

Fringe Benefits Tax legislation, I am inclined to support the suggestion that the Attorney-General should begin to recruit English speaking draftsmen. If the community is to understand and value what we are doing, we need to rid the law of its prolixity and unnecessary technicality.

Mind you, we have come a long way since the great days of Parke B. who, though the possessor of a brilliant legal mind, was known as Baron Surrebutter because of his love of technicality. He visited a colleague who was gravely ill, taking with him a special demurrer. "It was so exquisitely drawn", he said, "that it would cheer him to read it". He actually rejoiced when non-suiting a plaintiff in an undefended case, reflecting that those who drew loose declarations brought scandal on the law. The 16 volumes of Meeson & Welsby were his especial pride. However, another colleague remarked that "it was lucky that there was not a 17th volume for, if there had been, the common law world would have disappeared altogether amidst the jeers of mankind".

The stories told by tonight's speakers have improved with the passage of time. However, they have managed to convey an impression, as I have tried to do, of the Bar as it was, a world which to me was both fascinating and exciting, with its companionship and competition, its humour and rumour.

I thank the speakers for what they have said and I thank you all for your support of the toast. Although it is the Annual Dinner of the Association you will forgive me if I regard the large attendance as amounting to a personal gesture of goodwill and as an expression of confidence

in, and support for, the High Court. For that my colleagues and I are extremely grateful. □

Letters to the Bar Association

From Judge Phelan:

"Dear Secretary,

.....
Would you please pass on to the office bearers of the Association my sincerest thanks for the hidden work which throughout my years at the Bar has been carried on by the various specialist committees. I am deeply indebted to all members of those various committees who have at no inconsiderable sacrifice to their own freedom and leisure worked on my behalf in so many divergent ways.

That work has so constantly been carried out so efficiently that it seldom if ever comes to notice.

May I, through you, thank all those involved.

Yours faithfully
Peter Phelan"

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Campbell Steele, Fellow Inst. of Engineers Aust.
Mem. Royal Soc. of NSW, Aust. Acoustical Soc.
Cert. Env. Impact Assess., etc. Expert Witness.
17 Sutherland Cresc. Darling Point (02) 328 6510.

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88 Walker Street, North Sydney, 2060. DX10592 North Sydney