de Smith's

JUDICIAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Fourth Edition

J.M. Evans

Stevens

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JUDICIAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

By

the late S. A. DE SMITH, F.B.A.

Sometime Downing Professor of the Laws of England in the University of Cambridge

FOURTH EDITION

BY

J. M. EVANS, B.A., B.C.L.

Professor of Law, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto

"Let no man weakly conceive that just laws, and true policy, have any antipathy; for they are like the spirits and sinews, that one moves with the other."

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PREFACE

DURING its first three editions this book established itself throughout the Commonwealth as the most authoritative and comprehensive exposition of the part played by English courts in administrative law. It is not difficult to discern the reasons for its high reputation amongst judges. practitioners and the academic community. In Judicial Review of Administrative Action de Smith displayed to the full his remarkable ability to reveal from a mass of material emanating from a diverse range of legal systems and governmental settings the legal principles underlying his subject. He also had an acute sensitivity to the contextual influences that determine the way in which those principles had been or should be applied in particular situations. These attributes, together with the author's fluid and distinctive literary style, his judicious choice of illustration and references, and his meticulous accuracy and thoroughness earned this book in the author's lifetime a status in contemporary English legal literature surpassed by few. Whatever the deficiencies of this edition, it would have been a grave loss had the significance and value of de Smith's achievement lapsed gradually but inevitably into the realm of legal history. On a personal level, I have endeavoured in producing this fourth edition to repay some of the debts of gratitude that I owed to Stanley de Smith, former colleague, philosopher and friend.

My primary purpose has been to incorporate within the existing fabric of the book the developments in the law that have taken place since 1973. For the most part this has been possible without radical alteration to either the substance or the organisation of the third edition. The most important single change that I have made is to add a new chapter to deal with the application for judicial review, a new remedy brought into effect at the beginning of 1978 by the revised Order 53 of the Rules of the Supreme Court. I have transferred to this chapter, with the necessary modifications, the account previously given in Chapters 8 and 11 of the practice and procedure formerly pertaining to the prerogative orders of certiorari, prohibition and mandamus. After considerable hesitation I decided not to consolidate in a separate chapter an overall examination of locus standi in administrative law, despite evidence of an emerging rationalisation in the case law and whatever encouragement in this direction may be provided by the new Order 53. The decision of the House of Lords in Gouriet v. Union of Post Office Workers has reinforced the importance of remedial distinctions in this area. Subsequent events may, however, require further rationalisations of this kind in the treatment of the law of remedies in future editions. Elsewhere, I have amended footvi Preface

notes and text to accommodate changes attributable both to the passage of time and to the advent of a new editor able to sympathise in most important respects with the manner and content of the exposition of the law contained in the third edition.

A number of important statutes that bear upon the subject-matter of this book have been enacted in the period covered by this edition. The ferment that has surrounded the legislative framework within which individual and collective industrial relations are conducted appears to have abated somewhat, although further statutory changes in this politically volatile area seem perennially imminent. The activities of the various statutory agencies that operate under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974, the Employment Protection Act 1975 and the consolidating statute of the same name passed in 1978, seem likely to provide a continuing stream of problems of interest to administrative lawyers. Also of importance in the employment field, and elsewhere, are the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the new Race Relations Act of 1976. Important statutory modifications have also been made to the machinery for regulating price increases, monopolies and mergers and for improving consumer protection from other unacceptable business practices. The Community Land Act 1975 was passed to enable public authorities positively to plan land use and was part of a legislative package designed to keep within the public domain increases in the value of land attributable to its development: the potential impact of this programme is yet to be fully realised. I have taken account in Chapter 1 of those provisions of the National Health Service Reorganisation Act 1973 and of the Local Government Act 1974 that extend to their respective public authorities an element of extra-judicial scrutiny analogous to that exercised since 1967 over central government departments by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.

Events in the courts have contrived to bring several important aspects of our subject to the attention of a wider audience than usual. Such causes célèbres as Congreve v. Home Office, Laker Airways Ltd. v. Department of Trade and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council v. Secretary of State for Education and Science have confirmed the courts' continuing readiness in a number of contexts to subject to closer judicial scrutiny the exercise of ministerial discretion. The decision of the House of Lords in D. v. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has raised the possibility that the circumstances in which the courts will allow evidence to be withheld in the public interest from disclosure in litigation may be extended in novel directions. It seemed apposite in this context to relegate the use of the increasingly anomalous

Preface vii

term "Crown privilege" in favour of the more apt, but not totally satisfactory, "public interest privilege." The implications of the opinions delivered in the House of Lords in the Gouriet case for the future of the injunction and the declaratory judgment as public law remedies I have canvassed principally in Chapter 9, although they are also considered in the more general remarks about locus standi contained in Chapter 8.

