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Book Review of Remedies in Labour, Employment and Human Rights Law by Field Atkinson Perraton and James T. Casey
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James T. Casey, a lawyer with the Alberta law firm of Field Atkinson Perraton, edits this looseleaf service. Its chapters are written by labour and employment law practitioners in the firm. The title clearly indicates the intended scope of the work. The field of labour and employment law has many contexts, and this work does not restrict its coverage to any one. Neither does it purport to address aspects of labour and employment law other than remedies (although the authors ensure the concept of remedies is understood to encompass more than monetary awards).

The work discusses the various remedies that arise in both labour (that is, unionized environments) and employment (non-unionized work) settings. Each substantive chapter is devoted to one of five labour and employment areas: labour arbitration, labour relations boards, wrongful dismissal from (non-unionized) employment, unjust dismissal under the Canada Labour Code, and human rights cases.

The relatively extensive coverage of labour law is probably attributable to the detailed and complex legislation and collective agreements governing the labour context, as contrasted with the employment contracts and legislation that govern many non-union situations. However, the dedication of one chapter just to the unjust dismissal provisions of the Canada Labour Code - which, unlike the remainder of that statute and the labour statutes of other jurisdictions, addresses non-unionized employment - is a useful inclusion in the work.

Within the five areas, the authors discuss narrower topics such as the principles underlying remedies in the area, remedial jurisdiction, types of remedies, and types of breaches or conduct that might attract a remedy. The level of detail in which these topics are presented is good, although it does vary somewhat from chapter to chapter. This perhaps is to be expected since each chapter is written by a different author; nevertheless, greater structural or organizational consistency among the chapters would facilitate the task of the researcher using the book.

Although the authors and editor are members of an Alberta law firm, the work is not restricted to coverage of that jurisdiction, in either the labour or employment context. Legislative provisions from the various jurisdictions are reviewed, and the discussion throughout the work is supported by a cross-jurisdictional selection of cases.

A good number of illustrative cases are cited, and these are listed in a table of cases of approximately 52 pages. The table of cases is usefully designed for a looseleaf product, with inclusion of specific chapter and section references for each of the cases cited. Access to the content is also facilitated by use of a summary table of contents as well as a detailed one, with several levels of section headings. As well, the index, like the table of cases, provides chapter and section references rather than page numbers. The only dissatisfaction I have with the index is that it uses a method of fairly broadly grouped subject headings which does not differentiate its functionality greatly from that of the detailed table of contents. One must know the broader context to find mention of a narrower topic.

The foreword to the text set me up for one disappointment in the contents. There is promise that those who practice alternative dispute resolution will find this work “a valuable source of guidance,” and specific mention is made of a rising interest in mediation. Although there is a chapter on labour arbitration, I was unable to find any content related to mediation, at least by using the index and table of contents as means of access. Perhaps this can be expected in future supplements.

Apart from the noted shortcomings I perceived, this text serves as a single resource for addressing remedies in a number of labour and employment contexts. Because the topic is restricted to remedies, the authors have been able to cover it in some depth. The text is likely to be a useful resource to labour and employment law practitioners, serious students of labour and employment law, and those involved in labour or employment dispute resolution.

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