

THE GOVERNMENT OF SCOTTISH EDUCATION :
PARTNERSHIP OR COMPROMISE?

ALASTAIR MACBETH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

NOTE: This paper discusses the Scottish Educational System as structured for children of compulsory education age. It does not include the tertiary sector or provision for adult and continuing education, nor does it cover pre-school facilities.

The British government of education has sometimes been called a partnership, sometimes a compromise. The phrase "a national system locally administered" has been used often⁽¹⁾ but it is doubtful whether education authorities, which have been regional for the last decade, can any longer be described as "local". (Indeed, I shall argue below that local governance of schools has passed entirely to the professionals.) Further, the adage assumes only two levels of control, those of national and regional governments. In legal terms that is not unreasonable. Section 1 of the Principal Act specifies that education authorities must secure "for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education and further education", while Section 2 allows the Secretary of State for Scotland to "make regulations prescribing the standards and general requirements to which every education authority shall conform"⁽²⁾. However, decision making, some of it of substantial educational importance, is diffused through the system. Terms such as governance, administration, management and supervision shade into one another and, for instance, a head teacher would be involved in all four. There is a multiplicity of other bodies and groups involved in the educational partnership: churches, unions, interest groups, administrators, inspectors, teachers, parents and children.

Whatever partnerships or compromises exist, they are the result of major historic adjustments (of which regionalisation is a recent example) and lesser continuing shifts of position. An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report politely hints that the forces of history have not produced an entirely logical system: "The educational planning process in Great Britain is part of

a larger pattern of received codes and mental habits. The result may be described either as a set of paradoxes or as a subtle blend of mutually supporting virtues"⁽³⁾. In this paper I shall consider some of those mutually supporting virtues and the paradoxes, the fusion and the confusion, under four headings:-

1. The Scottish Education Department in a British setting
2. Education authority control
3. Local level provision
4. Interest groups

The Scottish Education Department in a British Setting

Scotland prides itself in having a separate and distinctive system of institutionalised education. Popular belief in its superiority to the English system seems to have persisted, if tarnished by some recent adverse publicity. Its generalist tradition (most evident in its broad syllabus for the Scottish Certificate of Education 'Highers' examination and in the non-specialist ordinary degree offered in Scottish universities) and a reputation, perhaps romanticised, for being 'democratic' are cherished notions. Its separateness is something to which politicians can point when they want to appeal to sentiments of nationalism, and the 1977 Devolution Bill assumed that education would be a responsibility of the Scottish Assembly.

There is much to support the contention that Scottish education is distinctive. Historically one can point to Knox's proposed national system of education in the "First Book of Discipline" in 1560, the creation of the 'Scotch' Education Department in 1872 (and its quiet removal from London to Edinburgh by Sir George Macdonald in 1922) or the clean settlement with the churches in 1872 and 1918, much envied by the English. Educational law for Scotland is independently enacted by parliament, and even when elements of an English Act are designed to apply throughout the UK discrete Scottish sections appear, almost identical in wording but adjusted to Scottish terminology. (See, for instance Sections 23 and 25 on Scottish school meals and nursery education in the English Education Act, 1980).

In structural terms much also appears to be emphatically Scottish. The Scottish Education Department (SED) is part of the Scottish Office and its Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC)

enables central influence on the curriculum. The General Teaching Council (GTC), established in 1966⁽⁴⁾, advises the Secretary of State on the supply and training of teachers and maintains a register of those licensed to teach in Scotland. The pay and conditions of Scottish teachers are determined in Scotland, the committees concerned with the two facets having been fused in 1981⁽⁵⁾. There is a separate Scottish HM Inspectorate.

Perhaps most visible to the average family, Scottish public examinations are different from those in England. The Scottish Examination Board (SEB)⁽⁶⁾ is the sole examining centre for schools, in contrast with a multiplicity of boards south of the border. Its examinations provide a broader syllabus than do specialised English 'A' levels but the most idiosyncratic feature is the one-year run from 'O' grades to 'Highers', an arrangement unique in Europe. Since a greater proportion of pupils is attracted to stay on at school into the post-compulsory stage than in England, this arrangement is likely to remain.

Other features distinguish the Scottish system from the English: transfer to secondary school at the age of 12 rather than 11, a reluctance to experiment with sixth form colleges or middle schools⁽⁷⁾, a longer probationary period for teachers, the absence of governing bodies, a smaller independent sector⁽⁸⁾, and a wide range of minor distinctions, including confusingly different terminology⁽⁹⁾.

