I.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS & NOMINATIONS

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction

Although much of the work done by the Committee has been routine, they have sought to carry it out in the manner of those who are serving the Lord, to whom nothing is small or insignificant. God being a God of order, this should be reflected not only in worship but in all our service, and in the operation of the Courts of the Church of Christ, our great King.

In accordance with Standing Order I.5 the Committee notified Presbyteries of their representation in the Assembly.

In accordance with Act II Class II 2002, the Committee nominated a Moderator–Designate.

2. Assembly Commissioners' Expenses

In accordance with Act I Class II 2001 the Committee notified Presbyteries that they had set the maximum rate for Assembly Commissioners' expenses which are paid from Central Funds through Presbyteries at £170 (£220 for Commissioners resident in the Outer Isles and £460 for Overseas Commissioners). These rates take into account the fact that free meals are provided for Commissioners during the Assembly. This rate remains unchanged from the previous year.

It should be noted that no provision is made by the Committee to provide expenses for attendance at diets of the Commission of Assembly. It is the hope of the Committee that in the near future there will be less need for the Commission to meet at all and that any business conducted will be of a routine nature. Thus the Committee are not minded to introduce any measures for the provision of expenses thereanent from central funds. However, the Committee have reminded Presbyteries that it is their responsibility to pay reasonable travel expenses for attendance at Presbytery and Synod meetings and that it is also their responsibility to pay reasonable expenses for Commissioners attending diets of the Commission of Assembly which cannot be covered by excess from Assembly Commissioners' expenses, but only when such expenses cannot be reimbursed by another way.

3. General Assembly

Recently, the practice of Commissioners intending to ask questions or speak in debates coming to the front pew before being asked to speak has helped expedite business. Commissioners are again reminded of this procedure in the hope that it will soon become an established feature of practice in the Assembly.

There are times when the Convener of a Committee cannot be present to present his Committee's Report to the General Assembly. On such occasions it is the duty of a Convener to ensure that his Vice-convener, failing whom another member of his Committee, is alerted in sufficient time to enable a meaningful presentation of his Report to be made.

The time-tabling of the Assembly follows a similar pattern each year for obvious reasons. The Committee, in giving guidance to the Assembly Clerks' Department, review matters each year and suggest changes where appropriate. However they are also aware that no timetable will work to the satisfaction of all and that some items of business or Reports may provoke little debate mainly due to the order in which the business was been

taken. Whilst care is taken to try and avoid such occurrences, such is the nature of Assemblies that these occasions are largely unpredictable or unavoidable.

The Committee remind Commissioners that the General Assembly being the highest Court of the Church, it is becoming that appropriate attire, suitable to the solemnity and dignity of the meeting, be worn by Commissioners . Whilst it is acknowledged that formal attire may be worn without a heart duly exercised that Commissioners are about the King's business, it is the Committee's view that, especially in our own day when informality and dressing down is so common, and also in the light of the reduced size of the Church, there is a need to preserve those things which are a reminder of the solemnity of the occasion. Whilst some may feel this is an infringement of liberty, it should be remembered that in the true exercise of Christian liberty, unnecessary offence is always avoided.

Mr Derick Gillies has again made himself available to act as Assembly Officer this year. The Committee are grateful to him and his assistants for the time they so freely give up to help the Assembly. They are also grateful to Miss Kaori Simpson of Harajuku Kitchen for again providing catering for Commissioners.

The Committee are once more indebted to the Minister and Congregation of Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh for the kind use of their buildings for the Assembly.

4. Review of Assembly Costs

Aware of the need to be good stewards of the Church's resources, the Committee reviewed the costs of the General Assembly. The possibility of reducing the length of the Assembly was considered. However, the Committee concluded that it would be unlikely that significant cost savings could be made unless it were possible to reduce the length of meeting of the Assembly by one whole day, and that at present it is difficult to see how this would be possible.

