

pointed to conduct the inquiry, which will essentially address the question of how the Legal Aid Office came to spend 'a whole year's allocation in only six months'. The case illustrates the growing public funding of professional fees with the consequential demands of public authorities to have a say in the fees fixed.

- This last point was made by the ALRC Chairman, Justice Kirby, in addressing the Australian Society of Orthodontists in Melbourne on 5 March 1984. Delivering the 1984 Wilkinson Oration, Justice Kirby referred to the resistance by the organised dental profession to the use of dental hygienists and to the prosecution of at least one dentist in NSW for using such an 'auxiliary', although she was highly trained and experienced in the United Kingdom. Remarked the ALRC Chairman 'When the ordinary man and woman receive an income determined in large part by industrial tribunals and when the highest officers of the country have their income determined by a Remuneration Tribunal, the demand of professional people, themselves drawing heavily and increasingly on the public purse, for old-fashioned independence and the free market, strikes most Australians as a buccaneer attitude, strangely anachronistic in today's social circumstances'.

don't cheer yet. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, similar debates are proceeding over the solicitors' monopoly in land conveyancing. Mr Austin Mitchell, a Labour Member of the House of Commons, introduced a Bill drafted by the Consumers Association to reform land title conveyancing. According to the *Economist* (25 February 1984) the Commons defied 'government arm-twisting' and the lobbying of the Law Society to give the Bill a Second Reading. The government then began to look carefully at the Bill and, as it transpired, the majority of

the Ministers in the Thatcher Cabinet expressed themselves in favour of breaking the solicitors' monopoly, as an example of the free market competition to which the Cabinet is generally committed. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, was reported to have put up 'stiff resistance' to the breach of the lawyers' monopoly and to have lost the argument to Ministers favouring competition though under conditions that would protect the client against mistakes or fraud.

By September 1984, a committee headed by a Manchester professor is to report on the 'tests or other evidence of competence' needed to protect house buyers who have their conveyancing done cheaply by non-solicitors. By the end of the year the committee is to suggest other ways of simplifying conveyancing and house purchases in general, including by reference to the Scottish system. Legislation is promised by the government for 1984-5.

The British Government has also indicated to the Law Society its support for the proposal that solicitors should advertise their charges for conveyancing. It has promised legislation to permit building societies to offer conveyancing services. But, cautions the *Economist*, don't cheer yet:

Whitehall's own 'wide-ranging' internal review of house purchase will be vigorously lobbied by the cartel [of the Law Society]. The solicitors will argue for strict standards (translation: as many obstacles as possible) for their non-solicitor competitors, and they will fight fiercely against letting building societies in on the act ... At present, with the biggest investment he will ever make, the buyer gets less user information than if he bought an aerosol can of paint.

new reports

Australia

- ALRC : *IP 4* : Contempt of Court 1982 (see above p 62).
: *IP 5* : Service and Execution of Process, 1984.

- : *Service & Execution of Process, RP 1* : Constitutional Considerations, 1983
- : *Service & Execution of Process, RP 2* : Commencing Process, 1984.

- NSWLRC** : Annual Report, 1983.
- : Options Paper, Solicitors' Costs and Conveyancing, 1984. See above, p 78
- NTLRC** : *R 9* : Report on Local Courts Act, 1983.
- : *R 10* : Report on the Oaths Act and amendment thereof in connection with Oaths & Affirmations by Witnesses in Court Proceedings, 1983.
- SALRC** : *73* : Report Relating to Perpetuities, 1984.
- : *78* : Report Relating to Imperial Law 1225-1557, 1984.
- : *79* : Report Relating to Imperial Law 1558-1702, 1984.
- Tas LRC** : *32* : Report and Recommendations on the Law and Procedure Relating to the Sale of Land by Installments, 1983.
- : *33* : Report and Recommendations Relating to Exclusion Clauses and Implied Obligations in Contracts for the Supply of Goods & Services, 1983.
- : *34* : Report and Recommendations Upon Perpetuities & Accumulations, 1983.
- VLCC** : : Report on the Interpretation Bill 1982, 1984. See above p 68
- WALRC**: *Project 34* : Trusts and the Administration of Estates — Part V — Trustees' Powers of Investment, Summary, February 1984.
- : : The Problem of Old Convictions, March 1984.

Canada

- CLRC** : : Twelfth Annual Report 1982-83.
- Saskat-chewan LRC** : : Tentative Proposals for a Lieutenant Governor's Review Board in Saskatchewan, 1984.

Hong Kong

- Hong Kong LRC** : : Draft Report of the Forum on Law Reform Within the Commonwealth, 21 September 1983.

United Kingdom

- Law Com** : *124* : Private International Law : Foreign Money Liabilities, 1983.
- : *125* : Property Law : Land Registration, 1983.

new references

- ALRC** : : Community Law Reform. See above p 50.
- NSWLRC** : : Solicitors' costs and conveyancing. See above p 78
- QLRC** : : A third program for the QLRC has been approved.
- : : **Juries** : Review of the role of juries in criminal trials.
- : : **Computer Technology** : Need for legislation to take into account.
- : : **Real Property** : Consolidation of law.
- : : **Property Law Act 1974** : Review.
- : : **Limited Partnerships** : Examination of law.
- : : **Costs** : Examination of Costs Act and taxation of costs.
- : : **Oaths** : Review of Oaths Act 1867.
- : : **Debt Recovery** : Examination of methods of execution of judgments.
- : : **Practice and Procedure** : Reform and modernisation of Common Law Practice Act 1867 and Common Law Process Act 1867.
- : : **Courts** : Adjusting the limits of jurisdiction between Supreme and District Courts, including equity jurisdiction.
- : : **Procedural Rules** : Court proceedings particularly in the Supreme and District Courts.
- : : **Contempt** : Examination of law of contempt of court.
- : : **Crown** : Method and desirability of vesting statutory bodies with status of.
- : : **Contracts** : Exclusion, exemption and unreasonable clauses in.
- : : **Contracts** : Illegality.
- : : **Law Reform Suggestions** : To consider and effect recommendations for reforms suggested by the judiciary.
- : : **Subpoenas** : Costs occasioned by compliance with.