

THE
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Society Notes

For the Annual Conference and the AGM of the Society on 9th/10th September at the Co-operative College the support, I gather, is reassuring - but still there is room for more. The conference jointly sponsored with the International Co-operative Management Unit (Leicester Polytechnic) will deal with *Management in a Co-operative Setting*. The programme will be a goodly balance of general sessions and group discussions and the speakers include Sir Dennis Landau, Chief Executive C.W.S., Keith Darwin, Deputy C.E.O. of Lincoln Society, Frank Dent, National Member Relations Officer of C.R.S. and Dr. J.H. Butler, Senior Liaison Officer of the Co-operative Union.

There are various options for attendance - Friday only (including high tea) £15 per person; Saturday only (including lunch plus tea and coffee) £15; Friday and Saturday (non-residential) £24; Friday and Saturday (including full board) £40. The Conference Organiser is willing and keen to receive bookings:-

Mr. Peter Davis,
School of Management,
Leicester Polytechnic,
PO Box 143,
Leicester. LE1 9BH

Haste ye, haste ye!

For the AGM the Annual Report and Accounts of the Society are printed in this Journal.

Journal 63 - And Beyond

Journal 63 also includes a series of articles on the theme of the Conference - *Management in a Co-operative Setting*. A second Special Feature in a sense examines the achievement by such management as witnessed in the *Provisional Figures 1987* which the Co-operative Union has published. Both these Features are introduced more fully later. And Paul Derrick, with suggestions for the rôle which Co-operatives should play in the revised policies of the Labour Party, opens what should grow into a comprehensive series.

Beyond 63 we intend reports and assessments of the role seen for Co-operatives by the other Parties. We also propose to return to the significance, past, present and in the future, of the Co-operative auxiliaries. At an Educational Convention in the early 1970's, Brian Groombridge, in connection with his Report on the Co-operative Auxiliaries, said:

“Auxiliaries can act both as the conscience and the eyes and ears of the societies. A really progressive Co-operative Movement needs the stimulus and interest of a keen, organised minority of members to act as “ginger” groups in their local societies.”

What do the auxiliaries and executive officers and Board members and educationists think of this role in societies - how effective was it in the past, can it be exercised in the future and who will exercise it?”

And, as always, we shall be glad at the AGM to have other suggestions as topics to guide our footsteps.

Omissions and Commissions

For a concluding balance let me acknowledge there has been delay far beyond our expectations in completing for publication the *Register of Co-operative Research* and the comprehensive *Review of Co-operative Retail Performance* based on the Co-operative Union's Provisional Figures and comparing these with the records of other retailers. We still pursue these ambitions.

On the other hand there is in contrast a “shining prospect at the last” from Ken Penney, Director of the Centre for Co-operative Studies at Exeter University. Ken gratified with the success of his Conference on Co-operative Learning, goes on to report: “Faculty Board recently passed our Diploma in Co-operative Studies which aims to train workers in the various Co-operative Development Agencies round the country. We plan to take our first intake this October and are applying for Common Market Social Service Funds to help provide bursaries for needy candidates. We are already receiving applications for MA's and PhD's by dissertation and in addition to these we are engaged in discussions for a taught MA programme which we plan to launch in October 1989.”

There is also a welcome for the *Yearbook of Co-operative Enterprise 1988* which replaces *The Yearbook of Agricultural Co-operation* published continuously by the Horace Plunkett Foundation since 1927. The new title will accommodate current developments in all forms, sectors and areas of Co-operation and as a British publication will view in detail the progress of U.K. Co-operatives. It is hoped to review the yearbook more expansively in the next Journal. (H.P.F. 31 St. Giles', Oxford OX1 3LF; £8.95)

Finally, in the list of commendations, it is fair to thank the national Co-operative organisations who have made their past grants to the S.C.S. - and the retail societies who have added themselves to that honourable list. The fifteen largest societies in the latter category were approached - and fourteen agreed. The Treasurer will be reporting the response in detail to the A.G.M.: in the meantime, our warm thanks to all the benefactors who "weary not of well doing".

July 1988

R.L.M.