It would be out of place to catalogue here other instances of the many significant developments in the law that have been generated in the courts. Suffice it to say that the tide of interesting judicial decisions that in the last decade and a half has transformed much of administrative law shows no sign of ebbing. Moreover, in recent years many judges throughout the Commonwealth have joined their English brethren along a number of the trails of administrative law that have been blazed by our courts since the mid-1960s. Although the important statutory elements recently added to the law of judicial review in Australia, Canada and New Zealand are likely to reduce further the extent to which principles of public law should be assumed to be uniformly applicable in different jurisdictions and administrative structures, it would be unjustifiable to conclude that legal cross-fertilisation in this area of the law has ceased to be beneficial. I am grateful that the publishers have not so pressed me on space that I could not have included material of interest and significance from other Commonwealth jurisdictions. Even so, I have been aware of the importance of containing the book within manageable proportions and of retaining its clarity of exposition, without at the same time omitting anything of value that may assist the reader to navigate that difficult gulf between the beguilingly simple statement of a general proposition and its application to a particular problem in a specific context. Indeed, the extent to which a book about the courts and the administration achieves this latter objective is perhaps the essential criterion of its worth.

The debts of gratitude that I have incurred in the preparation of this edition are heavy and numerous, only some of which can I specifically acknowledge here. I am grateful to the publishers for their encouragement and co-operation (including the preparation of the tables of cases and statutes and the index). The Canada Council and the Law Foundation of Ontario generously provided financial assistance during the time that I spent on research in London, and the various requests that I made of the library staff and two successive Deans of Osgoode Hall Law School were always sympathetically and helpfully answered. My research assistant, Mr. Greg Ludlow, has been resourceful and thorough in undertaking a number of laborious tasks in the latter stages of this project. And it is a pleasure to be able to thank my secretary, Mrs. Elsie Ramkhelawan, for her

viii Preface

patience and skill in producing a typescript from my execrable hand-writing.

The length of time that it inevitably takes to produce a book of this size and the vagaries of transatlantic mail have made it difficult to ensure that I have always been able to incorporate the most recent developments in this rapidly changing area of the law. I submitted the last portion of the manuscript to the publishers early in 1979, but was able to note the more important material that reached me up until the time that I returned the page proofs at the beginning of November 1979. Unfortunately, the law refuses to stand still for the convenience of authors, and I regret that the reader will search these pages in vain for a discussion of the decisions of the House of Lords in Burmah Oil v. Bank of England (Governors and Company), Science Research Council v. Nassé and R. v. Inland Revenue Commissioners, ex p. Rossminster Ltd. The important decision in R. v. Hull Prison Board of Visitors, ex p. St. Germain (No. 2) also came to hand too late for inclusion.

J.M.E.

Osgoode Hall Law School Toronto 1980

TABLE OF CASES

English, Scottish, Irish and Privy Council Decisions

ACAS v. UKAPE. See United Kingdom Association of Professional Engineers v. ACAS. A.C.T. Construction Ltd. v. Commissioners of Customs and Excise	Amalgamated Investment and Property Co. Ltd. v. John Walker and Sons Ltd 191, 217 American Cyanamid Co. v. Ethicon Ltd
A.E.U. Case	American Inread Co. V. Joyce 153 Amies v. I.L.E.A 115, 359, 498 Amphitrite, The. See Rederiaktie- bolaget Amphitrite v. R.
Abergavenny (Marquis) v. Llandaff (Bishop)	An Absence in Germany, Re 103 Anable's Case
Absolam (F. R.) Ltd. v. G. W. (London) Garden Village Society Ltd. 405	Andrews v. Mitchell 240, 369, 472, 473 Anima (Elizabeth) v. Akwasi
Accountancy Tuition Centre v. Secretary of State for the	Anisminic Ltd v. Foreign Com-
Environment	pensation Commission 47, 94, 97, 110, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 121.
Addis v. Crocker 88	116, 117, 119, 121, 122, 127, 151, 152, 154, 231, 274, 324,
Afford v. Pettit	340, 344, 361, 364,
Agbor v. Metropolitan Police Commissioner	365, 367, 369, 372, 373, 374, 403, 489,
Agnew v. Manchester Corporation 299 Agricultural, etc. Industry Training	494, 503, 519, 520, 522, 571
Board v. Aylesbury Mushrooms Ltd	Annamunthodo v. Oilfield Workers' Trade Union 154, 160, 196, 200, 241, 245
Agricultural Industries, Re 82	Annison v. District Auditor for St. Pancras B.C
Ahmad v. I.L.E.A. 100 Albyn Properties Ltd. v. Knox 150 Alderman Blackwell's Case 284	Anns v. Merton L.B.C 24, 102, 321, 322, 351, 352,
Aldrich v. AttGen	Anon. (1671) 532, 534, 572 586
Ltd. v. Crabtree	— (1641)
359, 501, 502	Application des Gaz S.A. v. Falks Veritas Ltd
Allam & Co. v. Europa Poster Services Ltd	Application for Certiorari, Re (Ire.) 421
Allcroft v. Bishop of London 334,	Appuhamy v. R
Allen v. Bagshot R.D.C 412, 413	Arenson v. Arenson 77, 337
— v. Sharp	Argosam Finance Co. v. Oxby 359, 501, 502, 508
Allen and Matthews' Arbitration,	Argyle Motors (Birkenhead) Ltd. v. Birkenhead Corporation 360, 502
Re	Argyll v. Argyll
inary Surgeons	and Local Government
ture and Fisheries	Armstrong v. Whitfield 369, 487, 525
Allinson v. General Council of Medical Education and Registra-	Arnbridge (Reading) Ltd. v. Hedges
tion	Arsenal Football Club Ltd. v. Ende 115, 154, 414, 416, 463
Middlesex C.C 106, 328, 353, 354, 355, 488	Arthur v. Commissioners of Sewers

