

Society for Co-operative Studies

REPORT OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

16TH-17TH APRIL 1971

AT THE HUGH STEWART HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

1 Attendance of Members

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

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

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

2 Introduction by the Chairman

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

3 Report of the National Officers for 1970-71

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

(a) MEMBERSHIP

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

(b) BULLETIN

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

(c) RESEARCH: COLLEGE JUBILEE FUND

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

(d) FINANCE

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

4 Future Development of the Society

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

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

5 Appointment of Officers for 1971-72

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

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

6 Conference Papers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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