

Society for Co-operative Studies

Bulletin 18 April 1973

Contents

AGM and Conference 1973	4
Annual Report for 1972/73	5
Current Retail Developments: and the co-operative counterattack D G Hopwood	10
Co-operative Democracy - A Final Comment? Dr T F Carbery	19
Consumer Education and Protection Report from a Working Party	25
Comments by Mrs J Jenkins	33
Comments by Dr T F Carbery	35
Recent Publications on the Co-operative Movement: a select bibliography Bernard Howcroft	39

This is a PDF scanned version of the full issue of the Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin No 18 published in April 1973.

It is distributed here under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 License, which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the Creative Commons website and the Journal of Co-operative Studies re-use guidelines.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

27th/28th April 1973

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY will be held at the CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE, STANFORD HALL, on FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, 27th/28th APRIL 1973.

The programme will be as follows:

Friday, 27th April

4.15 p.m.

Afternoon Tea.

4.45 p.m.-6.30 p.m.

First Conference Paper: "Current Retail Developments: and the Co-operative Counterattack". (In *Bulletin* 18).

This will be led by D. G. HOPWOOD, University of Lancaster and supported by contributions from the experience of:

s. P. CLARKE, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, West Yorkshire.

D. MCKELVIE, Chief Executive Officer, Lancaster.

G. K. MEDLOCK, Chief Executive Officer, Birkenhead.

6.45 p.m.

Dinner

Saturday, 28th April

9.15 a.m.-10.45 a.m.

Second Conference Paper: "Co-operative Democracy-A Final Comment?" (In *Bulletin* 18).

This will be led by DR. T. F. CARBERY, University of Strathclyde.

11.15 a.m.-12.45 p.m.

Annual General Meeting: including discussion on the Report of the National Officers for 1972/73. (In *Bulletin* 18.)

Bookings are good for the occasion but any members who wish to attend and have not yet booked are asked to get in touch with the Secretary: the inclusive fee for the Conference is £4.50.

The Society for Co-operative Studies

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1972/3

1. The Presidents of the Society- with Mr. C. C. Hilditch taking the place of Sir Robert Southern - have remained in office during the year. Mr. W. J. Philpott has occupied the Chair and Mr. D. G. Hopwood and Mr. S. P. Clarke have served as Vice-Chairmen. In accordance with the practice of the Society the 1971/72 Chairman, Mr. W. E. Lawn, has been invited to attend the meetings of National Officers during this year.

The Officers have had five meetings: the attendance they regret has not been good. The following is their report for presentation to the Annual General Meeting on 27th/28th April 1973.

2. Membership

(a) At 31st January 1973 the membership of the Society (with the 1972 figures given in brackets) was:

Region	Individuals		Organisations		Total	
	'Co-operative'	Other	'Co-operative'	Other		
Metropolitan and Southern	5 (6)	6 (5)	4 (6)	1 (1)	16	(18)
Midland	11 (11)	7 (3)	5 (5)	1 (1)	24	(20)
North	2 (3)	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	6	(7)
North-West	14 (8)	6 (8)	7 (8)	- (1)	27	(25)
Scottish	6 (21)	5 (7)	3 (2)	1 (2)	15	(32)
South-West	4 (3)	- (-)	1 (1)	1 (1)	6	(5)
West	4 (4)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	4	(4)
Yorkshire and Humberside	4 (4)	1 (1)	6 (6)	1 (1)	12	(12)
Overseas	1 (1)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	1	(1)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	51 (61)	27 (26)	27 (29)	6 (8)	111	(124)

(b) The recent record of total membership, at the end of January in each year, has been 142 (1970), 132 (1971), 124 (1972) and 111 (1973). About the distribution of membership at 31st January 1973, it is worth noting:

(i) The Co-operative Union nominates 16 individual members, and one representative. The Scottish Co-operative Society has maintained its membership as an organisation but not the nomination of its Directors as individual members.

(ii) There are 10 new individual members and 1 new organisation.

3. The "Bulletin"

Mr. J. R. Hammond, Joint Editor, had to resign and the Officers thanked him for all he had done. His place was taken by Dr. T. F. Carbery from Bulletin 17 onwards and his interest and skill have been warmly welcomed.

The programme has been to publish Bulletins No. 16, 17 and 18 during the year, and this has remained one of the main services from the Society to its members. The contents have included, for example, the substantial discussion

paper for the 1972 Conference by John Hughes "The Co-operative Movement: A Perspective for the 1970s" and "Another Perspective" by S. P. Clarke; a Report by a Co-operative Working Party on "Projecting Co-operative Principles" with a commentary by Professor J. Banks; a Report by another Co-operative Working Party on "Consumer Education and Protection", and commentaries by Jennifer Jenkins and Dr. T. F. Carbery; the annual bibliography of publications on the Co-operative Movement by B. Howcroft; and the discussion papers for the 1973 Conference.

4. Other National Activities: Research

(a) CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE ENDOWMENT FUND

As recorded in the last report, two projects were already being supported from this. In the first, Mr. T. E. Stephenson of the University of Leeds has continued his research into "Management in Regional Societies". The second was the establishment of a Senior Research Fellowship at Loughborough University of Technology to investigate the long-term problems of financing Co-operative retail societies in times of inflation, and this has rather foundered with the resignation of the Fellow half-way through his tenure. Particular investigations of Ipswich and Birmingham Societies included within the framework of this project have, however, been completed and made available to the Capital Resources Working Group which was set up by the Co-operative Union following Congress 1972.

(b) DIRECT PROMOTION BY THE SOCIETY

The offer of limited grants to the Regions has been maintained and the responses have been:

- (i) NORTH-WEST: Mr. D. G. Hopwood, University of Lancaster; research into the development of hypermarkets and general Co-operative development.

In addition, a grant was made to Mr. Hopwood to supplement support from the Department of Marketing, University of Lancaster for attendance at the 7th International Congress of Co-operative Science at Munster, on which he reported in *Bulletin* No. 17.

- (ii) NORTH: Mrs. M. Mellor: research into the role of the auxiliaries particularly within the framework of the North-Eastern Society.

5. Regional Developments

The following summaries are based on notes from the Regions:

METROPOLITAN AND SOUTHERN

There has been one business meeting and otherwise very limited activity.

MIDLAND

No Sectional meetings have been held in the last twelve months, but the West Midland branch continues to hold monthly meetings in Birmingham under the chairmanship of Mr. A. J. Corfield. This branch is currently engaged on a research project entitled "Communications between Retail Societies and their Members and Customers".

At present the project is specifically concerned with the Birmingham Co-operative Society but it is hoped to widen the scope to other West Midland societies when this is complete.

NORTHERN

The only activity held during 1972 was a meeting on 11th May when Mr. N. Leivers, Training Manager, North Eastern Co-operative Society Limited, gave a very detailed account of the many problems which the Regional Society had faced in organising efficiently, throughout the Society's vast area, a suitable training programme. It was most unfortunate that only three members, plus the Secretary, were in attendance at this meeting.

In terms of current research it is anticipated that Mrs. Mary Mellor, B.Sc., will be in a position to give an initial outline of her research into "The Role of the Auxiliaries within the North Eastern Co-operative Society Limited" by early March.

NORTH WEST

Unhappily, the activities of this Region have been in limbo during the year. The first lecture arranged under the Region's sessional theme "The Co-operative Movement: Prospects for Survival" was abandoned because of negligible attendance and the speaker had to be sent home--his lecture undelivered--with embarrassed apologies. It was thought unwise to risk further arrangements during the summer months, when many members would be away on holiday, and circumstances prevented the convening of autumn meetings. However, absence of Regional activity did not arouse any marked reaction from members. Consequently, Regional officials have sent a circular letter to members asking if it is worthwhile to continue but putting forward new suggestions for venue and time in case past arrangements have been inconvenient for most members. Replies to the circular letter are still being received and at the time of writing it is not yet clear whether the majority of members would welcome new arrangements regarding the venue and time of meetings. Certainly, the convenors of the Region are only too anxious to explore every suggestion from members which would ensure that the branch remains viable and worthwhile.

SCOTLAND

The only activity of the Region has been an initiative in organising, in association with the University of Strathclyde Department of Marketing, a course on "Consumer Affairs". The financial basis is that the University is responsible for £60 and the Scottish Co-operative Educational Association for £40. The Co-operative Union financial backing is automatically reduced in relation to the number of students it enrolls at £2 per student: that is, if we produce 20 students at £2 per student--a total of £40--then our commitment is cancelled. All enrolments in excess of our commitment go to the University.

The programme was outlined in Bulletin 17 and the course has been well supported by the undermentioned groupings:

Society for Co-operative Studies	4
Co-operative Societies (7)	22
Trading Standards Offices Glasgow (10)	
Lanark (6)	
Paisley (5)	21
Individuals (Public)	7
Technical college	1
Total	55

SOUTH WEST

There has been no activity during the year.

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

The main feature of the year's activity, related to the interest of the Society, has again been the continuing weekly study group organised at Leeds University for senior managers, mainly from the West Riding, under the careful guidance of Mr. T. E. Stephenson. This continuing course is well esteemed and is a proven success.

6. Relations with Other Organisations

Apart from the International Congress mentioned above, there has been little positive contact with other organisations during the year.

7. Finance

The Cash and Bank Account for the year ended 31st December 1972 is being audited and compared with the account for the previous year is as follows:

				1971		1972	
RECEIPTS				£	p	£	p
Cash in Hand brought forward	..	..		0	70	42	05
Cash at Bank brought forward	..	..		758	26	909	72
Subscriptions	..	..	..	628	00	492	00
Fees—A.G.M. and Conference	..	..	..	126	65	156	00
Sales—Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..	..	..	0	22	2	75
Contribution to Printing Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..			40	00	—	
Postage Refunded	..	..	..	—		0	25
Bank Interest	..	..	..	4	35	4	10
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				£1,558.18		£1,606.87	
				1971		1972	
PAYMENTS				£	p	£	p
Printing Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..	..	..	323	50	325	50
Stationery and Postage	..	..	..	58	27	69	39
Typewriting	..	..	..	38	45	59	07
Translations	..	..	..	—		5	00
Telephone	..	..	..	3	07	1	44
Annual General Meeting	..	..	..	152	87	274	78
International Congress	..	..	..	—		25	00
Other Meetings	..	..	..	17	50	161	80
Research Grants	..	..	..	—		40	00
Scholarship to Seminar	..	..	..	—		50	00
Fees Refunded—A.G.M. and Conference	..			—		7	00
Subscriptions Refunded	..	..	..	12	00	12	00
Bank Commission	..	..	..	0	75	1	35
Cash in Hand carried forward	..	..	..	42	05	0	86
Cash at Bank carried forward	..	..		909	72	573	68
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				£1,558.18		£1,606.87	

The accumulation of cash - in hand and at the bank - has been substantially reduced. Moreover two Bulletins are charged in 1972, compared with three in 1971. Factors in the change within the financial statement are the decrease in subscription income, various grants for the Society's objectives and greatly increased expenditure under the heading "Other Meetings" which should be specially outlined. This included in 1972 travelling expenses for a meeting of National Officers held in 1971; a greatly increased number of meetings of National Officers in 1972 compared with the previous year, more claims on the Society for travelling expenses and higher travelling expenses because of the location of the meetings; and among these 1972 meetings a particularly large one for the discussion of John Hughes' paper with the author.

