Australian high technology firms carried out for the Espie Committee showed by far the largest group to be in the computer software industry (p. 93).

The survey itself provides more grounds for concern. It is mandatory upon those responsible for such a Report to provide some survey methodology: this Report leaves the reader foundering. Details of the survey appear in a lengthy Attachment 2. No mention is made of "the 18 surviving enterprises examined in detail by the Committee" (p. 26) from which examination unfettered generalisations are made in the text. Have these 18 anything in common with the "21 high technology case studies" (pp. 70, 84) mentioned, in passing, elsewhere in the text? The whole sample of 255 had apparently experienced a 12 per cent growth in employment between June 1981 and June 1982. Although no figures are presented for previus years, it is admitted that "the employment growth record could only be described as moderate" (p. 32), which suggests a rather selective use of figures. The Report is determined to show that high technology enterprises create lots of jobs (at all skill levels) and in its enthusiasm falls into the trap, already occupied by several American studies, of comparing employment generation in all established firms with that in only surviving high technology firms. Inevitably, the conclusion is that "nearly all the net new jobs in the private sector are created by young, high growth companies" (p. 24).

There are also some oddities in the detail of the report's recommendations. New Australian high technology companies are not only to use high technology, but will preferably develop it in-house (p. 67). New venture capital companies are not to be really new at all, but rather specialised offshoots of existing financial institutions (pp. 56, 75). Nor does the Report really consider how its recommendations might fit in with other developments in the conservative confusion of technology and industry policy in Australia — the Campbell Report, for example, is not mentioned until page 40. What, one wonders, will be the impact of tax concessions for venture capital companies on the most common sources of start up capital for high technology entrepreneurs — friends, family and acquaintances (p. 126)? Time will tell, and in a very short time the amateurish scribblings of the Espie Committee will be forgot. Its recommendations seem destined to leave a more enduring mark, but they should be seen for what they are — good ideas derived from instinct and experience, not the result of research and logic.

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SHORTER NOTICES

Sources of Australian Economic Information *by Infoquest Business Publications*
(Infoquest, 123 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, 1983) pp. 35, $25.00.

This Infoquest publication is intended to "alert all those interested in the field of economics, from secondary students to academic and business economists, to available information sources". The categories covered are: 1. printed sources — reference material, books, serials; 2. data bases; and 3. contacts — Commonwealth and State Governments, industry associations, professional associations, and economics teachers' associations.

Despite the obvious problem of updating, this guide will be useful. One can think of many possible extensions of the coverage. One such extension would be a directory of publishers (or their local representatives) of economics material. There is also the possibility of a directory of economists, who should be sources of Australian economic information. A companion directory, *Sources of Australian Financial Information* (pp. 37, $5.00) is also available from Infoquest.

DML

THIS IS IT. A Manager's Guide to Information Technology *by John Eaton and Jeremy Smithers*
(Philip Alan, Oxford, 1982) pp. xi + 345, $43.00 (hb), $21.50 (pb).

This book grew from the need for teaching material for the authors' courses at the London Business School. The aspects dealt with are: the historical context of information processing; the fundamental concepts of computing, from the basic operation of the hardware to the nature and problems of software; microelectronics; telecommunications; the converging paths of telecommunications, computing and office products; office automation; and the wider social and national implications of information technology (IT) as an agent of technological change in the national economy.

The technical parts are better than the concluding section on the social impact of IT, which tends to reproduce an over-simplified, popular model of the process of change. An adequate treatment, for example, of the role of R&D in IT and the potential for organisational redesign that lies beyond office automation would have needed a separate volume. There is a 26-page glossary which includes the following entry: "Telecommunications: a system incorporating the combined use of computer and telecommunications facilities." Sources of statistics for tables and graphs are not indicated. The only references to the literature on the subject are in the preface, where two government reports issued after the book was written are mentioned.

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