

descriptive and explanatory of attitudes and their causes. It is also a timely warning that we cannot put blind faith in the force of rational arguments to ensure results which are in the public interest, from our political processes.

Naturally the book is autobiographical as well. The image of Rattigan is clear as a strategist who carefully calculated how he wanted debate and action to proceed and devised suitable means to achieve that end. He had a very sharp understanding of politicians and of the bureaucracy, a total commitment to the belief that more comprehensive research and presentation would advance his cause, a firm conviction in the importance of independence for statutory bodies and the essentiality of non-political appointments to them.

One major advantage of a longitudinal study such as this, written by an actor who was centre-stage throughout, is that it allows a vivid contrast between different governments and their policies and methods. Surely no contrast could be starker than the attitude of coalition governments on industry protection compared with that of the Whitlam Government, intent on the generation of imports. Interestingly, according to this account, while the substance of these policies was poles apart, the political chicanery appears remarkably similar though no doubt the author was able to draw a little greater comfort from Whitlam's declaration that he shared Rattigan's views on protection. There were also contrasting personal relationships with McEwan who had tried to stifle him, Anthony whom he claims made some misleading statements, Whitlam and Cairns and their sharp differences on economic policy, together with other prominent players in the industry arena, *viz.* Coombs, Crawford, Callaghan, Curie and Carmody. Regrettably he casts no additional light on a matter which he must have known more about, the vetoing by McEwan of McMahon as successor to Holt, always believed to have been based on factors relating to industry protection and the general desire of the National Country Party to woo the manufacturing lobby away from the Liberals.

So there is a little in this book for everyone: the economist cataloguing the arguments and methodology surrounding industry assistance and protection, the student of public policy and its buzzing world of trade-offs bearing so little resemblance to the admonitions of the Westminster model, and the historian who will find chronicled in these pages a document which is both an object and an instrument of research and which provides a lively insight into Australia's current economic ills.

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Comparative National Computer Policies *Edited by Harold Sackman*

North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1986), pp. xi + 486, \$59.25, ISBN 0-444-70056-0.

In the preface, it is explained that this book is actually the proceedings of the Third International Federation of Information Processing Societies (IFIP) Technical Committee #9 (TC9) Conference on Human Choice and Computers held in Stockholm, Sweden, 2-5 September, 1985. The theme of the conference was a worldwide comparative analysis of national policies in the social use of

computers. There exists some discrepancy, then, between first, the title of the volume which suggests an analysis of national computer policies in the broadest sense, second, the title of the proceedings which suggests a study of parameters upon which humans choose computers, and third, the stated theme which suggests a review of national policies toward social responsibility with regard to computers. In actuality, the book deals largely with the latter issue, the purported theme of the conference, and is rather comprehensive in its worldwide coverage. The misnomer of a title is unfortunate from two aspects: first, the potential reader of social policies regarding computers may not realise that this book deals with that topic; and second, the potential reader of economic, legal and/or technological policies may retrieve this book by mistake and be disappointed.

Part I consists of an historical critique of the IFIP Technical Committee #9 in two sections; one by the proceedings editor, Harold Sackman, and the other by the chairman of the working committee, Ulrich Brief. While providing somewhat difficult reading for the uninitiated, they present an historical perspective on the intent and purpose of the conference. The following two articles are the keynote speeches of two Swedish scientists, Jan Freese and Kjell Samuelson. The first is a very general discussion of man's and/or society's adaptation to technology versus technology's adaptation to man and society, with specific examples related to several countries including national dependencies on international computing and effects on labour. The second is a discussion on international systems and flows including their effect or lack of effect on organisational behaviour. Samuelson points out, for example, that computer technologies tend to reinforce existing power infrastructures. Furthermore, he discusses how the typically Western thought processes, i.e. textual, may be limiting factors in the expanded use of computer technologies as compared to societies which naturally think pictorially, spatially or iconically.

Part II is comprised of national reports from smaller countries, specifically Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden. As in most conference proceedings, the quality of the papers varies. In general, in this case, the quality is high and it is quite evident that the speakers were well directed regarding the content of their articles. Furthermore, the organisation of the proceedings by country eliminates from the start the problem of redundancy which one normally encounters.

The articles in Part II mainly deal with the state of information processing in the country discussed; often including numbers and types of computers, types of applications, manpower, education and a general discussion of the socio-economic and/or socio-cultural aspects of the issue. In addition to the above:

- The Austrian article describes in some detail data laws and impact on labour of microelectronics.
- The Belgian article includes a description of research studies on the social impact of computers.
- The Danish article looks into health and safety aspects as well as including specific recommendations.
- The Israeli article describes national policy determinants.
- The Netherlands article includes discussion of flexible automation and electronic funds transfer as well as education of the general public.
- The New Zealand article specifies issues related to social change such as the impact on disadvantaged groups and increased sexual discrimination.

- The Swedish article details proposed laws related to employment, work laws, advanced democracy, personal integrity, etc.

Part III is similar to Part II but specifically relates to the larger countries, viz. the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the German Democratic Republic, India, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

- The article about the Federal Republic of Germany provides a status report on the social impact of computing including a discussion of laws and the result of several public opinion polls.
- The French article discusses information practices regarding the challenge of using computers not just for mechanising bureaucracies but also for increasing creative, democratic and self-teaching processes and values.
- The article about the German Democratic Republic describes their historical progression of computer use including the social impacts thereof.
- The article on India details the progress and impact, both actual and potential, of computer use on society.
- The Japanese article emphasises the future information society and the development steps which Japan is taking, and planning to take, in order to achieve these goals.
- The South African article describes the historical achievements in computerisation of the country as well as a detailed collection of applications and steps needed to acquire a higher degree of 'computeracy' in the population.
- The United Kingdom paper discusses the programme established to maximise the opportunities and minimise the threats created by information technologies.
- The article on the United States describes the historical growth of information, mainly in the public sector. Emphasised is the indictment that there not only is no plan for equitable distribution of computer benefits, but in actuality the system exacerbates social inequality.

Part IV consists of the conference conclusions and comments by various working groups each of which stated its problem, made forecasts to the year 2000, and laid out specific recommendations.

Also included is a comprehensive summary by the editor of the proceedings.

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Recurrent Education: A Revised Agenda by *Ed Davis, Jack M. Wood and Barry W. Smith*

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This first volume in the series entitled **Research and Policy Studies in Recurrent Education** is based on the project entitled "Recurrent Education for Australia"