Despite these formal differences, one can still question how separate and distinct our educational system is from the English one. Like racial differences, are they in detail rather than fundamental? Comparison is relative and one can identify a broad consensus not just throughout Britain but throughout Europe. As Malinson says, "Even today when the whole of western Europe is in a ferment of educational reform, it is still possible in moving from country to country to be impressed not so much by the dissimilarities to be found between various educational practices as by the similarity between styles of education"⁽¹⁰⁾.

Placed in a European setting, the English and Scottish systems appear to have much in common. Compulsory education covers the same age span, and free, institutionalised schooling facilities are

provided, generally divided into two levels, primary and secondary. Control over the curriculum is substantially devolved, methods of teaching are similarly structured, and schools have comparable internal organisations. Hours of work and terms of employment for teachers do not differ greatly. Parents bear prime legal responsibility for their child's education in both territories⁽¹¹⁾, yet in both they are treated as peripheral to the system.

More relevant to this paper, the same political party governs on both sides of the border and its philosophies are inevitably reflected in legislation for both territories. That legislation is enacted in the same parliament and often contains the same or closely similar wording. Both Scotland and England employ a system of responsibility being placed upon regional education authorities to build, maintain, staff and administer the schools and other educational facilities, and entrust them with sufficient power that it has been asserted that "the way the service develops nationally is, in effect, the total of authorities' individual decisions"⁽¹²⁾. It is true that the Scottish system is marginally more centralist (in regard to curricular control, finance and the Inspectorate) than is the English, but a steady transfer of influence from the locality towards the centre can be identified in both countries over the past century, the creation of regions in the 1970's being one of the most overt recent shifts of control.

Finally, both the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Scottish Education Department (SED) are predominantly policy-making departments with few executive functions⁽¹³⁾. The question may be posed: to what extent does DES thinking determine Scottish practice? At first glance the chronology of legislation suggests that Scotland copies England, but a year or two later. Repeatedly, English educational laws (eg. 1870, 1944, 1980) are reflected in similar Scottish legislation shortly afterwards, (1872, 1946, 1981) and we introduced regionalisation a year after England did. Similar non-legislative examples can be found, such as the introduction of comprehensivisation, the publication of inspectors' reports on schools and the definition of grade-related criteria for examinations.

Two arguments can be advanced to suggest that Scotland is not simply copying England. The first points to the way in which the

"education world" gradually develops and refines ideas, then introduces them experimentally in both territories long before they are reflected in legislation or circulars. (Thus, many Labour-controlled Scottish education authorities had introduced comprehensive secondary schooling before Circular 600 formally requested it.) The second concerns parliamentary procedures. It is more convenient for parliament to debate first the legislation which will apply to 90% of the UK (England and Wales) and then to adjust for a Scottish market with subsequent Scottish provisions. This enables Scotland to select, reject and adapt to what suits the Scottish educational system. Thus, for instance, the first five sections of the English 1980 Act gave impetus to governing bodies in England, but the Scottish 1981 Act avoided the issue of school governance entirely.

However, we cannot dismiss DES influence on Scottish education completely. In two formal ways the DES is an all-British Ministry: in regard to universities (and it may be recalled that the Robbins Report of 1963 recommended a separate Ministry for Higher Education (14)), and civil science. Less formally, but by mutual agreement, the DES in London is the contact-point for bodies such as UNESCO, the EEC, OECD, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth; for instance, the Secretary of State for Education and Science represents the UK (including Scotland) at meetings of the EEC education ministers. This arrangement may suit those in Scotland who take a self-satisfied parochial attitude to Scottish education, believing that developments elsewhere are irrelevant. Indeed, it may reinforce that parochialism. It also saves us the expense of specialist personnel in SED.

DES thinking may pre-condition SED thinking more than the above descriptions suggest. When a broad political notion such as comprehensivisation, parental choice of school or the Assisted Places Scheme, is passed to the civil servants to be converted into legislative and administrative forms, the processes of defining and delimiting the problems are carried out initially by DES personnel who, for instance, may decide that limited parental choice will replace concepts of free parental choice, or may introduce the idea of appeal committees. Such work may be carried out by any of the individual policy branches of the DES or through its Departmental Planning Organisation (DPO). English "framework" thinking is therefore

automatically on the Scottish agenda; with more than four times the staff and fewer central administrative functions (such as student grants which the SED administers for the whole of Scotland), the DES is perhaps better equipped than the SED to carry out this formative planning. It is difficult to pin down the extent of DES influence on Scottish education and it doubtless varies with personalities and issues. However, one can no longer agree with Kellas' assertion of ten years ago that "the English Ministry exerts almost no influence in Scotland at this level"⁽¹⁵⁾.

