

Body approved recommendations from a Working Group on the Constitution, part of the brief of which was to review bill procedure. The Group which met under the chairmanship of Mr W. H. John has recommended several streamlining changes to bill procedure. It is likely that the Standing Committee will now instruct its Drafting Sub-Committee to produce a bill to implement the changes, and once available, the contents will be described in the pages of this journal in due course.

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND 1997

MICHAEL DAVEY
Solicitor

There was little legislation to be considered at this year's Synod which took place in Dublin on 13–15 May. The two Bills which were presented and duly passed were of an administrative and non-controversial nature.

The first Bill brought in new provisions to replace Part IV of Chapter X of the Constitution which deals with the Church Fabric Fund. Having set out the origin of the Fund and confirmed that the Representative Body should be its Trustee the Bill restated the source of capital to be held by the Fund and set out what should constitute its income. It went on to establish that sale proceeds should be applicable, if the Diocesan Council certified it as appropriate, for the repair or provision of an equivalent building in the parish. It extended this provision, to the extent of up to eighty per cent of the capital, to include the building or repair of an equivalent building within the union or group of parishes. It maintained the position whereby up to eighty per cent of the capital might be invested as an endowment for the benefit of the parish and also the provision whereby the balance of the capital, in cases where the whole is not applied in rebuilding or for investment, should be held by the Fund for the benefit of all parishes of the Church of Ireland.

The second Bill was to amend the membership arrangements for the Board of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. In the past, the Clerical Vicars appointed by the Dean and Chapter were full time and bound by the terms of the Cathedral's Deed of Endowment. Since that was no longer the case it was considered preferable that the Clerical Vicars should no longer be members of the Board but to confine such membership to Cathedral dignitaries.

Two major changes to the Documents of the Church were dealt with by way of Motion. Approval was given to a revised Hymnal which, it is hoped, will be ready for submission to the publishers in the autumn. A review of the Book of Common Prayer was also foreshadowed, with initial proposals about the content of a revised book expected next year. The whole process is likely to be a lengthy one.