

good precedent that the administration of the law in Australia could consider for its Justice Ministries. There is an acknowledgement of the revival of interest in the administration of law reform and calls for the establishment of a permanent full-time L.R.C. For about forty years New Zealand has had a system of part-time committees. The report points out that it should not be assumed that more sophisticated (and expensive) methods would produce more or better legislation.

*"It cannot be stressed too strongly that the only valid test of any law reform machinery is in terms of enacted legislation. A great body of well researched and well reasoned reports is of little more than academic value if for any reason they are not given effect to by legislation".*

The report suggests that there is "no ground to suppose" that the output of a law reform commission during the last eight years or so would have had a better scoring record than the part-time committees and the department. It is ironic, says the report, that the demand for more reforming law is found side by side with allegations of excessive law making.

A number of Australian L.R.C.s have personnel originating from New Zealand. One of them, Mr. Eric Freeman, is Chairman of the W.A.L.R.C. He presented an interesting commentary at the Australian Legal Convention in Sydney in July 1977. He suggested that, although the legal profession had achieved much on a voluntary basis, "there is a limit to what can be done with the existing machinery".

*"New Zealand is in a fortunate position in that it is not complicated by a federal system and when it sets up a full-time law reform establishment - as must surely be inevitable - it may look to the results of experimentation in law reform commissions in Australia".*

The Australian L.R.C.s keep close contact with their New Zealand colleagues. A.L.R.C. Chairman, Mr. Justice Kirby, has been invited to attend the forthcoming New Zealand Legal Convention which meets in Auckland, New Zealand on 28 March to 1 April 1978.

## Is ten cents a year enough?

*"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; tis dearness only that gives everything its value".*

*Thomas Paine, 1776*

An interesting statistic in Eric Freeman's paper to the Legal Convention was the amount we pay for law reform in this country. With figures taken from Annual Reports, and making due allowances for omission of judges' salaries and other variants, the statistics are revealing :

Australian Law Reform Commission	Over \$600,000
New South Wales Law Reform Commission	\$270,000
N.T. Law Review Committee (Voluntary)	Nil
Western Australian Law Reform Commission	\$134,000
Queensland Law Reform Commission	\$108,000
Victorian Law Reform Commissioner's office	\$ 52,000
Victorian Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee (Voluntary)	Nil
Victorian Statute Law Revision Commission (Parliamentary)	Nil
Tasmanian Law Reform Commission	\$ 47,000
South Australian Law Reform Committee	\$ 16,000
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	\$1,227,000

This means that on average Australians are paying about 10 cents a year for institutional law reform. Given the amounts that we spend on other things, including on the development of other sciences, is the amount being spent on the improvement, modernisation, simplification of the legal science enough?