

LEARNING THE LAW (8th Edition), GLANVILLE WILLIAMS. [London, Stevens & Sons, 1969. ix + 220 pp. 15s. (paper back)].

This book has been "Guide, Philosopher and Friend" to thousands of students since it was first published in 1945. Now, twenty-four years later, it joins the ranks of the popular paper backed editions of the classics of the law.

In this new edition, the learned author has noted the recent changes effected by the Criminal Law Act of 1967, particularly the abolition of felonies and misdemeanours, also the simplification of the law of larceny in the Theft Act 1968,

and, in dealing with precedent, the Practice Statement of the House of Lords* which declares that the House would no longer be bound by its own previous decisions. The list of Statutes on page 45 is also brought up to date, although the important Divorce Law Reform Act 1969 and Family Law Reform Act 1969 seem to have come too late for inclusion.

One could quarrel with the statement about Family Law on page 47 that "Sufficient of the Statute Law is contained in Webb and Bevan, *Source Book of Family Law*", as this book, admirable as it is in other respects, is substantially out of date and is therefore likely to confuse students. It is questionable indeed whether casebooks should be recommended at all. The learned author refrains from mentioning textbooks, and it is notable that the list of reference materials in the chapter on "Legal Research" is now omitted, presumably because in compiling book lists it is so difficult to know what to leave out. It would seem that both textbooks and casebooks could be left to the specification of teachers.

It is a mystery why the learned author should concern himself with teaching us the simple shorthand notation as is found on pages 57 and 58. Surely the dullest of students has enough wit to work out his own abbreviations.

In the chapter on Case Law Technique, particularly in that part dealing with the answering of examination questions, one finds that many students, purportedly having read the chapter, in answering questions, tend to follow the example of how *not* to frame the answer, rather than emulate the correct way. This may be because they are presented with two examples to remember instead of one, and are then furthermore burdened with remembering which example is the correct one to follow. It is not, I think, sound teaching practice to demonstrate faults, and the examples of "how not to" could well be left out of a future edition.

The very useful chapter called "From Learning to Earning" is revised to take into account social changes and the development of opportunity for lawyers over the last six years. One landmark is the change in the entrance requirements and syllabuses for the Bar Examinations. As far as would be Solicitors are concerned, it is encouraging to see that the Law Society since 1969 is no longer in favour of articulated clerkship. Judging by the statistics given in the book to the effect that one-third of articulated clerks receive no instruction at all from their principals, and that one-quarter in fact receive no instruction from anyone in the office, this change of attitude is justified, and reform is vitally necessary. Certainly, it would seem that a shorter period of intensive practical training after graduation would be better than the present archaic "hit-and-miss" method that intending solicitors suffer from for two and a half years after graduation. As the learned author indicates, any system could hardly be worse than the present one.

"Learning the Law" is an excellent book, readable, entertaining, and highly instructive. If only all law students would fully heed the wise advice given to them by Dr. Glanville Williams, the burden of teachers of the law would be considerably lightened.

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* [1969] 1 W.L.R. 1234.