

International Notes

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7th International Congress of Co-operative Science. A preliminary announcement issued by the Co-operative Research Association at the University of Münster (Westphalia) includes the provisional programme of the next triennial Co-operative Scientific Congress which will be held at Münster from 19th to 22nd September, 1972. There will be three days of discussion, followed by a day for visiting different Co-operative enterprises, of which Westphalia can offer a rich assortment, including the great regional consumers' co-operative based on Dortmund and some powerful agricultural marketing, supply and credit federations. The first day's proceedings are concerned with problems of democracy, management and control in co-operatives of highly industrialised market economies. The second day is devoted to co-operative problems of the developing countries and to the internal organisation and politico-economic functions of co-operatives in countries with socialistic planned economies, with special reference to Poland and Hungary. On the third day the Congress will return to the highly-industrialised countries in order to consider Co-operative policy in relation to competition and cartel legislation. During the Congress there will also be a meeting of the International Forum on Co-operative Research. More detailed information will be issued in April.

The French Institute of Co-operation. In the special issue of the *Revue des Etudes Coopératives* which appeared towards the end of last year to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of that quarterly review, was an announcement giving full particulars of the *Institut Français de la Coopération* formed by the merger of two bodies which had existed separately for many years. These were the *Institute des Etudes Coopératives*, whose aims and activities have been mentioned from time to time in these Notes and the *Institut Français d'Action Coopérative*. The former and older institution operated almost entirely within the boundaries of metropolitan France and, like our own Society for Co-operative Studies, aimed, among other things, at promoting active collaboration between Co-operative educationists and researchers on the one hand, and, on the other, teachers and students at all levels of the national educational system throughout France. The latter and younger institution was founded in the 1950s when the French Co-operative Movement began to shoulder its responsibilities for rendering technical assistance to the promotion of Co-operation in the French-speaking less-developed regions of the world, and especially Africa.

The basis of the new Institute, even more than that of the two previous ones, is inter-co-operative. That is to say, its founder-members include all the national non-trading federations which represent the different branches of Co-operation in France, besides two central credit institutions and the Central Office for

School Co-operatives—14 in all. Its objects are the organisation of studies, research and experiment to every form of Co-operation and the diffusion of the resulting documentation both inside and outside the Co-operative Movement, so as to promote and strengthen Co-operative enterprise in advanced industrial countries and developing countries alike. Its headquarters remain at the older Institute's address: 7 Avenue Franco-Russe, Paris VIIe.

The Revue des Etudes Coöperatives (Review of Co-operative Studies), mentioned earlier as celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation, was the creation of Professor Charles Gide, the eminent economist, one of the founders of the International Co-operative Alliance and France's greatest propagator of Co-operation, and of Professor Bernard Lavergne, well known for his studies of co-operative service organisation amongst French and Belgian local authorities, who is still living. He recently published a re-statement of his Socialist and Co-operative doctrine, entitled *Le Socialisme à visage humain* (Socialism with a human face). The commemorative number of the *Revue* is a remarkable volume of some 200 pages. It contains a facsimile of the title-page of the first issue and reprints the full text of the Manifesto in favour of Co-operatives published in 1921 by eminent French publicists, scientists and academic teachers of social sciences in 13 universities. Besides Professor Lavergne's own reminiscences and other articles looking back upon the development of the Review, this number contains a series of articles describing the progress of every form of Co-operation in France and the International Co-operative Movement from 1921 to 1971. The contribution of the *Revue* to every aspect of Co-operative thought and action on both the national and international levels entitles it to a unique place among Co-operative periodic publications.

Co-operative Management in the 1970s. In 1969 the International Co-operative Alliance held its 39th annual International Co-operative Seminar (formerly School) at Madison, Wisconsin, where the University, in conjunction with the Co-operative organisations of the U.S.A. and Canada, several years ago established a Training Centre which now has a world-wide reputation. Owing to difficulties in assembling the necessary material, publication of the proceedings of the Seminar has been delayed, but it is hoped to bring out soon after Easter a volume in the I.C.A. "Studies and Reports" series which will make generally available the ideas and suggestions put forward by eminent professors, consultants and Co-operative administrators in their respective special papers and case-studies. Starting with the change, now visible, in the concept of management from a centralised authoritative process to one of participation and widely-diffused responsibility, the underlying argument proceeds through planning, control and communication to its natural conclusion in the appropriate methods of education and training the newer concept requires.

REORGANISATION OF RETAILING

Regionalism. The re-organisation of the retailing sector on a regional, rather than a local or district basis is making notable progress in most of the Consumers' Co-operative Movements of Western Europe. In Western Germany

last year's congress at Wiesbaden adopted a plan, already partly in operation, to cover the whole territory of the Federal Republic through 20 regional Consumers' Societies. It was hoped to complete the preliminary planning by the end of last year and to fulfil the whole scheme by 1975. On the 1st January, 1971 the three district societies based on Cologne, Düsseldorf and Wuppertal were formally united as a single society for the Rhineland, with a membership of 250,000 and aggregate turnover of 500 million Deutschmarks. Immediately to the south of it, based on Frankfurt, is another regional society, the Rhein-Main. In Austria amalgamations are steadily proceeding according to the scheme adopted in 1969 whereby the Movement in the several Lander (or provinces) will be consolidated on the basis of strong local societies already well-established in the principal conurbations. From Switzerland come reports of an amalgamation which will form a similar nucleus in the area of the Rhine valley, Lake Constance and St. Gallon. In France, where regionalisation began fifty years ago after the first World War, over nine-tenths of the national Co-operative retail turnover is now handled by such societies. A line drawn on the map from Paris to Strasbourg intersects the boundaries of no more than four societies—Paris, Champagne, Lorraine and Strasbourg. Regional societies in all the countries named are making rapid headway in the establishment of supermarkets and hypermarkets at strategic points in their respective areas. The time is rapidly approaching, if it is not already come, for some comparative studies on the processes and problems of regionalisation in neighbouring countries in the European Economic Community.