

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION PRACTICE**, Douglas R. Mah, (Scarborough: Carswell, 1996)

In the Introduction, Mr. Mah rightly points out that "Workers compensation is not a subject taught in law school neither are there practitioners in Alberta, save a few, who could rightly call themselves 'expert' in the field."<sup>1</sup> The writer does not count himself as being among those happy few. However, the writer has had occasion to deal with the Workers' Compensation Board [hereinafter WCB] on behalf of unhappy employees and frustrated employers. While the staff, and particularly the legal staff, at the WCB have been unfailingly helpful, the absence of a users' manual and guide book has been keenly felt.

Doug Mah has done a great service for the practicing bar — he has unravelled what can appear to be the byzantine complexity of the *Workers' Compensation Act*<sup>2</sup> in his user-friendly text *Workers' Compensation Practice*.

Make no mistake — this is a practitioners' text, in the very best senses of that phrase. The writing is clear, spare and, on occasion, pointed. The relevant sections of the *WCA* are described in plain-language, with cross-references to the significant jurisprudence. The "Now Hear This" limitation periods are defined. All of which is accomplished in only 135 pages of text.

Generally, the book provides the history and an overview of the WCB, the structure of the tribunals created by the *WCA*, advice on acting for injured workers, employers, insurance companies and creditors, subrogation, and judicial review. The Appendix helpfully provides the names, addresses and phone numbers of WCB offices and departments of interest.

Perhaps of greatest assistance are the author's "tips," which clearly come from the school of hard knocks. For instance, the author insists that anyone attempting to assist a worker in making a claim obtain a copy of the Policy Manual — and then tells the reader where to get the manual!<sup>3</sup> The practice pointers are a quick checklist of "do's" and "don'ts" for anyone intending to appear before the WCB.<sup>4</sup> The author provides a step-by-step listing of what to do when representing an injured worker.<sup>5</sup> The author also provides in point form "What your client needs to know prior to judicial review."<sup>6</sup> Good stuff.

How could it be improved? I would have liked to have seen this text put out in loose-leaf. I would like to ensure that, through regular updates, the information does

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<sup>1</sup> D.R. Mah, *Workers' Compensation Practice* (Scarborough: Carswell, 1996) at xiv.

<sup>2</sup> S.A. 1981, c. W-16 [hereinafter *WCA*].

<sup>3</sup> *Supra* note 1 at 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* at 39-41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* at 56-57, 84-86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* at 109.

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not go stale. While this may be a lot of (continuing) work for Mr. Mah, the bar would be appreciative.

Otherwise, if you intend to tangle with the WCB, first read this book.

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