

in numbers over the years plus the fact that whilst the agenda at some meetings is very heavy, at others it is particularly light, and it explored ways of evening out the peaks and the troughs. The report was the product of many hours of work by the members charged with the responsibility of preparing it and of much discussion by the Standing Committee itself. It provoked a lively debate and a wide variety of opinion. Eventually it became clear that the Governing Body wished to see a number of the proposals shaped differently and it agreed to the proposal that further discussion should be postponed until revisions to the report, taking account of the views expressed, had been prepared ready for further discussion.

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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This Report covers two Groups of Sessions: those held in July and November 2001.

At the July Group of Sessions, the Synod gave final approval to the Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure (bishops, 24 : 0; clergy, 160 : 4; laity, 175 : 14). The Measure gives effect to a number of recommendations made by the Bridge Report on Synodical Government in the Church of England which were seen as uncontroversial (see 5 Ecc LJ 383). Other proposals derived from the Bridge Report, largely concerned with the size and composition of the General Synod itself and therefore of a more contentious nature, were also discussed at the July Group of Sessions. Following a debate widely seen as unsatisfactory, they were subject to a number of changes. The Business Committee must now consider in just what form the proposals should be brought back to Synod.

Unusually, the two Groups of Sessions also saw the completion between them of all the stages of a new piece of legislation, the Church of England (Pensions) Measure. First consideration having been given in July, the absence of any proposals for amendment meant that it was possible to complete the remaining stages in November (final approval: bishops, 28 : 1; clergy, 164 : 0; laity, 174 : 0). The Measure makes changes in two main areas connected with pensions: it amends the powers of the Church of England Pensions Board in several technical respects (including by amalgamating a number of discretionary funds in the interests of effectiveness); and it extends beyond its expiry date of 31 December 2004 the power which the Pensions Measure 1997 conferred upon the Church Commissioners to spend capital in satisfaction of their pre-1998 pensions liabilities.

The Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure and the Church of England (Pensions) Measure now join the Clergy Discipline Measure (see 5 Ecc LJ 382 and 6 Ecc LJ 89) in being committed to the Legislative Committee for submission to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament. Although it received final approval in July 2000, the Clergy Discipline Measure has not progressed further because of the need to reconstitute the Ecclesiastical Committee following the General Election. At the date of writing, details of the Committee's membership are still awaited.

The Churchwardens Measure also having been delayed at earlier stages (see 5 Ecc LJ 64 and 6 Ecc LJ 89), Royal Assent was finally given in April 2001. Amending Canon No 20, which amends Canon E 1 in ways consequential upon the changes made by the Measure, was accordingly promulgated at the July Group of Sessions. The Measure will come into force on 1 January 2002.

In November the Synod also gave first consideration to the Care of Cathedrals (Amendment) Measure. That will give effect to a number of recommendations made by a group set up to review the detailed provisions of the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990 in the light of factors such as subsequent operational experience, changes to the governance of cathedrals and the requirements of continuing the Ecclesiastical Exemption. Whilst concluding that in general the 1990 Measure was working effectively, the group proposed a number of detailed changes, many of which will be implemented by the Measure. It now stands committed to a Revision Committee.

As regards other legislation, in July the Synod gave deemed approval to the usual Fees Orders and in November it approved the National Institutions Measure 1998 (Amendment) Resolution 2001, which (in the interest of greater flexibility) amends Schedule 1 to the 1998 Measure so as to reduce the minimum term of office of members of the Archbishops' Council appointed jointly by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. In November the Synod also approved, without debate, changes to the Church Accounting Regulations 1993 which reflect, in the context of the arrangements for accounting by parochial church councils, recent changes to accounting by charities generally.

Finally, issues related to the Establishment arose at both groups of sessions. In July the Synod passed a resolution calling on the Government in reforming the House of Lords "to ensure provision fully adequate to enable bishops of the Church of England to continue to contribute effectively to a reformed House be retained, and that members drawn from other Christian Churches and other Faiths also be added". It also broadly endorsed the recommendations of a report dealing with a number of specific issues relating to the appointment of bishops, including the methods of operation of the Crown Appointments Commission. Less agreement was shown in November, however, in relation to a motion from the Diocese of Southwark proposing the reform of the method of appointing bishops "so as to detach the process from any involvement with Downing Street and the Monarch": Synod passed a procedural motion adjourning the debate.