

Society for Co-operative Studies

Bulletin 13 July 1971

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Society News and Notes

The Society for Co-operative Studies has held its fourth Annual General Meeting and Conference: an enjoyable and successful event amid the comfortable surroundings of the University of Nottingham. This issue of the *Bulletin* contains a report of this meeting and of the discussion on the two papers presented. The papers by Mr. K. A. Noble and Mr. L. A. Harrison were printed in *Bulletin No. 12*.

Future of the Society

The National Officers at a meeting on 20th May reviewed the discussion on the future of the Society along with the guidelines for the future which had been included in their report to the AGM. In the event it was agreed:

(a) *Bulletin*

That while its function as the main communication with members required two or three issues over the year, there should be an effort to make one issue, possibly the one before the AGM, more substantial by the inclusion of longer articles on areas of Co-operative development. This was linked with the later discussion on the prospect of working parties, both national and Sectional, and submission of reports from them to the Annual Conference.

(b) *Working Parties*

That an effort should be made to bring into existence both national and regional working parties on the following lines:

(i) *National*

That an author should be invited to draft a statement of his views on the future of the Movement over the next ten years: to review this with a national working party, say, at a day or weekend meeting and subsequently to re-draft it for inclusion in the *Bulletin*. It was envisaged that up to £150 should be available from the Society's balance to cover this arrangement.

(ii) *Regional*

That each Region should be offered the sum of £40 towards commissioning a similar statement of both Regional and general interest for discussion at a Regional conference and subsequent revision by the author. It was envisaged that in some Regions additional funds might be available to supplement this allocation and that again the material would be available for publication in the *Bulletin*.

Subscriptions for 1971/72

Subscriptions for 1971/72 are now due. A letter from the Secretary and Treasurer has been forwarded to all members and we hope you will respond speedily and willingly to his request.

Current Co-operative Studies and Research

Information on the current contribution by Universities and Colleges to Co-operative studies and research has been given in previous *Bulletins*. Discussions are proceeding on further courses for the forthcoming session.

Courses completed or in prospect for Session 1971/72

North-West

University of Manchester in association with Co-operative Union Section: a course on "Management in Retail Distribution" for senior officials.

Manchester University in association with Co-operative Union Section: a course for directors on Regionalisation and Integration of Co-operative Societies in Britain and Europe.

Yorkshire and Humberside

Leeds University in association with Co-operative Union Section: this continuing course is now covering decision making areas in management, with particular reference being made to the making of decisions in large organisations.

Scotland

University of Glasgow Extra Mural Department in association with Co-operative Union Section: courses for board members in the Glasgow, Motherwell and Stirling Districts.

Under discussion: courses for board members in the Falkirk and Ayrshire Districts.

Glasgow University Extra Mural Department in association with Co-operative Union Section: a six-week course for senior officials at Kilmarnock's Technical College.

Glasgow University Extra Mural Department in association with Co-operative Union Section: a six-week course for senior officials at Kilmarnock Technical College.

Under discussion: courses for board members in the Borders, East of Scotland, Fife, Glasgow and District, and North East.

South-west

Bath University of Technology in association with Co-operative Union Section: a long-term course for departmental managers.

Research in Progress

Yorkshire and Humberside

Leeds University: Level of Decision-making in the Board Room, Mr. T.E. Stephenson.

Role of the Chief executive officer, Mr. T.E. Stephenson.

Problems arising in the emergence of supra-regional societies. Mr. T. E. Stephenson.

North-West

Manchester University: Business Ratios in Co-operative Societies. Mr. J. Roper.

The Co-operative Movement in Sweden. Dr. A. Wilson.

The Degree of Member Participation in West European Co-operative Movements, Mr. D. Smythe.

Scotland

Reasons for declining member participation in Co-operative Societies in West Central Scotland. Dr. T. F. Carbery and associates.

Co-operative Business Finance. Mr. E. E. Canaway and associates.

Information about research and courses in progress or in prospect will be welcomed and should be sent to the Secretary, Society for Co-operative Studies, Stanford Hall, Loughborough, Leicestershire.

