

BOOK REVIEW

The General Teaching Council by John Sayer (Cassell 2000) ISBN 0-304-70562-4 (paperback). Pp. 195 + ix.

In my book *Professional Ethics*, published in 1969, I said of school teaching in England that its lack of a representative body (apart from trade union aspects) prevented it from being a true profession. It is to the credit of Mr Blair's Government that that deficiency is at long last being remedied. The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 provides for the setting up of a General Teaching Council for England and another for Wales. Scotland has had one since 1966.

The GTC will become operational next September. Already elections have been held for the 64 places on the Council. This will be the independent professional body for all teachers, and will provide them with an authoritative voice of their own. Its aims are to maintain and enhance the profession's standards; and to enhance the public standing of teaching. The GTC will be a leading player in shaping the education service of the future, and will bring a fresh and authoritative perspective by drawing on the experience and knowledge of over 400,000 teachers.

John Sayer's book *Towards the General Teaching Council* (1989) was instrumental in furthering the GTC movement which led to the passing of the 1998 Act. In his new book Mr Sayer says that what the Act effects is not yet the GTC constituency which he and others have long proposed. He asks how the public will be protected until all teachers are required to be qualified and to register, and not merely those in the maintained sector.

The new book is a sound introduction, though a full description of the new arrangements must await the second edition which will undoubtedly be demanded by a grateful profession.

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