

- possible introduction of "the Brandeis Brief", as in the United States, with identification and frank discussion of relevant policy issues involved in appeals, including economic and social data;
- introduction of pre-hearing conferences to permit more economic use of Full Bench time;
- possible introduction of two member appeal courts in minor and procedural appeals. This has already been introduced in England;
- introduction of computerisation and improved technological support.

In terms of technology, the courts lag far behind the rest of the community and even behind the legal profession.

We see the spectacle of major take-over battles, with millions of dollars turning upon them, and with serried rows of lawyers, every one with a computer and a word processor at the finger tips, whilst the judge must struggle along with manual typewriters, without benefit of word processor.

I have purchased my own personal computer to permit the organisation of legal material. I suspect that the judges will be the last members of the legal profession to have the computerisation of legal data made available to them from the public purse.

I simply gave up waiting and bought my own in Hong Kong.

If we expect the continuance of the highest standards of excellence in the judiciary, our community should be ready to pay for it. This may mean less emphasis upon ceremonial robes and more attention to computers, research assistance and word processors.

The battle cry for the legal profession, and for the courts, in the next two decades should be: Silicon before Silk!

## Famous last words

At the time the President of the Court of Appeal, Mr Justice Kirby, was appointed to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in 1975, he was appearing with Mr Justice McHugh (then McHugh QC) in an equity case.

They were representing that fearless and tireless upholder of the interests of the BLF — Mr Norman Gallagher. In the course of the case the following exchange occurred:

KIRBY: I am going to take a job on the Arbitration Commission.

McHUGH: What! As a Commissioner?

KIRBY: No. As a Judge.

McHUGH: Michael, you are only 35. If you take that job you will sink like a stone. Nobody will ever hear of you again.



## Encounters of a legal kind

STITT QC: I would like to put a couple of propositions to you.

WOMAN WITNESS: You would? My luck has changed at last.

HIS HONOUR: I think you had better wait until you hear what the proposition is.

*At the next adjournment Stitt QC happened to be in the same lift as the witness and the exchange continued:*

WITNESS: Still interested in that proposition?

STITT QC: You have to realise, whatever I get, my junior gets two-thirds.

## Never ending stories

The inquest currently proceeding before Wilson, M, in respect of the Sutherland Bushfire (which occurred in January 1983) produces interesting statistics.

At the date of going to press, it had lasted 243 days.

There were 9400 pages of transcript of evidence and, with submissions, the transcript was approximately 12,000 pages long.

There were 13 appearances before the Magistrate, eight counsel and five solicitors.

Over the 243 days, six different people have assisted the Coroner. It is hoped that the inquest will conclude in June.

The bushfire lasted three days.

## Invitation to contribute

*Bar News* welcomes contributions in the form of articles, photographs or cartoons on topics of interest to members of the Bar.

These may be a learned treatise or a matter for amusement.

Readers' participation in the columns of this magazine is vital to it achieving its aim of providing a lively forum for all practitioners.

Contributions from members of chambers outside Sydney are especially welcome.

Please address all material to Ruth S. McColl at 7th floor, Wentworth Chambers, Sydney, NSW 2000 or DX 399 Sydney.