

to reconcile the completely opposite conclusions reached by the contributors. Further, the analysis of the social consequences of unemployment is inadequate. It is not acceptable simply to ignore inconvenient literature which would undermine one's argument. And some of the contributors cannot write. Members of the Bureau of Labour Market Research are particularly at fault here. (Perhaps the BLMR's recent demise was due to their inability to communicate much with the outside world).

To end on such a sour note would, however, be inappropriate. This is a book to be dipped into and its best essays enjoyed. No doubt students will find certain chapters particularly useful. As for which contributor presents the most accurate version of what is going to happen, only time will tell. Buy it and remember to read it again in ten or twenty years' time.

REFERENCES

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2. B. Jones, *Sleepers Wake!*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985.

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Telecommunications and Equity: Policy Research Issues edited by James Miller (North-Holland, Amsterdam, 1986) pp. vii + 348, ISBN 0-444-70013-7.

This volume contains papers presented to the thirteenth annual Telecommunications Policy Research Conference held in Airlie, Virginia (USA) in April, 1985. These annual conferences have changed in character over time, from a small gathering, predominantly made up of economists, meeting to advise the White House's Office of Telecommunications Policy, to a larger and more interdisciplinary group attempting to identify and discuss issues and policy approaches. The theme chosen for the 1985 Conference 'Equity: Social and Economic Issues', gave ample scope for the interdisciplinary framework, with economists, sociologists, lawyers, engineers, regulators, industry and communications experts all contributing papers.

The book contains some 29 papers which are divided into four sections. The four sub-themes are: perspectives on equity; policy approaches to monopoly and competition; the provision of a universal telephone service; and the policy concerns of the 'cultural' media. The largest and most varied section is that on monopoly/competition policy, which is composed of fourteen papers, while the section on universal service contains some of the longer contributions to the volume.

The first section is described by the editor (p. 1) as discussing 'overarching thematic and disciplinary matters appropriate to the analysis of telecommunications policy'. This section is rather short, however, and does not really provide much which is of use in placing the other material into some sort of 'perspective'. Of the three papers included, the one by Edward Zajac is possibly the most helpful, being an explanation of economists' methodology and its need for supplementation when questions of equity and policy making arise. Zajac draws

on telecommunications for several of his examples, something which is almost totally absent in the other two papers.

The second section, on monopoly/competition questions in telecommunications, is perhaps the one most obviously relevant to the dominant policy concerns of the day. The first four papers consider the appropriate role for regulatory intervention in an increasingly competitive telecommunications environment, while the next four consider the relationship between the pre-existing US monopolist (AT&T) and its newer competitors. All the papers are in fact quite closely linked by two dominant themes. One is the issue of the cross-subsidisation which has traditionally flowed from long distance telephony to local telephone subscribers (or in the US parlance, from toll to local access), and whether regulation should (or even could) be able to hinder the diminution of this subsidy by competition. The other, perhaps slightly contradictory concern, is whether competition in the long distance market is in fact strong enough to be relied upon in place of regulation. Most of these papers are short and raise little that is new in the way of argument on these subjects. The most substantial piece is that by Carl Shapiro and Robert Willig which attempts to develop a quantitative framework within which the competitive strength of AT&T's opposition carriers can be assessed.

The remainder of the section on the policy approach to monopoly in telecommunications is taken up by four papers which address the European industry and two papers on the problem of standardisation of equipment. The most interesting contribution, in the area of European policy, is that by Nicholas Garnham on developments in the United Kingdom, and on the setting of standards, the paper by Joseph Farrell and Garth Saloner is well worth reading. This latter paper provides a clear and fascinating summary of a relatively new area of economic analysis *viz.*, the costs and benefits, and the pro- and anti-competitive effective, of standardisation.

Certainly the most specifically focussed of the three selections of papers is the third, on the provision of a universal telephone service. Of course this topic is already touched on in the earlier discussions of the appropriate regulatory response to the unravelling of the toll to local service cross-subsidy. Here, however, the questions considered are whether cost-based pricing is likely to affect the affordability of telephone services significantly, and on possible responses to such an outcome. Three papers provide complementary approaches. The first, by Gerald Brock looks at the likely response of competing telephone companies to any trends away from universal service. The second, by Gillis, Jenkins and Leitzel, considers alternative means of achieving universal service through subsidy programs. Finally, Lewis Perl's paper gives some estimates of both the welfare gains, and their distribution, which might be expected from cost-based pricing, under a variety of assumptions. We note, though, that in all of these papers the question of 'affordability' is almost exclusively analysed in terms of income effects, *i.e.*, low income subscribers being unable to afford a higher priced service, rather than in terms of cost differences in the service themselves, *e.g.* the metropolitan/rural cross-subsidy. Finally, this section includes a comprehensive discussion, by Eli Noam, of developments in local communications. This is the most technologically based paper included in the volume, and provides an excellent summary of the competitive positions of a wide range of point-to-point and broadcast communications services.

The final section of the book is a little difficult to summarise because of the broad range of areas covered. This is perhaps reflected in the somewhat

vague title of the section 'Policy challenges for the cultural media'. If there is a connecting theme, it would appear to lie in the policy determination (or policy evolution) process in communications, particularly as it affects the electronic mass media. Thus two papers (by Waterman and by Thomas) look at the development of 'public' television and radio, and another two (by Ducey and Portale and by Valenzuela) consider the role for ethnic broadcasting.

While the papers collected together in this volume were presented over two years ago, the issues which they address remain of considerable relevance. Some readers, though, may find a number of the contributions either too lacking in substance or too concentrated on the particulars of the US system. Nevertheless, the contributions taken as a whole cover a wide range of topics, perhaps wider than is implied by the volume's main title, and if nothing else serve as an excellent source of references to a broad range of recent and not so recent work. (In total, there are 348 references to be found amongst the 29 papers.) Overall, the work stands as a useful encapsulation of a wide range of approaches to the variety of issues which face telecommunications policy makers both now and in the future.

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Technology Assessment in Australia by Senate Standing Committee on Science, Technology and the Environment.

(Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987) pp. 111. ISBN 0-644-05265-1.

The Senate Standing Committee on Science, Technology and the Environment has finally released the report of its major inquiry into 'New Technology and Unemployment'. Entitled *Technology Assessment in Australia*, the just over 100 page report has taken nearly three years to produce since the Senate first referred the issue to the committee back in June 1984.

According to the report, the six man, all-party committee, chaired by Queensland ALP senator Gerry Jones, collected over 3,500 pages of evidence, and heard from over 100 witnesses, including peak business and trade union councils, major employers and unions, state and federal government ministries, and sundry scientific, educational and technological groups and organisations.

In terms of research effort then, the inquiry rivalled the Fraser Government's \$2 million Committee of Inquiry into Technological Change chaired by Sir Rupert Myers, and the more recent National Technology Conference and subsequent failed National Technology Strategy development effort.

Unfortunately, just as with those previous efforts, this inquiry too, failed to reach any definite conclusions about the relationship between technological change and unemployment. Ordinarily then, such a report would be likely to be pigeon-holed and forgotten very quickly. However, the report contains a number of recommendations concerning technology assessment and industrial relations which are controversial, and which may well save it from instant oblivion.