

## Editorial

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This year's Sir William Dale special issue of the EJLR looks at different aspects in the theory and practice of 'law reform' with emphasis on consolidation/codification.

The first article, by Stephen Laws CB the First Parliamentary Counsel for England and Wales, is titled *Plus ça change? Continuity and Change in UK Legislative Drafting Practice* and was the topic of the 8<sup>th</sup> Sir William Dale Memorial Lecture delivered by Stephen Laws in November 2008 at the University of London's Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. The article examines changes in legislative drafting practices in England and Wales from the point of view of the drafter. As the current chief drafter for England and Wales, Stephen Laws is probably in a unique position to describe change – if any – in the UK's approach to drafting.

Jonathan Teasdale's article, titled *Statute Law Revision: Repeal, Consolidation or Something More?* draws from the author's experience in the United Kingdom's Law Commission, an independent body created 'to keep the law under review and to recommend reform where it is needed'. Essentially the author looks at the concept of 'law revision' and examines the different meanings it can take depending on the objectives of the government as well as the 'own dynamic' that reform can gather.

Professor Ulrich Karpen's article titled *Good Governance Through Transparent Application of the Rule of Law* goes beyond the usual prescriptive rhetoric about transparency and good governance by reopening an old question in legislative drafting theory: is good governance affected by good or bad legislation or merely by the good or bad implementation of the Law?

Coming from a jurisdiction where common law and civil law systems coexist (Canada) Catherine Skinner looks at *Codification and the Common Law*. For quite some time civil law experts have wondered how it is possible for a legal system to operate in the absence of codes just as common law experts have wondered how it is possible to ignore case law. The truth, of course, is that both, common law and civil law systems have made great strides towards each other. Case law is slowly finding a place in civil law jurisdictions just as Codes are warily appearing in common law jurisdictions. Skinner's article looks at feasibility of codification in common law systems.

Finally, on the same topic of codes, La Toya James's contribution takes a more empirical stance in an article titled *Restructuring the Labour Code in Lieu*

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*of Quality in Legislation Principles: Will the Use of a Code Prove Beneficial?*. As a drafter, La Toya James is interested in the practical problems or benefits of codification which she links to quality in legislation principles.

All five articles in this special issue of the EJLR are informative and a joy to read; moreover, they broaden the scope of traditional legislative drafting – or, to put it more correctly although less elegantly: the drafting of normative acts – to include different aspects of law reform. This has been one of the aims of the annual Sir William Dale special issue and in this respect it has been quite successful.