Having made these points about the overall similarity of British educational systems and the nature of DES influence, one must stress that the Secretary of State for Scotland does have formal control over Scottish educational policy-making except in regard to universities. Everything carried out by the SED is in the name of the Secretary of State and he, in turn, is responsible to parliament. Since education is but one of his several responsibilities, a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State is in immediate charge of the SED, currently the Minister for Education and Industry, Mr. Allan Stewart. It has been suggested that combining the responsibilities for education and industry distracts from both, but the arrangement has also been defended in that it brings educational planning closer to the needs of industry. After the recent General Election, Mr. George Younger, Secretary of State, referred to the political conjunction of education and industry as "a great success, widely welcomed in both these worlds"⁽¹⁶⁾. Similarly it has been questioned whether Scottish education is at an advantage or a disadvantage in being represented in the Cabinet by a generalist Secretary of State with many responsibilities, whereas England has a specialist Secretary of State to argue the educational corner.

It might be assumed that party political cohesion would have provided both mutual understanding and a source of Scottish influence, but Keating and Midwinter assert, "Personal links between UK and Scottish ministers are surprisingly weak. Ministers are so absorbed in the work of their own offices that they have little time for general policy discussions with colleagues"⁽¹⁷⁾. A reservation has been added by one Scottish Minister for Education and Industry⁽¹⁸⁾ that membership of ministerial committees helps to overcome such separation.

Curiously, therefore, it is at administrative level (which is formally separate) that most SED/DES contact happens rather than at political level. As Keating and Midwinter state, "Although St. Andrew's House is separated by some 400 miles from Whitehall, communications are fast and efficient and the homogeneity of the civil service makes for close contacts. Scottish officials are in weekly or daily contact with their opposite numbers in UK ministries"⁽¹⁹⁾. The Permanent Secretaries have only one formal meeting a year, but there is constant dialogue by less formal means in regard to policy matters.

Finally, reference may be made to the influence of the Scottish Inspectorate. Entirely employed by the SED (in contrast with England where some educational authorities have local inspectors), the Scottish Inspectorate has been involved in developmental work, such as the recent feasibility studies related to the Munn and Dunning proposals⁽²⁰⁾, and thereby has substantial policy influence. In recent years the Inspectorate has worked more closely with the administrators in SED, whereas the English Inspectorate has remained more independent. It has further influence by its own membership of key committees (for instance those of the CCC) and in suggesting names of others for membership.

Apart from its broad policy overview work and developmental functions, the SED carries out tasks in relation to the nature of educational buildings, formal further education and the central institutions, teacher training, student grants, staffing standards, teachers' salaries, the conduct of examinations and educational research. About 17% of Scottish educational expenditure is controlled centrally, a higher proportion than in England⁽²¹⁾. These, combined with the Secretary of State's regulating power, influence over the curriculum and unity of the Inspectorate, amount to a substantial degree of central control.

Education Authority Control

It is the twelve education authorities (9 mainland and 3 island authorities) which provide the schools and colleges, employ teachers and make educational facilities available. Money for this, in part, comes from rates and, in part, from central government, but the

education service must compete with other services in each region for its financial support. Since about half of a region's expenditure goes on education, it is inevitable that at a time of economic recession and with school rolls falling with the birth rate, regional councils increasingly look to the educational services to find savings. Education is labour-intensive and teachers' unions in Scotland have a reputation for determination (which I shall return to below), so that resistance to cuts is also impressive.

This is not the place to argue whether the Wheatley Report⁽²²⁾ was right to recommend the allocation of education to the new regions in an attempt to prevent over-reliance on the centre by strengthening the units of regional government, nor whether the diverse sizes of those regions, with half of Scotland in Strathclyde, was appropriate for educational administrative purposes. However, it is worth noting the stages by which control over educational institutions became increasingly distant from the locality:

1872 approx.	900 school boards
1918	38 education authorities
1929	35 education authorities
1973	12 education authorities

At each stage, as control became more remote, local committees were set up to retain a gesture of local involvement. I shall return to that issue below, showing how ineffective these committees were and suggesting why. Education authorities are certainly no longer phenomena of the neighbourhoods, and, unlike England, we do not perpetuate a myth by putting the word "local" into their title. Some regions retain Divisional Education Offices; Strathclyde, for instance, has six. However, with the possible exception of the more compact regions such as Fife, it is difficult for the citizen not to regard education authorities as somewhat remote and faceless. On the other hand a more even spread of resources has been possible, and access to specialist and shared facilities may be added to arguments about economies of scale to defend the larger educational administrative unit.