Society for Co-operative Studies

REPORT OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

16TH-17TH APRIL 1971

AT THE HUGH STEWART HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

1 Attendance of Members

The following members were present: where the participant is the representative of an organisation in membership of the Society, this is given after his name:

| | |
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| MR. T. BENTLEY | |
| MR. R. BRISCOE | Plymouth & S. Devon Co-operative Society |
| MRS. R. BRISCOE | |
| MR. D. BROWN | Co-operative Union, Northern Section |
| ALD. J. T. BROWN | Colchester & East Essex Co-operative Society |
| MR. G.L. BRUCE | Co-operative Productive Federation |
| MR. F. BRUCKSHAW | |
| MR. F. BRUMBY | Ipswich Co-operative Society |
| MRS. D. BUTTON | |
| MRS. E. CHRISTMAS | Birmingham Co-operative Society, Educ, Comm. |
| MR. K. COOPER | |
| MR. J. DALY | |
| MR. P. DERRICK | |
| MR. L. C. FOX | |
| MR. S. GARNET | Grantham Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |
| MR. W. G. GIBSON | |
| MR. J. GILBERT | |
| MR. R. M. GRINDROD | |
| MR. J. R. HAMMOND | Chesterfield Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |
| MR. E. C. HANCOCK | |
| MR. J.H. HARRISON | Greater Nottingham Co-operative Society |
| MR. L. A. HARRISON | |
| MR. M. T. HEATH | |
| MR. D. HIBBERD | |
| MR. D. HOPWOOD | |
| MR. B. JEUDA | Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers |
| MRS. D. JEUDA | Central & East Fife Co-operative Society |
| MRS. E. KING | Leicestershire Co-operative Society, Member Relations Committee |
| MR. M. KIRKMAN | Birmingham Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |
| MISS M. LARGE | |
| MR. W. E. LAWN | |
| MR. R. A. LEE | |
| MR. J. LEONARD | Co-operative Productive Federation |
| MR. W. LIVINGSTONE | University of Strathclyde |
| MR. R. W. MACKIE | Central & East Fife Co-operative Society |
| MR. R. L. MARSHALL | Co-operative Union, Education Department |
| MR. E. MURPHY | London Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |

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| MR. K. A. NOBLE | Co-operative Wholesale Society |
| MRS. N. NUZUM | |
| MR. W. J. PHILPOTT | College for the Distributive Trades |
| MR. E. PORTER | London Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |
| MR. G. V. J. PRATT | Co-operative Union, North Eastern Section |
| MR. J. ROPER | |
| MR. N. SIDDON | Chesterfield Co-operative Society, Educ. Comm. |
| MR. D. SMYTHE | |
| MR. E. W. TAYLOR | Harrogate & District Co-operative Society |
| MR. S. WILLIAMS | |
| MR. F. B. WILLIAMSON | |
| MRS. WILLINGHAM | } Colchester & East Essex Co-operative Society |
| MR. W. H. WILLINGHAM | |
| MRS. N. E. WILLIS | |
| DR. A. WILSON | University of Manchester |
| MR. R. WILSON | |

2 Introduction by the Chairman

Mr. J. Roper extended a welcome to all present and expressed satisfaction that the A.G.M. and Conference had attracted such a large number of participants.

3 Report of the National Officers for 1970-71

This had been printed in *Bulletin No. 12* of the Society and was introduced by Mr. Marshall, the Secretary and Treasurer, who reported that the cash and bank account as printed had now been audited. Among the points made in review of the Report were:

(a) MEMBERSHIP

A question was raised on the distinction between 'Co-operative' and 'Other' in the analysis of membership and it was agreed that it was useful for this distinction to be made, arbitrary though it was in some instances. One of the primary objectives of the Society was to seek the involvement of a larger number of academics in a continuous dialogue with the Movement, and this division made it possible to make some measurement of the Society's success in achieving that objective.

(b) BULLETIN

Publication of Nos. 10, 11 and 12 were noted, and the contribution of Mr. B. Howcroft to the bibliography in issue 11 was acknowledged.