However, the financial position still leaves modest resources for the Society's development.

8. Role for the Future?

The record in general is one of activity maintained and developed on the national level and not a great deal of initiative Regionally - apart from the interesting development of the West Midlands group which has already been referred to. We hope that the Annual General Meeting will discuss ways of improving organisation and activities at both levels. However, the central issue remains as stated in our report last year and we quote from it.

"There was agreement that a primary purpose was to increase the number of people in universities and colleges interested in the Movement, studying its problems and engaged in a useful dialogue with active Co-operators, and about service to that objective two general questions were raised or implied:

- (a) Do the resources devoted to the Society look like showing "cost effectiveness" in achieving the objective - either within the present framework of the Society or through some adaptation of it, e.g., by taking as a basis universities or groups of universities throughout the country and by concentration on gathering in each of these staff and students with some degree of interest in the Movement?
- (b) Or should we give up the kind of separate organisation envisaged under (a) and let the educational agencies of the Movement, particularly the Education Department and College, resume responsibility for the functions which the Society was intended to carry forward - aided perhaps by a panel of active academic advisers on a national level?"

Current Retail Developments: and the Co-operative Counterattack

D. G. HOPWOOD

(Department of Marketing, University of Lancaster)

The background to this particular discussion paper originally relates to two sources of comment in the past, The main source concerns chapter four on "Changing shopping patterns" of that very fascinating study "The future pattern of shopping" issued by the Neddy for the Distributive Trades in 1971. In a questionnaire study the respondents on average forecast an estimated Coop share of total retail trade of 8 per cent in 1975 compared to the once held market shares of 12 per cent in 1957 and 9 per cent in 1966.

The second comment relates to a graduate student seminar I conducted at Lancaster where after explaining that in 1971 retail society sales in the North West rose on average by 4.6 per cent compared to the national Coop increase of 4.5 per cent, I was asked to give a comparative figure for Lancastria alone. When I answered that they had recorded a 14.3 per cent increase for that year without being involved in a major takeover move for another society the student promptly replied "then what on earth were the others doing?", At this point I felt a need to get behind the figures and to go out into the field to see the position of modern Coop store developments in relation to the progress being made by their main trade competitors.

Field expenditure is both time consuming and costly even when one limits overnight visits to the bare minimum. At the outset I must first of all thank the head of the Marketing Department at the University of Lancaster, Mr. Michael Thomas, for agreeing readily to my departure from the University for one or two days a week on information collection surveys for a distribution course- part of which time I used to obtain data for this particular paper. Travelling expenses were heavy and here a combination of sources were used-the Society for Co-operative Studies (for which I must thank the committee), the Co-operative Press (who kindly backed my activities to some extent by commissioning articles from me for both the Co-operative News, and Co-operative Management and Marketing) and also from my own private resources out of past consultancy work on retail store location with retail societies.

Regional Societies in the North West

I have tended to confine my present research studies to the North West of England, and to Scotland. These areas jointly form a huge and geographically scattered region and the contrast of areas in both England and Scotland is deliberate because they are serviced by two different national wholesale organisations. The population of Scotland is around 5.23 million, while the population of my concept of the North West covers roughly 7¾ million. (My definition includes Cumbria in addition to the Co-operative Union "North West" boundaries, so it takes in a region which starts at Stoke and goes forward northwards to Carlisle).

The 1971 Co-op turnovers of these two distinct regions were remarkably similar. In the north west region, turnover reached £164.41 million for the first time compared to £147.49 million in 1968. The figure for Scotland in 1971

was £165.2 million compared to £158.61 million in 1968. The rate of sales growth was noticeably slower in Scotland. At the end of 1971 there were 52 societies in the North West compared to 81 societies in Scotland, counting S.C.R.S. and S.C.W.S. as one unit.

In general, regional societies are more widely accepted in the North West than in Scotland, though it should be emphasised that the widely scattered areas of Northern and Western Scotland (including the Highlands and Outer Isles) are run entirely by the Scottish Co-operative Society.

Regional societies in the North West include (1) Birkenhead, turnover £18.9 million in 1971, which stretches out to cover parts of North Wales, as well as a wide stretch of Cheshire plain; (2) Lancastria which has a £18.8 million territory starting from Southport and Leyland in the south and extending northwards to take in Kendal, Sedbergh, and Windermere; (3) Norwest, 1971 turnover £18.5 million, which operates in the Greater Manchester region and in particular covers Manchester, Salford and Stockport; and (4) Bolton and Wigan, turnover in 1971 £11.9 million. Finally in the extreme north there is a society, Cumbria, which one day may obtain the turnover figures of around £10 million, which will properly designate it as a regional society so far as I am concerned. It covers a large geographical region already taking in West Cumbria as well as Carlisle but so far has only reached a turnover of around £5 million a year.

Besides these large area societies there are other medium sized societies that at some future date may constitute regional societies-Blackburn, Liverpool, and Rochdale societies to give but a few examples.

With its move into Runcorn New Town, Warrington society is already rapidly becoming a regional society as distinct from being dominant in one main commercial centre only. (5) In the extreme southern section of this region, based in the Stoke area but also covering southern Cheshire is the fast-growing Normid society, 1971 turnover £9.5 million.

Position in Scotland

In Scotland, the position is rather different. The one really large society here is St. Cuthberts, Edinburgh, turnover £20.1million in 1971. This was a dominant area organisation before the concept of "regional society" became fashionable. The new Scottish Co-operative Society, in addition to covering the northern part of Scotland as previously mentioned, in effect also administers a large regional society in the Glasgow district. Then there is the Northern Aberdeen society, turnover £9.1 million in 1971. But recent unsuccessful attempts to form large regional societies in both Fife and North Lanarkshire seem characteristic of the slow pace of Co-op structural change in this region. The position in districts such as Ayrshire is especially fragmented by the large proliferation of neighbouring small societies despite the existence of an Ayrshire society based on both Ayr and Kilmarnock. In the vicinity of Falkirk and Stirling there are other clusters of small neighbouring societies.

This foregoing introduction is a necessary background to any examination of the Co-op position in these areas today. It is commonly stated in both national press articles and formal and informal business discussions wherever distributors, consumer goods and food manufacturers and property men get together (often at education and trade conferences) that although the national Wholesale Societies

have made energetic attempts "to put their house in order in recent years" the failure of retail societies to take sufficient advantage of these changing Wholesale strategies have been mainly responsible for the Movement's continual failure to do more than stay in a near static position in the retail economy in the past few years.

N.E.D.C. Questionnaire

The N.E.D.C. "future pattern of shopping" puts it delicately that "since 1966, however, the pace of change in the movement has become much more rapid: to cite a few examples, there have been "Operation Facelift"; vigorous television advertising, a much more determined reduction in the number of societies, considerable rationalisation of sites, and in many cases the replacement of the old "divi" by stamps - "there is evidence that the present organisational changes are going a long way towards stopping the slide in the co-ops market share-largely by making the movement behave more like any other multiple".

Despite these comments however, respondents to their questionnaire predicted a future Co-op market share "8 per cent in 1975, stabilising at that level or just below it". In contrast to this view of the Co-operative future, "respondents to the questionnaire foresaw a substantial increase in the share of total sales which would be made by multiples"- "the reason for this lies in the management resources on which they can draw, and in their ability to buy in large quantities and supply common services to their stores. Because of their economies of operation and their ability to attract relatively high customer traffic, they can afford the higher rents in the new shopping developments, which many independents cannot, and they are also in a position to bargain for rent concessions, since their presence and reputation will help to draw customers to a new development".

Another important retail store category, the department stores, "were expected to maintain the same proportion of trade (5 per cent) in both 1975 and 1980" and here allowances were made for "a continued tendency to move to the suburbs and new centres of population". Since then Debenhams, House of Fraser, and the John Lewis Partnership have shown a readiness to IMPROVE their own personal market shares: example the Debenham takeover of Caters, the Home Counties supermarket group, and their projected superstore site at Walkden, Lanesh; if these approaches are typical they suggest that the department stores as a group may actually INCREASE their market share, at the expense of other types of retail organisation, such as the Co-ops.

Particular Co-operative Developments in N.W.

I now want to look at a few major Co-op developments in the north west in order to see what the pace setting Co-ops are doing to improve the image at the local society level.

The Birkenhead society recently opened a 50,000 sq. ft. hypermarket at Woodchurch, Birkenhead. It is well sited off an interchange from the M53 motorway. What made it particularly interesting for me was the decision to develop it despite the existence of their central department store premises in the town centre three miles away. There is at present a major town centre reconstruction scheme in progress at Birkenhead which also involves the erection

of a large new retail market. Last November, the same society opened up a conventional two floor small department store in Wrexham, North Wales, Forthcoming projects include a 35,000 sq. ft. superstore at Middlewich, Cheshire - a scheme that has already aroused strong opposition from existing traders there and led to a feature on the new site in the BBC "Look North" regional news programme. The society have also taken 60,000 sq. ft. in the new Belle Vale shopping centre to be developed on the other side of the Mersey, in Liverpool though covering Birkenhead society trading territory.

In summary, this rate of activity hardly characterises the position of a society acting in a static situation, even allowing for the need to engage in new development these days to avoid losing a section of one's market share. My students find it significant, as I do, that the C.E.O. of Birkenhead, Mr. K. Medlock, is a trained engineer by background. This may help to make him less hidebound by the traditional conventions of Co-operative accountancy. I mention this because it has been suggested that sometimes the mystiques of this profession inhibit some senior officials from taking on a commercial challenge. (A good example of this well known to me personally is where old established store buildings occupying premium sites pay few occupancy charges so that it seems a major hurdle to move to taking on leased premises for trade expansion schemes where inevitably modern property rentals are involved). However not all societies following traditional Co-op accounting practices find this gap a psychological hurdle so presumably this is not always the full story. Presumably if the senior managers feel the investment is desirable, whether to protect their existing interests, or to expand their market share, they will go ahead anyway whatever the system of investment evaluation adopted by the accountant.

I had better make it clear that I am a member of Lancastria Society, but if I were unhappy about their performance I would not hesitate to comment. In the past year they have opened up new junior department stores with large ground floor food department areas at both Arndale Centre, Morecambe, and the Chapel Street development, Southport. In addition, they recently opened a new non-food department store at Preston adjacent and running into the new municipal retail market. This is in addition to a number of new supermarket openings in recent years. Mr. McKelvie is not an engineer by background, and under questioning by my students I could only add that his chief distinguishing feature to others is his Scottish ancestry of which he is understandably very proud. Perhaps I could add a comment in his favour made to me recently by a competitor of his in the Lancaster Conservative Club. (I was there as a guest!). "Before McKelvie came here nobody bothered much about the Co-op. They just went on in the same old way as they had done in years past. Then he got appointed as manager and one has got to admit that for the first time ever in this town, we started treating the local Co-op as a serious trade competitor". Travelling up and down the country it is clear to me that there are still too many locally important trading centres where nobody bothers much about the Co-op since "they go on in the same old way as they have done for many years before." Perhaps Mr. McKelvie will enlighten us as to what makes him tick.

