

Editorial

THE OTAGO LAW REVIEW: TWENTY FIVE YEARS

This year sees the publication of the 25th issue of the Otago Law Review. During those years it has developed from a collection of shorter notes published by the Law Students' Association to a refereed academic journal, indexed in the major legal abstract publications.

The Law Review has taken some time to establish its present character and has passed through several different phases. In the early years (from 1967 to 1974) there was a regular feature reviewing recent developments in the law. From 1975 onwards only selected cases or items of legislation were dealt with and currently there seems to be little demand for such a feature, the New Zealand Recent Law Review providing more than adequate coverage. From 1969 to 1976, each issue contained papers delivered at a topical symposium. There have been several book reviews over the years, although presently it is difficult to persuade authors to engage in this task; this issue is a happy exception. So the Law Review is now composed largely of articles. Recent editorial policy has been to consult expert referees in respect of all submissions to ensure that academic standards are maintained. By their nature, many of the articles relate to areas that legal practitioners will encounter seldom; the Law Review does, however, attempt to cater for its practising subscribers as well. The present issue contains a particularly relevant article on the recently introduced securities legislation.

Two of the traditions which now form an integral part of the Law Review are the Guest Memorial Lecture and the Joshua Williams Memorial Essay. The Guest Lecture is delivered annually in the Law Faculty in memory of the first Professor and full-time Dean of the Faculty of Law, Francis William Guest. His inaugural lecture was published in the 1968 issue of the Law Review and since then the published form of the lecture has taken pride of place. The lecture is delivered in turn by judges, practitioners, and academics. This year we are pleased to publish the address by Sir Ivor Richardson of the Court of Appeal on Commissions of Inquiry.

The Joshua Williams Memorial Essay Prize is awarded annually by the Otago District Law Society for the best piece of legal scholarship produced by a student at the University of Otago. Since 1978 the winning essay has been published in the Law Review and that tradition is continued this year with an article on the Protection of Persons and Property Rights Act 1988.

Although it is closely associated with the Otago Law Faculty, the Law Review has always been independently published. The first volume (1965-1968) was published by the Otago University Law Students' Association, and remains a tribute to their initiative in establishing the Law Review. Although in his preface Professor Guest stressed that there was no promise of an annual review ((1965) 1 Otago LR 13), this has fortunately proved incorrect and the Law Review has been produced annually without missing a year. Since 1969 it has been published by the Otago Law Review Trust Board, which continues to have this responsibility. The reproduction of

the Law Review has always been an entirely Dunedin-based effort: from 1965 to 1973 it was printed by John McIndoe Ltd; since then the printer has been The Tablet Printing Company. Their high standards are something the editors have come to depend on.

The editorial responsibility for the Review has been undertaken by members of the Law Faculty. Don McRae, then an assistant lecturer, now Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, was the first general editor and held that position for four years. His successor for the next six years was Don Paterson, now Director of the University of South Pacific Pacific Law Unit in Vanuatu. John Smillie and Kevin Dawkins, now professor and senior lecturer respectively at Otago, assumed the reins in 1975 and since 1978, various members of the Law Faculty have taken on editorial responsibility on a short term basis. Throughout, editorial assistance has been provided by students of the Law Faculty and they continue to perform an invaluable task in the checking of references and maintenance of house style.

In style, the Otago Law Review was modelled to a large extent on the New Zealand Universities Law Review (which only pre-dates it by two years). Over the years, however, it has developed its own house style which accords with modern trends of using punctuation only where necessary and economy in citation. The touchstone remains intelligibility rather than technical precision and diverse styles are therefore easily accommodated. In 1987, a brief style guide was published in the Law Review for the convenience of prospective authors.

Over the years there has been very little in the way of editorial comment – perhaps this is because there have been few momentous events during the life of the Review. A notable exception is the 1984 issue, which was dedicated to Professor Peter Sim. Professor Sim features again in the following pages, this time sadly, following his death last year. The only other obituary is to be found in 1973, where tribute was paid to Sir Francis Boyd Adams, graduate of Otago Law School and distinguished Supreme Court Judge.

Although there are over one hundred legal academics in New Zealand, there are very few outlets for publishing the results of their research; the Faculty of Law at Otago University is accordingly proud to be associated with the Otago Law Review. It is to be hoped that research will increase and the Otago Law Review is willing to play its part in ensuring that articles of quality are published to enable proper dissemination of that research. In this hope, the next 25 years can only be better.