Ashbridge Investments Ltd. v. Minister of Housing and Local	AttGen. v. Hart
Government 118, 119, 137, 324, 364, 583	— v. Heelis
Ashby, Re	Church Trustees 117, 450, 454, 456, 516
Asher v. Lacey	— (ex rel. McWhirter) v. Independent Broadcasting Authority 119,
Environment	287, 299, 359, 364,
Associated Minerals Consolidated Ltd. v. Wyong Shire Council 328,	415, 453, 458, 529, 553 —— v. Jonathan Cape Ltd 35, 41,
Associated Portland Cement Manu-	42, 440, 454, 455, 457
facturers Ltd. v. Price Commission	— v. Kerr and Ball
Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd. v. Wednesbury	(Ire.)
Corporation 279, 295, 323, 328, 341, 344, 348, 352,	455, 456 —— v. Leeds Corporation 95
353, 354, 397, 492	- v. Leicester Corporation 95
Athanassiadis v. Government of Greece	v. Leveller Magazine Ltd 42,
Atkinson v. Bettinson	— v. Lichfield Corpn
Ground Co 456, 516	Joint Electricity Authority 467
— v. Aspinall	v. Manchester Corporation 95, 297, 341
v. Bastow 86, 281, 438, 449, 454, 456, 457	 v. Melville Construction Co. 456 v. Merthyr Tydfil Union
454, 456, 457 v. B.B.C	Guardians
— v. Birmingham Corporation 444 — v. Birmingham Tame & Lea	— v. Mr. Appleton, Surgeon- Dentist Ltd
District Drainage Board 438, 444 — v. Bradford Canal Co 439	— v. Myddletons Ltd 453, 454
— v. Chaudry	v. North Eastern Ry 461
Sanatorium Ltd	v. Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Ry 433, 453
- v. Clerkenwell Vestry 436, 442	— v. P.Y.A. Quarries Ltd 454 — v. Parish 449
455	— v. Pontypridd Waterworks
v. Colchester Corporation 436, 437, 483, 513, 547	Co
Asylum	— v. Poplar Guardians
v. Crayford U.D.C 95, 449 v. De Keyser's Royal Hotel	— v. Premier Line Ltd 438 453,
Ltd	456, 457 v. Prince Ernest Augustus of
— v. Dorking Union Guardians 533 — v. Dublin Corporation 433	Hanover
— v. Eastlake	— v. Richards 431
Ry. 453 — v. Foran 486	— v. Ripon Cathedral (Dean and Chapter)
— v. Forbes 432 472	489, 513, 515 —— v. Roe 513, 517
— v. Fulham Corporation 441, 455 — v. Galway Corporation 433	— v. St. Ives R.D.C 495, 533 — v. Scott 438, 513
— v. Gamage (A. W.) Ltd 282, 363 — v. Grand Junction Canal Co. 438	— v. Sharp
- v. Great Eastern Ry 95	Co 438, 439
— v. Halling	v. Shonleigh Nominees Ltd. 452 v. Shrewsbury (Kingsland)
— v. Harris 456, 457	Bridge Co 453, 455

