Distinguished Visitors

The School was recently pleased to welcome the Honorable John Vincent Barry, Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, Australia, and chairman of the Department of Criminology of the University of Melbourne. Justice Barry addressed the student body on "The Administration of Criminal Justice in Australia."

Dr. Jiro Matsuda, president of the Judicial Research and Training Institute of Japan, and judge of the High Court of Tokyo, was a visitor at the Law School in May. Dr. Matsuda, an authority on the corporation law of Japan, is touring the United States studying American methods of legal education.

United States District Judge Gus J. Solomon, of Portland, Oregon, spoke recently to members of the student body. Judge Solomon discussed practice before the Federal District Courts.

Book Review

The following review first appeared in Volume 7, Number 3, of the Journal of Legal Education and is reprinted here with the permission of the Journal and of the author.


This is a beautiful casebook, certainly one of the best in the business.

For those who are already admirers of the first edition, a paragraph from Steffen's preface will be enough to whet the appetite:

"This edition does not differ greatly from the first, put out fifteen years ago. It is somewhat better organized; there are a number of new cases; and, two or three new sections have emerged. Some interesting pictures of typical paper have been added. But in the main, it is the same 'team of horses.' " (P. xi.)

For people to whom the original team of horses is not well known, these are some of the virtues both of it and of the new one.

First, organization around transactions. Commercial law can be very blind and very dull, or otherwise, depending on whether one sees or does not see what goes on behind the papers. Steffen's organization around typical transactions and his factual introductions to each section and sharp footnotes to each case help both newcomers and old hands to understand the commercial facts behind the courts' opinions.

Second, organization, within the separate sections, around history. We all know that commercial law has deep roots in the past. But unless those roots are laid before us we may not realize how alive they are today. In Steffen, we meet Lord Mansfield frequently, and behind him, "a certain Marius," in context, close to the recent cases. It is amazing how the old law persists and illuminates the new. For instance, take the first case in Section 1, Chat v. Edgar, on p. 4. It was decided by the Court of King's Bench in 1663, but the transaction might have happened yesterday (substituting a bank or finance company for the parson as the drawer of the draft), and the result would be the same today. Or compare Lord Mansfield in Pillans and Rose v. Van Meinop and Hopkins (K.B. 1765), on p. 789, with the Uniform Commercial Code, Section 5-106(1): "No consideration is needed . . . to establish a credit . . . " And have not Price v. Neal (K.B. 1762), on p. 446, and Gill v. Cubit (K.B. 1824), on p. 586, been fighting issues in the hearings before the Law Revision Commission of New York, in 1954, on the Uniform Commercial Code? The old commercial law, unlike so much of the feudal law of land, is still alive and kicking, and illuminates the present wonderfully.