(c) RESEARCH: COLLEGE JUBILEE FUND

It was noted with interest that an appointment was being pursued at the University of Loughborough of a senior research award in the area of the long-term financing of Co-operative enterprise in times of inflation.

(d) FINANCE

Satisfaction was expressed at the financial position of the Society which now could support the financing of some small-scale projects.

4 Future Development of the Society

A discussion on this was introduced by Mr. Marshall and some points made were:

- That there appeared to be general agreement with the views in the Report.
- That the Society needed to develop activities regarded by "academics" as significant for their interests.
- That there should be appointed one or more working parties regionally or nationally to investigate particular problems, each working party being asked to prepare and present a report.
- That future conferences could be divided into small seminar groups in order to discuss prepared papers, etc.

5 Appointment of Officers for 1971-72

Thanks were expressed to the officers for their services during 1970-71 and the following were recommended and approved for office during 1971-72:

- (a) All Presidents to be re-elected, with the addition of Sir Robert Southern.
- (b) Mr. W. E. Lawn to be Chairman.
- (c) Mr. W. J. Philpott and Mr. D. Hopwood to be Vice-Chairmen.
- (d) Mr. R. L. Marshall to continue as Secretary and Treasurer.
- (e) Mr. Marshall and Mr. J. R. Hammond to continue as editors of the Bulletin.

6 Conference Papers

(a) "Co-operative Capital Problems: Part One"

In a paper entitled "Co-operative Capital Problems: Part One--The overall position: current and forecast", presented by Mr. K. A. Noble, the following points were made and discussed:

- (a) That the shortage of capital for Co-operative trade development was justifiably viewed as a major problem confronting the Movement. The fundamental questions to be raised were:
 - (i) What capital shall we have available for the next five years?
 - (ii) What are our needs?
 - (iii) What policies do we need to close the gap?
- (b) The need for a co-operative corporate planning unit, to be established by the two wholesale societies, to undertake research on future shopping trends, shop siting, and all aspects of the future environment of the distributive trades.
- (c) The need to increase the amount of capital available for investment to keep pace with the continuing process of inflation.
- (d) The need for more detailed study of societies' investment policies. Should societies be encouraged to invest within the Movement or outside?

(b) "Co-operative Capital Problems: Part Two"

Mr. R. A. Lee presented a paper entitled "Co-operative Capital Problems: Part Two-How the practising executive official does and hopes to cope". The following points were considered:

- (a) That co-operative investment facilities needed to be more widely publicised among both members and employees: This necessitated a concerted effort involving public relations, staff training, and member education.
- (b) That efficient management of both capital and trade was inseparable to business success. Each society should have a clear objective to aim at. terms of both trade performance and capital investment.
- (c) The need to ensure collateral between superannuation funds and the society.
- (d) The possibility of increasing the minimum individual shareholding. It was argued that members share capital should be the main basis of societies' funds and that an increase in the average shareholding per member would also help to strengthen the members' sense of belonging.

(c) "Aspects of Co-operative Industrial Relations"

Mr. L. A. Harrison presented a paper entitled "Aspects of Co-operative Industrial Relations". The following points were considered:

- (a) That the Movement must examine in depth the whole field of industrial relations, against the background of (i) the Industrial Relations Bill; (ii) the rapid reduction in the number of societies; (iii) the need for a greater measure of employee participation in the affairs of societies.
- (b) The need for investigation of the situation in those societies which were not achieving a surplus: to what extent were these societies able to meet major wage awards?
- (c) The need to devise a framework of national standards which could be applied as a yardstick in local productivity bargaining.
- (d) That the Co-operative Movement remained an important form of social ownership and that societies belonged to both employees and members.
- (e) The need for more consultation at local and sectional levels and for more detailed study of the whole field of industrial relations.

