LABOUR LAW AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN CANADA (second edition), by H.W. Arthurs, D.D. Carter and H.J. Glasbeek. Kluwer Law and Taxation Publishers and Butterworths, 1984, pp. 316, hardcover.

The title of this book provides an indication of the breadth of the subject matter covered. At a time when most labour law books are restricted to specialized topics, this book deals with every aspect, including legislated employment standards, the individual contract of employment and collective labour relations. The number of pages in the book (316) signals that it is not intended to deal with the myriad of topics in detail.

This text was originally written for the International Encyclopedia of Labour Law and Industrial Relations. It was meant for a readership which wants some explanation of the Canadian political system, Canadian federalism and a national perspective on employment law in both the individual and collective sense. The book provides this admirably. It is extremely well written, and indeed, is a pleasure to read. For those who want to understand the variations in employment law at the federal and provincial levels, and particularly to gain some insight into the impact of legislation in different parts of the country, it is an ideal text.

This book, however, would not be useful to the practitioner or academic who is interested in a detailed analysis of labour or industrial relations within a particular province. The analysis of legislation and case law is not of sufficient depth. It is not a heavily footnoted book, and many of the cases are old, first principle cases. If one were to take Alberta as an example, a reader of this text might gain the impression that there have been no sexual harassment cases, and that there are no significant differences in employment legislation from that of other provinces. This is not a criticism; it is simply meant to emphasize that the authors provide a comparative impression of employment law in Canada, and not a detailed examination useful in practice. The book may be useful to lawyers or businessmen interested in setting up companies in various provinces; it would be useful in trade union courses; and it is interesting to the reader who simply wants a not overly compendious comparative study.

If there is a weakness to the book, it is in its treatment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This second edition appears to have been updated in the sense of recent legislative developments and cursory treatment of the Charter under topics which the authors felt might be affected. The impact of the Charter on Sunday observance legislation, no-strike legislation, mandatory retirement, affirmative rights programs and union security clauses simply does not come across in the book. The significance of the Charter warrants a more detailed examination.

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