

SOCIETY NOTES

This Bulletin welcomes Dr. Johnathan Hill for the preparation of its Reviews in the temporary absence in Thailand of Jin McCloskey. It regrets that Jenny Thornley has had to withdraw from the Newsletter, sends to her warm thanks and best wishes and thanks Peter Clark for continuing on his own.

"Co-operation Internationally"

Its special feature is "Co-operation Internationally". In any exercise in autobiography I ever attempt there will be a short, poignant chapter on the editorial frustrations that have attended its preparation - and, no doubt, if I can muster the honesty, on the editorial failings. Anyhow, the Bulletin is well served in form and content by what has emerged and is grateful to the contributors. The statistics from the International Co-operative Alliance indicate the forms, distribution and strength of Co-operative organisation throughout the world. This variety of development is exemplified in more detailed reports from Hungary, Burma and Kenya - the latter two obtained by the persuasive agency of Dr. Hill from participants in the 1982-3 courses at the International Co-operative Training Centre at Stanford Hall. Finally there is the account of the current courses and participants at the I.C.T.C. - again by Dr. Hill. Indeed I was tempted to adapt for him the dedication offered by Randolph Churchill in a collection he had made of his father's speeches: "To Winston S. Churchill without whose help this book would never have been written."

The I.C.T.C. - Past and Future

Anyhow, as the article makes clear, the I.C.T.C. is an institution of considerable Co-operative significance, nationally and internationally, and an assessment of its history sometime would be well worthwhile. This would include the hesitations and difficulties in offering the first specific courses in 1947-8 for participants from the developing countries; the analysis and codification at the I.C.T.C. of Co-operative experience in these countries to add to the British experience more immediately available; the changing relations with the British movement and Government; the threat to the maintenance of the I.C.T.C. at the Co-operative College from ambitions to establish a separate foundation - ambitions shared by one or two consumer Co-operative leaders; the frequent and necessary debate on the role and, indeed, the need for long-term courses at an international centre.

All that and - as they say - much else may be taken up when the Bulletin returns to the theme of "Co-operation Internationally" as surely it should.

The Next Bulletin

More immediately in the next Bulletin due out in December 1983 we hope to include special attention to Co-operation and Employment, related to the recent Co-operative Party Commission and also to turn to the "Independent Commission Report - 25 Years On". In 1958 the Commission whose Chairman was H.T.N. Gaitskell and whose secretary was C.A.C. Crosland, presented its report on Co-operative production and marketing

in Britain to the Co-operative Congress. The biography of the latter by his widow says of the reception of the main recommendations by Congress:-

"With dogged resolution the Co-operative Movement refused to advance into the second half of the twentieth century".

Various contributors will examine that assessment and the relevance of the recommendations to the Co-operative record since 1958 and to its prospects now.

Swedish Society for Co-operative Studies

I am indebted to Will Watkins for this note:

"The National Officers, at their last meeting on 16th May in London, learned with no little gratification that the Swedish Society for Co-operative Studies had become a corporate member of our Society and had expressed its interest in being represented at our forthcoming annual conference. Their representative can be assured of the warmest of welcomes with a keenly interested hearing for their contributions to the discussion.

With its application for membership the Swedish S.C.S. enclosed three of its publications which give a very good idea of the nature and scope of its present activities.

The Role of the Society

A four-page leaflet aimed at recruiting members states that the Society was founded

on 25th March 1981 at a meeting of some 60 persons drawn from all kinds of Co-operative organisation in different parts of the country, as well as from Universities and other institutions of advanced education. The general aim is to promote Co-operation as a field of research and study, more particularly by increasing contacts between research workers and persons active in posts of responsibility at various levels in the different branches of the Co-operative Movement. The Society not only brings them together to discuss problems and determine lines of research, but also publishes the results and so increases public interest in Co-operative solutions of problems of social organisation.

A copy of No. 3, 1982, of the Society's Bulletin contains articles on Co-operation with a strong international outlook, together with notes on education, new publications and bibliography and an invitation to contribute to the next issue of its year book. The previous issue is a paper-back volume of over 200 pages with a foreword and 10 articles from which one can form some idea of the topics our Swedish colleagues are thinking and talking about, even if our knowledge of their language is not always equal to understanding all that they say."

Congratulations

And a happy grace note. It has been a pleasure to note the award by the University of Nottingham of the honorary degree of LL.D. to

Lloyd Harrison, a President of the Society and Vice-Chairman of the University Council. Congratulations to him and, of course, to the University for such a wise and discriminating choice.

Society Conference and A.G.M. 1983

The Report and Accounts for 1982/3 are printed below along with details of the programme for 23rd-24th September. The prospect is for a very stimulating rendezvous.

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R.L.M.