The other week I visited Wigan. Here the Bolton and Wigan society, under the management of Mr. Perrow, are opening a new junior department store in a new

town centre redevelopment scheme at Wigan opposite the famous and very popular municipal retail market. In addition, the society will have a large supermarket in the same development. Wigan is a very competitive trading centre with an Asda superstore a mile away to the west, and Lennons, Tesco and Whelans, all with town centre supermarkets, and in the non food sector, British Home Stores, C and A Modes, Debenhams, and Marks and Spencer all have busy stores here.

To the south west of Wigan is Bryn, formerly part of the trading area of the old Park Lane Society. Having friends in this area I have watched the dismal trading performance of that latter society over the years with some regret and several times have reported on the situation to senior C.W.S. officials. In particular Park Lane neglected the fast-growing town of Ashton-in-Makerfield but I was informed by the C.W.S. staff that nothing could be done about it, since Park Lane was an autonomous small society, and further there were many more societies like this in other parts of the country. However, I was pleased to discover that the Bolton society are now to open a new 10,000 sq. ft. supermarket at Bryn in a bid to retain the local Co-op market share there. (In retrospect I suspect that the Asda site investigators when deciding to locate a superstore at adjacent Golbourne were influenced in their choice by the poor showing of this inefficient local society).

Retail Investment in N.W. and Scotland

So, in brief outline then here are some of the latest projects involving three large regional societies in the north west. Before going on to look at Co-op developments in Scotland, something should be stated about the general environment for retail investment. Apart from Cumbria, this North West region has been the subject of much town centre retail construction activity in recent years. Superstore developments in unconventional retail surroundings have been numerous too with Asda in particular in the lead with new stores at such places as Bolton (Astley Bridge), Colne, Golbourne, Widnes, and Wigan. Whelans have a similar project at St Helens, while "limited line" food price discounters Kwik-Save have stores with good adjoining parking facilities at Bury, Rochdale, Southport, and Wrexham and other centres. There is one Woolco store in the region at Middleton (in the Arndale Centre), and now Tesco have won a very competitive bidding session to get permission to open up a new 50,000 sq. ft. store at Horwich, near Bolton. (Reference has already been made to the new Debenham superstore project at Walkden, Lanes.)

By comparison, many Scottish towns lack major shopping schemes, and unconventional superstore developments are also rare, two notable exceptions being at Aberdeen (Fine Fare) and Portobello, Edinburgh (Asda).

Co-operative Development in Scotland

I am sorry that I am not able to give comparative details of similar modern Co-op developments in Scotland despite considerable travel in recent months in that area. This is a fairly private audience, so I don't feel inclined to act in too restrained a manner on this particular point.

In recent months I have visited Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Dumfries, central Glasgow, Greenock, and Paisley, and yet I have not been over impressed with what I have seen in the Co-op sector. Perhaps in context I should emphasise

that there have not been many new shopping schemes in these areas apart from the new town centre at Cumbernauld. There is a new shopping centre at Paisley and another one in process of being constructed at Greenock. (I have so far not visited East Kilbride where a major Co-op store is currently being built nor Aberdeen where there is a new department store).

Taking Airdrie and Coatbridge together, there is one major new Fine Fare superstore here, while at Dumfries, Templetons have a new large supermarket; it was at Dumfries that Asda recently unsuccessfully applied to erect a new superstore on the outskirts of the town. Cumbernauld is one of the few fast-growing population centres in Scotland* and here the major town centre shopping area is going to be radically enlarged with the opening of the first Woolco store in Scotland later this year. But unfortunately, the Kilsyth society which traditionally serviced the former village which preceded the new town is clearly inadequate to handle the shopping resources of such a fast-expanding centre. Despite occupying a reasonable site in the new town centre, it clearly does not know how to make the best use of it.

At Paisley, there is a new joint development in the new precinct between the local Paisley society and the Scottish Co-operative Society. The supermarket section does not stock either Clan or Co-op brand lines and the non-food area of this store handled too many sections on an inadequate basis. Several shoppers questioned in the centre took it to be a Co-op store while others did not know and took it to be "just another supermarket". It seemed strange to me that the store authorities went to such lengths to conceal ownership in such a strongly traditional Co-op centre as Paisley where the society's main department store premises tend to dominate a sizeable section of the central shopping area.

Modern shopping precinct developments together with an adjacent new main road at Greenock will cut off the local society department store premises at Crown Street from the main part of the new shopping centre. In addition, this society at present is not well equipped to deal with large modern supermarket developments and Tesco in particular has taken full advantage of this deficiency.

As far as the centre of Glasgow is concerned, like Liverpool, another important commercial city in my area of study, there are no town centre Coop stores at all. Just as many senior C.W.S. managers find it embarrassing that central Manchester is only served by the "remains" of Deansgate House, so must the Scottish Co-op Society be concerned that they are so weak in the centre of a city where they have their main trading headquarters.

As yet this is in effect an interim report, and since I do not yet know Scotland as well as I know North West England, it is possible that I have done Scottish co-operators something of an injustice. If so, then I willingly offer them my apologies.

Assessment of N.W.

Since this is not intended to be a one-sided report in favour of the North West, let me finish with a few critical comments on some societies in the North West. I have already enumerated the achievements of a number of expansion-minded regional societies.

*Population 5,000 in 1961, 32,000 in 1971, and 35,000 today.

On the other side of the coin, how is it that on one side of the Mersey (Birkenhead) you see a lively progressive society while on the other side of the river there exists a rather stagnant society in Liverpool. My students keep asking me this question and in general I cannot answer it. Further north, the new Cumbrian Society based on Carlisle clearly lacks the resources and perhaps the management initiative as well* to cope adequately with the shopping needs of nearly 100,000 people in West Cumbria, as well as Carlisle. It tends to be seen locally as a Carlisle society and so far, has had only limited acceptance as a regional society. At Barrow, in south Cumbria (Furness is now lost to Lancashire under the new local authority area system) the Co-op society has a woefully inadequate set of non-food central premises in a town somewhat neglected for multiple retail competition because of its rather remote physical position on the Furness peninsula in relation to the rest of England. A chance for the Co-op to be a dominant efficient local trader perhaps? Despite serving a population of almost 90,000 in the immediate vicinity, the local society has so far failed to equip itself to meet the possibility of fresh competition in the future. The result: Asda are currently erecting a purpose-built hypermarket on the site of a former brickworks only half a mile from the central Co-op premises.

The general theme of this paper is twofold. One aim is to encourage discussion as to why some Co-op societies are working hard to cope with the more demanding decade of the 1970s while others are stagnant; while the other purpose is to emphasise the fact that often the generalised statistics of both regional and national Co-op performance are both misleading and unfair to the better run Co-op societies. (They are equally flattering to the more inefficient societies too!)

I do teach quite a bit about the Co-ops and their trading problems particularly on a comparative international marketing basis, to both graduate and undergraduate students on our marketing courses. But as an academic, despite my sympathies and interest in the future of the trading movement, I have to aim to give my students a carefully balanced viewpoint of the Co-op sector in relation to other categories of trader in the retail economy. Overall, I am sorry to say that the Co-ops still do not come out particularly well in any comparative study on national retailing trends-yet locally in areas such as Birkenhead and Lancastria they come out well in terms of comparison with other retail organisations trading in the area.

Reason for Disparity

The reasons for this disparity in trading performance will, I hope, be discussed in the following Conference debate. I merely mention a few brief possibilities already raised by me in private discussions with a number of senior Co-op personalities.

1. It is sometimes argued both inside and outside the Co-op Movement (latest external critic being Mr. James Goldsmith of Cavenham Foods)

*In fairness to the new C.E.O., Mr. Peter Henderson, it should be stated that Cumbria was formed from a number of formerly weak societies with no clearly efficient existing society to be used as a base for further consolidation and expansion. This fact must distinguish it from the Birkenhead, Bolton, and Lancastria societies, though the latter society in particular inherited a number of serious management problems from the former large Blackpool and Fleetwood and Preston societies.

that employee control and/or representation either directly on the board or in terms of being the main influence on voting behaviour for election and re-election of candidates to the board hinders expansion minded managements in their development plans. There is a lack of clear evidence here and I can think of a number of progressive societies where employee influence is considered strong as well as less successful trading societies where direct employee representation on the board is relatively weak.

2. Another point sometimes raised especially by newcomers to C.W.S. staff rank is that the known political affiliations of the Co-operative Movement is a commercial handicap not experienced by their stronger trading competitors. If this were so, other things being equal, one would expect to find Co-op societies commercially successful in areas with high Labour party voting strength but relatively weak in the main Conservative voting areas. Of course, "other things are not always equal", hence despite trading in a number of solid Labour voting areas in Liverpool, that particular Merseyside society is not exactly renowned for its successful trading performances in that vicinity. The Co-op sometimes is weak in strong Conservative voting areas but even then the Lancastria society, to give but one example, has several successful supermarkets operating in middle class and Conservative voting areas-examples being at Bowness and Kendal in Westmorland.

None of the main societies in the North West engage in political activity to the extent that both the London and Royal Arsenal societies do in the London Metropolitan area and it maybe that this low political profile is partly responsible for Co-op stores being seen as trading stores rather than as shops directly associated with a political party. It would need a major consumer household research exercise to determine what type of consumer were basically reluctant to enter a Co-op store even if the location of the site was convenient to them personally, has a good range of merchandise, and a competitive list of prices as well as being a clean and well managed store.

3. Clearly the calibre of the Board is very important in this context both in selecting the C.E.O. and his senior management team, knowing how to retain their services when it is in the best interests of the society that there be no changes in top management, and thirdly in knowing when and how to put increased pressure upon the senior executives perhaps even requiring their early retirement or dismissal or demotion from senior management responsibilities. I do not suggest that we aim at a management turnover rate similar to that experienced in some well-known football league clubs but certainly some Co-operative societies seem over tolerant in this important aspect of boardroom control.
4. I sometimes think that the general lack of membership interest in voting for board members (even amongst many staff employees in some societies) tends to bring about potential weaknesses at senior management level but here again I concede that there are dangers in over generalisation on this point. I well remember an interview where the C.E.O. of a good and large

society (X) was reluctant to take over responsibility for a medium sized neighbouring society, (Y). The latter were well known for their internal political squabbles involving also certain members of the board. "If we take them over now we shall be dragged down to their level" was the comment I received at an interview. Other good managers in the commercial sense have confided to me that they manage much better "without all this democratic interference. Its all right for the Co-operative Union to expect more membership involvement. they are not involved in the day to day running of a society". *

I anticipate some comment that I equate "good" Co-op managers with those who aim at achieving good commercial operating standards of performance. The onus is upon these critics to suggest instead what standards or targets they think senior managers ought to aim at. In the absence of clear acceptable alternative guidelines, one cannot be surprised if "successful" managers aim to apply strict commercial standards to the operation of retail societies. I think this point important because long term there will probably be more mobility between managers in the private and Co-op trade sectors-than there is now-a movement parallel to the interchange in staff that already takes place between the C.W.S. and private trade manufacturers and distributors. Ambitious Co-op managers aiming for a transfer to senior positions in a different Co-op or to a private retail organisation, will not want to seem lacking in administrative ability because their existing organisation lacks a good rate of return on its capital. It would perhaps be preferable for a society report to add the following statement to the accounts "as deliberate board policy we have kept open twelve small uneconomic branches to service the requirements of our membership. Collectively they accounted for a loss of £8,000 in the current financial year". One could then delete that aspect of the society's affairs when evaluating the success of the senior management of the society.

