

Report on Study Projects

At the 1968 Annual General Meeting it was agreed that the Society should concentrate its efforts during 1968-69 on one or two specific lines of development. Two topics were selected for study and discussion in the regions: these were "The Future of Co-operative Democracy", particularly in regional societies, and "The National Structure of the Movement", particularly the relations between the trading and non-trading federations. Dr. Alexander Wilson and Mr. W. P. Watkins were invited to prepare notes to provide a framework for discussion and these were published in *Bulletin No. 5*.

The following summary gives a brief conspectus of engagement with the study projects so far.

The *Midland* branch have examined a number of aspects of Co-operative democracy and have discussed a paper on "Democracy and Competition in Consumer Co-operatives". Members have also discussed the fundamental principles of the Movement and the importance of democratic control within those principles.

In the *Northern* region Mr. J. W. Charlton, C.S.D., A.I.A.C., Deputy Executive Officer of the Newcastle Co-operative Society introduced a discussion on "The Future of Co-operative Democracy". In addition, a questionnaire under the same title was distributed to every society in the region.

Eight societies, representing one third of the total membership in the region, completed and returned the questionnaire. There is some doubt if the sample is sufficiently representative. Further investigations are proceeding and the results of the research will be published at a later date.

In the *Yorkshire and Humberside* region a group of senior managers, guided by the Society, are making a study of aspects of structure and democracy in a regional society. A report is expected early in 1969.

In the *North-West* a series of discussion meetings have been held in order to examine the paper prepared by Dr. Alexander Wilson. Discussions have ranged over the structure of the Movement at both local and national levels and the paper has aroused considerable interest in the region.

Members in *Scotland* have discussed "The Future of Co-operative Democracy" and further meetings on this topic will be held.

In the *South* the Society has been gathering information from selected societies concerning attitudes to regionalisation and methods of approaching this. It is hoped to undertake certain research projects on the basis of this information. Members have also prepared discussion papers on various aspects of democracy in regional societies.