



The Co-operative Development Agency and Industrial Development Act, 1984, which is now law, gives the CDA new powers and a new lease of life. £200,000 a year is available for six years (from October 1984) to meet the cost of staffing and running the CDA. A further £300,000 will be kept in reserve, presumably to top up the annual grants to bring them in line with inflation.

This means the CDS will have to continue to depend on secondments, augmented by contributions from projects and commercial activities.

New Powers of the CDA

The CDA's new powers allow it to:

- engage in commercial activities;
- enter into partnerships;
- carry out training;
- make grants or loans.

No fund is being provided from which the CDA could make grants or loans. No money is being made available specifically for training, but the CDA will be able to make full use of European Community funds, for example the European Social Fund.

The Government will be able to give directions to the CDA. It will also be able to wind up the CDA using a simplified procedure. Under the Co-operative Development Agency Act, 1978, another act of Parliament was required to wind up the CDA. Now only a Statutory Instrument, approved by both Houses of Parliament, is required. However, the Government is obliged by the Act to consult the Co-operative Movement on the proposal to wind up the CDA.

On 1st October the Government announced the Board of the CDA for the next three years. It includes Professor Tony Eccles, a past chairman of the Society for Co-operative Studies. The others are Ralph Woolf, of Scott Bader, who is chairman, W.H. Farrow, of CRS, Lewis Lee, of the Co-op Bank, Tom Garnier of Kalamazoo (all reappointments) and John Fotheringham of North Eastern Farmers.

Agricultural Co-ops — Outline Operating Strategy 1984-87

Agricultural Co-ops in the UK have gone from strength to strength during the past 15 years, thanks largely to the work of the Central Council of Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operation. In 1968 they had a turnover of £400 million, in 1981/82 £2,163 million. In February 1983 the Central Council was absorbed by Food From Britain and reorganised as its Co-operative Development Division. In May 1984 the Co-operative Development Division issued its outline operating strategy for consultation with the agricultural sector.

The deadline for comments is now long past, of course, but I wonder what interest the retail Co-operative Movement and the CWS took in the document. Agricultural Co-ops each year market about £90 million worth of vegetables and salads and are "particularly strong in supplying the major UK Supermarket chains which are taking an increase in share of retail fresh produce sales". Consumers often judge the calibre of a shop by the quality of its fresh food. The retail Co-op Movement must take agricultural Co-ops seriously and establish firm trading relations with them.

Worker Co-ops, local CDAs and the national CDA would also benefit by following the example of this consultation document. There is a dominant emphasis upon markets and marketing. This represents a major contribution by the Co-operative Development Division to the commercial success of agricultural Co-ops — and a valuable supplement to the Division's grant schemes, which are not an end in themselves.

Now that the national CDA has six years assured life, can we expect it to publish a consultation document outlining its operating strategy 1984-1987?

Copies of "Outline Operating Strategy 1984-87" are available from, Co-operative Development Division, Food From Britain, Market Towers, New Covent Garden Market, London SW8 5NQ.

World Co-op Conference — Perth, Western Australia 1986-87

Are you a Co-operator, interested in the America's Cup and an Australian, or are you two out of the three? The America's Cup, you'll remember, is a yachting trophy which the Australians wrested from the Americans (after the latter won it from Britain in the nineteenth century). The first Australian defence will begin in October 1986; the final series of races is expected to take place in February 1987. Coinciding with this event is ACCECC 87 being hosted by the Co-operative Federation of Western Australia. It aims to bring 100,000 additional visitors to Western Australia. Mr. T. Drinkwater, chairman of the Co-operative Federation has announced that ACCECC 87 (an abbreviation for America's Cup, Cultural, Expo and Co-operative Conference 1987), is designed to "encourage business trade on a national and international basis, communication and exchange of

Recently Edgar Parnell, Director of the Plunkett Foundation, attended a meeting of the Co-operative Resources Committee in Washington, which reviewed the US Programme of aid to co-operatives, largely funded by the American Government AID. In the USA the various wings of the Co-operative Movement have a Co-operative Resources Committee which co-ordinates aid to Co-operatives in developing countries and acts as a lobby to secure aid funding specifically for Co-ops.

