wider range of issues. Despite the centrality of skill formation in Mathews' view, and his continued assertion of its importance, only ten pages are spent looking at this issue in detail. Similarly, the need for organisations to address the need to revise payment systems is argued at many points along the way but more detailed arguments about why and how and the options that are available are never set out.

The second issue relates to the conceptual distinction between lean production systems (LPS) and sociotechnical production systems (STPS). In the United States, Appelbaum and Batt (1994) have argued that there is considerable overlap between the two systems, and that the differences between them centre "... largely on differences in human resource and industrial relations policies rather than on differences in product markets, technology, or organisational strategies." (Appelbaum and Batt, 1994:125-126). In contrast, Mathews argues that alternative models of production (LPS, STPS, and mass production) are "... competing and irreconcilable ...". The differences between LPS and STPS are referred to throughout the book, but are dealt with substantively in chapter two. Mathews argues that while LPSs see productive efficiency as centred in the production system itself, and associated with leanness, elimination of non-value-adding activities, functional flexibility

and total quality assurance; STPSs are anthropocentric, with productive efficiency arising out of utilisation of the skills of workers operating the system. The distinction is a critical one for those engaged in the debate as to whether workplace reform is a positive trajectory leading out of the tyranny of Taylorism and mass production; or, alternatively, whether it is simply a more manipulative extension of Taylorism. Unfortunately Mathews fails to argue the case convincingly. In discussing the two systems he omits to distinguish characteristic components of each, and his discussion suggests in fact that many features overlap. In addition, at times the terms are used interchangeably, leading to confusion during reading. This is added to by the fact that while Mathews clearly argues for STPS as a preferred alternative for Australia, he also concedes that the adoption of LPSs "... makes sense if the firm is seeking to compete in a rapidly changing market where success goes to speed of innovation, market responsiveness and quality of product rather than low price." (p.44) Clarity could have been assisted through a clearer conceptual distinction between the characteristic and overlapping features of both systems. In addition, it would have been useful to have had an understanding of the way in which these features are manifested in Australian workplaces as opposed to their ideal types (arising from Japan in the case of LPSs and Europe (particularly Scandinavia) in the case of STPS).

Finally, it is difficult to know who the intended audience of the book is. The case study material will be useful to anyone interested in workplace change in the 1990s, whether in a role as a manager, union official, academic, consultant, or policy adviser. The rest of the book is less easy to recommend. While practitioners may find it too theoretical and short on specifics, academics may be irritated by the extravagance of the claims that are made for workplace reform, and the lack of a critical focus. The book is worth reading for the empirical material contained within it, but the rest only serves to underline the need for improved theoretical development of the concept of workplace reform.

Bibliography

Appelbaum, E. and Batt, R. (1994), *The New American Workplace: Transforming Work Systems in the United States*, Ithaca, New York, ILR Press.

McDonald, D. and Rimmer, M. (1989), Award Restructuring and Wages Policy. In Nevile, J. (ed.), *Wage Determination in Australia*, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Melbourne.

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Julie Shaw, Robin Chase, Len Moore and John Toohey. Occupational Health and Safety: Best Management Practice. Sydney: Harcourt Brace, 1994. 259pp. ISBN 0 7295 1415 3.

This book reminds me very much of the American management textbooks I have sitting on my book shelves; with simple language, each chapter having lots of illustrative newspaper reports, set learning objectives, basic definitions of the topic/issue, an outline of key points, an example illustrating the itemised salient points, and self-paced exercises at the end of each chapter. The 18 short chapters cover the broad spectrum of occupational safety and health related topics, such as: the history and content of current Australian state legislation; health issues related to harmful substances; causes and treatment of injuries at work; personnel and economic systems for managing injury prevention; evaluation methods for assessing the systems; and, rehabilitation of injured workers. Later chapters cover more general behavioural and psychosocial problems related to occupational safety and health, such as: the impact of EEO and anti-smoking policies; the problems faced by English-second language immigrants, and older workers made redundant; the problematics of establishing pre-employment and training programmes; and, managing change in organisations.

The overall content and style reflects the Australian origin of the book, and the audience at which it is primarily aimed - TAFE students and the general occupational safety and health training needs of Australia (Preface, back cover). The easy self paced learning style, and broad content of the book, provides a very useful basic introduction to the subject area of modern occupational safety and health practice. Except for the chapter reviewing legislative developments, much of the content is applicable to New Zealand, and as such is a useful contribution to the burgeoning literature on occupational safety and health that has started coming out of Australia since the mid-80s. In many ways each chapter of the book could be taken, for example, as a set assignment prepared by the Correspondence School of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand for a National Certificate level course in workplace health and safety.

