

	<i>per cent</i>
Readers of <i>Platform</i> . . . . .	10
Readers of <i>Co-operative News</i> . . . . .	80
Regular readers of <i>Co-operative News</i> . . . . .	60
Readers of <i>Sunday Citizen</i> . . . . .	30

Table II: Activist readership of co-operative publications

Activists were asked whether they knew the attitude of the Co-operative Union to the then recently imposed SET. Half the activists knew that the Co-operative Union opposed the imposition of SET.

The second question used to determine the economic knowledge and awareness of the respondents was a request for a reason for the changeover to self-service in retail outlets, ("This change is now a general trend in this country. Can you give me an explanation of why it is happening?").

If a respondent gave a reason which could be taken to be a 'structured' reply in an economic sense, then that respondent was considered 'informed'. Only a quarter of the activists gave acceptable replies.

It has been possible here only to briefly indicate empirical findings about the socialization with respect to recruitment and knowledge of the co-operative movement. However it would be of interest if the experience of co-operators elsewhere could be made available.

## International Notes

W. P. WATKINS, J.P., B.A.

*(Mr. W. P. Watkins, a President of the Society for Co-operative Studies, is a former Director of the International Co-operative Alliance. He will be reporting regularly on co-operative studies abroad)*

### A STUDY OF CO-OPERATIVE DEMOCRACY

*France.* It is, of course, no mere coincidence that the elder sister organisation of the Society for Co-operative Studies, the French Institute of Co-operative Studies, is also engaged on a study of democracy in the Co-operative Movement. The French Consumers' Co-operative Movement, although it is much further advanced in regional organisation than the British and although a number of its regional societies have long possessed internal representational structures based on a network of local "sections", enabling active members to play an effective role in their societies' administration, is well aware that the reality of democracy is not to be found in machinery and that the Co-operative Movement is alive just in so far as its democracy is effective and dynamic.

The Institute of Co-operative Studies has recently launched a research project under the direction of the chairman of its administrative board, Professor Georges Lasserre. In March a brain-storming session was held for which Professor Lasserre prepared a fascinating interrogative pre-report. This somewhat outlandish term is a literal translation of the French "Pré-rapport

interrogatif" but the meaning is clear enough. If the project is to yield the right answers, those participating must first ask the right questions and, in a brochure of thirty-five typed pages, this is exactly what Professor Lasserre has attempted to do, relating his questions to facts already well known and to current thinking. The purpose is to reveal lines on which further research may profitably proceed.

In his introduction, Professor Lasserre observes that in our day Co-operation has to be judged no longer by its principles, that is, its intentions, but, as we judge the other economic sectors; by its performance and achievements. The decline of democracy, which afflicts also the friendly societies, trade unions and political parties, is less pronounced in the workers' productive societies than in the agricultural societies and less pronounced in the agricultural than in the consumers' co-operative societies. (It should be noted that the two types of producers' co-operation are in France relatively stronger in relation to consumers' co-operatives than their corresponding movements in Great Britain.) But in all, democracy is dwindling and tends to become a fiction like shareholders' control in the capitalist sector. The problem is, therefore, no longer: how can the masses conquer the power to which they aspire? but on the contrary: how can we convince the rank and file to exercise the power they constitutionally possess?

There follow five parts. The first attempts a diagnosis of the crisis of democracy, with reference to technocratic tendencies, apathy, defects of democratic machinery and the present dilemma, whether current tendencies are to be accepted or counteracted. The second part brings together some basic data and assumptions; the third deals with the sovereignty of the members in their societies and how it should be exercised. The fourth part considers the role of the "militants", by which is meant the whole body of convinced and active members whose function is to animate the mass and to act as a counterpoise to the management. The fifth and concluding part discusses the motives which compel people to join co-operatives and keep them more or less loyally attached to them and poses the uncomfortable question whether, in the agonising re-appraisal of co-operative thinking today, it is necessary not only to face doubts about the means adopted by the Movement but also the ends it should set before itself in a changing world.

It is the intention of the writer of these notes to follow as closely as possible the working out of the Institute's project and to report its progress from time to time in the Bulletin.

#### A CO-OPERATIVE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*France.* One of the notable features of Co-operative development in certain Western European countries within the last decade is the formation, on similar lines to workers' productive societies, of co-operatives of members of the liberal professions—doctors, lawyers, architects and town-planners and so on. In Great Britain, this type of society is represented by Co-operative Planning Ltd. In Paris, since 1961, there has existed a society of educationists, the object of which is to provide organisations having little or no educational or training apparatus of their own with advice and skilled assistance in arranging courses for staff training or member enlightenment. This society, bearing the title Institut

Promotion Animation (I.P.A.) has its headquarters in Paris and regional sub-offices in Tours and Toulouse. Its clientele includes national organisations of the workers' productive and agricultural Co-operative Movements, business undertakings, trade and professional associations, government ministries and public enterprises, trade unions and many other types of association.

Inevitably, in the course of its activity, I.P.A. has accumulated a considerable fund of experience of adult and technical education of various types. This fund it endeavours to make available to anyone interested through seminars at which experience is exchanged and principles of educational method, particularly applicable to the needs of adults at the present time, can be worked out. I.P.A. attaches special importance to the training in method of those who themselves are responsible for or engaged in training personnel for manual or intellectual labour or for management, as well as for the non-vocational education of adults which results in a richer and more effective civic or social life.

Two connected seminars held this year at a centre near Beauvais seem from the prospectus to be especially valuable and stimulating. The first, already held in March, dealt with method in adult education with the object of defining a new pedagogy adapted to the needs of adults in the society of tomorrow. While remaining independent and evolving its own methods and techniques, this pedagogy, says the prospectus, will utilise the findings of all the humane sciences—sociology, social psychology, economics, logic, so as to create a synthetic discipline in continual evolution. The second seminar, to be held in June, has the theme "Adult Education, Society and Values". This will be treated in such a manner as to show how adult education not only reflects current social structures and philosophical ideas but also reacts upon them.

Another pair of seminars deals with the tests of the effectiveness of training and training methods. In France, as elsewhere, it would appear that the classical examination system, as a means of measuring the results of training, is no longer regarded as meeting contemporary needs. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what other instruments can be discovered or evolved which could permit a more accurate evaluation of results.