During the 1960s a similar Co-operative aid promotional/lobbying committee existed under the chairmanship of Lord Peddie. Perhaps such a committee is needed again to increase the importance given to Co-operative development in overseas aid projects. Equally important is a re-examination of the system whereby contracts for Co-operative projects are awarded. During the 1970s Co-operative organisations were approached first. Now they have to tender for the contracts and, by the nature of the system, very often private sector organisations obtain the contracts without, necessarily, having on their permanent staff personnel with direct Co-operative experience.

Creative Mind

There has always been a hazy frontier between Co-operation, communism and experiments in alternative life styles. My researches into the origins of the Land Settlement Associations aroused my interest in this subject, so I was fascinated to see "Creative Mind". (Single issues, price 50p including postage, from Creative Mind, 3 Linnet Lane, Liverpool L17 3BQ. Subscriptions, £3.10 per annum.)

"Creative Mind" is interested in "Better ways of living, practical alternatives and community activity" and appears six times a year, with each issue dealing with a special theme — health/alternative medicines, arts/society, environment, psychology/inner worlds, mythology/folklore. Issue nine is devoted to Co-ops and Communes, with good articles on the history of Co-ops (starting with the Diggers and Levellers), Bakehouse Trust (by Martin Stott), setting up a Co-op, the International Communes Festival 83, Housing Co-ops, York Cycleworks Co-op, and unemployment. It is all fairly down to earth though the cover illustration, by Cliff Harper, "Welcome to the free land of Albion" conjures up the opposite image of rural Utopias. back to the land, wind power and, perhaps, free love.

EEC and Co-ops

Further research into Co-ops is being funded by the Commission of the European Communities under the Programme of Research and Actions on the Development of the Labour Market. Three projects are under way to be completed by September 1985, one on legal structures, one on the

financial arrangements of Co-ops and one on internal structures and relationships.

The last project is the responsibility of Richard MacFarlane working at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (and also of Brent CDA). Specifically he is examining the organisation, working conditions and industrial relations of Co-ops, collectives and other self-managed structures. He is interested to hear of any other work in the field or from anyone interested in the subject — at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 '01-435 7111 ext. 380'.

Co-op People

Congratulations to the Co-op Bank. One of the tellers on duty at the temporary Co-op Bank kiosk at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool was a Miss Purse! Disappointingly, the gentleman teller was not called Mr. Wallet.

Congratulations also to Chris Green of Calderdale CDA. He graced the ICOM fringe meeting at the Conference wearing a sweater bearing, on the back, the legend "Co-ops are magic". It was accompanied by a Trojan horse motif on the front. He tells me that he got the garment from a Co-op called "Sheer Decadence".

And we take the first chance in the Newsletter to offer a welcome to Mr. David Short, the new Editor of the "Co-operative News" and "Co-operative Marketing and Management". He comments

"I am very enthusiastic and optimistic about the future of the Co-operative Movement and hope that a revitalised Co-op News will play its part in passing on the best ideas, and acting as a forum for debate. I would love to have more letters about co-operative issues and to hear from anyone who might like to write a feature article."

If you should meet him, or his 19 year old son Nigel Short, at a conference or over a drink, and either of them suggests a game of chess, beware! Nigel Short is the world's youngest international chess grand master, and David Short introduced him to the game at the age of five.

Recent Reading

The CDA has now published *The New Co-operatives. A Directory and Resource Guide*, "the only comprehensive listing of worker, neighbourhood and community co-ops in the U.K." Entries are organised on a regional basis and listed in the appropriate trade sector.

Distribution: Scottish and Northern Book Distribution (46A Hamilton Place, Edinburgh EH3 5AX) and Turnaround Publications (27 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL). Price £4.95.

ideas between world Co-operatives and expose visitors to Western Australia's cultural activities."

"The series of seminars and conference being organised will be oriented toward commercial trade encouraging people from within Australia and overseas to conduct their business with Western Australian companies and in particular our Co-operatives.