This paper is aimed mainly at provoking a conference discussion as to why some societies are improving their trading standards at a time when others are stagnant or are even in decline. It in no way provides all the answers-but merely suggests a few possibilities for further debate. Others will no doubt wish to add their own suggestions to the brief list of comments I have made.

I have focussed especially upon the North West and Scotland because these are two different geographical areas of interest to me at present. But as many of you will be aware the problems highlighted are to be found to some extent in all other regions of the British Isles as well. Hence it would be a great mistake to think that the issues briefly raised in this paper are peculiar to Co-op societies in the North West and Scotland alone.

Copyright, Desmond Hopwood, Department of Marketing, University of Lancaster.
4.3.73

*In this respect it is interesting to see that both Brierleys and Fine Fare are experimenting with shopper committees at the store level.

Co-operative Democracy- A Final Comment ?

by

DR. T. F. CARBERRY

(Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde)

A distinguished Professor of Economics who is an expert on the Swedish economy and on the Swedish trade unions has spoken and written so frequently on the subject that he is on record as having observed that sometimes he wishes he had never been to Sweden-which considering he has a Swedish wife was perhaps not the most politic of observations.

I offer this as an opener because I, for my part, am sometimes tempted to say that I wish I had never ventured to comment on the working of (and failure of) Co-operative Democracy. Were I to do so, however, that too would be impolitic so I shall not say it.

Nonetheless having written on the matter on at least four occasions; participated in one Working Party's examination of the problem; spoken on it some ten or so times and having been rebuked by such distinguished critics as Ted Edmondson, Will Lawn, Frank Rodgers and George Random I now not only carry my battle scars but feel them.

A Diagnosis

Some of those present will recall that my first and second ventures into print on this matter were two fairly controversial articles in Co-operative Management & Marketing. At the risk of being repetitive and indeed tautological it could be said that the essence of the case argued in these pieces was that the great highwater marks of (talented) Co-operative Democratic Involvement were for economic, social and educational reasons behind us. Both quantitatively and qualitatively the field of potential Co-operative activists from which Directors of Boards are normally drawn has diminished and this trend would have become markedly more evident had it not been for the contraction in the number of societies. Already in some parts of the country no *real* election to the Board takes place. Such societies are prepared to fill a vacancy by appointing virtually anyone in membership who is willing to become a Director. The end result of such a situation is, in my view, that the standard of Directors is falling. (If anyone present denies this is true of his society or more particularly of himself let him be regarded as a sort of French irregular verb).

This set-up was and is being married to a situation wherein professionals are exercising increasing de facto power, acquiring same by a widening knowledge-cum-phraseology gap vis-a-vis the non-specialist Board members.

-And a Proposal

My "solution" to this problem situation was a re-structured Board made up of three constituent elements:

50% would be elected from and by the lay activists as at present, and who would provide the President.

25% would be made up of the C.E.O. and either two of his immediate lieutenants or one such lieutenant and one Board member elected by the staff of the society.

25% would be made up of people favourably disposed towards the Society and with areas of expertise-such as accountancy, business finance, statistics, management, marketing, operational research, commercial law-who would be co-opted to the Board.

Basically the idea was that the having-been-co-opted experts would bring somewhat greater critical faculties to bear on the pronouncement of the C.E.O. and his team. In blunt terminology the presence of such 'experts' would, it was hoped, ensure less likelihood of the Board being "blinded by science" by the management team. Moreover it was suggested, perhaps with undue optimism and charity, that the management team would welcome being submitted to a more informed review. It was hoped too that by way of a by-product effect the conventional lay experts would learn more quickly than at present, for the discussions between the two teams of expertise would take place not only before them but with a view to winning their support.

As for the reason why the non-employee experts had to be co-opted instead of elected the short answer was that they were not likely to have such time at their disposal as would enable them to attend monthly/quarterly meetings and do the carousel of guilds and other auxiliaries which constitute the traditional route to the Board room.

These offerings did not enjoy a good reception!

On the contrary they were subjected to considerable criticism. In effect such criticism fell into two categories.

The Objections

First there were those who objected to what were seen as derogatory, impolite observations about C.E.O.s. Some of this criticism was contradictory. Thus some C.E.O.s said the position was *not* as I had described it, while others said it *was* but that it was both necessary and all for the best in the best of all possible co-operative worlds.

The other group of critics were the lay activists and here again there were sub-divisions.

- (i) There were those who did not like the idea of co-option. To them it was wrong in principle!
- (ii) the other group here was, as I saw it, one of perversity or sheer "thrawnness". Their attitude was that they had no great interest in the *principle* of co-option, but they had carried the heat and burden of the day and anyone else who wanted to aspire to the dizzy heights of power of a Board of Directors of a retail society was going to have to "suffer his Purgatory", "thole his Assize". "There'll be nae back door entry to wur board" declared one Scots octogenarian waving his arm around his septuagenarian colleagues.

It is possible however that despite the fury of the condemnation of the late sixties, the opposition to the concept of co-option has diminished. It seems to me the opposition is less stubborn than it was. As though it were an indicator of that movement in opinion the Educational Executive of the Union agreed to co-opt four people from differing areas of expertise. It is for those who co-opted myself and my co-opted colleagues to say whether or not we make a contribution which justifies their action.

Before leaving this issue of the co-option scheme there is one more point to be made regarding it.

While not a few folk were telling me I was an iconoclastic radical or an elitist, Frank Rogers wrote a piece in the *Co-operative News* (7.2.70 page 6) in which he said that my solution was "an advance on the traditional co-operative... board". For all that as Mr. Rogers saw it, it was not good enough, for he went on " ... it is not the kind of 'new thinking' which will have any great effect in the last 30 years of the twentieth century. The idea would have been a good one some 30 or 40 years ago. The time has now passed when we can tinker ... "

Mr. Rogers' solution was much more radical: indeed it was titled "A Time for Radical Reform". That article is well worthy of re-reading but as I saw it Mr. Rogers' solution was an all-time non-starter. If my modest "tinkering" provoked the fury and hostility it did, there seemed no likelihood that the Movement would be prepared to embrace a markedly more radical solution.

More recently at the 1973 (Dunoon) Educational Convention I gave a not very profound paper titled "Co-operation at the Top". It was an attempt to spell out the basic skills which, one hoped, lay Board members would attain. It would of course be possible by the co-option arrangement to acquire some directors who already held some such skills and attributes.

"People rather than Structure"

My third contribution to the debate on Co-operative Democracy was when I undertook a series of speaking engagements on the title 'People rather than Structure'. This took me to Gilsland Hall, Newcastle, Loughborough, and Weston-super-Mare. Again the message was simple and was an extension of the first. Without in any way disassociating myself from the blue-backed book on "Democracy in Regional Societies" put out by the Educational Executive or even being in any way severely critical of the green-backed "Democratic Involvement in a Regional Society" put out by R.A.C.S. Education Dept., it seemed to me that these publications made the mistake of concentrating on structure rather than attending to the problem of where the Movement was to obtain the men and women who would give life to the structures evolved. This was not and is not to say that structure is not important: of course it is. But if the structure is wrong and the people are right, they will amend the structure whereas were the structure to be right and the people to be wrong (in the sense of not being equal to their task) or non-existent then the correctness of the structure would be of no avail.

In enlarging on that argument I tried to indicate why the Movement had shunned away from this issue i.e. I admitted there were difficulties in looking at people.

As for a solution here again I looked at co-option but went beyond to look at the facilities for and the nature of co-operative meetings and compared the experiences of different societies which had experimented with inviting new members to become something other than shoppers. In retrospect however, I would reckon that the most controversial items in that third contribution were when I questioned whether certain sections of the Movement really wanted new activists and when I suggested that the debate on Co-operative Democracy was

in danger of being pointless until the Movement spelt out with much greater clarity than hitherto what it meant by Co-operative Democracy in the current trading situation.

Role of the Board?

And so to the fourth contribution. In mid-1972 I went to Newcastle and spoke again on the matter of Co-operative Democracy. On that occasion I tried to grapple with what is perhaps the most paramount question of all-i.e. what are the lay members of the Board there to do? As George Random was to bring out in a critical piece based on press coverage of the address (*Co-operative Review*, July 1972 p.6) I started from the premise that control of most contemporary societies has passed to the executives. I argued that the inference here had been that whatever the desirability of such a move there had been a certain inevitability about it were the Movement to win the "Battle of the High Street". By inference then it was a situation akin to that when during the war we surrendered our freedoms in order to win a war waged to protect our freedoms. Given that that analogy was to be continued it followed that when the Movement had won the battle of the market place-or even when a particular society saw itself as over the hump-real decision-making should flow back to the lay board members.

It was my view then that executives should be invited now to discuss with lay members what degree of success should be regarded as 'victory'; as being the point at which their powers diminished somewhat and that of lay activists increased. Were no satisfactory answer to be forthcoming we could arrange the requiems of Co-operative Democracy. But given that in some instances the answers were satisfactory the lay activists would henceforth have a double incentive for seeing that the Society prospered. There would I suspected be a marked dichotomy in the attitudes of C.E.O.s. This in the same way as Ulster Unionists split in their acceptance and rejection of the 1973 White Paper so too C.E.O.s would split between the Black Knights who would make it evident they were not prepared to surrender power ("No surrender" being the cri de coeur in both instances) and the White Knights who would co-operate. One did not win prizes for spotting who would be the Faulkners and the Craigs of the situation. Of course there would be dangers in such situations-not the least of them being that one could envisage situations wherein a C.E.O. struggled gallantly to make a society viable whereupon power was resumed by the lay activists who thereafter ran it into the red again and the C.E.O.-or his successor-had to start all over again. But such dangers are inherent in a Democratic situation for democracy implies choice and choice implies not only the ability but the right to choose unwisely.

A Hope for Progress

More hopefully I envisaged the return of real decision-making to the activists being confined (by their own wish) at least initially to "opportunity cost" situations. Two examples might help. The first is the recurring situation where-in an old, working-class area is being demolished and the people rehoused. In such a situation there may be a number of old people, difficult to rehouse,

living in the area wherein too there is but one shop and that a Co-op shop which be- cause of the loss of trade is uneconomic. Should the shop be closed or kept open? The arguments for closing are essentially commercial and economic: the arguments for retention are almost entirely social. It would however be possible for the C.E.O. to make a statement as to current loss, current utilisation, projected loss and projected utilisation and invite the Board to say whether or not their compassion for the old people remaining in the area is of such a nature as warrants picking up the price-tag. Another example again involves elderly people. It is the now well-known half pint of milk problem wherein old people have no need for more, but where the economics of milk production make for the uniform one-pint unit. Again the issue is compassion v economy: again the decision in an otherwise viable society should lie with the Board.

When the argument was reported in the *Co-op News* (by a reporter whom I took to be rather unimpressed) various leading Co-operators including two Co-op M.P.s wrote saying I was right.