The regional council is the education authority. It has an education committee which effectively determines educational policy, but within the party political framework of the local council,

regulations from the SED and the law. In this structure the post of Director of Education has been of special importance. With knowledge of both the administrative system and of the field of education, he has been able to exert substantial influence on 'lay' councillors who may feel some reserve about entering professional fields. Indeed, education authorities have been more concerned with financial and structural issues (such as school closures) than with curriculum.

Strains placed upon education authorities and the directorate have been substantial in recent years. The increased power of the teachers' unions in the 1960's and early 1970's combined with a militancy which led Kogan to describe their actions in 1974-5 as "raucous, unreflecting about the general good . . . bullying"⁽²³⁾, led to strikes over the Houghton Committee's report on pay, and subsequently to a contract which gave teachers conditions to be envied in other countries and which some consider to have changed teaching from a profession to a job⁽²⁴⁾. The unions' preparedness to take aggressive stances has not evaporated. The most recent conference of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), against their leaders' advice, voted for strike action if composite classes are not reduced to 25 pupils by the end of January 1984.

Such jostling has coincided with increasing debates within the profession about appropriate teaching methods and growing public demands for accountability. The falling birthrate led to diminished pupil numbers; and other dilemmas about whether to close schools, fuelled by the recession and arguments that small schools are uneconomic, have added to the pressures on education authorities. Tensions between central and local governments in the last four years have not only stemmed from the financial squeeze but from differences of political complexion between national government and many Scottish local councils⁽²⁵⁾. It is little wonder that the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland chose as one of its topics for its 1983 conference "The Directors' distinctive contribution - will it survive?"

An additional irritant to education authorities has been what has seemed to them an intrusion into their administrative sphere. In the past the SED has given guidance (especially curricular guidance from the Inspectorate or administrative guidance on issues such as staffing

levels⁽²⁶⁾), as well as detailed uniform requirements through regulations on a wide range of topics. However, the Education (Scotland) Act 1981, was unusual in the extent to which it made binding requirements of some detail upon education authorities, with additional prescription through regulations and explanatory amplification through circulars, especially in the sections concerned with parental choice of school. In this respect it went much further than did the counterpart English legislation in its administrative prescription.

However, it would be wrong to suppose that this was the dawn of a new era of central involvement in regional administration. Legislation since the war had included detailed requirements about attendance orders, the education of children with special educational needs, conditions of employment of teachers and other matters which authorities might have regarded as administrative. The parental choice provisions are of special interest in that they require the kind of administrative procedures which the spirit of the pre-existing legislation had implied but which had been implemented only patchily by the authorities. The 1981 Act therefore deserves attention as an example of interpretive legislation.

Sheriff court cases since 1954⁽²⁷⁾ had fairly consistently supported the principle of parental choice of school, based upon section 29 of the 1946 and then the 1962 Education Acts. The position was clearly summarised by Sheriff Prain⁽²⁸⁾

"... it seems to me that when exercising their duties in relation to attendance orders the respondent must have regard to the general principle laid down in section 29 - that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of the parents - and, in particular, in selecting the school... At the same time I cannot accept it that the parent has on his part a complete right to select a school for his child. There must be some accommodation between reasonable administrative requirements for the education authority and the wishes of the parent ..."

Some authorities had been allowing parental choice but others had not and the extent of publicity of the right accorded to parents to make choices of school was limited. Further, there was no appeal system. The 1981 Act introduced these and required conformity. It provides a useful example of the way in which the Secretary of State

can intervene in regard to the mode of implementation of a legal principle.

It may be added that central controls have been relaxed in other ways, for instance in relation to school closures and schemes of educational provision. It would be wrong to paint a picture of unremitting increase of central regulations.