AttGen. v. Smart	432	Baird (Robert) Ltd. v. Glasgow	
— v. Smethwick Corporation	95,	Corporation 325, Baker v. Jones 135,	335
	487	Baker v. Jones	358
v. Smith 442, 453,	454.	Baldwin & Francis' Application, Re	136
456,		Baldwin & Francis Ltd. v. Patents	
	453	Appeal Tribunal 126, 340,	3/1/
V. Silliti (George C.) & Co.	733	Appear 1110unar 120, 540,	126
- v. South Staffordshire Water-	420	405,	420 501
works Co 438,		Balen v. I.R.C. 234,	301
v. Staffordshire C.C. v. Taff-Ely B.C. v. Times Newspapers Ltd.	436	Ball v. Partridge	109
— v. Taff-Ely B.C	104	Banbury Corporation v. Oxford-	
— v. Times Newspapers Ltd	454	shire and District Water Board	482,
v. Ivnemouth Poor Law		497, 502,	507
Union Guardians 342,	487	Barber v. Manchester Regional	
— v. Vivian	449	Hospital Board 228,	326.
— v. Weekes	453	491,	528
v. Wellingborough U.D.C.	450.	Barker v. Westmorland C.C 257,	258
v. Wellingborough U.D.C.		Barker V. Westinoriand C.C 257,	
	456	D 1 D	388
v. Westminster Corporation		Barlow, Re	561
449,	455	Barnard v. National Dock Labour	
— v. Wilson (1840)	462	Board 154, 220, 299,	429,
— v. — (1901)	449	472, 483, 484,	489.
— v. Wilts United Dairies Ltd.	100	490, 519, 522,	
v. Wimbledon House Estate		Barnardo v. Ford	598
Co 438,	456	Barnato, Re 505, 508, 510,	512
— (Duchy of Lancaster) v. Heath	431	Barnes v. B.P.C. (Business Forms)	312
		Dailles V. B.F.C. (Business Points)	220
v. Simcock 359, 501,	302	Ltd 212,	239
AttGen. & Down C.C. v. Newry	400	Barnes Corporation, Re, ex p. Hut-	E 40
No. 1 R.D.C	439	ter	549
AttGen. and Spalding R.D.C. v.		Barnsley Canal Co. v. Twibell	473
Garner 449,	454	Baron v. Sunderland Corporation	358
AttGen. for Alberta v. AttGen.		Baron Reitzes' Case	502
for Canada	334	Barraclough v. Brown 359, 477,	501.
AttGen. for Australia v. R. and		502,	571
the Doilermokers' Society of		Barratt v. Kearns	88
the Boilermakers' Society of Australia	505		124
Australia	, 303	Barrett, Ex p.	124
AttGen. for Canada v. Hallet &	000	Barrs v. British Wool Marketing	0.00
Carey Ltd 99, 291,	292	Board 204,	260
AttGen. for Ceylon v. Silva	101	Barty-King v. Ministry of Defence	361,
AttGen. for Ontario v. Maclean		503,	571
Gold Mines Ltd	480	Barwick v. South Eastern &	
AttGen. of the Gambia v. N'Jie	78.	Chatham Ry. Co	494
412.		Bates v. Lord Hailsham of St.	
Attwood v. Chapman 78, 84	4 88	Marylebone 72, 181,	185
Auckland (Lord) v. Westminster	1, 00	1VIATYICOONC 72, 101,	160
	471	239,	
Local Board of Works	471	Battelley v. Finsbury B.C.	302
Austen v. Collins	483	Baxter v. L.C.C.	517
Auten v. Rayner 258, 267,	211	Beaconsfield D.C. v. Game	318
Awdley v. Joy	586	Bean v. Doncaster Amalgamated	
Ayanlowo v. I.R.C.	201	Collieries Ltd 131,	133
Ayr Harbour Trustees v. Oswald	317,	Bean (William) & Sons Ltd. v.	
	318	Flaxton R.D.C.	318
Azam v. Home Secretary. See R. v.		Beardmore v. Westinghouse Brake	010
Pentonville Prison Governor,			1/10
		and Signal Co. Ltd	148
ex p. Azam.		Beck & Pollitzer's Application, Re	291
		Becker v. Home Office 75	. 95
D (A Maron) D. 100	260	530	535
B. (A MINOR), Re 190		Becquet v. Lemprière	267
B. (orse. P.) v. AttGen.	82		
B. (T. A.) (An Infant), Re	266	Bedford (Duke) v. Ellis	512
B.B.C. v. Johns	535	Beetham v. Trinidad Cement Co.	171
Backhouse v. Lambeth L.B.C 328,			234
353, 354,	, 522	Belcher v. Reading Corporation	350
Bacon's (Sir Nicholas) case 248			550
Bagg's Case 157, 159, 196, 240,		Belfast Corporation v. O.D. Cars	200
Dagg 5 Case 137, 137, 170, 240,	502	Ltd	350
546, 591, 592,		Belling, decd., Re 461,	509
Bailey v. Williamson	148	Bendles Motor Ltd. v. Bristol	
Bainbridge v. Postmaster-General	535	Corporation 131,	137
Baines v. Baker	432	Benin v. Whimster	98