Yet as indicated, George Random of the *Co-operative Review* thought otherwise. As I understood him, he agreed with my basic tenet that unless democracy is fully restored, if and when the battle of the High Street is won, the battle is largely meaningless anyway, but he went on. "I thought, however, that if correctly reported Dr. Carbery was somewhat naïve in suggesting that those executive officers who have been given something approaching autocratic powers to wage the present battle, should be asked to state the stage of advance at which democracy would again be allowed to function". Mr. Random went on to observe that in national politics we had at least had a Parliament that if and when it granted emergency powers it reserved the right to end them. "The decision," said Mr. Random, "is not left to the civil servants" and so to Mr. Random's main point. "To ask the executive officers, who presumably have a wider measure of freedom at present, to state the level of success which they think they should reach before surrendering those rights to unfettered decision making, is like asking the dictator to state in advance that at a prescribed time and circumstance he will submit to the will of the people". "By all means," he continued though now in heavier type "have a declaration of intent but let that declaration be made on behalf of the members by a body capable of ensuring that the intent is operated at the right time."

The difficulty here is that at national level there is no such deliberative body. Congress could pronounce. The Central Executive could-but will not. In either event the pronouncement would be ignored by those who chose to ignore it-and those too afraid to implement it. At local society level, each Board, each A.G.M., could pronounce now as they could emasculate or even dismiss the powerful, power-exercising C.E.O. but they do not nor will they.

And a Reassertion

In other words my riposte to Mr. Random is akin to that to Mr. Rogers. If my mild ameliorative approach is difficult to attain, the more radical, brave, courageous, foolhardy-let each choose his own descriptive adjective-scheme is in even less likelihood of attainment.

At the end of the day then I have nothing that is new to contribute-merely reiteration.

- (i) The Co-operative Movement still needs to recruit ability on the hoof.
- (ii) It needs such people more than it needs new structures.
- (iii) Some opportunity-cost decision-making should be assumed by lay Boards and this should occur on a more widespread basis than it does at present.
- (iv) If negotiations between each C.E.O. and his existing lay Board (and those whom they represent) cannot agree on a success point where real decision-making starts flowing back to the Board (and this notwithstanding frightening dangers) then Co-operative Democracy is dead, and we had better start re-writing the text books.

Consumer Education and Protection

REPORT FROM A WORKING PARTY

Bulletin No. 17 published a report to the Education Executive on the problem of projecting Co-operative principles and with it a comment from Professor J. Banks. The Executive has now received a Report from a Working Party in Consumer Education and Protection and will be taking this to its Conference at Easter 1973 and discussing further action. In the meantime, we are printing this Report and with it comments from Mrs. Jennifer Jenkins, Chairman of the Consumers' Association and from Dr. T. F. Carbery, author of "Consumers in Politics".

1 Introduction

In the autumn of 1971 the Education Executive, with the agreement of the Central Executive, took the initiative in bringing together a Working Party to examine the present role of the Co-operative Movement in the fields of consumer education and protection. The aim of the Working Party was "to identify objectives for the Movement in these areas and the further lines of action which are needed".

2 Membership

The composition of the Working Party was as follows:

Co-operative Wholesale Society	MR. C. CROSS
Chief Executive Officer, Ipswich	MR. T. R. EDMONDSON
Co-operative Society	
Vice-Chairman, Education Executive	MR. W. FROST, J.P.
Secretary, Co-operative Party	MR. T. E. GRAHAM
Chief Executive Officer, Greater	MR. L. A. HARRISON
Nottingham Co-operative Society	
General Secretary, Co-operative	MRS. K. KEMPTON
Women's Guild	
Chairman, Education Executive	MR. W. E. LAWN
Member Relations Officer, South	MR. H. T. J. PICHOWSKI
Suburban Co-operative Society	
Parliamentary Secretary,	MR. J. M. WOOD
Co-operative Union	

In attendance from the College and Education Department were Mr. R. L. Marshall, O.B.E., M.A., Chief Education Officer, Mr. J. R. Hammond, Officer for Member Education, Mr. B. J. Rose, Tutor in Social Studies, and Mr. W. F. Pickard, Member Education Development Officer. Mr. Hammond acted as Secretary to the Working Party.

3 Documentation

We considered the following documents in the course of our discussions:

- "The Role of the Movement in Consumer Protection and Education" and "Consumer Education Work of the Consumer Council": submitted by the Education Department.

- "A Co-operative Journal": two papers submitted by Mr. C. Cross and Mr. T. Edmondson.
- "A Consumer's Charter?": submitted by Mr. J.M. Wood.
- "Consumer Affairs - A Co-operative Approach": submitted by the Co-operative Party.
- "Consumer Protection and the Co-operative Movement": the address by Mrs. J. Jenkins to Easter Convention 1972.

We also took account of various motions submitted to recent Co-operative Conferences.

4 The Consumer Role of the Movement as Trader

In the Independent Commission Report of 1958, consumer protection is discussed as one of the four main economic principles of co-operation. The discussion in the Report did not in fact give rise to any specific recommendations, but the Commission proposed three aims for each Retail Society as follows:

"First, to sell at prices which are never consistently undercut by any major competitor: secondly, never to sell shoddy or untested merchandise, but only goods for which it is willing to accept complete responsibility: thirdly, to maintain the highest standard of shop location, layout, appearance and service". (Page 24).

At a later point, the Commission remarked on the Movement's having no internal conflict between shareholder and consumer, and observed that for this reason

"It is especially well placed to represent the consumer in all matters of public policy. In its evidence to Government bodies ... it does and should take account solely of the interests of the consumer; and it should be known in the public eye as the one trading organisation which can be relied upon to do so".

That these aims have not been fully realised was common ground. None the less, Co-operative thinking generally has remained reasonably consistent since the Commission reported.

There has been in the past two decades a continuing and possibly an accelerating growth in what we may dignify with the term "consumerism". By this we mean a public initiative in the form of voluntary organisation at both local and national level (an initiative which no doubt reflects the increasing levels both of education and expectation within our society), consequent pressure for statutory attention to the consumer 'safety-net', and a response by government in the form of continuing concern and legislation for the interests of the consumer. When we acknowledge this process, we must acknowledge also that the Movement has been only marginally concerned with it: hence, although to some extent we may have progressed in the direction of the Commission's aims, we may appear to have slipped back in the public eye as representing a significant agency for protecting the consumer's interests.

We regard it as most important that the Movement associates itself at all levels more closely with this new consumer consciousness; but at the same time, we urge that initiatives of this kind must be backed by practical trading developments which more clearly show the commitment of the Board and the management of individual retail societies, and also the wholesale societies.

5 The Consumer Role of the Movement as educator

We acknowledge the various attempts that are being made, notably by regional societies, to develop consumer education activities. So far, we see no evidence of a clear national pattern, and it may be that we have not yet reached the stage at which many of these initiatives can be properly evaluated.

It would be foolish to deny the apprehension of some Boards and managers about practical consumer activities mounted by Societies Education Departments which might impinge on the societies trading policy or prospects. *At the same time, we feel that whatever an Education Department may seek to do in consumer education will, because of the trading role of a society, be of very limited value unless it does impinge on trade.* For example, educationists may be concerned with the question of unit pricing and products, but any meetings they may organise, or any resolution they may pass, will be of little consequence unless a practical initiative is taken (or at least an experiment mounted) within stores.

It must therefore be a first priority for every society to maintain a realistic and practical dialogue between the Board and the Education Department. So far as this is achieved (and there are societies in which the relationship is very close, as there are societies in which it is almost non-existent) it will be possible for consumer education to be both taught and evidenced.

6 The Consumer Role of the Movement in relation to other organisations

As we have already mentioned, the Independent Commission discussed the Movement's "evidence to government bodies" and this function continues to be discharged. Both through the Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Union and through the Co-operative Party, both formal and informal representations are continually being made at Government level.

There are many ways in which the Movement can make progress in association with the non-co-operative consumer movement in general. We note particularly the work of Consumers Association with local authorities in setting-up consumer advice centres in shopping areas and are pleased that two recent ventures at Harlow and Greenwich owe much to local co-operative endeavour. We urge that societies should use their influence with local authorities to further such developments in other areas, and that they should be seen to be advocating this publicly.

In the nationalised industries generally-and specifically in the gas, electricity, transport, post office and health sectors-the consumer voice is ostensibly heard through a consumer consultative body. We noted with interest the evidence submitted by the Co-operative Party to the House of Commons Select Committee on relations with the public and nationalised industries, in which the Party advocated that a Consumer Panel, drawn from interested consumer-oriented bodies, should be established in every locality. We recognise a public need to increase consumers' opportunities to influence the policies of nationalised

industries as they affect the consumer, and the hope that co-operators both individually and collectively will give attention to this need.

7 A Code of Practice?

In the light of all these considerations, we recommend as our first priority that all retail societies consider subscribing to, and making public their commitment to, a "code of practice" which gives clear expression to the co-operative ideal of consumer protection.

We considered a code of practice adopted by various Canadian co-operatives, but although we agreed with its intentions we did not feel that it could be "transplanted" into a different organisational and cultural setting. Any code of practice to be used by British Co-operatives should, we feel, have two purposes: it should set appropriate guidelines for the managers and employees in their trading practices, and it should make the public aware of the society's own commitment.

We feel firstly that it is important that every employee of the society, from the Chief Executive Officer to the most junior assistant, should be aware that the society is committed to an ethical behaviour vis-a-vis the consumer. In the light of fierce competition in all fields of trade today, there is undoubtedly a temptation for societies' employees to regard increasing turnover as the first priority. There is surely nothing unethical in this, but as can clearly be seen from the public trading commitments of other national trading chains, a declared commitment to a line of action that protects the individual consumer has its place in successful enterprise.

It is the public awareness of this voluntary undertaking that gives it practical effect. It would be futile for any society to enter into such an undertaking unless it made all its customers aware of its commitment, and aware too of the advantages which are thereby offered to the customer. Hence, secondly, we urge that whatever code of practice may be entered into, it must be of such a kind that it can be communicated to, and understood by, the ordinary consumer.

We therefore submit in the Appendix to this Report our recommendations on a Code, on which we have agreed. There are naturally differences amongst us about extensions of the Code beyond this consensus-and there will be similar differences amongst societies. The Code, however, could, we believe, be adopted as a basis by all British consumer co-operatives and we urge the Education Executive to initiate suitable consultations with a view to its effective promulgation.

As a not unimportant footnote to the above, we feel that the existence of a publicly accepted Code might have direct consequences to societies in producing new trading initiatives. We were very conscious that there is no general "complaint procedure" within the British Movement; several, if not most other national trading chains have by now followed, largely if not entirely, what we may call the 'Marks and Spencer' policy of exchange-or-money-refunded- without-question. In the grocery field, Fine Fare (for example) print a "consumer guarantee" with a similar promise on many of their own-label brands, while Co-operative products have nothing comparable except in one or two cases such as sliced bread.

Differential pricing between societies would of course complicate the issue, particularly over cash refunds: but while we acknowledge the problems we feel

that the Movement can no longer ignore the trading advantages which are being pre-empted by its competitors.

8 Further recommendations affecting trading ventures

We agreed that our recommendations could not be expected to cover the whole field of consumer education and protection but would concentrate on particular developments which seemed to us to be worthy of pursuance at present.