Uniting the discussion of the disparate subject areas, is the aim of providing "all students of OH&S, including managers . . . with a comprehensive, accurate and practical text which will enable the reader to assess current needs and plan effective programmes based on a thorough knowledge of OH&S theory." (Preface, back cover) The principle programme mechanism suggested for managing occupational safety and health problems, being an emphasis throughout upon the application of the concept of "a hierarchy of control". The "hierarchy" concept is introduced in Chapter Five "Preventative strategies in OH&S", as a process involving identification and assessment of hazards and establishing whether the hazard can be either removed from the process, or separated via engineering methods from contact with workers, or controlled by the provision of training or personal protective clothing and equipment (p.57-59); in essence eliminated, isolated, or controlled. Total quality management (TQM), ergonomics, and formal risk management are examples of the way in which that the concept could be applied.

It is at the point of the juxtaposition of TQM and ergonomics with the "hierarchy of control" concept, that the major limitations of such a book as this begin to appear - in spite of the claim to comprehensiveness and provision of a through knowledge of OH&S theory.

Linking TQM and ergonomics with a "hierarchy of control" is at best tenuous. The very wide-ranging yet limited discursive nature of the book while useful, results in coverage of some topics that is at times quite unsatisfactory in its superficiality. For instance, while all the legislative approaches of the Australian State's are succinctly reviewed, nowhere in the book are Australian Federal initiatives, such as Worksafe Australia, mentioned. Another example: in Chapter Twelve "Workplace data management skills", one of the learning objectives is stated as "the reader will have an appreciation of strategies for accident investigation" (p.157). However the discussion relevant to this objective consists of two pages. One page (p.163) refers to the historical role of Heinrich in establishing cause and effect models of accident investigation, includes a reference to the issue of "blame" in the 1972 British Report of Lord Robens, and three brief sentences mentioning three different types of accident classification systems. The second page suggests that accident investigation involves in practice finding answers to what, where, how, who, when, and why questions (p.163-64). Discussion of accident investigation in such terms, while accurate at a very basic level, cannot be said to be "comprehensive" or provide "a thorough knowledge of OH&S theory", nor ensure an "appreciation of strategies for accident investigation." Finally, while the book is subtitled "Best Management Practice" - intimating the provision of case studies illustrating the successful occupational safety and health management practices of leading companies - the content would more accurately be described as an introductory "how to" of occupational safety and health management.

In spite of the major limitations associated with such a book as this, the overall aim of the authors to provide a means for those interested in the day to day issues of health and safety at work to instruct themselves in an informative and user friendly manner, is laudatory and on balance accomplished - albeit at a basic level of understanding. With the addition of a few New Zealand illustrative examples, a section summarising New Zealand's health and safety legislation, and other supplements where required; I would recommend this book to any reader who requires an elementary introduction to issues surrounding the practice of occupational safety and health.

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Carol Slappendel (ed.). Health and Safety in New Zealand Workplaces. Palmerston North: Dunmore, 1995. 318pp. ISBN 0 86469 221 8.

This book is a long overdue, but welcome, addition to the literature on occupational safety and health in New Zealand. Long overdue in that no book dedicated to promoting understanding of New Zealand workplace health and safety has been printed since Dr W.I. Glass' ground breaking book *People at Work: Their health, safety, and welfare* was published by Wormald in 1974. The book consists of ten chapters each covering a different aspect of occupational safety and health in New Zealand. The range of topics covered includes: the epidemiology of injury and occupational disease; historical reviews and analyses of the development of New Zealand's factory and workers compensation legislation; the industrial relations context of occupational safety and health; cameos of the

origin and perspectives of six practitioner groups; presentation of a management system for controlling health and safety at work, and examples of best management practice; analysis of dominant theories of injury causation in New Zealand, and analysis of the cause of industrial accidents from a sociological perspective.

Each chapter is written by different people who have previously published in their subject area. Many of the contributors will be familiar to readers, for example: Ian Campbell, Don Rennie, Colin Cryer, and Tom Dwyer. Most of the chapters present new material not seen before; others constitute updates of previously published work. Colin Cryer's chapter on the "Epidemiology of work related injury", and Tom Dwyer's "Industrial accidents: A sociological analysis" are largely repeats of material that have appeared elsewhere. Ian Campbell's review of the development of state regulation of occupational safety and health in New Zealand is the best account I have seen to date. Glyn Jeffrey's acknowledgment and explicit location of occupational safety and health within a theoretical industrial relations framework of rules and rule making is a welcome occurrence. Carol Slappendel provides some absorbing comments as to the dominance of particular theories of injury causation in New Zealand.