Thus, irrespective of whether a local council has been of the same or of different political colour to the national government, education authorities have felt substantially under pressure in recent years for a variety of reasons. In part the pressure derives from the simple fact that education authorities have the central task of making educational provision available at a time when social and financial difficulties have mounted. We may conclude this section by listing the functions which the Paterson report "The New Scottish Local Authorities: Organisation and Management Structures" recommended for the regions in 1973:

1. Formulating educational policy.
2. Planning, providing and controlling the education services and developing the education programme.
3. Laying down organisational and operational guide-lines for pre-school, primary, secondary and further and special education, outdoor pursuits, youth employment, school meals.
4. Deployment of teaching and other staff.
5. Undertaking department personnel work, including training.
6. Laying down organisational and operational guidelines for administrative services.
7. Providing specialist and advisory educational support services, including research and statistics.

This is, indeed, the heart of educational planning, yet a great deal is delegated to the head teacher and his professional staff in the schools, especially in regard to what is taught and how it is taught. It is therefore to that level, the chalk-face of schooling, that I now turn.

Local Educational Provision

While the daily routine and school policy planning are

administered with professional thoroughness in most schools, it is still possible to assert that the democratic governance of formalised education at the local level is one of the most neglected aspects of the Scottish educational system. I outlined above how control over the administration of schools has shifted from more than 900 to 12 authorities over the course of a century. As control became more remote, so the power of teachers and head teachers over the nature of local provision increased. Vain attempts were made to retain some local influence. When School Boards were replaced by 38 education authorities (still popularly elected) in 1918, School Management Committees were introduced at a more local level, with parents and teachers appointed by the authority. However, in the words of Scotland "... the management committees left in their own view to do nothing but menial duties and 'dirty work' like enforcing attendance and prosecuting parents, wasted away"⁽²⁹⁾. The Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1947 replaced them with Area Education Sub-Committees, but these similarly failed to provide a focus for local involvement. The reasons were clear. On the one hand these successive committees dealt with groups of schools and therefore floated between the levels of educational decision-making, neither concerned with education authority affairs nor with those of the individual school. On the other, the sorts of functions passed to them were unpalatable and educationally peripheral, such as dealing with the parents of truants.

With regionalisation in 1973, the Local Government (Scotland) Act required the creation of school councils but left it to education authorities to determine both format and functions⁽³⁰⁾. Swiftly the authorities created councils, but once again they were for groups of schools and again the functions were peripheral, prime among them being interviewing the parents of truants. In effect something close to the old Area Education Sub-Committees were re-created, though some authorities did reduce the scale of grouping to a council for a secondary school and its feeder primary schools.

Disenchantment rapidly followed. The Glasgow University report on school councils published in 1980⁽³¹⁾ showed that non-educational issues (especially truancy, transport, road safety and catchment area zoning) predominated and that only 1% of items discussed at school council meetings throughout Scotland over two years concerned the curriculum, what is taught and how. The majority of school council

members themselves felt that the councils were failing to achieve their objectives and only 16% considered that they were carrying out worthwhile work.

The Glasgow University report pointed to the need to have a school council for every school so that parents (and teachers) would be involved in the level that interested them and so that the central function of school councils, mutual accountability of both parents and teachers (that is, the educational partners) could be implemented. The report showed that already two-thirds of items discussed at school council meetings concerned individual schools, so that current school councils represent time-wasting on a massive scale while members listen to discussions which do not concern them. The report also demonstrated that conversion to one school council for each school need involve no extra public expenditure if they become self-servicing, with current servicing expenditure being diverted into a central information service for each authority.

In 1983 the EEC published a report⁽³²⁾ which showed that local involvement in school administration was growing apace in Europe, not only with a council for every school, but in some countries at class level and education authority level also. Scotland was reported as being unique with its largely irrelevant councils for groups of schools. England's 1980 Education Act started with a series of adaptations to its system of governing bodies, effectively removing grouping. When Scotland's counterpart Act appeared a year later it avoided the issue of school governance entirely. Just before the 1983 General Election the then Scottish Minister for Education and Industry published an assertion that he supported the concept of one school council for each school⁽³³⁾.

Although the virtual absence of local involvement in school governance may be in keeping with recent Scottish practice, it leaves a serious gap now that regionalisation has made democratic control so remote. The Glasgow University report, which urged that school councils should be able to discuss whatever they see as important, especially the curriculum, also highlighted an ominous divide of attitudes and wishes on this matter; 80% of parents expressed the view that school councils should be concerned with the curriculum, but only one-third of teachers on school councils espoused that view. Ingrained

attitudes are well illustrated by a recent public confrontation in which a director of education is reported by the Times Education Supplement as stating "At no time was it envisaged that particular matters concerning individual teachers, teaching methods or the internal management of a school should be discussed in the open forum of the school council. It is my contention that the school council is not there to listen to complaints from parents: the normal channel for complaints is to the director of education who will investigate the complaint". A parent representative on the school council in question is reported as stating: "There is no point in discussing education in the school council if we cannot discuss what our children are being taught in school"⁽³⁴⁾.

