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Industrial Citizenship

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This workshop on the deregulation of the Australian labour market is to celebrate the work of Professor Emeritus Keith Hancock. As academic labour economist, as author and scholar, as Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University and as a Senior Deputy-President of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, Keith has played a key role in Australian labour relations for more than 20 years (*Who's Who*, 2000: 764). We all owe him an enormous debt, and for my part as an academic labour lawyer I have gained so much from his historical work on Australian wages and the nature of the Australian labour market.

This chapter examines industrial citizenship. Citizenship theory, which springs largely from the social sciences, seeks to determine the rights and obligations which the state owes to citizens, and the concomitant rights and obligations which citizens owe to the State, that is to the community. For my part, I am seeking to determine whether working women and men whom I call industrial citizens, are receiving full citizenship rights in Australia now that our labour market has been partially deregulated as a result of economic globalisation, technological changes and the ascendance of neo-liberal ideas.²

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2 In undertaking this work on industrial citizenship, I have collaborated with a group of international scholars under the auspices of the Inter-University Research Centre on Globalisation and Work (CRIMT) which is housed at Université Laval and Université de Montréal in the Canadian Province of Quebec. I wish to thank Professor Gregor Murray of the School of Industrial Relations of Université de Montréal for getting me started on this project. His friendship and encouragement have been of enormous assistance and I also owe him a tremendous debt.

This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.

laws on working hours, on unfair dismissal, on discrimination at work and on occupational health and safety must be retained and enhanced. In areas of employment where collective bargaining does not operate, thought needs to be given to establishing consultative mechanisms to at least ensure that the views of industrial citizens are made known to their employers.

However, it is also obvious that a reworking of industrial citizenship is essential to take account of the needs and aspirations of part-time and casual employees and of those workers who are receiving remuneration as independent contractors. A revised form of industrial citizenship must also embrace immigrant workers who come to our shores, either as short-term employees or to build new lives in our nation. Citizenship must also concern itself with the needs and aspirations of home workers, of labour hire employees and of those persons undertaking voluntary labour. There is much work to do in order to forge a new Australian industrial citizenship for the deregulated labour market of the 21st century.

It is my hope that this survey of literature on industrial citizenship may be of some assistance in determining what form industrial citizenship should take in our own time. By dividing up the literature into four broadly based categories, I have endeavoured through the lens of a labour lawyer to breakdown its meaning and to set forth some ideas on what should be the content of modern industrial citizenship.

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