The question was also raised as to whether an alternative location for the General Assembly would produce significant cost-savings. In the Committee's view, they have noted that at present a suitable building in Inverness is not available for such a meeting of the General Assembly. They would also question whether any potential cost savings of such a move would not be outweighed by other factors. However, the Committee have resolved to review the matter should a suitable building in Inverness become available in the future.

5. Assembly Clerks' Department

Once more the Committee are most grateful to the Assembly Office Manager, Mrs Janet MacKenzie, for the assistance she gives to the Assembly Clerks in the production of Quarterly Memos, Committee Papers and Assembly Reports etc, as well as her most efficient assistance during the meetings of the General Assembly. The Committee are also grateful to the Assembly Clerks for their help and assistance to individuals, Courts and Committees of the Church over the past year.

The Committee are thankful that the Principal Clerk, who was seriously ill and on sick leave from 2nd February, has begun to return to work. They give thanks to the Lord for his restoration to health and trust that this will continue. In his absence the Assistant Clerk assumed his responsibilities and the Committee wish to place on record their gratitude to him for his bearing of an additional workload during that time.

As the Assistant Clerk of Assembly will be retiring Moderator at this Assembly, the Committee thought it appropriate to seek out the services of an appropriate individual who would be able to assist at the Clerks' table this year and this is referred to in the proposed deliverance.

6. Meetings of Committees and the Commission

The Committee are grateful to the Deacons' Court of Inverness, Free Greyfriars' for the use of their building for meetings of Committees and the Commission. They are also grateful to those who have provided hospitality on

such occasions. Although meetings of the Commission of Assembly have been more frequent, as well as more prolonged, than usual, it is hoped that the legal difficulties facing the Church may soon be resolved, leading to a reduction in both the length of meetings and their frequency.

(B) NOMINATIONS

The Committee, having duly considered the returns from Presbyteries in regard to the filling of impending vacancies in Committees, agreed to recommend the lists of Committees and Clerks to the General Assembly as in the Proposed Deliverance. A note of other Special Committees for which Nominations have not been sought is added for convenience.

DONALD JOHN MORRISON, *Convener*
COLIN CRICHTON, *Vice-convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A)

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (A) Assembly Arrangements of the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and the Assembly Clerks' Department;

2. The General Assembly thank Mrs Janet MacKenzie for the work she undertakes for the Church throughout the year as Assembly Office Manager and for her assistance in preparing and printing documents for the Assembly;

3. The General Assembly give thanks for the good measure of restoration to health of Rev. John MacLeod, *Principal Clerk of Assembly,* and pray that the Lord will fully restore and uphold him in days to come; they also thank the Assistant Clerk for his undertaking of additional duties during Mr MacLeod's period of absence;

4. The General Assembly appoint Rev. Murdo A.N. MacLeod as Assistant Clerk *pro tem;*

5. The General Assembly thank the Minister and Congregation of Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh for the kind use of their buildings for the Assembly;

6. The General Assembly thank Mr Derick Gillies, Assembly Officer, and his assistants, for again making their services available to the Assembly;

7. The General Assembly welcome the practical arrangements made both for the Assembly itself and the Moderator's reception;

8. The General Assembly thank the Committee for their diligence in seeking to keep the costs of the General Assembly under review so as to be good stewards of the Lord's resources;

9. The General Assembly note the advice given to Presbyteries anent payment of expenses in connection with attendance at Church Courts;

10. The General Assembly thank all those who contribute to the efficient functioning of the various Committees of Assembly, especially the respective Committee Conveners and Clerks;

11. The General Assembly thank the Deacons' Court of Inverness, Free Greyfriars for the use of their Westhill building for the meetings of Standing Committees of Assembly and the Commission of Assembly.

(B)

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (B) Nominations of the Assembly Arrangements and Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener;

2. The General Assembly appoint Standing and other Committees and Clerks to these Committees in accordance with the following lists: