

Co-operative College and Education Department, 1946-1977 - "a Light and Partial Chronicle"

R.L. Marshall

In the beginning - there was in the late Spring of 1946 a call to me at the Army School of Education from the Director-General at the War Office. He had been approached by the General Secretary of the Co-operative Union: could he nominate someone about to leave the Army who could be considered for the post of Principal of the Co-operative College: would I accept nomination? I would, was called for interview at Holyoake House, and came to the College in July 1946 - the year following its transfer from Manchester to Stanford Hall, Loughborough.

Towards the end (my retirement in the summer of 1977) there was a concise description of my intervening career as Principal of the College and Chief Education Officer of the Co-operative Union. An ex-student, who was an expatriate Registrar of Co-operative Societies in the Pacific area, wrote to ask if it was agreeable that his Co-operative Union should name its new Training Centre after me. I was delighted, and I still rejoice to see the picture of the modest proud building which he sent me. When we met, I asked him in what language the opening ceremony had been conducted. "Pidgin English", he said. Intrigued, I asked how the Chairman of his Union had described me in that language and the answer was: "Heap big fella; long time Co-op Education". You may rightly feel the description was too generous but allow for that and it will serve well enough for the career which I am now invited to review briefly.

This "retrospective" will, of course, be selective - there is a limitation of space, though I should add gratefully that the discipline from the new Editor is less severe than it would have been from his predecessor. It will, no doubt, be defective - in various senses. My prejudices will even unconsciously exercise their self-regarding influence, but I will try to control them. I fear too that in the interval since 1977 my recollections may have become less comprehensive and exact than they should be, though I have tried to check them. It will also be from time to time explicitly prospective: I comment occasionally from my experience on some aspects of the Business Plan published in the middle of 1995 for the future of the College and Department, and do so with fraternity and best wishes for those now taking responsibility and without, I hope, attempting

prescriptions on issues now faced. Finally, the “retrospective” will be collective in its personal references. Within its scope I cannot possibly pay specific tributes to all the colleagues and associates (including the students of agreeable memory) who deserve them, and to include only a few would be unfair to others. I make below one exception to this rule - but then she has always been exceptional in many ways.

To give this light and, I hope, interim chronicle an appearance of order, however specious, its main points of reference will be threefold - the Purpose of the College and Department, their Content and Method - and the Organisation of the elements of them, which indeed can be taken as the components of any educational and training institution or process. In following this sequence I have chosen to be more generous in space to Content and Method.

1. The Purpose of the Co-operative College and Department

By “College” I mean the services for which the participants came into residence at that particular institution, and by “Department” the services directed from that location for activities mainly undertaken elsewhere - comprising, for example, syllabuses, textbooks and examinations and awards in both social and technical studies, correspondence courses over the same range, and provisions in various forms for youth service. The College and Department were Co-operative in the sense that they had been provided by and intended to serve a consumer Co-operative movement, though the relation of College and Department with the other Co-operative sectors in the U.K. was positively fraternal. The objective of that movement, as I envisage it, has three parts:

- a. To exhibit principles of social organisation which the movement believes to be important
- b. To show that the Co-operative societies in which we exhibit these principles can achieve economic and social leadership in their scope of operation
- c. And finally, by that effectiveness to encourage the extension of the principles to other areas of human life in community.

Somewhat circuitously then, I come to the general purpose of the College and Department - to undertake the educational services to the movement’s understanding and practice of its principles which a central institution could undertake more effectively than could be done by individual societies

- particularly services to the staff and managers of the movement, to the activists and leaders in its democracy, to its members and to the public understanding of its character and intentions.

This high endeavour will be presented in the following pages, but before that takes flight, let me acknowledge in passing a more local purpose - to be a good neighbour in the area in which the lot of the College and the Department was now cast. In one sense, the College and Loughborough had already been linked! I am indebted to Professor John Corina for a note on Lady Byron, widow of the poet, who promoted retail societies across the country and, in particular, in 1831 "conceived the idea of a Co-operative College". The early Loughborough connection is expressed, he reports, in a letter dated September 1832 from Loughborough Co-operative Society to Lady Byron expressing their thanks for her support to a working class Co-operative movement and enclosing a gift - two pairs of fancy lace stockings "one pair for herself and one pair for your Ladyship's daughter"! In our later connection, the College, I hope, has served the region well in opening its facilities to the community - including its theatre which became not only a stage for professional repertory but a continuing centre for dramatic societies throughout the region - and indeed drew from the borough council a proposal that they might share ownership and development of it!

Different Circumstances, Different Applications

Definition of Co-operative principles does not change fundamentally - for all the International Co-operative Alliance re-examinations and reformulations of 1966 and 1995. Their expression in practical action by Co-operative societies commercially, socially and educationally does, however, have to change with changing circumstances and the period 1946-77, from the perspective of a Co-operative movement serving consumers, presented new challenges demanding new responses (see Special Journal 79, Consumer Co-operation in the UK, 1945-1993). There was, of course, ebb and flow in the community's general attitudes, policies and action, and particularly in its concern for collective schemes of social amelioration. However, the welfare state has been instituted and maintained with consequences bearing strongly on the Co-operative movement. There has been, for example, extension of educational opportunities at all levels - a development of inescapable importance for the recruitment policies of Co-operative societies. They traditionally had recruited mainly at the minimum school leaving age - and after the extension, of course, discovered that ability which once left the system at that level and entered Co-operative service was going on to higher stages of education. In the community there were more consumers; they had more money; they wanted a greater variety of services and products.

Within distribution, the multiple organisations grew in scale and dominance, and consumer Co-operation, confronting these challenges to its trade and self-confidence, was diminishing its role in production and concentrating on retailing. Within its measures to counter intense competition from the multiples, it was regrouping widely into very large societies which had the possibility of undertaking for themselves services previously provided by their national organisations and which for education and training could turn them to a widening range of accessible institutions. The movement was on the whole exhibiting less concern with general social amelioration, and within its own organisation looking with a more critical eye on the traditional claims of non-commercial activities including Co-operative education.

This inclination towards “one auspicious and one dropping eye” came to mind as I noted a particular aspect of the Business Plan. One part of the definition in the Plan of the role for the College is “the provision of co-operative education” and this offers no contradiction to my formulation above. To this, however, is added a second role, that of responding to the need “to maximise the commercial opportunities offered by the site and resources available at Stanford Hall”. There is a possible tension between what we may call these “College” and “Stanford Hall” aspects. The claims and pressures of the two tasks may come into conflict. Such tensions need not be excessively daunting; they go with the job of education and on this task of riding two horses at once, everyone concerned will, I am sure, remember the wise words of Mr. James Maxton, MP!

2. Content and Method

What, then, are the provisions for carrying forward in practice the purpose of the institution? It is a question confronting the Business Plan which obviously intends to lead to definition, in the most specific terms possible, of the needs of Co-operative societies in education and training in present and calculable conditions, and of the range of services that the College and Department as central institutions intend to offer to meet these needs. To make that definition, the experience of “providers” and of “users” of the provisions has, of course to be powerfully combined.

a. Content

In my experience this range, as I learned sometimes painfully, was wide and, of course, changing. The task of summarising without distorting the changes is daunting and perhaps impossible, but I hope I shall not be too outrageously misleading if, first, I set out a few facts and figures from the reports I drafted covering my first year in the post, 1946/47, and then the final year, 1976/77. I have retained the faith that an abundance of statistics

can be dangerous but that a few may increase the danger. However, the selection may give some idea of the scale and variety of the service. Beyond the statistics, I add some notes on the various categories of activity.