Benmax v. Austin Motor Co Bennett v. Bennett	134 358 462	Bombay and Persia Steam Naviga-	226 479
Bennett & White (Calgary) Ltd. v. Municipal District of Sugar City (No. 5) Bentley Engineering Co. Ltd v.	357	Bombay Province v. Bombay Municipal Council	535 160
Berkhamsted Grammar School, Re	232 183	Bond v. Bond	345 250 231,
Berry v. St. Marylebone B.C. Bewlay (Tobacconists) Ltd. v. British Bata Shoe Co. Bhagat Singh v. King-Emperor	494 131 291	Booker v. James	
Bhardwaj v. Post Office	245	452, 460, 504, 5 528, 531, 536, 5 Boswell's Case	510, 577 157
Biddulph v. St. George's, Hanover Square, Vestry	325	Bottomley v. Brougham	88
hampton Corporation	467 187 316	Cinematograph, Television & Allied Technicians	484 594
Co. v. Southport Corporation Birkenhead Corporation, Re 107,	317, 318 501.	Road & Ferry Co. v. Harvey & Sons	99 486
Birkett v. James	521	Bowman, Re	69,
Ullah v. Perry Bar Stadium Ltd Birmingham & Midland Motor	136 460	Box v. Allen	451
Omnibus Co. v. Worcestershire C.C. 326, 330, Bishop v. Deaken Bishop v. Deaken	451 465	Boyd v. Easington R.D.C	497
Bishop of Rochester (Doe d.) v. Bridges		Boyle v. Wilson	316 137
the Environment 73, 317,	324, 412	146, 415, 442, 44 459, 503, 5 Bradlaugh, Ex p 116, 3	43, 532
v. Papier Werke, etc. A.G Blackburn, Ex p	98 550 550	v. Gossett	500 409 396
Blaiber & Co. v. Leopold		Brayhead (Ascot) Ltd. v. Berkshire	136
Newborne (London) Ltd	405 215 319	C.C	84.
Blanchard v. Dunlop	178 258 361,	224, 230, 239, 262, 33 335, 3 Brekkes Ltd. v. Cattel	346
Blue Circle Staff Association ν . Certification Officer	502 202	singhe	68 267
Blythe v. AttGen. (Ire.) Boaler, Re Board of Education v. Rice 123,	508 358 162,	Co	179 227
163, 168, 203, 346, 361, 384, Boardman v. Grand Trunk Railway	344,	Brinkley v. Brinkley	205 212 560
Co. of Canada Bocking v. Roberts	500 134 282,	D 1 1 0 .: C:	196 79,
	348	Britford Common, Re 138, 4	06

British Actors' Equity Associa-	Bucknell (Frank) and Sons Ltd. v.
tion v. Goring 184, 355	Croydon L.B.C 102, 492
British Airports Authority v.	Buckoke v. G.L.C 194, 285, 295,
Customs and Excise Commis-	314, 549
sioners 135	Buggin v. Bennett 416
British Association of Glass	Bugsier Reederei-und-Bergungs A/G
Bottle Manufacturers v. Foster	v. S.S. Brighton
& Sons	Bull v. AttGen. for New South
British Dredging (Services) Ltd. v. Secretary of State for Wales 118,	Wales
Secretary of State for Wales 118,	Management Committee 337
British Electricity Authority v.	Bulmer v. AttGen. 490
Exeter Corporation	Bulmer (H.P.) Ltd. v. Bollinger (J.)
British Launderers' Research As-	S.A
sociation v. Hendon Borough	Bunbury v. Fuller 114, 141
Rating Authority 135	Burder v. Veley
British Metal Corporation v.	Burdle v. Secretary of State for the
Ludlow Bros. Ltd 220	Environment
British Oxygen Co. Ltd. v. Board	Burghes v. AttGen 479, 483,
of Trade 182, 186, 207,	86, 516 Burke v. Copper
223, 314, 315, 316	Burke v. Copper 219, 299
British Railways Board v. Customs	v. Willister of Housing and
and Excise Commissioners 131, 135	Local Government 412, 413
v. Glasgow Corporation 502	Burmah Oil Co. Ltd. v. Bank of
— v. Glass	England
Westmorland C.C 318-319, 487	289
Briton Medical and General Life	Burn v. National Amalgamated
Association, Re 575	Labourers' Union 160, 216
Brittain v. Kinnaird	Burnley B.C. v. England 452, 458
Broad v. Perkins 416, 421	Buron v. Denman
Broadbent v. Rotherham Corpora-	Burr v. Smith 88
tion 161, 187, 459, 472, 572	Burton v. Field & Sons Ltd 134
Brocklebank (T. & J.) Ltd. v. R. 100	Bushell v. Secretary of State for
Brodie v. Ker	the Environment 85, 168, 170, 184,
Brook, Re 160	Butler, Re
Brookdene Investments Ltd. v.	Butler, Re
Minister of Housing and Local Government	v. Board of Trade
Brooks v. Earl of Rivers 249, 267	Butterly Building Materials Ltd. v.
Brooks and Burton Ltd. v. Sec-	National Coal Board 359, 494, 502
retary of State for the Environ-	Buttle v. Buttle 309, 311
ment 104, 131, 134	Button v. Jenkins 143, 154
Broome v. Broome	Buxton v. Minister of Housing and
— v. Cassell & Co	Local Government 168, 411, 412,
Brown, Ex p 599, 600	414, 418, 420
— v. Cocking	Byrne v. Herbert 513, 525
Brown (Christopher) Ltd. v. Genossenschaft Oesterreichischer Wald-	v. Kinematograph Renters'
besitzer, etc	Society Ltd 161, 197, 238, 244
Brownlow's Case 585	
Brownsea Haven Properties Ltd. v.	C. (A.) (An Infant), Re 298
Poole Corporation 485, 512	Cababé v. Walton-on-Thames
Broxbourne B.C. v. Secretary of	U.D.C
State for the Environment 118,	Caffoor v. Income Tax Commis-
370, 582	sioners, Colombo
Brutton v. St. George's, Hanover	Calder v. Halket
Square, Vestry	Caldicot and Wentlooge Act, Re,
Bryanston Finance Ltd. v. De Vries	Eton College v. Commissioners
(No. 2)	of Sewers
B.S.M. (1257) Ltd. v. Secretary of	Calvin v. Carr 152, 154, 243, 257
State for Social Services 135	Calvin's Case 594
Buchanan (James) & Co. Ltd v.	Cambridgeshire & Isle of Ely C.C.
Babco Forwarding and Shipping	v. Rust 102
(U.K.) Ltd 99	Campbell v. Edwards 337
Buck v. AttGen 499, 500, 510	- v. Rochdale General Com-
Buckley v. AttGen 68	missioners

