

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 1979

With the now well established annual ritual of new, deleted or amended Industrial Relations legislation, it would seem that the area of Industrial Relations has become a legislative paradise! Perhaps in the future, when we hear or read about the 99th amendment to some particular item of Industrial legislation, we shall probably have become so immune to the changes that our only response will be to give a deep yawn!

Like the economy, in Industrial Relations we go from one crisis to another generally on the basis that someone's got to be blamed, be it employers, unions or the government of the day. Certainly, there is an obvious reluctance by all parties to face up to the urgent and pressing problems of unemployment, desirable changes in wage bargaining, new technology and its effects and industrial democracy. In seeking solutions, it seems that so called "industrial muscle" is not necessarily the sole prerogative of one particular party.

With the apparent entrenched polarized situation existing between all parties involved in Industrial Relations, there is some comfort and encouragement to know that our Society continues to present an ideal forum for representatives from management, labour and government interests to meet on an informal basis with the objectives of achieving informed discussion and mutual consideration and exchange of views on current trends and needs in Industrial Relations. It is doubtful whether any other joint industrial organisation has analysed and considered the many complex Industrial Relations problems that your Society has examined during the past few years. Some of the topics that have been the subject of Society meetings include — The Industrial Relations Act — Voluntary Unionism — Equal Pay — Demarcation problems — Injunctions — Redundancy — Worker Participation — Health and Safety in industry — Overseas trends in Industrial Relations etc.

Society membership has remained fairly stable, Auckland Branch 84 members — Wellington Branch 75 members. Although there is considerable scope for membership growth, it should be noted, that our present constitution provides that admittance to membership in the Society is by way of introduction through an existing financial member.

As the Society commences its 6th year, the prospects of a re-structured National body, will, in my view, provide Society members with much greater opportunities to influence future trends and changes in Industrial Relations. There is considerable experience and expertise amongst the Society membership, and providing that members are willing to be actively involved, I have every confidence that the Society can make a useful contribution to the continuing debate on Industrial Relations. The negative aspects of Industrial Relations receive the widest publicity and notoriety, yet there are many industrial enterprises that enjoy a good industrial relations record. There is an urgent need to undertake extensive research into the positive factors influencing good industrial relations, and it is my view that the Society could with the assistance and co-operation of other agencies, provide useful discussion papers and

material which could be of immense value to our legislators and Central Employer/Employee organisations.

My thanks to all members of the Committee for their loyalty and support during the past year, and a very special thanks and appreciation to Bill McNally who after many years service to the Society is retiring from the post of Secretary. Bill has given conscientious service to the Society and has at all times responded readily and willingly to the many calls placed upon him.

Unfortunately, due to pressure of commitments I regret that I am unable to seek nomination for re-election to the position of President of the Society, however, members may be assured that as circumstances permit, that I will continue in the future to support and assist the work of the Society.

In conclusion, my personal thanks to all members, Guest speakers and other participants, and in particular, a special thanks to the officials of the Wellington Branch for their sterling efforts in promoting the aims and objectives of the Society.

My best wishes to the Society members for continued success in the future.

Ken Tuxford
President of the Society

REVIEWS

A.P. Blair, **Accident Compensation in New Zealand**. Butterworths, Wellington, 1978, pp.xxiii and 195, with index.

The author of this book is certainly most adequately qualified to write on compensation for accidents. He has been the Accident Compensation Appeal Authority, a tribunal consisting of one person, since its establishment, and before that for a long time the Judge of the Compensation Court. In the preface to the book he confesses some feeling of embarrassment on analysing his own judgments, but also expresses the view that his decisions, as well as the book itself, "will be given no more respect than they deserve"; as "all will be subject to professional scrutiny and criticism". This sentiment apparently includes the author himself who reserves the right to dissent from the opinions expressed in the book.

While the introductory words in Chapter 1 characterise the Accident Compensation Act 1972 as "a radical remedial statute", a "unique code of compensation for personal injuries by accident", a few lines later it is described as "not a logical statute", but "an amalgam of an original idea and some old practices". It is, of course, well recognised that the principles put forward in the Woodhouse Report have been mixed with ideas rescued from the old common law of negligence, such as lump sum compensation for non-economic loss arising out of permanent loss or impairment of bodily function, or loss of capacity for enjoying life, or pain and mental suffering. As a result it cannot be denied that the two do not always fit together, and despite the repeated emphasis on the new social and legal framework of the compensatory notion as distinct