

of stipend, housing, pension and allowances. Proper use of stipendiary resources was debated; it was felt that there should be greater planning of career, continuing training and expectations—very much the aspects which affect those in other professions.

Theological Institute

The Theological College was closed several years ago and instead a Theological Institute opened alongside a Church of Scotland college. It was decided to remove the Institute to Old Coates House, a listed building close to St Mary's Cathedral where there would be a greater working space and some living accommodation for full-time students. It was hoped to reconstitute the working library there. Staff would be increased, but there would be no return to the old pattern of working. Despite the move the Episcopal Church would remain committed to Scottish Churches Open College.

It need scarcely be added that fund-raising, as always, was a subject of debate. Not unconnected with it was the final authorisation of the service of Administration of Communion by a deacon or lay person, which had previously been tried on an experimental basis in charges where there was no priest to preside at the Eucharist; communion was then administered from the Reserved Sacrament. This is an important provision in the sparsely populated parts of the country.

None of this reflects the beauty of the countryside round Oban or the warm hospitality of the Argyllshire congregations. The anniversary of St Columba's arrival was not forgotten, and the greater socialising was indeed enjoyed, but the Synod will return to Edinburgh next year.

THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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This Report covers two Groups of Sessions held in July and November 1997.

The Pensions Measure 1997 (No. 1), which was given Final Approval by the General Synod in November 1996 (see 4 Ecc LJ 681), received the Royal Assent on 21 March 1997 and comes into force on 1 January 1998. At the July Sessions the Church of England Pensions Regulations 1997, SI 1997/1929, made pursuant to the Clergy Pensions (Amendment) Measure 1972, and various other amending rules required as a result of the new legislation, were passed by the Synod.

The Churchwardens Measure which had its revision stage at the July and November 1996 Sessions (see 4 Ecc LJ 681) received Final Approval in July 1997 (Bishops 26, 0; Clergy 148, 5; Laity 181, 6). The Measure now awaits consideration by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament.

The Cathedrals Measure which had been Generally Approved by the Synod in November 1996 (see 4 Ecc LJ 682) returned to the Synod on the Revision Stage in July. Through lack of time the revision stage had to be adjourned and was completed at the November Sessions.

Also considered on the Revision Stage in November was the National Institutions Measure which had been Generally Approved at the previous November Sessions (see 4 Ecc LJ 20 p. 682). The Measure was returned to the Synod by the Revision Committee with the position of the Synod strengthened and enhanced by the proposals. During the Revision Committee stage there had been input both from the dioceses and from parliamentarians. The revised Measure safeguards the Synod's power of legislative initiative and the

Archbishops' Council will be accountable through the Synod to the whole Church in many areas of its work. Because the Council will have a wider range of responsibilities than the present Standing Committee of the General Synod and will be required to report on those responsibilities to the Synod, a larger area of the Church's life will come under the Synod's overview. The Measure will also require the Council to bring to the Synod legislative, policy and budgeting issues for approval.

The Measure also embodies major reforms of the Church Commissioners' functions and membership whilst protecting the Commissioners' core trustee responsibilities and their status as a Church-State body. The revised Measure also envisages joint working between the Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council in key areas such as the support of bishops and cathedrals. Most of the safeguards and reforms are to be found in clauses 3, 4, 9 and 10 of the revised Measure. No major changes were made by the General Synod at the Revision Stage in full Synod in November.

General Approval was also given in November to the draft Care of Non-Parochial Places of Worship Measure. This legislation stems from the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994, SI 1994/1771, relating to the 'ecclesiastical exemption' from the secular listed building and conservation area controls for ecclesiastical buildings which are for the time being used for ecclesiastical purposes. In general, the 1994 Order confined the exemption to buildings which are subject to:

- (a) the faculty jurisdiction or the Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990; or
- (b) the internal controls of some other Churches which the Department of National Heritage regarded as acceptable for that purpose.

The 1994 Order also contained other restrictions on the ecclesiastical exemption. However, it provided for a number of special cases which retained the exemption even though they were outside the legal controls of the Church of England or of some other Church. So far as the Church of England was concerned, the special cases included peculiars (which are outside the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop): some chapels and places of worship belonging to universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, Inns of Court and other public and charitable institutions; buildings of religious communities; and certain buildings subject to sharing agreements under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969.

It was always envisaged that in general these special exemptions would be temporary ones. However, agreement was reached with the Department of National Heritage (now the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) that draft legislation would be introduced into the General Synod to permit those responsible for certain of the buildings in question to bring them within the faculty jurisdiction on an individual basis if they wished, so that the buildings could retain the ecclesiastical exemption permanently. Otherwise, they would normally come within the secular controls when the special exemptions come to an end. The draft legislation also relates to certain other buildings, in particular chapels in bishops' and archbishops' official residences, which it is proposed should be brought within the faculty jurisdiction.

The General Synod next meets in February 1998 when it is envisaged that the Cathedrals Measure and the National Institutions Measure will be before the Synod for Final Approval.