Cannock Chase D.C. v. Kelly 148,	China Mutual Steam Navigation	
149, 279, 297,	Co. v. Maclay 511	
333, 334, 336	China Navigation Co. v. AttGen. 289	
Capel v. Child 160, 171, 225, 246	Ching v. Surrey C.C	2
Capital and Suburban Properties	Ching Garage Co. v. Chingford	А
Ltd. v. Swycher 149		+
Capper Pass Ltd. v. Lawton 131	Chivers & Sons Ltd. v. Cambridge County Council	7
Cardiff Bridge Case, The. See R. v.	County Council	
Glamorganshire Inhabitants (Cardiff Bridge case).	Church v. Inclosure Commissioners 383	
Carlish v. East Ham Corporation 307	38	
Carltona Ltd. v. Commissioner of	Church of Scientology of Cali-	
Works 165, 292, 307,	fornia, Ex p 260	6
363, 511	- v. Dept. of Health & Social	
Carl Zeiss Stiftung v. Rayner &	Security 43, 4	5
Keeler Ltd 290	— v. Johnson-Smith 46	9
Carnarvon Harbour Acts (1937),	City Brick & Terra Cotta Co. v.	
Re	Belfast Corporation (N.I.) 10	U
	City of London Corporation v.	
Carratt v. Morley	Secretary of State for the Environment	Q
v. Metropolitan Police Com-	Environment	O
missioner	Commission v. E.C. Council 10	4
Cartwright v. Ministry of Housing	Clanricarde (Marquess) v. Con-	
and Local Government 373, 488	gested Districts Board for	
Casberd v. AttGen 478	Ireland	4
Cassel v. Inglis 186, 262	Clark v. Epsom R.D.C 483, 504, 50	
Cassidy (Peter) Seed Co. v.	Clarke, Ex p 27	3
Osuustukkukauppa I.L	Clarks of Hove Ltd. v. Bakers'	
Catalina and Norma, Re 202,	Union	
266, 336 Catt v. Wood 369	Clay, Re	10
Caudle v. Seymour	Clay Cross (Quarry Services) Ltd.	20
Cave v. Mountain	Clayton v. AttGen. 47	_
Cecil's (Sir Thomas) Case 478	Clegg, Parkinson & Co. v. Earby	
Central Control Board v. Cannon	Gas Co	28
Brewery Co 99, 494	Clifford and O'Sullivan, Re 81	1,
Central Council for Education and	386, 39	19
Training in Social Work v.	Clifford Sabey (Contractors) Ltd.	
Edwards	v. Long 34	
Central Electricity Generating	Clinch v. I.R.C 353, 362, 364, 48	
Board v. Clwyd C.C 129, 138	Clough v. Ratcliffe	17
— v. Dupning	Clyde & Co. v. Secretary of State	
— v. Dunning	for the Environment	
Certification Officer v. Squibb U.K.	Coats (J. & P.) Ltd. v. Brown 55	
Staff Association	Cobb & Co. v. Kropp	
Ceylon University v. Fernando 163,	Cohen v. Rothfield	
215, 226	— v. West Ham Corporation 16	
Chabot v. Viscount Morpeth 385, 399 Chamberlain's Settlement, Re 512	304, 51	
Chamberlaine v. Chester &	Colam v. Mansfield	53
Birkenhead Ry 460	Coleen Properties v. Minister of	0
Chambers v. Green 417	Housing and Local Government 10: 118, 188, 211, 29	
Champsey Bhara & Co. v. Jivraj	349, 363, 58	23
Balloo Spinning & Weaving Co. 405	Collins v. Henry Whiteway & Co.	
Chandler v. D.P.P 286, 287, 289, 333	Collis Radio Ltd. v. Secretary of	,
Chaney v. Murphy 500, 513	State for the Environment 118, 34	42
Chapman v. Earl 143, 152, 404	Collymore v. AttGen	
v. Essex C.C 503, 532	Colonial Bank of Australasia Ltd.	
— v. Michaelson 479, 518	v. Willan 111, 367, 408, 40	09
Cheetham v. Mayor of Manches-	Colonial Sugar Refining Co. v.	
ter	Melbourne Harbour Trust	
Chester v. Bateson		99
Chettiar v. Chettiar 159, 174, 212	Colquhoun v. Brooks 18	87
Chien Sing-Shai, Re 207	Commendams, Case of 28	80
Child, Ex p 417, 598	Commins v. Massam 10	09

