

# REPORT

by Dr. R. Johnston Birchall

## Geoff Wade in the Chair

Apologies were received from Will Watkins, Ken Penney, Frank Toft, Alan Rhodes, Tom Carbery, Nora Willis.

1. The minutes of the 1987 AGM were agreed to be a correct record.
2. Matters arising: Bob Marshall was congratulated on producing the index to the Journal, which had been suggested by David Hutton at last year's AGM.

### 3. Reports of National Officers:

#### *a. Chair:*

Geoff Wade reviewed the major achievements of the year. These have included the Regents' College Co-operative Management Seminar, which has been followed through with the annual conference on the same theme. Regional developments have included Nancy Scott's very successful programme of S.C.S. meetings for the London and Home Counties region, an exhibition by the South Coast Area and a Co-operative Learning Conference put on by Ken Penney's Centre for Co-operative Studies in the South-West. We have found new sources of support for the Journal in 14 Co-operative societies, and have produced the Journal index. Geoff thanked the committee for their support.

#### *b. Secretary:*

Johnston Birchall's report in Journal 63 was taken as read.

#### *c. Membership Secretary:*

John Brown reported that at the beginning of September the Society had 243 members, compared with 222 at this time last year. The 243 were made up of 168 individuals and 75 organisations, 126 had paid this year's subscriptions so far, compared with 112 last year. From 1st April we have recorded 15 new individual members and 1 new organisational member. John Brown is retiring from this post, and we expressed our thanks for all his hard work.

#### *d. Treasurer:*

Apologies were received from Alan Rhodes, but he had prepared a set of notes amplifying the accounts presented in Journal 63, which Geoff was able to read out. Here is a summary:

i. This is the first time in four years that the excess of income over expenditure has exceeded interest earned from investments; true income was £93 net. This shows that last year's increase in subscriptions was justified.

ii. 14 retail societies have agreed to contribute £100 per year for the next three years, along with the CIS, CRS, Co-operative Union, Co-operative Bank, and CWS. The £1900 per annum compares with £1500 received for the past two years from the Co-operative Union, Co-operative Bank, CIS and CRS. In the Treasurer's opinion, we should expect to have to become self-financing at the end of the three years.

iii. The reduction in Journal sales this year is due to a one-off sale last year which was untypical.

Bob Marshall commented that while the effort at self-financing should be made, support might be needed and forthcoming for the Journal after the three years are over, stressing that we give a good return to the Movement through our own voluntary activity. Bernard Rhodes suggested asking the smaller societies for a contribution. It was agreed that we must safeguard the future of the Journal, which is the Society's main product. The Secretary reported it was hoped to activate its plans to market the Journal to academic libraries.

*e. Editors:*

Bob Marshall reported that the calendar of current research into consumer Co-operation, which Garth Pratt had agreed to do, might not be ready for publication, as there is so little research to report. The annual comparative review of Co-operative performance has also proved difficult to bring to full completion but Journal 63 had published a very useful set of articles comparing Co-operative with private retailing on the basis of the Union's statistics for 1987. Tom Carbery and the Department of Retail Studies at Stirling are to proceed further when agreement is available on the statistical basis needed and the resources for full comparative examination are assured. The index of the Journal has been a laborious but interesting task, providing points of guidance for the future. In general we need to continue to promote in-depth studies such as those achieved on a single national federation, and more recently, the small shops issue.

Journals 64-6 will include articles on Party policies for Co-operation, on reports into CWS and CRS restructuring, on capital resources for retailing, and on the prospects for Co-operative democracy.

#### **4. Accounts**

Adoption of the accounts was agreed.

## 5. Election of Committee

The following were elected:

a. Chair	Peter Davis
b. Vice Chairs	Lily Howe Ken Penney
c. Secretary	Johnston Birchall
d. Membership Secretary	Frank Dent
e. Treasurer	Alan Rhodes
f. Editors	Tom Carbery Bob Marshall
g. Additional members	Ivor Moody Bernard Rhodes Frank Toft

A member raised the question of an editorial board and the editor reported earlier consideration for this, and in particular the difficulty over expense and the reliance on developing consultation with the S.C.S. Committee and with experts on various themes in the Journal. Another member raised the question of a third editor or an understudy to ensure some 'succession planning'. The first of these was thought to be too cumbersome, but the committee agreed to look into the second question.

It was agreed that the Secretary should write to Brian Rose (past chair, now going off the committee) thanking him for his long support of the Society.

## 6. Election of Presidents

The presidents were re-elected en bloc.

## 7. Appointment of Auditor

Alex Wilson was re-appointed, with thanks for his continued help.

## 8. Activities 1988-9

Thanks were expressed to Peter Davis for organising an excellent conference. It was hoped that we could disseminate the findings, via a report in Co-op News etc. Peter expressed thanks to John Brown for help with circulation of the details of the conference, and for help with the speakers. He expressed concern for continuing research and development in the area of Co-operative management. The numbers attending had been a little disappointing, but there had been a good cross-section, including Co-op managers. We discussed the theme of the next conference. 'Training and development for Co-operative

leadership' was suggested, along with research into the management needs of Co-operative societies, and the theme of the 'Co-operative as employer'. We agreed that the SCS committee should further consider these ideas for next year's conference.