In effect, there has been a constant trend of educational control towards the centre and towards the profession, and the ever-growing deficiency being at the most local level. Stakeholder theory⁽³⁵⁾ suggests that those with a stake in an enterprise should be able to influence (but not necessarily make) decisions affecting that enterprise. Parents, being legally responsible for their children's education, are certainly stakeholders.

Interest Groups in Scottish Education

It has been argued by Eulau and Prewitt⁽³⁶⁾ that "the degree to which the governors are responsive to the governed is the 'sine qua non' of whether democracy in fact exists". By this test, at local level, democracy cannot be said to exist in Scottish education. To what extent does it exist at regional and national levels? At least here there are elected representatives dealing with central educational decisions, but political theorists have long recognised the difficulties of achieving responsiveness between elections. Some have defended interest groups as the intermediaries between citizens and political authorities, the "transfer agents" for citizens' wishes, who may petition elected representatives holding positions of authority⁽³⁷⁾.

We may distinguish between self-interest groups (such as unions) and social interest groups (such as the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment). Between these are the parental organisations which are social interest groups in the sense that they operate on

behalf of others (children) but are self-interest groups in the sense that their member families stand to gain. Finally, we may distinguish between pressure groups which are prepared to use or threaten sanctions (such as going on strike) and interest groups which are not. So far, teachers' unions and those of non-teaching ancillary staff are the only educational groups in Scottish education to have used or threatened strike action, though others could do so. There is no theoretical reason why head teachers or members of the administration should not withdraw their labour. Nor would there seem to be any legal impediment to organised parents withdrawing their children 'en masse' from school in protest, as long as they provide education for them; schooling is not compulsory by law, though education is and parents are responsible to provide it⁽³⁸⁾.

The largest and most thrusting pressure group in Scottish education is the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). Although its original charter, dating back to 1851, stated that the Institute's aims were to promote sound learning and to advance the interests of education in Scotland, actions of self-interest have been more conspicuous among its activities reported in the press. Its membership is predominantly of primary teachers, and Hunter has written "Although various aspects of Institute policy come under attack ... there is little doubt that the Institute has been of considerable value to Scottish education... Its recommendations are usually carefully considered by the Secretary of State and the Scottish Education Department"⁽³⁹⁾. Two other unions were formed as break-away groups from the EIS, the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA) and the Scottish Schoolmasters' Association (SSA now under the umbrella of the NAS/UWT) while more recently the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT), an English union with a non-striking policy, gained membership in the turmoil of industrial action in the late 1970s among teachers who considered that it is unprofessional to go on strike.

Teachers' unions are markedly the most influential interest groups in Scottish education to the point of imbalance.* With their employment protection aims and their facility to negotiate terms which

*This makes the assumption that bodies such as the Convention of Local Authorities (COSLA), the OCC and the SEB are not, by definition, interest groups. Such an assumption could be challenged.

affect conditions of work of individual teachers, they can readily obtain membership born of self-interest and therefore the finance for effectiveness. Parental organisations do not have those advantages and are inadequately developed and relatively powerless. Parental organisations do not have the financial advantages enjoyed by teachers' unions and their position has been further hindered by the British tradition for having parent-teacher rather than parent organisations, thereby weakening their own capacity to represent parents at local, regional and national levels. (This is in contrast to continental countries where parent organisations, undiluted by teacher influence, are usual.) The Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC, formerly called the Scottish Council of Parent and Parent Teacher Associations) was founded in 1948, but it is only recently, in the past decade under four successive chairmen, that it has shaken off its tea and jumble sale image and has put emphasis on two policy principles: first, that parents (not teachers) bear the prime legal responsibility for their child's education, and second that parental involvement enhances a child's attainment in school. It cut its political teeth in lobbying MPs at the committee stage of the 1981 Act and one of its chairmen, George Jackson, became a nominee of the Secretary of State for a position on the General Teaching Council and is currently a member of the planning group developing a European parent organisation for EEC countries.