Commission for Racial Equality v. Associated Newspapers Group	Crosfield (Joseph) & Sons Ltd. v. Manchester Ship Canal Co 361,
Ltd 134	501, 502
Commission of European Communities v. Council of the Euro-	Crown Lands Commissioners v. Page
pean Communities 318	Croydon Corporation v. Thomas 282
Companhia de Moçambique v. British South Africa Co 500	Cudgen Rutile (No. 2) Pty. Ltd. v. Chalk
Company of Mercers and Iron-	Cullimore v. Lyme Regis Corpora-
mongers of Chester v. Bowker 250	tion
Coney v. Choyce 142, 143, 144, 428,	Cumings v. Birkenhead Corpora-
437, 459, 513, 514, 532 Congresse v. Home Office 59, 61	tion 279, 314, 353, 354,
Congreve v. Home Office 59, 61, 100, 294, 298,	Curtis v. Sheffield
327, 333, 487	Customs and Excise Commis-
Connolly Bros. Ltd., Re 470	sioners v. Automobile Associa-
Consett Iron Co. v. Clavering	tion 135
Trustees 99	v. Cure & Deeley Ltd 22, 96,
Constables of Hipperholme, Re 382,	106, 293, 307, 354, 358
388	— v. Hebson Ltd 101, 318
Construction Industry Training	v. Holvey 372 v. Mechanical Services (Trailer
Board v. AttGen	Engineers) Ltd
of Housing and Local Govern-	- v Savov Hotel Ltd 486
ment 141, 211	— ν. Tan 108
Conway v. Rimmer 39, 40, 41, 42,	- v. Thorn Electrical Industries
43, 44, 46	Ltd 100
Cook, Ex p	Cutler v. Wandsworth Stadium
—, Ex p., re Dawson	Ltd 509, 515, 528, 530
— v. Ward	Czarnikow v. Roth, Schmidt & Co. 358
Cooke v. Ipswich Local Board 107 Cooper v. Wandsworth Board of	
Works 161, 166, 196, 246	D. (INFANTS), Re 44, 57, 135, 190, 196
v. Whittingham 439, 440, 456	D. (Minors), Re 219, 242, 245
— v. Whittingham 439, 440, 456 — v. Wilson 225, 228, 260, 275,	D. v. N.S.P.C.C 42, 44, 46, 57, 190, 288
361, 484, 490, 491,	Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd. v.
503, 519	Gardner
Copartnership Farms v. Harvey-	Daisy Hopkins, <i>Ex p.</i>
Smith	Damodhar Gordhan v. Deoram
State for the Environment 488	Kanji 369
Corchester, The 204	Dances Way, West Town, Hayling
Corke, <i>Ex p.</i> 601	Island, Re
Cory (William) & Son Ltd. v.	Darby v. Cosens
City of London Corporation 318	Darlassis v. Minister of Education 168 Darley v. R
County and Nimbus Estates Ltd	Darnel's Case 596
County and Nimbus Estates Ltd. v. Ealing L.B.C	Davey Paxman & Co. v. Post Office 100
Coventry, Case of the Mayor of 586	David v. Abdul Cader 24, 322, 339
Cox v. Green	Davies v. Gaslight & Coke Co 540
Crabb v. Arun D.C	— v. Price 116, 133, 400, 401, 405 — v. Ripon Corporation 487
Craig v. Kanssen	v. Ripon Corporation 487
Crisp v. Bunbury 361, 501, 502	— v. Secretary of State for Wales 244 Davis v. Bromley Corporation 322
Crittenden (Warren Park) Ltd. v.	— v. Carew-Pole 160, 197, 244
Surrey C.C	460, 472, 489
Crofter Hand Woven Harris	— v. Johnson 98
Tweed Co. v. Veitch 331, 332	Dawkins v. Autrobus
Crofton Investment Trust Ltd v.	— v. Lord Rokeby 88
Greater London Rent Assess-	Daws, Re
ment Committee 206, 215	Day v. Brownrigg
Cromford & High Peak Ry. v. Stockport, Disley & Whaley Ry. 460	Daymond v. Plymouth City
,	Council
Crompton (Alfred) Amusement Machines Ltd. v. Customs and	298, 485, 48
Excise Commissioners (No. 2) 43,	de Bode (Baron), Re 553, 554
46, 190	de Freitas v. Benny 187, 236
Crosby-upon-Eden Tithes, Re 383	286, 28

