

THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND

The body formed by the fusion of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty in 1948 to manage the estates and revenues of the Church of England. It consists of the Archbishops and Bishops of England, 3 lay "Church Estates Commissioners", 25 persons appointed by the Church Assembly (5 Deans, 10 other Clerks in Holy Orders and 10 laymen), 4 laymen appointed by the Crown, 4 persons appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, certain officers of the state, and representatives of the cities of London and York and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Board of Governors is formed of not more than 30 of the Commissioners, and day to day business is carried on by a small Estates and Finance Committee which includes the three Estates Commissioners. In addition to their main responsibilities (trusteeship, financial administration etc) the Commissioners have certain wider administrative duties such as reorganising the legal structure of parishes and rural deaneries from time to time, and fixing the statutory fees chargeable for marriages, funerals and other rites.

QUEEN ANNE'S BOUNTY

A fund formed by Queen Anne in 1704 to receive the first fruits (annates) and tenths which had been confiscated by Henry VIII. On surrendering them for the benefit of the Church, she directed their use for the augmentation of the livings of the poorer Anglican clergy. Grants of Capital (not income) were made to poorly endowed benefices; and later the fund was empowered to make loans (from 1777) and disbursements (from 1803) for the building and repair of parsonage houses etc. Between 1809 and 1820 it received grants of over £1,000,000 from Parliament and at various times large private benefactions. By the Tithe Act of 1925 Queen Anne's Bounty was charged with the collection of ecclesiastical tithe rentcharge and its distribution to benefices and ecclesiastical corporations. When the Tithe Act of 1936 extinguished tithe rentcharge, Queen Anne's Bounty received Government Stock as compensation. In 1948 Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were united in a new body, the Church Commissioners for England.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS

The body which from 1835 - 1948 managed the estates and revenues of the Church of England. In 1835 two commissions were appointed to consider reforms in the allotment of Church revenues; and in the following year an Act of Parliament was passed, establishing a permanent body of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who were constituted a corporation with power to hold and purchase lands and to prepare schemes for the alteration and redistribution of ecclesiastical revenues. Its constitution was several times amended. The commission presented an annual report to Parliament. In 1948 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty united in a new body, the Church Commissioners for England.

RECTOR

In the Church of England a Rector, as distinguished from a Vicar, is a parish incumbent whose tithes are not impropriate. A "lay rector" is a layman receiving rectorial tithes or in whom the rectory is invested.

VICAR

(Latin, vicarices, "a substitute") In the Church of England the priest of a parish where the tithes have been appropriated. The institution goes back to medieval times, when churches were appropriated, e.g. to monasteries, which received the revenues, and employed first one of their monks to perform the duties of the Rector, and later a secular priest, called a Vicar, who acted as the substitute for a religious house. For his maintenance about 1/3 of the tithes were set apart (the Vicarial tithes, or small tithes) the remainder (Rectorial or great tithes) being reserved for the monastery. When the monasteries were dissolved the King granted the Rectorial tithes to others who became known as lay impropriators or lay rectors. As a parish priest a Vicar has exactly the same spiritual status as a Rector, and the forms of institution and induction are identical, since in both cases he holds his full spiritual jurisdiction from the Bishop. He also holds the freehold of the church, churchyard, vicarage and glebe, with the exception of the chancel of which the freehold, though not the possession, is commonly said to belong to the Rector. In common parlance the title "Vicar" is also used of incumbents who are legally "Perpetual Curates".