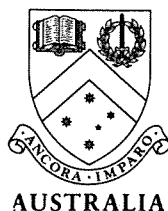


23 August 1989



Dr J. McLaren
Editor
Overland
PO Box 249
MT ELIZA VIC 3930

Dear John

I'm sorry that I have not completed the review of The Tech. In part, this has been caused by some health problems and in part by the distractions which the proposed amalgamations have caused.

However, the main reason is that I have a personal problem. Put quite simply, after two readings, I don't think it is a very good book. Stephen's third and Tony Dare's two-thirds don't hang together particularly well. I'm more troubled, however, by Stephen's contribution. It has occasional parts where the Murray-Smith fizz is evident but it is far from being vintage Murray-Smith. What worries me most is that Stephen's section is seriously out of date. In the twenty years since he completed his marvellous thesis, much work has been done in social and educational history on technical education - some of it in Australia but most of it in Britain, the United States and Canada. Stephen has ignored nearly all this. I think I can understand why because the last years of his life saw him that extraordinary burst of productivity which prevented even him from keeping up to date with this material.

I realise that, though I value my friendship with Stephen, I was not a close friend such as you were. However I did greatly admire and respect him. I know if Stephen were alive that he would tell me to ignore any bonds of friendship and to write what I thought. I would do that, because I know that the next time he saw me, if he remembered what I had said, he would boom his objections to my paltry criticisms and buy me a drink. But that can't happen and I don't want to go into print, especially in Overland, criticising Stephen. Do you mind asking someone else? I'm sorry to have put you to this trouble.

Regards

R.J.W. Selleck

PS As you know, I did not need to get a copy of this book. I did, however, receive a copy of Carolyn Rasmussen's book and as I know you wanted the review to contrast the books I return it with this letter.