

SOCIETY NOTES

I recall an educationist, then employed outside the Movement, being asked for his general impression of the Education Convention which he had just visited. Broadly speaking he had found it worthy "but not very exciting": adding with a mischievous eye on the age of the participants - "but then, how much excitement could they stand?"

This latter question would not be apt to the Society's A.G.M. and Conference which is reported below. The congregation, if I "may summon age to grant youth's heritage" had a strong element of comparatively young interest and vigour. Perhaps, however, the preceding comment by the educationist could be applied with more justice: the occasion did not throb with response to urgent challenge.

Certainly no fault attached to the main speakers Will Watkins and Roger Clarke who served the Conference very well. Moreover the lack of excitement was quite appropriate to some areas of business: an A.G.M. and Conference has its constitutional procedures or thoughtful analyses to complete without any necessity for an accompaniment of high drama. Indeed the deficiency was on some items a reassurance. The report on the Society's greatly improved finances was a proper invitation to just satisfaction.

Even so, it seemed to me that something capable of generating excitement, the sense of engagement with decision on important issues was missing. It should be provided for some conferences or parts of them by topics which are related to problems of immediate practical importance and by proposals for specific action.

Such gentle admonition and modest plea can perhaps be borne in mind for the next A.G.M. and

Conference - 23/24 September 1983 and again at Stanford Hall.

Bulletins for 1982-3

There should be no lack of "sense of engagement with important issues" in the following Special Feature: "A Future for Consumer Co-operation in Britain?" And in a more cheerful prospect no lack of welcome for Peter Clarke who joins Jenny Thornley in responsibility for the Newsletter.

In the centenary year of the Co-operative Women's Guild, Bulletin 47 will have as its Special Feature the role of women in the Co-operative Movement. This is due out in April 1983 and should be followed in Bulletin 48 by attention to international agencies and action for Co-operative development.

Co-operative Times

Finally, fraternal greetings to our contemporary Co-operative Times, a quarterly published by John Parkinson (Education and Research), 46 High St., Solihull, West Midlands: subscription £3 a year. The Bulletin and Co-operative Times share much the same scope and interests and on occasion even a coincidence of topic and moral: in late 1982 the latter is also dealing with the future of the consumer Movement and is introducing this with the signal "The Last Call"!