

however. Nor is it, of course, sought. Readers will remember that Perry Mason and Horace Rumpole were both defence lawyers!

As I said in a letter I wrote to Richard Coates in April 2003:

*The prosecution task is mostly thankless. They make difficult and sensitive decisions every day. They work damned hard. They are poorly paid and have poor conditions, when compared to their southern counterparts. I don't think they get any recognition at all for the fine work they do. They deserve decent support. I will keep urging its provision.*

## CONCLUSION ON A PERSONAL NOTE

I have been greatly honoured to be invited to speak to you today and thank you for your generosity to me and my wife Lyn. I am told that the guest speaker's partner is always invited but I can't remember ever seeing one attend before.

I was made welcome when I arrived here in the Territory and I hope it has not been outworn. We have made a home here and we will continue to treat Darwin as home. As some of you know we also have ties to Melbourne, two daughters there, and we will spend some time with them. Our son Ben who is one of you, lives here in Darwin of course, and is here today.

If I was able to tout, I would tell you that I will be back at the end of April and able to accept briefs here in the Territory all year round. I will be a Northern

Territory Barrister – not a Victorian one. (Nevertheless, Neville Henwood, I will probably continue to wear my Victorian rosette). For those of you who care, one of my ambitions is to travel up the Tanami. I want to see the lie of the land for myself. For those in the know, I will be just plodding along.

I have enjoyed my time in Darwin immensely. There was a famous Barrister at the Victorian Bar, Woodsie Lloyd QC. He loved the practice of the law and the Bar. He delighted in going in each day to whatever challenge awaited him. He had this recurring nightmare that one day he would come into Chambers and find the front doors locked and barred. There would be a sign up: "We have woken up to you!"

Perhaps they have woken up to me!

As I said at some drinks kindly put on by the Chief Justice a couple of weeks or so ago, this job is so good I would almost do it for free. I wonder whether Richard will feel the same. I wish him well in his Stewardship of the Office. He has a fine staff awaiting him there.

Good luck to all of them in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and to you as another year in the law gets under way. work damned hard. They are poorly paid and have poor conditions, when compared to their southern counterparts. I don't think they get any recognition at all for the fine work they do. They deserve decent support. I will keep urging its provision.

## LCA in favour of a Federal Judicial Commission

**The Law Council supports renewed interest by the Government in establishing a body that will deal with complaints about the conduct of Federal judicial officers without endangering judicial independence.**

According to Law Council President John North, the Law Council has been exploring this "A Federal Judicial Commission is an initiative that the Law Council has been exploring for some time and one which we had focused on in recent talks with all Federal Heads of Jurisdiction. We also proposed this idea to the Federal Attorney-General in August last year," Law Council President John North said.

"We welcome confirmation by the Government that it is looking at establishing a Federal Judicial Commission.

"Maintaining high standards is essential if the community is to have confidence in its judiciary, and judicial officers need better protection from malicious and misleading complaints.

"The Law Council advocates the benefits of creating a body to assist in the process of assessing complaints about the conduct of judges and magistrates in the Federal courts of Australia," he said.

"There is currently no mechanism that deals with complaints of judicial negligence, physical or medical fitness, incompetence or misbehaviour."

A Judicial Commission could investigate complaints against judicial officers and could also provide education and training services to judges and magistrates.

"It is increasingly recognised that complaints about the conduct of judicial officers need formal processes to help resolve them. Unjustified complaints can be very damaging to the reputation of judicial officers. Complaints of serious misconduct need to be properly scrutinised."

"A Federal Judicial Commission will enhance Parliament's role in dealing with complaints – all to the better of the administration of justice," Mr North concluded.