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NOTES AND NEWS

RESEARCH STUDY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF LAND REGISTRATION

The only book on comparative land registration now available in Great Britain appears to be the publication entitled *Land Registration* by Dowson and Sheppard. This was first published in 1952. A second edition was published in 1956. The book has been used as a textbook on the subject.

The Dowson and Sheppard book is based to a large extent on research work carried out by the authors before the second world war. Though the second edition endeavoured to bring up to date the references to laws and procedures in the various jurisdictions covered and added short accounts of the Scandinavian systems and the evolution of tenure in tribal lands as well as a glossary of terms, the book does not take into account the very considerable development in the field of land registration which has taken place in post-war years.

Dowson and Sheppard published their work in the hope that it might be of use to Colonial Administrative and Survey Officers serving in British Colonies whose duties embraced the establishment or the maintenance of land records. They hoped also that students would find it to be a profitable study. The work is chiefly concerned with the form of land registration more explicitly known to British readers as Registration of Title to Land. The authors pointed out that there were a considerable number of textbooks dealing with the law of many jurisdictions but these works seldom dealt adequately with the question of land survey and the part this function played in the process of land registration and ignored the important practical questions of administrative procedure and book-keeping involved. The authors sought to make good these omissions.

The Commonwealth Survey Officers' Conference held at Cambridge in 1967 noted the value of the existing publication to registration authorities and to students and recommended that the book should be revised and enlarged with the addition of well informed and constructive criticism. For some time, however, certain leading authorities and professional organizations have felt that it should be replaced by an up-to-date and authoritative text on the principles and practice of land registration, including a comparative analysis of the various systems now in operation.

Convinced of the importance of land registration in land administration, development and conservation and of the need for a comprehensive up-to-date book on the subject, the Ministry of Overseas Development has made a grant to finance a research project to enable the latest information on the subject to be obtained with a view to preparing a completely new authoritative text. Arrangements have been made for the research work to be undertaken by special staff of the Department of Land Economy in the University of Cambridge.

The Ministry has convened a Steering Committee to assist and advise the research staff and to ensure that the research study will provide the information which the Committee considers should be included in the proposed new work. This Committee consists of persons who have specialist knowledge of the subject and who have had wide experience in land registration in different countries. The Committee is under the Chairmanship of Mr S. R. Simpson, C.B.E., Land Tenure Adviser to the Ministry of Overseas Development and for many years Commissioner of Lands and Registrar-General in the Sudan. Its members are Professor D. R. Denman, Head of the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, Professor A. N. Allott, Professor of African Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Mr J. C. D. Lawrance, O.B.E., of the Ministry of Overseas Development and formerly Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Land Tenure in Uganda, Mr A. G. Dagleish of the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, formerly Assistant Director of Surveys in Kenya, Mr H. A. L. Luckham, formerly Commissioner of Lands in the Federation of Malaya, Mr C. Mace, O.B.E., formerly Director of Land Registration and Surveys, Cyprus and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands, Tanganyika, Sir George Curtis, C.B., formerly Chief Land Registrar, H.M. Land Registry, Mr H. W. West of the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge and formerly Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Surveys, Uganda and Mr D. T. Lloyd, O.B.E., also of the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge and formerly of the Surveys and Lands Department, Sierra Leone and Director of Lands, Mines and Surveys in Fiji. Mr Lloyd is in charge of the research work and is also Secretary and Executive Officer of the Steering Committee.

The aim of the Steering Committee is the production of a new textbook designed to cover the basic principles and practice of registration. The salient features of modern systems will be critically examined and analysed with particular regard to their suitability for developing countries. Special emphasis will be given to countries whose land administration processes were derived from British sources. The new work will contain historical material only in so far as this will contribute to an understanding of modern concepts and practice. There will be reference to the likely effect of computers and other electronic data processing equipment on the survey and book-keeping techniques involved in the general process of recording land titles. The book will be designed to meet the needs of persons responsible for the introduction and operation of systems of land registration, and to be of value to legal and survey prac-

tioners and to persons advising governments on land policies, land administration and land legislation. It is intended, also, that the book shall serve as a textbook for students studying the wide range of subjects connected with land and land administration, e.g. law students at overseas universities studying for the LL.B., those attending practical training courses of which conveyancing forms a part, undergraduates taking degree courses in such subjects as Land Economy, Public Administration, Land Surveying, students taking courses set by specialist professional organizations such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and graduates attending courses in Land Development and Land Administration.

In order to ensure close co-ordination between the Steering Committee and the research staff and to assist in the day-to-day conduct of the research a Standing Committee has been set up for the duration of the project. This consists of Mr S. R. Simpson, Chairman with Professor Denman and Messrs West and Lloyd as members.

The research study, which is expected to take some three years, will involve the collection of information on current land registration procedures in selected countries with attention being focused particularly on the developing countries in the Commonwealth. Official sources in individual jurisdictions will be invited to supply factual and statistical information concerning their own systems. Critical commentaries will be sought from known authorities on particular aspects of the subject. The research staff who will be responsible for the collation of information will visit as many countries as possible in the course of the work. The staff will be based at the Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, 19 Silver Street, Cambridge. Further information may be obtained from Mr D. T. Lloyd at that address.

[Communication from the Ministry of Overseas Development, London, and the Department of Land Economy, Cambridge University.]

Note by the Editor:

The Department would greatly welcome comments from teachers of land law, registrars, surveyors and other persons professionally concerned with land registration on the contents and approach of the projected new volume. It is hoped that interested readers of this Journal will communicate their views direct to Mr Lloyd at the above address.

TWO NEW SERIES OF THE AFRICAN LAW REPORTS

The African Law Reports, about which a note appeared in [1967] J.A.L. 151, will shortly publish the first volumes in two new national series of reports.

The African Law Reports—Malawi Series will report cases from 1923 to the present date which have been selected for publication by a committee representing the judiciary and the Law Society of Malawi. The series will incorporate cases of current value which

previously appeared in the Nyasaland Protectorate Law Reports and the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Law Reports as well as previously unreported decisions of all the Nyasaland courts. The first two volumes will cover the pre-independence period: Volume 1, published in November 1968, will cover 1923-60; Volume 2, to be published in mid-1969, will cover 1961-64.

The African Law Reports—Sierra Leone Series will be the successor to the Sierra Leone Law Reports. The series will initially bring those reports up to date, by reporting cases selected for publication by the Sierra Leone Law Reporting Committee, and will then begin retrospective coverage of cases decided prior to the first volume of the Sierra Leone Law Reports in 1960. The first volume, to be published during 1969, will contain previously unreported cases; future volumes covering the pre-1960 period will contain both cases previously reported in the West African Law Reports, the West African Court of Appeal Reports and the Sierra Leone Law Recorder, as well as a wide range of previously unreported decisions of all the Sierra Leone courts.

Both new series will be published in *The African Law Reports* format and will contain all the features of other *ALR* publications. The volumes will be comprehensively indexed and contain complete tables of all legislative and case material referred to; the cases will be fully headnoted and the accuracy of all quotations and other references verified by *ALR* research staff.

JURISTIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

We record with pleasure the announcement of the formation of the above Association, on 13 October, 1967. The Chairman of the Association is Professor K. Bentsi-Enchill, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Zambia. The committee of the Association includes both practitioners and lecturers. The principal object of the Association is to encourage the study and reform of the law in Zambia. The Secretary is Mr W. P. Capstick, P.O. Box 2710, Lusaka, Zambia, from whom further details may be obtained.