De Haber v. Queen of Portugal 416,	Draper v. British Optical Associa-
591	tion 508
de Mulder v. Secretary of State for	Drew v. Drew
the Environment	Drewe v. Coulton
De Verteuil v. Knaggs 154, 161-162,	Dugdale v. Kraft Foods Ltd 205
De Vries v. Smallridge 524	Duncan v. Cammell, Laird & Co 34,
Deadman, Re	— v. Knill 37, 38, 39, 40, 308
Dean v. District Auditor for Ash-	Dundee General Hospitals Board
ton-in-Makerfield 71, 78, 366	of Management v. Walker 358
Deare v. AttGen 478	Dunford, Re
Death, Ex p 194, 213, 226, 237	Dunne v. North Western Gas
Deaton v. AttGen 68	Board 23, 532, 534
Dedman v. British Building, etc.,	Durayappah v. Fernando 80, 85, 172,
Ltd143, 320	173, 175, 176, 177, 178,
Defrenne v. Sabena	187, 200, 241, 244, 274,
Demetriades v. Glasgow Corpora-	391, 393, 415, 421, 537
tion	Dutton v. Bognor Regis U.D.C 102, 321, 322
Denaby Main Colliery Co. v. Manchester, Sheffield & Lincs.	Dymond v. Pearce 451
Ry 398	Dyson v. AttGen 431, 478,
Denby (William) & Sons Ltd. v.	479, 480, 481, 484, 486,
Minister of Health 167, 169	510, 511, 514, 515, 516
Denman (J. L.) & Co. v. West-	Dyson Holdings Ltd. v. Fox 131, 132
minster Corporation 325	
Dent Tithe Commutation, Re 382	No
Denton Road (No. 56), Twicken-	EALING B.C. v. Minister of Housing
ham, Re 107, 108, 489	and Local Government 167, 201,
Department of Health & Social	497, 512
Security v. Walker Dean Walker	v. Race Relations Board 358,
Ltd	360, 495, 497, 502
Devis (W.) & Sons Ltd. v. Atkins 137,	Ealing Corporation v. Jones 411, 412 Earl v. Slater and Wheeler (Airlyne)
232, 245	Ltd
Devonport Corporation v. Tozer 456,	Early (Charles) and Marriott
495. 515	(Witney) Ltd. v. Smith 115, 359, 498
Dickson v. Pharmaceutical Society	East Barnet U.D.C. v. British
of Great Britain 95, 440, 442,	Transport Commission 131
493, 499, 507, 510	East Fremantle Corporation v.
— v. Viscount Combermere 159	Annais 351
Dimes v. Grand Junction Canal	East Ham Corporation v. Ministry
Proprietors 248, 258, 274, 277	of Housing and Local Govern-
D.P.P. v. Head	ment 497
v. Humphrys 314, 550	East Hampshire D.C. v. Secretary of State for the Environment 141,
Disher v. Disher	of State for the Environment 141, 212, 221
Docherty (T.) Ltd. v. Burgh of	East Midlands Gas Board v.
Monifieth 436, 547	Doncaster Corporation 361, 501, 502
Dodd v. Salisbury & Yeovil Ry 325	East Riding C.C. v. Park Estate
Doe d. Bishop of Rochester v.	(Bridlington) Ltd 145
Bridges 359, 531	East Suffolk Rivers Catchment
Doggett v. Waterloo Taxi Cab Co. 133	Board v. Kent 321, 351
Dolan v. O'Hara (Ire.)	Eastcheap Dried Fruit Co. v. N.V.
Donaldson v. South Shields Cor-	Gebroeders Catz' Vereeniging 204
poration	Eastern Archipelago Co. v. R 585
Donnelly v. Jackman	Eastham v. Newcastle United F.C. 484,
Dormer v. Newcastle upon Tyne	493, 509, 510, 513
Corporation 341, 351	Eckersley v. Mersey Dock etc 263,
Dorset Yacht Co. Ltd. v. Home	269
Office	v. Secretary of State for the
Dover Picture Palace Ltd. v. Dover Corporation 460	Environment 242, 296, 335, 342
Dowty Boulton Paul Ltd. v. Wolver-	Edgwarebury Park Investments Ltd.
	v. Minister of Housing and Local Government
hampton Corporation (No. 1) 319,	Edinburgh & Dalkeith Ry. v.
— v. — (No. 2) 297, 319, 347	Wauchope
Drakard (P. J.) & Sons Ltd. v.	Edinburgh (University of) v. Craik 250
Wilton 107, 200	Edwards v. Bairstow
	20 1 2 1 2 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2