However, the SPTC is still a fragile body. Although it has received some small grants from SED and Strathclyde Region, its level of subsidy is minor compared to that granted by some European governments to parent organisations. Its membership is growing, but slowly. Its leadership inevitably changes faster than that of teachers' unions and it does not yet employ permanent staff. Until it can break the vicious circle of low funding and low impact it will not be able to rectify the imbalance of interest groups so conspicuous in Scottish education.

The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC), while not representing parents and pupils in any elected sense, has done much valuable work in drawing the public's attention to schooling as a consumer good. Its report "Reaching Out to Parents", based on a survey which it commissioned, provided a useful if depressing snapshot of the state of

home-school relations in Scotland⁽⁴⁰⁾, and it has subsequently investigated the quality of information provided in school brochures⁽⁴¹⁾. It has responded clearly and thoughtfully to a series of government consultative documents. Unlike the SPTC, it has the advantage of a regular income (from the government though it is politically independent) and a team of full-time staff including Graham Atherton who has expertise in the field of schooling, and a legal adviser. Both the SPTC and SCC are campaigning for one school council per school.

There are other, more specialist interest groups in Scottish education, such as the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment (STOPP) and the embryonic Strathclyde School Council Parents' Federation (SSCPF), but in terms of broad policy influence those discussed are likely to have most impact.

Conclusion

In summary, Scotland has an education system which, both in its government and in its curricular approach, is part of a broad British pattern. There are aspects in which it differs from England, the nature of public examinations being the most conspicuous. The facility to be markedly different exists, but it has been exercised little except in regard to details. The DES acts as an all-British Ministry of Education in regard to specific functions and its thinking probably preconditions SED policy on occasions, though the extent is difficult to assess. Contact between DES and SED is more constant at administrative level than at political level.

Education authorities, at regional level, bear responsibility for providing schools, staff and facilities. Probably the most neglected field of school governance is at the most local level where school councils have been prevented from having educational impact by structures which are out of keeping with the spirit of their creation and by processes which have limited their functions to the trivial and the menial. Paucity of central and regional support for parent organisations has prolonged an imbalance of interest group power which is currently dominated by teachers' unions.

It is my personal view that the current structure of government in Scottish education has much to commend it and that the facility to depart from measures designed for England has provided a valuable safeguard. If asked to suggest improvements, I would suggest four.

The first concerns a statement of fundamental duties and rights. Such a statement could either be British or specifically Scottish. At present these duties and rights can be found buried in legislation, often in complex legal language. A simple Basic Educational Law, written in language designed for the citizen rather than for the lawyer, would help to clarify the proper relationship between educational partners, especially parents and teachers.

Second, I can see value in the shift of power towards the centre which has occurred during the past few decades, but I would argue for an increase in openness, information, debate and encouragement of interest-group involvement to accompany that shift. The 1979-1983 government may be commended for its repeated use of consultative documents and its publication of advisory booklets for parents. Also, the helpfulness with which SED personnel made themselves available for interview by researchers (myself included) is appreciated. One might speculate whether it would be possible to go beyond structures such as the revamped Select Committee of MPs which has received recent praise in England⁽⁴²⁾ and establish bodies of accountability (to which elements of the system might render account, in the sense of explaining) at national, regional and local levels.

Third, the absence of local involvement in the governance of local school provision would seem to be a serious deficiency, especially since schools vary in provision and quality and since it is parents who bear the prime responsibility for the education of their child, by law. The answer must surely be to follow the rest of Europe and establish one school council for every school, but at the same time to ensure that those councils are free to discuss (though not necessarily to decide upon) central curricular and management issues for each school. The school council would, in essence, be a mutual accountability body for the two groups of adults responsible in different ways for the education of the child, parents and teachers.

Finally, there is a need to give both verbal and financial encouragement to organisations representing the schools' clients, the parents.

With these changes, the gaps left by the shifts of power might be filled.