- (a) The 'home economist' project. The Education Department has prepared a pilot scheme, along lines similar to those already undertaken by a number of co-operatives in Scandinavia and the United States (and discussed in the recently issued Co-operative College Paper 'Consumer Co-operatives in America', which we hope will be widely read), for a short-period experimental appointment. We feel that an experiment of this kind, including full evaluation of the results, is worthy of consideration by regional societies in particular.
- (b) The "point of sale" store project. The Education Department has recently been exploring the possibility of mounting an experimental short period project in a food supermarket, which would combine the provision of point-of-sale advice and information, a consumer advice stall, and a membership hand-out for shoppers. Again, this would need to be not only mounted but also properly evaluated, and we feel that such a venture would be most valuable in terms of the information it could yield. Assuming that the results are favourable, further explorations could be made to extend the project to the non-food area.
- (c) Consumer goods labelling. The demise of the Consumer Council, and the consequent withdrawal of the Teltag scheme, has stifled a valuable national initiative. We hope that the Movement at national level will use every opportunity to press for some similar development, but in the immediate future we recommend two specifically Co-operative possibilities:
 - (i) either as a part of the Code of Practice outlined above, or separately, all British societies could support specific labelling schemes such as the British Standards Institute's kitemark, and the British Electrical Approval Board's label. There are other examples, such as the Design Council label, but these two are the most important in our view. "Support" must be seen as a deliberate trading act, rather than just as an expression of approval in principle, and we hope that societies' Boards will give this practical attention.
 - (ii) the Movement as a whole could develop an informative reliable labelling scheme for its own-brand products, along similar lines to Teltag. We would like to see discussions on this initiated by the Co-operative Union with the wholesale societies in particular.

9 Member/Consumer Contact Journals

We have been greatly impressed by the potential of "member contact" newspapers and periodicals if they are seen as consumer-oriented rather than as public relations. We considered in particular the example of the Co-op News produced (at a net annual cost, sterling equivalent, of £32,500) by the Berkeley (California) Co-operative: this was an 8–12-page tabloid printed weekly and posted individually to 52,000 of the society's 56,000 members, free of charge.

This is of course on a scale that is far beyond the range of even the most ambitious education budget of any British society-equally, it is on a scale familiar to managers who think in terms of trade promotion. A sustained exercise of this kind is therefore only practicable if it is seen by the Society as a trading venture, and this demands again the close liaison between the Board and the Education Committee which we have already identified as a first priority. Of course, the problems are not exclusively financial, though the maxim "Who wills the end must will the means" seems to be applicable here.

We would not like to suggest that British societies have made no efforts in this field. We are aware of the excellent periodicals produced, among others, by Norwest, Greater Nottingham, and Leicestershire societies-and for many years London and Royal Arsenal Societies have expended considerable thought and money on attractive popularisations of their trading results. The trend is, and we welcome this development, extending itself to relatively smaller societies: the examples of Chelmsford and Hull societies are known to us.

But none of these endeavours are in any way comparable with the Co-op News of Berkeley. They tend to have (either deliberately or because of distribution problems) a high proportion of employee readers, they are in general produced at intervals of months rather than weekly, and (perhaps most important) the consumer element, as opposed to the trade-promotion element is generally slight. Nor would we belittle national Co-operative endeavours. The British Co-operative News, and its sister Scottish weekly, are both increasingly concerned with consumer issues; and we welcome this trend, which we hope to see continue. The Education Department, as a part of its Member Education Publications Service, produces a quarterly magazine CHECK with a circulation of just over 1,000. Nevertheless, in our view national publications must inevitably concentrate on national issues, even though these may be raised by local initiatives: what we would like to urge is the value of local, society, member contact journals which are mainly consumer oriented.

Neither we, nor indeed the Movement, are unanimous on this. We have studied carefully the papers on "A Co-operative Journal" from two of our members, Mr. Cross and Mr. Edmondson, which have greatly helped us: and we have considered particularly the notion of local insertions into a national format. The problems of cost, and of finding the necessary national finance at a time when the wholesale societies and the Co-operative Union are hard-pressed, seem to us on balance to make the idea of a national journal impracticable at present. The Chief Education Officer has, however, assured us that the Education Department is anxious, given a real expression of interest from one or more societies, to explore the whole question of a large-scale Society publication more fully: and we recommend the Education Executive to agree to finance a feasibility study of such a project using all necessary professional assistance, if and when the possibility presents itself.

Without detracting from the importance of the above, we urge all societies now to reconsider the degree of consumer contact they have with their share- holder-members. There are few useful opportunities, and these should surely be used to full advantage.

In particular, we recommend societies:

- (a) to introduce a consumer flavour into their quarterly, half-yearly or annual

meeting: this could have the additional advantage of enlivening such a meeting and making it more entertaining to the members, provided that whatever is done is designed to inform and help consumers and not as a straightforward act of trade promotion. We are pleased to note that the Education Department intend to develop this idea in a future issue of its bi-monthly leaflet 'Ways and Means', and trust that it will be widely circulated.

- (b) to seek to give in their Reports due attention to the phenomenon of "consumerism". The average member who is not an activist is likely to be far more receptive to material which suggests that his or her society is consumer-conscious, than to material which emphasises its trading successes and shop development. Again, we hope that the Education Department will develop this matter through their Publications Service.

10 We have been appraised of the National Consumer Conference project which is now in train, and which it is hoped will reach national fruition in the summer of 1973. We look to this project to have three desirable consequences:

- (a) it will encourage participating societies to recognise themselves, and to act, as a community focus of consumer initiatives and resources.
- (b) it will, when the Conference is concluded, enable the Education Department to identify the more fruitful lines of initiative, either actual or prospective, for consumer education ventures, and in its co-ordination will strengthen the flow of ideas and information between the Education Department and local societies.
- (c) it will help locally towards the development of a continuing dialogue involving many different aspects of the consumer interest, in which the society will, we hope, continue to play a real part.

We are glad to note that the project is being planned in full collaboration with Consumers' Association, the National Federation of Consumer Groups, and other bodies both Co-operative and otherwise. We recognise the valued initiative of South Suburban Society in sponsoring the motion at Education Convention 1971, and we commend the project to all societies.

11 Conclusion

Finally, we wish to record that in our review we have been made once more aware of both problems and prospects. "Consumerism" is a fact of our time, and one which we expect the forthcoming years to make more, not less, vital to the future of British co-operation. We have failed as a Movement, despite many small-scale successes, to respond to non-Co-operative initiatives: we have perhaps tended to think of the overtly democratic business of resolutions and meetings as a solution to this failure, though in our view this can only be a superficial palliative if it is not backed-as in historic perspective it can be seen not to have been backed-by trading enterprise: we may have relied on the notions of "consumer-controlled" and "consumer-oriented" more than our members would have recognised.

But the time is opportune for advance. We are all certain that practical consumer activities will strengthen Co-operation in both trade and education; what this report urges is that the activities must be fully co-ordinated, and that developments in one area are not matched by indifference in the other.

APPENDIX

A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BRITISH CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVES

1. Our society is in business to give its members and indeed all consumers a fair deal and value for money, including goods of reliable standards, at competitive prices and supported by effective customer and after-sales service. Our members own their society and exercise control through a democratically elected Board of Directors, and membership is open to all persons over the age of 16 years without regard to their race, beliefs, or creed.
2. We acknowledge and practice our obligations to consumers, whether they are members or not. Among the most important of these obligations are the following:
 - (a) We will observe the highest standards of truth and accuracy in all our advertising, claims, advice, and pricing.
 - (b) We will always seek to give full satisfaction to any consumer who has a genuine problem or complaint about our goods or services.
 - (c) We will observe all appropriate British codes of practice, such as that of the Retail Trading-Standards Association, and we will seek to adopt objective standards of quality where these exist in all our stores and shops.
 - (d) We will provide consumers wherever possible with adequate information about our merchandise so that they are enabled to make a rational choice.

We hope that all consumers will help us in bringing any failure in observing these principles to our notice: and we will provide information on the ways in which they can do this.

Consumer Education and Protection

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

by

JENNIFER JENKINS*

"Educationists may be concerned with the question of unit pricing and products, but any meeting they may organise, or any resolution they may pass, will be of little consequence unless a political initiative is taken (or at least an experiment mounted) within stores".

Crystallised in this single sentence is a sentiment which comes close to defining the consumers' attitude to the Co-operative Movement. Consumers look to the Co-operative Movement to put into effect those trading practices which will help to achieve the just treatment of consumers in the economy - a principle for which both have long fought. It is heartening therefore that the Working Party on Consumer Education and Protection should have so clearly recognised that a policy of principle must be allied to a programme of action. Equally important is the Working Party's stress on the need for the Movement to associate with the new consumer consciousness at *all levels*.

Perhaps the most interesting proposal is that for a Code of Practice which would give clear expression to the co-operative ideal of consumer protection. Unquestionably, the evolution and publication of a Code of Practice governing the conduct of trade which was recognisably fair and just to consumers would be a major step forward. Two questions, however, arise. To what extent are consumers themselves to be consulted in drawing up the Code and what action is to be taken to ensure that stores conform to it? As the report states, it would be futile for any society to enter into such an undertaking unless it made all its customers aware of its commitment, and aware too of the advantages. Very true, but consumers are likely to be sceptical of a document concerning their protection in whose derivation they have played no part, and cynical should it turn out to be paper not practice. This is not carping but simply concern that a promising idea should be developed effectively.

Initiatives in Trade

Another recommendation from the Working Party which, for the consumer, has interesting and important implications is that concerning the provision of information points in stores. CA's experience has shown how helpful these would be. It is quite apparent that at the critical point of contact between the consumer and the trader-the discussion at the time of an impending purchase between the shopper and the retail assistant-communication is often incomplete. Many shoppers would certainly benefit from having access to consumer information, particularly in respect of those products which are technically complex (like a sewing machine), and which represent a substantial outlay from the family budget. Information which would help the shopper to determine the best appliance, carpet, piece of furniture or item of kitchen equipment for her particular needs,

*Mrs. Jenkins is Chairman of the Consumers' Association.

Circumstances, and resources, would be worthwhile. And, from the traders' standpoint an informed consumer is much more likely to be a satisfied customer than one who is not. Moreover, the concept could be extended to include the provision in food departments of information about labelling, date marking, metric quantities, etc.

Labelling indeed is one of the areas in which the Working Party recommends action. Much of what is proposed is welcome, though consumers might like to see a greater willingness to experiment with unit pricing, perhaps in relation to a limited range of packaged goods like biscuits and detergents. The most ambitious proposal is that the Movement should develop its own informative labelling scheme along the lines of Teltag. An informative labelling scheme is certainly necessary, particularly in respect of furniture where the paucity of meaningful brand names and the widespread absence of consumer information of any sort makes the exercise of sensible choice virtually impossible. The question is whether the Movement should go it alone. From the consumers point of view, it would clearly be more helpful to have a national scheme, not one which applied only in a particular range of stores. However, the prospects of achieving this are bleak and perhaps the Movement could take a lead. At worst it would earn an increase in consumer gratitude, at best it might prompt others to follow the same line.

Role of Journals?

The ideas considered so far are stimulating and could potentially lead to substantial improvements in protecting and informing consumers. It is less easy to be enthusiastic about member/consumer contact journals. Admittedly the Berkeley example is impressive, but it seems both in cost and scope far beyond anything which a regional society in Britain could tackle. Even more doubtful is how helpful they could be as a means of communicating consumer information. Far more effective might be greater concentration on organising meetings of the kind run very successfully by the Nottingham Society where the communication process can be made both painless and entertaining. Additionally, the Education Department might produce for distribution through its Publication Service informative leaflets for widespread distribution—a shopper's guide to V.A.T. for example.