One area where this book could be improved, is in the provision of a theoretically informed critical analysis of the policy and practice of occupational safety and health in New Zealand. While Campbell and Rennie provide some insights into the development and operation of New Zealand's health and safety and compensation legislation, the accounts are descriptive in nature, and atheoretical in critical analysis. As a consequence many of the comments made fail to follow through to a deeper and more insightful commentary. Campbell for instance starts (pp.81) by noting that:

"it is important to bear in mind that the trends described tend to be a reflection of prevailing economic and social conditions. The trends also frequently reflect the political views and ideologies of the political party in power."

However Campbell does not put this comment into a theoretical framework, and where a reference is made to state/society factors, he fails to follow through to provide the reader with deeper explanations as to why the particular action/decision was made or occurred. For example, in illustrating the "early cautious approach" (p.85) to workers' health, Campbell quotes an 1880 report from the Under-Secretary of Mines that specifically refers to balancing "the financial interests of the mine owner . . . and the necessity of enforcing of provisions". The obvious influence of economic criteria displayed here in shaping the subsequent legislation is not commented upon at all. Another example related to miners' health is: Campbell notes (p.86) that as "pneumoconiosis came to be recognised within the mining industry, the initial concerns tended to revolve around compensation issues rather than prevention", Campbell then goes on to outline the legislative changes that occurred which progressively deprived miners of compensation. The reason for the legislative changes, according to Campbell, was a concern by mine owners about miners immigrating from Australia claiming compensation in New Zealand. Having given this explanation Campbell does not enquire deeper into what might have been motivating mine owners to be so concerned about Australian miners claiming New Zealand compensation - was financial costs of paying compensation the motivator, or were issues of equity motivating concern? Why was prevention not an issue?

In spite of the above criticism, and the disparate subject areas and authors, the book overall is readable and in a format that should be accessible to all. For those developing courses on health and safety in New Zealand this book provides the necessary background to understanding the current policy and practice of occupational safety and health in New Zealand today. The book would also serve in many ways as the appropriate complement to the other book on occupational safety and health reviewed in this issue. In editing and presenting this book to the academic community and public, Dr Slappendel has accomplished no mean feat, doing a great service for the promotion of health and safety in New Zealand.

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John Deeks, Jane Parker and Rose Ryan. Labour And Employment Relations In New Zealand, Second Edition. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1994. 622 pp. ISBN 0-582-86005-9.

First impressions were that this was a long, well presented book. These impressions did not diminish. Within 23 chapters and over 600 pages rests a mass of themes, subject areas, the odd cartoon, and plenty of general information. All of which is generally easy to read and uncomplicated, but probably not for the novice. This is a text book of great value and its scope and breadth of thought is an impressive achievement.

The authors place labour and employment relations in a framework which is part practice and part theory. Whether practice is accurately reflected by media is debatable; however the illustrations provided are insightful and useful. A working definition is presented, as is an admission on the part of the authors that they have biases. Perhaps the boldest statement of intent was, "... we believe the most pressing need in our workplaces is not the application of greater and greater amounts of physical technology but the application of improved understanding about human and labour relations. While much of our physical technology is futuristic, much of our people management is feudal."

One should read the first chapter of this book carefully as the authors do follow their biases. Many of the authors' interpretations could be argued with from an ideological standpoint. This is not necessarily a weakness, but should be understood by the reader. See for example chapter three and a statement, "In New Zealand since 1984 labour relations and human resource management issues have provided a focus of attention for "new right" ideologues keen to see a reassertion of unitary management control of corporate affairs."

The book is organised into three parts. Part one deals with the overall context of industrial relations. This is achieved through outlining industrial relations history (in New Zealand) and the structure of work organisation (theories of wages, work structure, etc.). Part two examines the parties and processes of labour and employment relations. The third part of the book is the most diverse and is labelled "outcomes and issues". Here the authors deal with issues ranging in scope from unemployment to workplace reform. Occupational safety

and health makes an appearance, as does equal employment opportunities, flexibility, economic performance, and managerial strategy.

The authors follow a general theme in their argument, but given the depth of coverage I was not entirely sure that it was necessary to explain it so often. In this manner the authors made it difficult for themselves. Covering so much is a large task in itself without having to refine a consistent position across all the areas. In contradiction to my earlier statement, in parts I found the text heavy reading because the authors did such an impressive job of tying together each section and each topic. For those who are interested in the ideological route, it is a book that is easier to palate in a few (long) sessions of attention rather than brief glances from time to time.