References

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2. Education (Scotland) Act, 1980, pp. 1 - 2.
3. OECD "Educational Development Strategy in England and Wales", 1975, quoted by Sir Toby Weaver in "Department of Education and Science: Central Control of Education", Open University, 1979, p.21.
4. The Teaching Council (Scotland) Act, was passed in 1965, but the GTC was set up in 1966.
5. The Scottish Teachers' Salaries Committee and the Scottish Teachers' Service Conditions Committee were combined by the Education (Scotland) Act, 1981, section 14.
6. Formerly known as the Scottish Certificate of Education Examinations Board, the Board was renamed and revised by section 13 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1981. Until 1965 the Scottish Education Department administered examinations itself.
7. Grangemouth is the only place to have experimented with middle schools. Sixth form colleges and centres are unappealing as long as we do not have a two-year course between 'O' grades and 'Highers' examinations.
8. Just over 2% of Scottish pupils attend independent schools, contrasted with about 6% in England.
9. The term 'public school' is used to mean just that in Scotland and is defined in section 135 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980, but confusion with the English term, meaning a school (normally independent and therefore not public) with membership of the Headmasters' Conference, remains; Scotland's usage is more logical. Less defensible is the adoption of the term 'school council' in 1973 which is too similar to the English Schools Council. 'Education Authority' and 'LEA' might have been standardised, as might lesser examples of different titles for similar bodies.
10. Vernon Mallinson "The Western European Idea in Education", Pergamon, 1980, p.14.
11. This is common to all EEC countries. It is found in Scotland's Principal Act, (1980) section 30, and in England's 1944 Act, section 36.

12. DES draft country statement in response to OECD reappraisal of educational planning, March, 1980, p.2.

13. For instance Sir William Pile states that the DES "is essentially a 'policy-making' department with few 'administrative' functions" (Pile, "The Department of Education and Science", Allen & Unwin, 1979, p.36) and Sir Richard Clark : "It is officials' business to advise their Ministers on policy" (ibid p.36.)

14. Report of the Committee of Higher Education, HMSO, 1963, vol.1, pp.246-52, 289.

15. J.G. Kellas "The Scottish Political System", Cambridge University, 1973, p.56.

16. The Times Educational Supplement (Scotland), 17th June, 1983, p.1.

17. M. Keating and A. Midwinter "The Government of Scotland", Mainstream, 1983, p.18.

18. Interview with Mr. Alex Fletcher, 1983.

19. Keating and Midwinter, ibid. p.18.

20. These concerned curriculum and assessment for the S3 and S4 (fourteen - sixteen years) levels of Scottish secondary schools.

21. In 1983-4 SED controls £187 million in current and £62 million in capital expenditure out of a total of £1,460 million in the education service. Source "Public Expenditure to 1985-86: A Commentary on the Scotland Programme", Scottish Office, 1983.

22. Royal Commission on Local Government in Scotland, 1966-69, HMSO, 1969.

23. M. Kogan "The Politics of Educational Change", Fontana, 1978.

24. The Scottish Teachers' Service Conditions Committee contract gave minimum hours based on a 32½ hour week, 11½ weeks' holiday a year, and it specified the maximum size of classes.

25. See, for instance, articles in the Scottish Government Yearbook, 1983, pages 20-54.

26. SED: "Secondary School Staffing : a report on secondary school organisation and staffing in Scotland, with proposals for new staffing standards", HMSO, 1973.

27. The first case was Huckstep vs. Dunfermline District Education Sub-Committee in 1954.

28. Sheriff Prain in Parlane vs. Perth and Kinross Joint County Council, 1954.

29. J. Scotland "The History of Scottish Education", vol. 2, University of London Press, 1969, p.22.

30. Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973, section 125.

31. A.M. Macbeth, M.L. Mackenzie and L.Breckenridge "Scottish School

Councils: Policy-Making, Participation or Irrelevance?", Scottish Education Department, HMSO, 1980.

32. A.M. Macbeth "The Child Between : a report on school-family relations in the countries of the European Community", the Commission of the European Communities, 1983, p.122.

33. Times Educational Supplement (Scotland) 3rd June, 1983.

34. Times Educational Supplement (Scotland) 17th June, 1983, p.3.

35. See B. Abrahamsson "Bureaucracy or Participation: The logic of Organisation", Sage, 1977.

36. H. Eulau and K. Prewitt, "Labyrinths of Democracy", Bobbs-Merrill, 1973, p.24.

37. See, for instance, F.M. Wirt and M.W. Kirst "The Political Web of American Schools", Little Brown and Cole, 1972, chapter 3.

38. Education (Scotland) Act, 1980, section 30.

39. S.L. Hunter "The Scottish Educational System", Pergamon, 2nd ed. 1972, p.269.

40. G. Atherton "Reaching Out to Parents: an exploratory study of parents and schooling in Scotland", Scottish Consumer Council, 1979.

41. G. Atherton "The Book of the School: a study of handbooks for parents issued by schools in Scotland", Scottish Consumer Council, 1982.

42. Times Educational Supplement (Scotland) 27.5.83.