The concluding note must, however, be a welcoming one. The Working Party has made proposals—one or two of them very far-reaching indeed—which could be of great benefit to consumers. I would now like to see the development of these ideas proceed with as much ambition as the thinking which lead to them.

Consumer Education and Protection

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT

by

DR.T.F. CARBERRY*

THE RESOLUTION OF A DILEMMA?

For years, the Co-operative championship of the consumer has suffered from the Movement's apparent inability to break out of the confines of a particularly distasteful dilemma. It wanted to champion the consumer with even greater enthusiasm and zest than before and indeed spent a great deal of time and effort and money on campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the consumer. To that extent it did the consumer a great service-an activity which barely earned acknowledgment, far less gratitude. But it was not the lack of kudos which distressed the Co-operative champions of the consumers: it was the realisation that all too many Co-operative Stores, by failing to achieve acceptable standards, seemed to give the lie to this crusade. Logically therefore the Co-operative champions of consumer interest would have rounded on and exposed their deficient colleagues. Yet to do so could well have resulted in the downfall of some Co-op trading organisations which, for reasons which became all too evident on the occasion of the Millom incident, would in falling have brought down yet more, so giving way to a rapid and intensifying collapse which could have brought down the entire, or almost the entire, Co-operative structure. That would have terminated in no uncertain manner the proselytising by Co-operatives on behalf of the consumer. The lobbying and politicking would have ended.

In other words, unrestricted, unfettered Co-operative sponsorship of the consumer could have resulted in the termination of that very activity on any scale whatsoever. Yet without frank and public exposure of Co-operative trading deficiencies few were prepared to take seriously the Co-operatives claim to be the consumers' champion.

The Independent Commission's View

There now appears a report which may resolve this impasse.

In 1971 the Educational Executive of the Union brought into being a Working Party to examine the present role of the Co-operative Movement vis-a-vis the entire field of consumer education and protection.

The report reminds the reader of the very sensible observations on these topics which were made by the Independent Commission Report of 1958 when the Commission members proposed three aims for each Co-operative Retail Society. These proposals were:

"First to sell at prices which are never consistently under-cut by any major competitor:

secondly, never to sell shoddy or untested merchandise, but only goods for which it is willing to accept complete responsibility.

* Dr. Carberry is the author of "Consumers in Politics" - an account of the history and activities of the Co-operative Party.

thirdly to maintain the highest standard of shop layout appearance and service."

Furthermore, the Report of the Working Party went on to quote the Gaitskell/Crosland et al. document in its observations on the Movement's role of representative of the consumer.

But what is much more important here is that having done these things the Working Party observes succinctly that "... these aims have not been fully realised . . ."

The Working Party observe that they regard it as important that the Movement associates itself much more than hitherto with the expanding consumer consciousness. But what is more regrettable is that it does not probe more than it does on why there is a shortcoming here; why there is ground to be made up: or to put it at its simplest why the aspirations of the Gaitskell Commission have not thus far been achieved. Yet the Working Party does touch on what is perhaps getting close to the heart of the matter. Says the Report:

"It would be foolish to deny the apprehension of some Boards and Managers about practical consumer activities mounted by Societies Education Departments which might impinge on the Societies trading policy or prospects." Back to the dilemma!

The disconcerting aspect here however is not what is said but what is not said. Thus, the Report does not go on to say whether that apprehension is justified or mistaken. Is it, one asks, that the Managers and Boards believe themselves to be vulnerable and, if it is so, why do they regard themselves as vulnerable? One suspects it is because they suspect, or indeed know, that their trading performance is not equal to the demands of consumer interest, and, if this is the case yet again the question is "why"? Why do they regard themselves as not equal to the task-is it due to a lack of financial resources or is it due to their lack of ability? Moreover, quite apart from why the Managers and Boards do not feel equal to the task, the Working Party does not reveal to us to what they would attribute the misgivings.

Such observations would have involved the Working Party in candour, but then candour is one of the obligations as well as one of the privileges of friendship!

With a view to remedying the situation the Working Party makes what are in effect two recommendations.

The Role of the Employee

The first of these is that they reckon it is important that every employee of a Co-operative Society from the Chief Executive Officer to the most junior assistant should be aware the Society is committed to ethical behaviour towards the consumer. The inference is that the employees will not only be aware but will take cognizance to the point of so conducting themselves that their own behaviour is not inconsistent with that commitment.

It would be myopic not to realise that this will call for a great effort on the part of Personnel Officers and U.S.D.A.W. and other trade union officials. Heaven knows that Co-operative Societies have not been as generous towards their employees as they would have wished to be, but many have been immeasurably more considerate on salaries, wages, conditions of service, termination of

employment, pension provision, holidays and the like than the vast majority of their competitors, many of whom subscribe to all the delicacy of touch of the Hire and Fire approach. There may be organisational gratitude and acknowledgment expressed by U.S.D.A.W. but its members at shop floor level seem to be little aware that it is so. All too often too many of them seem addicted to truculence and in the same way as too many academics behave as though Universities would be great places were it not for the students, they give the impression that they regard Co-operative Stores as pleasant places if only customers did not come in to annoy them. This may be no worse than it is elsewhere but (i) I think in some instances it is worse than elsewhere and (ii) it should-for reasons already argued-be much better than elsewhere.

If indeed there is to be consumer-conscious frame of mind emanating from every Co-operative counter there is going to have to be a marked change. To say it is otherwise would be a dis-service to those on the Working Party.

A Code of Practice

The other recommendation is the adoption of a Code of Practice, I have a great sympathy for this approach having just been instrumental in selling a Code of Practice on Safety to British Universities. On hearing of this recommendation, one's immediate reaction was that it would either be meaningless and vague- like calling for Liberty, Freedom, and Democracy as a solution to the Northern Ireland situation-or it would be succinct and definite. The Party in talking of the Code say the important consideration is that it should be capable of being understood by consumers. But even more important is that it should be honoured. But in a foul Machiavellian sort of way if the Movement could not see itself honouring the detail of the latter it would be better to go for the former. Vagueness can be a cloak to failure.

The Working Party, in this section of its Report, is to be commended for the realism with which it refers to the already high-standing in consumer affairs of Marks & Spencer and Fine Fare where the now-departing Mr. Gulliver, himself of original pro-Co-operative disposition, introduced an element of consumer consciousness. But the Report is somewhat less outspoken in referring to its own dichotomy over the efficacy of journals and certain proposals thereon.

Another point the members make is on the need to impress on shoppers that the Co-operative Society is consumer-conscious: here one would have thought the simplest measure which could have been advocated would have been to change the name of each society to include the term "Consumers Co-operative" and to put "Consumers Co-operative" over each shop as well as the symbol.

The final question at issue is "will it all succeed?" The difficulties will not be in obtaining reasonable publicity within the Movement: they will be two-fold- first to persuade the general public that the Movement means to take the exercise seriously and that in turn will involve admitting deficiencies in the existing set-up. The second is to persuade the Movement to live up to the fairly modest expectations of the Report.

Here healthy cynicism cannot be dismissed too readily. In 1966 the Co-operative Party resolved at Dunoon that thereafter the conduct of branch business by local party units was to be markedly different. Six years on the answer is that it is not.

I am reminded in all this of some of my technological and scientific based colleagues who appear to believe more investment in technology and science is necessary to get more growth in G.N.P. and if one asks why the answer is that thereby one gets more money for research in technology and science in order that one can get greater growth in G.N.P....

The question here is why a Retail Co-operative Movement in contemporary Britain. For years, to many folk, a great deal of the acceptable answer has been "for the consumer", whereas to others the answer has been "survival-because my job (or my pension) depends on it".

To some the question at issue will be whether the former is going to trump the latter whereas with real zeal and imagination an energetic pursuit of the former would achieve the second.

In short, implementation of the Working Party Report could resolve the Co-operative Consumer Affairs Dilemma-but if the Report is rejected or nominally accepted and ignored or nominally implemented the British Co-operative Movement will be seen as children playing a children's game- Blind Man's Bluff.

Recent Publications on the Co-operative Movement

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

BERNARD HOWCROFT, F.L.A.,

Mr. Howcroft is Manager of the Library and Information Unit of the C.W.S. He has indicated his willingness to give any help and advice he can in obtaining copies of this material to members of the Society who may have difficulty in doing so. His address is Library and Information Unit, Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd., P.O. Box 53, New Century House, Manchester M60 4ES.

BOOKS, PAMPHLETS AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

- BELLAMY, JOYCE M and SAVILLE, JOHN, *editors*
CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. Dictionary of Labour biography, vol 1. London, Macmillan, 1972. xxv, 388p.
CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. Co-operative Bank Ltd., centenary 1872-1972. Manchester, Co-operative Bank Ltd. 1972 16p.
CO-OPERATIVE EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION Report on proposals for reshaping the industrial relations machinery of the retail Co-operative Movement Manchester, Co-operative Union, 1972 15p.
CO-OPERATIVE EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION Rules ... Manchester, Co-operative Employers' Association, 1972. 7p.
CO-OPERATIVE UNION LTD, The Co-operative directory Manchester, Co-operative Union Ltd., 1972. xi, 318p.
"Records details of Co-operative societies in the British Isles - distributive, wholesale, productive and special".
GARNETT, RONALD GEORGE Co-operation and the Owenite socialist communities in Britain, 1825-45. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1972. xiii, 272p. bibliography (pages 241-260).
HOUSING CORPORATION Co-ownership housing: guidance notes and model documents. London, Housing Corporation, 1972 ii, 62p.
INSTITUTE OF GROCERY DISTRIBUTION The Function and status of the retail store manager: an enquiry into top management attitudes among multiple and Co-operative grocery organisations in regard to retail store management. Watford, Institute of Grocery Distribution, 1972. 48p.
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE, Commission on Co-operative Principles, 1963-66 Report of the Commission on Co-operative Principles. New Delhi, National Co-operative Union of India, 1971. ix (4) 50p.

- INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE 25th Congress, Warsaw, 2-5 October 1972 ... Agenda and reports London, International Co-operative Alliance. xii. 145p.
Pages 91-134 consist of two Secretariat papers entitled "Multinational corporations and the international Co-operative movement ... " and "Technical assistance for Co-operatives in developing countries".
- INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE. Secretariat Multinational corporations and the international co-operative movement: financial and managerial imperatives.
(In: International Co-operative Alliance, Congress, Warsaw, 2-5 October 1972. Agenda and reports; pp. 19-125).
- INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE International directory of Co-operative organisations. 12th edition.
Geneva, International Labour Office, 1971 xv, 256p.
- INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE SEMINAR, Madison, Wisconsin, u.s.A.; 8-18 September 1970 Co-operative management for the 1970's London, International Co-operative Alliance, June 1972. 46p.
Summaries of the proceedings, conclusions and recommendations made in the seminar.
- LAMBERT, PAUL Co-operative principles and the International Co-operative Alliance (I.C.A.).
Liege, "Annals of Public and Co-operative Economy", 1971. 29p.
Condensed from a series of studies which appeared in the "Annals ... " between 1965 and 1969.
- NATIONAL CONCILIATION BOARD FOR THE RETAIL CO-OPERATIVE SERVICE NEHRU, JAWAHARLAL Constitution of the National Conciliation Board ...
Manchester, Co-operative Union Ltd., 1972. 4p.
Jawaharlal Nehru on Co-operation; compiled and edited by M. L. Sharma.
New Delhi, National Co-operative Union of India, 1971. 99p.
- NEUENKIRCH, GERHARD Collaboration within the commonweal sector: increasing co-operation and concentration of public enterprises, Co-operative societies and "free commonweal" enterprises . . .with a terminological epilogue by Karl Kuhne.
Frankfurt am Main, Bank für Gemeinschaft Aktiengesellschaft, 1970. 31p.
Address to C.I.R.I.E.C. conference.