International Notes

W. P. WATKINS, J.P., B.A.

*(Mr. W. P. Watkins, a President of the Society for Co-operative Studies,
is a former Director of the International Co-operative Alliance)*

The Future of the International Forum

The doubts which for the last three years have overshadowed the future of the International Co-operative Scientific Forum have at last begun to be dispelled. This is the result, like the foundation of the Forums fourteen years ago, of action by the Institutes for Co-operative Studies of the Universities of Western Germany. The Working Party of these Institutes, which was set up at the time of the Congress at Giessen in 1969 (See S.C.S. Bulletin No. 9., March 1970), has since held two meetings. The second, held at Münster last March, took the form of a seminar and marked the attainment of a new level of collaboration between the universities and institutes represented. The special papers presented laid the basis for real teamwork in which not only the senior professors with years of experience in Co-operative studies but also younger lecturers and research workers actively took part. It is intended to develop the activity of the Working Party further in this direction so that its functions will not merely be informative but also productive of new thinking.

The universities participating in the Working Party are Berlin, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Giessen, Hamburg, Köln, Marburg, and Münster from Germany and Vienna from Austria. Ordinary membership is limited to the German speaking countries. Associate membership is open to individuals engaged in Co-operative research and teaching in German-speaking countries and this already comprises 14 lecturers in a further 8 universities, including two from Switzerland. A third category-corresponding membership-will be open to a still larger circle of scientists and university institutes outside the German language-area, such as the Co-operative Institute of Helsinki University which has already been accepted.

The Working Party (known as A.G.I. from the initials of its German title) is administered by a small committee with Professor Dr. Eberhard Dülfer (Marburg) as its chairman. Arrangements have been made with the publishers of the general Co-operative quarterly review *Zeitschrift Für Das Gesamte Genossenschaftswesen*, to issue a fifth number each year devoted to the activity of the Working Party, including the papers and discussions of the seminars which are intended to become annual events of increasing importance.

The Seventh International Co-operative Scientific Congress

The annual seminars will also be designed to lead up, through their papers and discussions, to the triennial Congresses. Preparations have already begun for the seventh of these Congresses which will be held in Münster, Westphalia in the autumn of 1972. The general theme will be "Co-operatives – Democracy and Competition". This theme has already been broached at the Münster seminar already mentioned. It will be considered in its egal aspects at a further seminar planned for later this year. It is also hoped that, independently of the

seminar and congress programmes, the interchanges between Co-operative teachers and researchers will give rise to joint research projects which can be carried out by working groups composed in a variety of ways according to the field and aim of the research.

The Functions of the Forum

Returning to the International Forum, it is to be noted with no little satisfaction that the responsibility for its direction will be shouldered no longer by a single professor, already carrying a heavy burden of academic work, but by the Committee of the A.G.I. It has been decided that one of its immediate tasks shall be the gathering and diffusion of information relating to education in the field of Co-operatives. There has been a remarkable growth during the last decade in the numbers of Co-operative teaching and training institutions, particularly in those countries of the Third World whose governments are sympathetic to Co-operation or where Specialised Agencies of the United Nations are engaged in promoting Co-operatives under schemes of technical assistance. Not merely are these new institutions largely unknown to European and American Institutes of Co-operation; they are mostly unknown to one another. Through the Forum and the International Co-operative Scientific Congresses they can be drawn into mutually advantageous communication and collaboration. The pioneer work done by Dr. George Davidovic in compiling an international directory of universities teaching and researching in the Co-operative field could well be taken up by the Forum and developed into a world survey with some pretensions to completeness. Such a directory will sooner or later become indispensable if the Forum is to select with certainty the right types of collaboration it needs for its work.

International Co-ordinator in Research

The efforts of our German Colleagues to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching and research through systematic inter-university teamwork can hardly be too highly commended. Their example may well be followed in other countries with highly developed Co-operative Movements dependent more and more on university-educated management. But since Co-operation is not simply a field of study for a number of scientific disciplines, but also a system of economic social organisation which must gain adherents through its practical results, there must be understanding and collaboration between the Co-operative scientist and the Co-operative practitioner. Both are already employing research for different if complementary purposes. The time is overdue for both parties to enter into partnership, and it might well be a suitable project for the International Co-operative Alliance, in the Co-operative Development Decade, to bring them together on the international level.