

The Society for Co-operative Studies

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1972/3

1. The Presidents of the Society — with Mr. C. C. Hilditch taking the place of Sir Robert Southern — have remained in office during the year. Mr. W. J. Philpott has occupied the Chair and Mr. D. G. Hopwood and Mr. S. P. Clarke have served as Vice-Chairmen. In accordance with the practice of the Society the 1971/72 Chairman, Mr. W. E. Lawn, has been invited to attend the meetings of National Officers during this year.

The Officers have had five meetings: the attendance they regret has not been good. The following is their report for presentation to the Annual General Meeting on 27th/28th April, 1973.

2. Membership

(a) At 31st January, 1973 the membership of the Society (with the 1972 figures given in brackets) was:

Region	<i>Individuals</i>				<i>Organisations</i>				<i>Total</i>	
	'Co-operative'		Other		'Co-operative'		Other			
Metropolitan and										
Southern	5	(6)	6	(5)	4	(6)	1	(1)	16	(18)
Midland	11	(11)	7	(3)	5	(5)	1	(1)	24	(20)
North	2	(3)	2	(2)	1	(1)	1	(1)	6	(7)
North-West ..	14	(8)	6	(8)	7	(8)	—	(1)	27	(25)
Scottish	6	(21)	5	(7)	3	(2)	1	(2)	15	(32)
South-West ..	4	(3)	—	(—)	1	(1)	1	(1)	6	(5)
West	4	(4)	—	(—)	—	(—)	—	(—)	4	(4)
Yorkshire and										
Humberside ..	4	(4)	1	(1)	6	(6)	1	(1)	12	(12)
Overseas	1	(1)	—	(—)	—	(—)	—	(—)	1	(1)
	51 (61)		27 (26)		27 (29)		6 (8)		111 (124)	

(b) The recent record of total membership, at the end of January in each year, has been 142 (1970), 132 (1971), 124 (1972) and 111 (1973). About the distribution of membership at 31st January, 1973 it is worth noting:

(i) The Co-operative Union nominates 16 individual members, and one representative. The Scottish Co-operative Society has maintained its membership as an organisation but not the nomination of its Directors as individual members.

(ii) There are 10 new individual members and 1 new organisation.

3. The "Bulletin"

Mr. J. R. Hammond, Joint Editor, had to resign and the Officers thanked him for all he had done. His place was taken by Dr. T. F. Carbery from *Bulletin* 17 onwards and his interest and skill have been warmly welcomed.

The programme has been to publish *Bulletins* No. 16, 17 and 18 during the year, and this has remained one of the main services from the Society to its members. The contents have included, for example, the substantial discussion

paper for the 1972 Conference by John Hughes "The Co-operative Movement: A Perspective for the 1970's" and "Another Perspective" by S. P. Clarke; a Report by a Co-operative Working Party on "Projecting Co-operative Principles" with a commentary by Professor J. Banks; a Report by another Co-operative Working Party on "Consumer Education and Protection", and commentaries by Jennifer Jenkins and Dr. T. F. Carbery; the annual bibliography of publications on the Co-operative Movement by B. Howcroft; and the discussion papers for the 1973 Conference.

4. Other National Activities: Research

(a) CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE ENDOWMENT FUND

As recorded in the last report, two projects were already being supported from this. In the first, Mr. T. E. Stephenson of the University of Leeds has continued his research into "Management in Regional Societies". The second was the establishment of a Senior Research Fellowship at Loughborough University of Technology to investigate the long-term problems of financing Co-operative retail societies in times of inflation, and this has rather foundered with the resignation of the Fellow half-way through his tenure. Particular investigations of Ipswich and Birmingham Societies included within the framework of this project have, however, been completed and made available to the Capital Resources Working Group which was set up by the Co-operative Union following Congress 1972.

(b) DIRECT PROMOTION BY THE SOCIETY

The offer of limited grants to the Regions has been maintained and the responses have been:

- (i) NORTH-WEST: Mr. D. G. Hopwood, University of Lancaster; research into the development of hypermarkets and general Co-operative development.

In addition, a grant was made to Mr. Hopwood to supplement support from the Department of Marketing, University of Lancaster for attendance at the 7th International Congress of Co-operative Science at Munster, on which he reported in *Bulletin* No. 17.

- (ii) NORTH: Mrs. M. Mellor; research into the role of the auxiliaries particularly within the framework of the North-Eastern Society.

5. Regional Developments

The following summaries are based on notes from the Regions:

METROPOLITAN AND SOUTHERN

There has been one business meeting and otherwise very limited activity.

MIDLAND

No Sectional meetings have been held in the last twelve months, but the West Midland branch continues to hold monthly meetings in Birmingham under the chairmanship of Mr. A. J. Corfield. This branch is currently engaged on a research project entitled "Communications between Retail Societies and their Members and Customers".

At present the project is specifically concerned with the Birmingham Co-operative Society but it is hoped to widen the scope to other West Midland societies when this is complete.

NORTHERN

The only activity held during 1972 was a meeting on 11th May when Mr. N. Leivers, Training Manager, North Eastern Co-operative Society Limited, gave a very detailed account of the many problems which the Regional Society had faced in organising efficiently, throughout the Society's vast area, a suitable training programme. It was most unfortunate that only three members, plus the Secretary, were in attendance at this meeting.

In terms of current research it is anticipated that Mrs. Mary Mellor, B.Sc., will be in a position to give an initial outline of her research into "The Role of the Auxiliaries within the North Eastern Co-operative Society Limited" by early March.