- "REVUE DES ÉTUDES
COOPÉRATIVES" Cinquante ans de pensée et d'action coopératives
(1921-1971).
Paris, Institut des Études Coopératives, 1971.
464p.
Special number of "Revue des Études
Coopératives" to mark fifty years of activity.
- ROBERT OWEN BICENTENNIAL
CONFERENCE. New Harmony,
Indiana, U.S.A. 15 and 16
October 1971 Robert Owen's American legacy: proceedings
of the Robert Owen Bicentennial Conference...
edited by Donald E. Pitzer.
Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1972.
88p.
- SCOTTISH CO-OPERATIVE
WHOLESALE SOCIETY LTD. Plan for the future: report on proposed
structural changes including transfer of
engagements of S.C.R.S. to S.C.W.S. and
consequent revision of rules.
Glasgow, Scottish C.W.S. Ltd., October 1972.
23p. 2 charts.
This is the discussion document, which
following its adoption, led to the formation of
the Scottish Co-operative Society Ltd.

PERIODICAL ARTICLES, PAPERS, ETC,

- ATKINSON, JOHN Young people and the Movement
(In: *Co-operative Review*, April 1972. p.3)
- BRISCOE, ROBERT Utopians in the marketplace: Co-operative
integrative strategies.
(In: *Co-operative Review*, July 1972, pp.1-2).
Part of an article, with the same title, which
appeared in "Harvard Business Review",
September-October 1971, pp 4-10,
134, 149-150.
- CAMPBELL, HAROLD Co-operation for housing.
(In: *Socialist Commentary*, July 1972, pp. 6-7).
- CAMPBELL, HAROLD Co-operative housing - the advantages . . .
(In: *Co-operative News*, 24 June 1972, pp. 4-5).
- CARBERRY, T. F. Problem areas with a business organisation in
the public and co-operative sector.
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*
April/May 1972, pp. 19-22).
- CHADWICK, ROY Realising a Co-operative Commonwealth.
(In: *Cooperative Review*, January 1973, pp.2-3).

- CLARKE, S, P, Another perspective for the 1970s.
(In: Society for Co-operative Studies. *Bulletin No.* 16 July 1972, pp. 28-30).
Contests the view that the creation of "giant sized" societies will solve Co-operative trading problems; discusses size of societies in relationship to trading success.
see also HUGHES, JOHN,
- "CO-OPERATIVE INFORMATION" Robert Owen (1771-1858).
(ILO) (In: "*Co-operative Information*" No. 1, 1971, pp. 55-69),
- CO-OPERATIVE UNION LTD. Projecting Co-operative principles: report
Education Executive [Working from a working party.
Party on the Problem of Projecting (In: Society for Co-operative Studies, *Bulletin No.* 17, January 1973, pp. 12-20).
Co-operative Principles] Comments on the report by Professor J. Banks are printed as pages 18-20 of this article.
- CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LTD., CO-OPERATIVE UNION LTD., Education Department and Co-operative College, Joint Training Forum. Working Party [on Management by Objectives] Management by objectives: [a statement]
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*, March 1972, pp. 7-11 *see also* WARREN, G.E.
- DERRICK, PAUL Co-operation by co-operators in Europe,
(In: *Socialist Commentary*, October 1972, pp. 9-10).
- DERRICK, PAUL Social ownership and industry,
(In: *Co-operative Review*, May 1972, PS,)
- DESROCHE, HENRI Owenisme et utopies françaises: symposium commémoratif du deuxième centenaire de Robert Owen (1771-1971) [Owenism and French utopias: commemorative symposium on the Bi-centenary of Robert Owen (1771-1971)].
(In: *Archives Internationales de Sociologie de la Coopération*, No. 30, July-December 1971)
The whole issue is a special number devoted to this single subject,
- DEVADHAR, Y, C. Alfred Marshall on Co-operation.
(In: *Annals of Public and Co-operative Economy*, October-December 1971. pp. 285-301).
- DIGBY, MARGARET Co-operation among fishermen.
(In: *Yearbook of Agricultural Co-operation* 1972, pp. 172-186).

- DURKIN, J. P. Co-operative democracy.
(In: *Scottish Co-operator*, 27 October 1972. p4.)
- GALLACHER, JOHN The need is for a national society.
(In: *Co-operative News*, 8 December 1972, p.6)
- HAMMOND, JOHN More money for member education.
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*,
Jan. 1973, pp. 14-16).
- HAMMOND, JOHN Projecting Co-operative principles - what the
Working Party discovered.
(In: *Co-operative News*, 23 February 1972, p.6.)
- HESELBACH, WALTER Co-operative banking and financing in the
enlarged Community.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation*,
No. 6, 1972, pp. 221-224).
- HUGHES, JOHN The Co-operative Movement: a perspective
for the 1970s.
(In: *Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin*,
No.16, July 1972, pp. 11-27).
A summary of this paper appeared in '*Co-
operative Management and Marketing*', April/
May 1972, pp. 7-12.
see also CLARKE, S. P.
- HUTTON, DAVID District committees and democratic structure.
(In: *Co-operative Review*, August 1972, pp. 6-7).
Outlines the function of London Society's
District Committees, their responsibilities,
history and achievements.
- INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE Co-operative chronology.
(In: "*Co-operative Information*", No. J 1971,
pp. 2-56).
A chronological list of the principal events
worldwide in the Co-operative movement.
A supplement appears in the same periodical,
issue No. r. 1972. pp. 9-16.
- INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE 150 years of Co-operative bibliography: outline
Library of a chronological bibliography of Co-operation
1821-1971. (41p).
(In: *Co-operative Information* (I.L.O.) No.2,
1971. p.127).
Supplement appeared in the same periodical,
in issues No. 1/72, pp. 111-150, and
2/72, pp. 145-154.
- JENKINS, JENNIFER Consumer protection - the Co-ops role.
(In: *Co-operative News*, 15 April 1972 p.4).

- KENT, LOTTE
 Inside Europe - strength in unity.
 (In: *Co-operative News*, 12 August 1972, p.6)
 Traces the background to the formation of Euro Coop and Inter Coop, their objectives and activities.
- LAVERGNE, BERNARD
 The social value of Co-operative socialism; a partnership of consumers, producers and the State.
 (In: *Annals of Public and Co-operative Economy*, April-June 1972, pp. 127-140).
- LEMAIRE, RAYMOND
 Co-operative insurance and the Common Market.
 (In: *Review of International Co-operation* No. 6, 1972, pp. 230-233).
- LOUIS, R.
 Women and the Co-operative movement.
 (In: *Co-operative Information (ILO)* No. 2, 1972. pp. 11-24).
- MABON, J. DICKSON
 A Co-operative housing policy.
 (In: *Scottish Co-operator*, 12 January 1973, p.4)
- MARSHALL, R. L.
 Profitability and consumerism?
 (In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*, Nov. 1972, pp. 16-18).
- MORLEY, J. A. E.
 Agricultural co-operatives and the E.E.C.
 (In: *Review of International Co-operation*, No. 6, 1972, pp. 214-217).
- NOBLE, KENNETH A.
 Co-operative overall planning.
 (In: *Scottish Co-operator*, 2 February 1973, p.7).
- PICHOWSKI, HENRY
 Active membership is our final goal.
 (In: *Co-operative News*, 19 February 1972, p.4)
- PICKARD, W. F.
 Consumer principles into Co-operative practice
 (In: *Co-operative Review*, June 1972, p.4)
 Reproduces the "Code of Ethical Standards for Co-operatives" adopted by various Co-operative Societies in North America.
- POTTS, A. W.
 This structure for our Union was created only just in time.
 (In: *Co-operative Year Book 1972* pp. 22-24). The National Association of Co-operative Officials was formed in 1971, by a merger of the former National Union of Co-operative Officials (NUCO), the National Co-operative Managers' Association (NCMA) and the Co-operative Secretaries' Association (CSA).

- ROCHDALE SOCIETY OF
EQUITABLE PIONEERS
- Law and objects of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers.
(In: *Co-operative Information*, No. 1, 1971 pp. 85-91).
A reprint of the original rules, published in 1844, together with extracts of amendments made and registered on 7 August 1845.
- SCHÖNE, A.
- The Consumer Co-operative societies in the Common Market.
(In: *Society for Co-operative Studies Bulletin* No. 15, March 1972, pp. 19-22).
- SCHÖNE, A.
- Co-operatives and monopolies in the Common Market.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation*, No. 6, 1972, pp. 206-209).
- SLOAN, PAT
- Co-operative communication.
(In: *Co-operative Review*, March 1972, pp. 1 and 8).
To foster belief and involvement in the Movement communication at all levels, especially between staff and customers, has more to contribute than advertising in improving the Co-operative image.
- STANSFIELD, JEAN
- The Consumer and the member.
(In: *Co-operative Review*, June 1972, pp. 1-2).
Instances the experiments with "Shop Groups" in Greater Nottingham Society as the media for improved member activity based on the Co-operative store.
- STEPHENSON, T. E.
- The C.W.S. and the retail societies.
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*, June 1972 pp. 15-18). " ... Analyses some aspects of the relationship between the C.W.S. and the retail co-operative movement with a view to increasing understanding."
- STEPHENSON, T. E.
- The Formation of a regional society.
(In: *Society for Co-operative Studies, Bulletin* No. 14, 1971, pp. 9-19)
The problems of top management which emerge in the early stages of the development of a Regional Society are the specific concern of this paper.

- STEPHENSON, T. E. Management education and training in regional societies.
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*, Jan 1973, pp. 7-10).
- VOLKERS, R. Industry and trade in the enlarged European Community - consequences for the Consumers' Co-operatives.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation* No. 6, 1972, pp. 225-229).
- WARREN, G. E. Management by objectives.
(In: *Co-operative Management and Marketing*, April/May 1972, pp. 13-17).
see also CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY LTD. CO-OPERATIVE UNION LTD. Education Department and Co-operative College, Joint Training Forum. Working Party (on Management by Objectives).
- WATKINS, W. P. Back to basics - grass roots democracy.
(In: *Co-operative News* 27 May 1972, p.6).
- WATKINS, W. P. The Co-operative Movement in the Common Market countries.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation*, No. 6 1972 pp. 199-205).
- WATKINS, W. P. Future tasks of public and Co-operative economy.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation*, No. 5, 1972. pp. 183-186).
General review of 9th Congress of Public and Co-operative Economy, Vienna; reproduces text of resolution (unanimously adopted) summarising current world situation and future tasks of public and Co-operative economy.
- WILSON, ALFRED Remember - we ARE a consumer democracy.
(In: *Co-operative News*, 3 June 1972, p.5).
An extract from Mr. Wilson's presidential address to the Co-operative Congress 1972. The complete text appears in the Congress report and is available as a separate book from the Co-operative Union.
- WOOD, J. M. Consumer protection in the European Economic Community.
(In: *Review of International Co-operation*, No. 6, 1972, pp. 210-213).