"Two ocean liners will be used as accommodation and conference facilities in addition to the first class accommodation of the Sheraton Hotel. Besides providing excellent accommodation the ocean liners will be anchored on the America's Cup course as a grandstand to the yacht racing."

Mr. Drinkwater continues, "We will be arranging regional meetings in country centres as an encouragement for visitors to see the real Western Australia and as an extension of Western hospitality, organising Co-operative Federation members' homes as part of the accommodation structure called 'Host a Co-operative Visitor'."

Information from: America's Cup Cultural Expo, 5th Floor Grain Pool Building, 172-176 St. George's Terrace, Perth 6000, Western Australia.

Superstore

Being one of those unlucky Co-operators who do not have a Co-op Superstore within my area (the plans were turned down by the GLC) I was pleasantly surprised to see "Superstore" magazine. Superstore is distributed exclusively in Co-op Superstores and is a lively mix of articles of topical interest (concerning house and home, love and marriage, holidays and hobbies) and some delicious recipes.

Superstore does not forget its roots; the June 1984 issue, which I saw, had a fascinating and well illustrated article about the early days of the Co-op.

Superstore is produced by Home and Law Magazines Ltd. in conjunction with the CWS. It is a valid and vital piece of Co-op literature and I hope that archivists of the Co-op Movement are collecting it.

Co-ops 85

Thanks to the success of the 1984 Co-ops Trade Fair, the Greater London Enterprise Board is laying on Co-ops 85. The national CDA, the Co-operative Insurance Society, the Wales Co-op Development and Training Centre and ICOM have already agreed to act as co-sponsors. More co-sponsors are being sought.

The 1985 Co-ops Trade Fair will take place at Kensington Town Hall, the same venue as last year, on 2nd and 3rd April. The format will be similar to that used in 1984 but stands will be grouped in sectors, each

sector colour coded for easy identification. Already 50 per cent of the exhibition space is let. The demand has been particularly strong from Co-ops which did not exhibit in 1984.

Co-ops should seize this exciting opportunity to exhibit their wares. Many retail Co-op buyers went to Co-ops 84, wishing to buy but had difficulties in being supplied. Worker Co-ops are aware of this problem and there are good reasons for believing it will be avoided in 1985.

Information from: Margaret Davis, Greater London Enterprise Board, 63-67 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6DD.

Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee

Tom King, Secretary of State for Employment, has appointed Garth Pratt, Economic and Research Officer, Co-operative Union, as one of the twenty-two members of the reconstituted Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee. It is to examine the treatment of housing costs in the Retail Prices Index, and consider the possibility of rebasing the Index and certain points regarding coverage and construction.

The treatment of housing costs, which presents particular problems in the construction of price indices, has been considered by the Committee on several previous occasions, but the Government believe that it is now appropriate for the issues to be looked at again in the light of current circumstances. The Committee has also advised on each previous rebasing — the choice of date which is taken as 100 in presenting the Index. As regards the coverage and construction of the Index, the Committee will be asked to review the effect of its earlier recommendations and to consider some further issues. The Committee's full report is not expected before mid 1985.

Co-operative Development Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee is made up of representatives from the International Co-operative Training Centre/CLEAR Unit, Loughborough, the Overseas Development Administration, the British Council and the Plunkett Foundation. It normally meets once per year.

The original purpose of the Committee was to co-ordinate activities in the field of Co-operative development within overseas aid programmes. In practice it has simply provided a platform for exchanging views and plans on the work of the respective organisations. The CLEAR Unit (Co-operative Union Ltd.) and the Plunkett Foundation are now collaborating on a day to day basis in an attempt to secure major contracts for Co-operative Development Work in third world countries. Both these organisations are in regular touch with the Co-operative Adviser at the Overseas Development Administration and with the British Council.

Note of the Author

PETER CLARKE is Research Officer of the Co-operative Party. His published work includes studies of Government promotion of all types of new Co-operatives, of closer relations between the retail Co-operative Movement, the agricultural Co-operative Movement and the "new" Co-operative Movements and of the Land Settlement Association; and a bibliography of new literature on new Co-operatives.