Social conscience is an impediment to many potentially prosperous managerial and political ideals and the authors make a continuous assertion of their belief that social and procedural fairness must be affirmed in the face of economic efficiency. This perspective is even more useful when it is presented hand in hand with issues such as workplace reform and technological development. Efficiency and belief in social justice can be compatible and routes are available towards such a goal, perhaps.

In conclusion, Deeks, Parker and Ryan have produced a comprehensive work which takes a standpoint and follows this standpoint impressively through a marathon of areas. I recommend it as reading for all people who have the inclination to cover more than just the basics of the subject.

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Moira Thompson (Managing Editor), Robyn Mackay and Robyn McArtney (Editors). Employment Law Bulletin: Recent Developments in Employment Law. Wellington: Butterworths of NZ Ltd, Annual subscription is \$225 for eight issues.

This looseleaf service comes in the form of eight issues published throughout the year. It provides a "forum for recent developments in Employment Law", and is primarily intended as a tool for keeping lawyers abreast of recent developments in the area (the editorial board is comprised of legal practitioners and academics). However, this is not to preclude its relevance and usefulness to those practitioners (in the sense of managers, unionists and other interested parties) dealing in the broader areas of industrial relations or human resource management. The publication is not exclusively devoted to narrow legal issues, and the up-to-date, selective coverage of the law that is provided would serve the needs of many non-legal practitioners.

The publication is organised into four regular columns: "Editorial", "Articles", "Recent Case Comment" and "Employment News in Brief".

Authorship of the "Editorial" rotates amongst the members of the editorial board. This ensures diversity of issue coverage and editorial style. Specialisation of the authors in the issue chosen also ensures depth and clarity of insight. Through the editorial practitioners in the wider employment environment are given an insight into a variety of issues. For instance, in 1994, topics covered included: "Superannuation and the Human Rights Act 1993" ([1994] ELB 86); "Privacy and Procured Consent in the Workplace" ([1994] ELB 70); "Minimum Wage for Young Workers" ([1994] ELB 54); and "The Employment Contracts Act: Time for a Review?" ([1994] ELB 30). Given that the editorial rarely extends beyond two pages, there is an opportunity to be exposed to employment issues beyond daily operational requirements without the need for extensive reading.

Many of the comments above apply equally to the "Articles" column. The authorship circle is extended to contributors (although members of the Editorial Board also write articles). Those who contribute tend to have a legal background. Articles are generally no longer than three pages and, again, a wide variety of interesting topics are canvassed. For instance, "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" (Wendy Davis, [1994] ELB 35) provides a very readable, comprehensive and informative discussion of the law relating to sexual harassment. Other articles published in 1994 included: "Compensation for Unjustified Dismissal Under the Employment Contracts Act 1991" ([1994] ELB 74); "Decollectivising the Labour Market: a Further Australian Instalment" ([1994] ELB 16); and, "The ILO Report on the Employment Contracts Act and Freedom of Association" ([1994] ELB 31). As is illustrated by these last two articles, the publication is not restricted to purely legal discussion.

"Recent Case Comment" is exactly what the name says. This section comprises the bulk of each issue. A number of Court of Appeal and Employment Court (rarely are Tribunal cases discussed) cases decided in the previous month or two are outlined and commented upon. Thus the non-legal practitioner is provided with an up-to-date overview of recent developments in the law. The decisions included tend to be those that break new ground, provide binding precedent, clarify (or create) uncertainty, support (or contradict) previous decisions and generally create contention amongst those affected by them. Thus, in recent times, cases dealing with the Holidays Act, the Health and Safety in Employment Act, with redundancy, procedural fairness, bargaining and representation rights have been discussed. These are all fluid areas of the law which, if they are to be applied correctly in practice, require a clear understanding of the most recent judicial pronouncements. The case synopses given have the added benefit of being readable, easily understandable and devoid of the superfluities, legalese and convolutions (of which this sentence is probably an example) prevalent in judicial prose. The busy manager or union official can thus obtain a feel for legal developments without having to wade through rafts of cases.

Finally, each issue contains "Employment News in Brief". This column provides a summary of current affairs in the industrial relations/employment law arena. As with the rest of the *Bulletin* this provides a useful summary of topical events and removes the need for extended reading of other sources. However, for those who follow various media services the news may not be new or cutting edge.

It would be surprising indeed to find an employment lawyer who did not subscribe to this Butterworths' service, as it provides detailed and up-to-date summaries of cases and issues

in the area. Its value to non-legal practitioners lies in that it provides a readable, broad spectrum summary of the current state of employment law and relevant issues. At a yearly subscription of \$225 for eight issues it is expensive, but in this reader's opinion the breadth of coverage, the recency of information and its summarised form make the publication worth the money.

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