

The Society for Co-operative Studies

REPORT OF NATIONAL OFFICERS
FOR 1974/75

1. The Presidents of the Society have remained in office during the year - subject to the very sad acknowledgement of the death of Mr. C. C. Hilditch in August 1974. Mr. S. P. Clarke has occupied the Chair and Mr. C. J. F. Ringrose and Mr. M. Gibson have served as Vice-Chairmen. In accordance with the practice of the Society, the 1973/74 Chairman, Mr. D. G. Hopwood, has been invited to attend meetings of the National Officers during the year: and in addition the Officers have brought into their councils the experience of Dr. A. Wilson and of Mr. J. M. Wood, who recently retired from the post of Parliamentary Secretary of the Co-operative Union and was Congress President for 1974/75.

The Officers have had three meetings. The following is their report for presentation to the Annual General Meeting 1975.

2. Membership

(a) At 31st January, 1975 the membership of the Society (with the 1974 figures given in brackets) was:

	<u>Individuals</u>		<u>Organisations</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Co-op- erative</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Co-op- erative</u>	<u>Other</u>	
Metropolitan & Southern	8 (6)	3 (4)	10 (8)	- (1)	21 (19)
Midland	11 (10)	6 (6)	10 (8)	1 (1)	28 (25)
North	1 (-)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	4 (3)
North-West	12 (11)	4 (5)	10 (9)	1 (-)	27 (25)
Scottish	5 (7)	7 (5)	3 (4)	1 (1)	16 (17)
South-West	7 (7)	1 (-)	2 (2)	- (-)	10 (9)
Yorkshire & Humberside	7 (3)	1 (1)	9 (9)	1 (1)	18 (14)
Overseas	1 (1)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	1 (1)
	<u>52 (45)</u>	<u>23 (22)</u>	<u>45 (41)</u>	<u>5 (5)</u>	<u>125 (113)</u>

- (b) In addition to the usual approaches to individuals and organisations by letter, small advertisements were placed in "The New Statesman" and in "New Society" associated particularly with the publications of Bulletins 21 and 22. The first did not produce any identifiable response and the effect of the second is awaited.
- (c) The membership has been reasonably well maintained and the number of new members is quite helpful: in the "Co-operative" category 8 individuals and 4 organisations; and in the "Other" category 3 individuals and 0 organisations.
- (d) The recent record of total membership at the end of January in each year has been 132 (1971), 124 (1972), 111 (1973), 113 (1974) and 125 (1975).

3. The "Bulletin"

It is expected that the year will accommodate three Bulletins - Numbers 21, 22 and 23. The first of these concentrated on presenting different views on the Co-operative Development Agency and has been well received including the sale of 330 copies above the normal distribution to members. From this experience two implications were noted by the Officers - the value to the Movement of bringing to bear different analyses and assessments on an important issue which Bulletin 21 achieved and the value, which the Bulletin did not achieve, of doing so at a formative stage of Co-operative discussion of the issue. Bulletin 22 published a wide range of articles on the central theme of societies and inflation, and Bulletin 23 should include a survey of Co-operative shopping in selected stores in Scotland by Dr. T. F. Carbery and Miss E. Quinn - supported by a small financial grant from the Society; and the annual Select Bibliography of recent publications on the Co-operative Movement prepared by Mr. Bernard Howcroft, FLA.

Other National Activities

(a) RESEARCH

Nationally the Officers have continued to explore the possibility of university interest in research into comparative Co-operative law with a particular bearing on the framework for a Co-operative Development Agency - but without any firm response. Regionally, the main venture has been the shopping survey referred to above by Dr. Carbery and Miss Quinn.

(b) STUDY MATERIAL ON CO-OPERATIVES AT UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Wilson and Mr. Gibson prepared a list of books suitable for university general or departmental libraries and this was distributed to appropriate societies throughout the country with a suggestion that they donate the books listed to their universities. There promises to be quite a good response by the societies to this initiative. The following have in the early stages indicated they are definitely taking up this suggestion - and there are, of course, more to come:

CWS (Scottish Region)
Lancasteria
Norwest

Norwich
Royal Arsenal

Regional Developments

There has been limited activity on the Regional level - particularly in the Scottish Region and the West Midlands Group.

Finance

- (a) The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December, 1974 has been audited, and compared with the Account for the previous year is as follows:

RECEIPTS

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
	£	£
Cash in Hand Brought Forward	0.86	0.47
Cash at Bank Brought Forward	573.68	234.11
Subscriptions	584.50	652.00
Fees - AGM and Conference	105.00	294.85
Sales - Society Bulletin	4.71	21.60
Bank Interest	0.94	3.13
	<u>£1,269.69</u>	<u>£1,206.16</u>

PAYMENTS

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
	£	£
Printing Society Bulletin	606.00	130.00
Stationery and Postage	61.02	72.51
Typewriting	44.85	98.80
Telephone	0.72	3.64
Annual General Meeting	156.00	252.25
Other Meetings	78.32	112.53
Research Grants	85.00	-
Donations and Grants	-	43.50
Presentation	-	10.00
Advertising	-	12.60
Subscriptions Refunded	0.50	-
Course Fees	2.00	-
Bank Commission	0.70	1.03
Cash in Hand Carried Forward	0.47	2.05
Cash at Bank Carried Forward	234.11	467.25
	<u>£1,269.69</u>	<u>£1,206.16</u>

- (b) The balance in hand at the end of 1974 is almost double that for 1973: there is no embarrassment in this surplus, though, of course, the objective of the Society is to use its money productively while retaining a prudent balance.

Within the account of Receipts, the item for Subscriptions reflects the modest increase in membership: and for the 1974 AGM and Conference the numbers were better and the charges higher than in 1973. In the list of Payments, the economy in the method of printing the Society Bulletin has been very effectively maintained, and the offset against this of the increased charge for careful (and very competent) typing is comparatively modest. The Presentation was an acknowledgement to Mr. D. A. Hibberd, who, as a member of the staff in the Education Department of the Union, had given very effective help to the Society in maintaining its accounts, and who left in 1974 for Co-operative service in the Cameroons.

7. Role for the Future?

On the two levels of Society organisation the reports and the questions are familiar enough:

- (a) Regionally, activity has been very limited indeed: can any progress be made, for example, by local engagement of Co-operative societies with universities and colleges in the neighbourhood within the broad purposes of the Society?
- (b) Nationally, the service of the Bulletin and, we are confident, of the Annual Conference and AGM, is being well maintained and appreciated. Is there any development of these services or any additions to them that could usefully be made within the range of our resources?