

WORKING PARTIES

Statute Law Revision (Convener Chancellor George Spafford, 57 Hawthorn Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5DQ)

A sub-committee of the Legal Advisory Commission of the Church of England has recently examined all the Statutes and Measures in the Ecclesiastical Law volume of Halsbury's Statutes and made recommendations to the Standing Committee of General Synod regarding the repeal of legislation which is now effectively spent or serving no useful purpose. This working party now proposes to go through other legislation, particularly ancient statutes which are expressed in outmoded or obscure language, with a view to restating the law in contemporary terms. A start will be made in relation to Church property, leases and pluralities.

Training of Archdeacons (Convener David Cheetham, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, Herts. AL1 1HD)

This group is engaged in preparing a manual for new archdeacons to help equip them for their work in the legal field. It will cover topics such as synodical government, patronage, diocesan finances, property, visitations, faculties, clergy discipline, pastoral care, state aid, inspection of churches, church schools and records. The group also hopes to organise regional conferences for archdeacons, the first to be held in the Autumn. Offers from members of the Society with specialist knowledge in these fields who would be prepared to take part in such conferences will be much appreciated.

Diocesan Boards of Finance (Convener John Bailey, 3 St Martins East, Leicester LE1 5FX)

The group intends to consider the Diocesan Boards of Finance Measure 1925, which has not been amended in the 65 years since it was passed, and to propose amendments to rationalise the present system in the light of synodical government.

Education in Ecclesiastical and Canon Law (Convener Rev. John Masding, Hamstead Vicarage, Walsall Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B42 1ES)

There is a frightening dearth of facilities for study in this field. The group will investigate the position in relation to theological colleges, training colleges, post-ordination training, first incumbents' induction courses and the like, and see what is feasible and practicable. It is hoped to present a detailed plan to the Society towards the end of 1990. It is encouraging to note that a start is already being made in this field, albeit in a different Province, at Cardiff University. (see page 2).

Visitations (Convener Revd. Michael Smith, St David's Vicarage, 95 Howell Road, Exeter EX4 4LH)

This is a topic which has awaited critical review for a long time. There are wide variations in the way visitations are carried out and how they are perceived by those being "visited". In particular the basis and purpose of archidiaconal visitations will be subjected to careful scrutiny to suggest means by which full advantage can be taken by the Church of the opportunities such visitations afford.

Faculty Jurisdiction (Convener John Holden, 49 Brooklands Road, Towneley, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3PR)

With the imminent publication of draft legislation arising out of the recommendations of the Faculty Jurisdiction Commission, there is an opportunity to subject proposed changes to careful scrutiny and to seek to influence the legislative process as it proceeds. In particular, attention is being paid to the key issue of enforcement, especially in the light of the continuing debate over the ecclesiastical exemption.

Marriage After Divorce (Convener Ven. Alan Clarkson, The Vicarage, Church Corner, Burley, Ringwood, Hants. BH24 4AP)

Ever since the inconclusive debates in General Synod, the Church has been asking itself whether it is possible to have a consistent discipline in relation to those who seek marriage in church after divorce. The group believes it should and proposes to try to seek a solution as a matter of urgency.

ALL THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO JOIN ONE OF THESE WORKING PARTIES ARE ASKED TO CONTACT THE CONVENER OF THE PREFERRED GROUP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.