

Victorian County Court Reports, edited by M. C. KIMM (Butterworth & Co. (Australia) Ltd, 1966), pp. 96. Price \$5.25.

Over the years, more than one notable judge has commented upon the necessity for uniformity of legal decision. After all, the principle of *stare decisis* is basic to the whole system of English law. Insofar as *The County Court Reports* seek to achieve such uniformity, their object is to be commended.

The County Court, or its criminal counterpart the Court of General Sessions, being as it were the 'middle court' in our hierarchy, plays an important part in the processes of litigation in this State and, indeed, is the final and, sometimes, conclusive arbiter in matters of important public interest (e.g. maintenance appeals, General Sessions appeals, appeals pursuant to the National Service Acts, appeals under the Labour and Industry Act and so on).

If, by the reports of their decisions, the County Court judges are to be assisted in achieving a greater degree of uniformity in jurisdictions such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, then it can be predicted perhaps with some confidence, that practitioners will welcome this publication and come to regard it as a useful and reliable guide in the conduct of future litigation.

Whilst, however, the prospective merits of these reports can be readily appreciated, it must also be realized that their sphere of usefulness is somewhat confined. The reported decisions of one County Court judge, for instance, will not create precedents binding upon his brother judges nor, indeed, can such decisions bind Courts of Petty Sessions. Furthermore, even in those jurisdictions where the decision of the County Court judge (or Chairman of General Sessions) is deemed to be final and conclusive, nevertheless he is still subject to the control of superior courts on questions of law (e.g. by way of case stated to the Supreme Court or by appeal to the High Court).

In view of the fact that this publication is still in the stages of infancy, it is difficult for the reviewer to give an accurate assessment of its value as a practitioner's digest. It is to be hoped that with the passage of time these reports will bring an ostensible degree of uniformity to those jurisdictions in which the County Court is to a large extent supreme. Whether or not the practitioner, having weighed the merits of the publication against its limitations, will conclude that it constitutes a worthwhile addition to his library is still, it would seem, within the realms of speculation.

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