NORTH WEST

Unhappily, the activities of this Region have been in limbo during the year. The first lecture arranged under the Region's sessional theme "The Co-operative Movement: Prospects for Survival" was abandoned because of negligible attendance and the speaker had to be sent home—his lecture undelivered—with embarrassed apologies. It was thought unwise to risk further arrangements during the summer months, when many members would be away on holiday, and circumstances prevented the convening of autumn meetings. However, absence of Regional activity did not arouse any marked reaction from members. Consequently, Regional officials have sent a circular letter to members asking if it is worthwhile to continue, but putting forward new suggestions for venue and time in case past arrangements have been inconvenient for most members. Replies to the circular letter are still being received and at the time of writing it is not yet clear whether the majority of members would welcome new arrangements regarding the venue and time of meetings. Certainly the convenors of the Region are only too anxious to explore every suggestion from members which would ensure that the branch remains viable and worthwhile.

SCOTLAND

The only activity of the Region has been an initiative in organising, in association with the University of Strathclyde Department of Marketing, a course on "Consumer Affairs". The financial basis is that the University is responsible for £60 and the Scottish Co-operative Educational Association for £40. The Co-operative Union financial backing is automatically reduced in relation to the number of students it enrolls at £2 per student: that is, if we produce 20 students at £2 per student—a total of £40—then our commitment is cancelled. All enrolments in excess of our commitment go to the University.

The programme was outlined in Bulletin 17 and the course has been well supported by the undermentioned groupings:

Society for Co-operative Studies	..	..	..	..	4
Co-operative Societies (7)	..	..	..	..	22
Trading Standards Offices:					
Glasgow (10)					
Lanark (6)					
Paisley (5)	..	..	..	..	21
Individuals (Public)	..	..	..	..	7
Technical College	..	..	..	..	1
					<hr/>
					55

SOUTH WEST

There has been no activity during the year.

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

The main feature of the year's activity, related to the interest of the Society, has again been the continuing weekly study group organised at Leeds University for senior managers, mainly from the West Riding, under the careful guidance of Mr. T. E. Stephenson. This continuing course is well esteemed and is a proven success.

6. Relations with Other Organisations

Apart from the International Congress mentioned above, there has been little positive contact with other organisations during the year.

7. Finance

The Cash and Bank Account for the year ended 31st December, 1972 is being audited and compared with the account for the previous year is as follows:

				1971		1972	
RECEIPTS				£	p	£	p
Cash in Hand brought forward	..	..		0	70	42	05
Cash at Bank brought forward	..	..		758	26	909	72
Subscriptions	..	..	..	628	00	492	00
Fees—A.G.M. and Conference	..	..		126	65	156	00
Sales—Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..	..		0	22	2	75
Contribution to Printing Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..	..		40	00	—	
Postage Refunded	..	..	..	—		0	25
Bank Interest	..	..	..	4	35	4	10
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				£1,558.18		£1,606.87	
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				1971		1972	
PAYMENTS				£	p	£	p
Printing Society <i>Bulletin</i>	..	..	..	323	50	325	50
Stationery and Postage	..	..	..	58	27	69	39
Typewriting	..	..	..	38	45	59	07
Translations	..	..	..	—		5	00
Telephone	..	..	..	3	07	1	44
Annual General Meeting	..	..	..	152	87	274	78
International Congress	..	..	..	—		25	00
Other Meetings	..	..	..	17	50	161	80
Research Grants	..	..	..	—		40	00
Scholarship to Seminar	..	..	..	—		50	00
Fees Refunded—A.G.M. and Conference	..	..		—		7	00
Subscriptions Refunded	..	..	..	12	00	12	00
Bank Commission	..	..	..	0	75	1	35
Cash in Hand carried forward	..	..		42	05	0	86
Cash at Bank carried forward	..	..		909	72	573	68
				<hr/>		<hr/>	
				£1,558.18		£1,606.87	

The accumulation of cash — in hand and at bank — has been substantially reduced. Moreover two Bulletins are charged in 1972, compared with three in 1971. Factors in the change within the financial statement are the decrease in subscription income, various grants for the Society's objectives and greatly increased expenditure under the heading "Other Meetings" which should be specially outlined. This included in 1972 travelling expenses for a meeting of National Officers held in 1971; a greatly increased number of meetings of National Officers in 1972 compared with the previous year, more claims on the Society for travelling expenses and higher travelling expenses because of the location of the meetings; and among these 1972 meetings a particularly large one for the discussion of John Hughes' paper with the author.

However, the financial position still leaves modest resources for the Society's development.

8. Role for the Future?

The record in general is one of activity maintained and developed on the national level and not a great deal of initiative Regionally — apart from the interesting development of the West Midlands group which has already been referred to. We hope that the Annual General Meeting will discuss ways of improving organisation and activities at both levels. However, the central issue remains as stated in our report last year and we quote from it.

"There was agreement that a primary purpose was to increase the number of people in universities and colleges interested in the Movement, studying its problems and engaged in a useful dialogue with active Co-operators, and about service to that objective two general questions were raised or implied:

- (a) Do the resources devoted to the Society look like showing "cost effectiveness" in achieving the objective — either within the present framework of the Society or through some adaptation of it, e.g., by taking as a basis universities or groups of universities throughout the country and by concentration on gathering in each of these staff and students with some degree of interest in the Movement?
- (b) Or should we give up the kind of separate organisation envisaged under (a) and let the educational agencies of the Movement, particularly the Education Department and College, resume responsibility for the functions which the Society was intended to carry forward — aided perhaps by a panel of active academic advisers on a national level?"