(i) The College

Table 1: College enrolments

	Enrolments	
	1946/47	1976/77
<u>Social Studies</u>		
Sessional, towards Co-operative Social Science Diploma and Co-operative Honours Diploma and in non-diploma studies	45	
Sessional, towards Diploma in Political, Economic and Social Studies (including Co-operation), University of Nottingham		22
<u>Secretaryship and Management</u>		
Predominantly sessional, towards Co-operative Union awards of Co-operative Secretaries' Diploma and Diplomas for (Co-operative) Salesmanship, Branch Management, Departmental Management, General Management and wholesale textile distribution	55	
Medium-term, for graduate recruits to Co-operative retail service		12
Sessional and medium-term, towards Diploma in Co-operative Management and Certificate in Distributive Management Principles (Retail Trades Education Council)		15
Short intensive courses for various levels up to senior management and in various areas of Co-operative trade)	35 places available
Short intensive courses provided by CWS for retail management)	
<u>Co-operation in Developing Countries</u>		
Sessional and medium-term, towards Certificates from College and Diploma from University of Loughborough and in non-award courses		41
TOTAL	100	125

College enrolments compared

The Annual Report I drafted for 1946/47 commented: "Like some other national institutions, and unlike most British colleges for adult education, the Co-operative College can proudly review its war-time record and say 'we never closed'". Indeed it had emerged from trying into triumphant times with the purchase of Stanford Hall and estate in 1945 - a bold venture for which the Movement could take great credit. Here from the snapshots in Table 1 at the beginning and end of my service are some noticeable developments:

- The two-year course for adults for the Diploma instituted by the University of Nottingham at the request of the College - which in addition to the direct service to its students, the movement and the community, gave testimony to the standards of the College without sacrifice of its Co-operative character; helped to make possible a similar and wider relation with Loughborough University; and engaged the interest and financial support of the national ministry of education and the local education authorities.

- The commitment of the College to the structure of long-term Co-operative Union courses - though concentrating from the latter part of the '40s on management levels. The staff (without imitating the crowing of the cock over the sunrise it has caused) can take satisfaction from seeing how many students attaining these awards at the College, and also, of course, through local classes and correspondence courses, have been, and still are "notables" on many eminences of the service, including the highest

- The later replacement of these Co-operative Union courses and awards, below the highest level, by 'national' courses.

- The short intensive courses on particular aspects of Co-operative management on different levels and in different areas of responsibility which supplemented the longer-term professional courses: for example, courses on self-service and supermarket organisation and management which supported the movement's early introduction of these techniques.

- The College scheme for the recruitment and training for Cooperative service of graduates of university level: these, too, rank with the 'notables' in service mentioned above.

- Courses in Co-operation in the developing countries provided at British

government request, particularly for Co-operative officers in government departments and in Co-operative movements throughout the Third World - a great and acknowledged contribution from Britain to an international cause. These courses were addressed to the forms of Co-operative relevant to the Third World and we had ready help from other Co-operative sectors in this country - for example, the Plunkett Foundation.

Absent from the explicit record is any reference to an ambition argued and, to a limited extent, served from beginning to end of the period - promotion of research by the College. Many forms of research belong, of course, to the central trading and non- trading agencies of the Movement but the College should have a distinctive share appropriate to its relative independence and to its particular preoccupation with the history of the movement and its social aspirations. The research and the publications of the tutors, the occasional award of research scholarships, the series of Co-operative College Papers, the initiative in the institution of the Society of Co-operative Studies, my service as joint editor of the SCS Journal, and so on, have been useful - but this did not attain to the achievement of a coherent and continuing programme. The vision still beckons!

ii) The Education Department

First of all, the following selection of facts and figures omits, reluctantly, some categories of activity and service which have considerable historic interest, for example, libraries provided by societies, or the "cultural and other continuing groups" which descended from early spacious ambitions of the movement.

The 1946/47 Report could still write

The consequent issue has been whether the Movement should provide a complete structure of educational provisions independent of the state and other voluntary agencies through which it could operate as a universal provider of all requirements, or whether the Movement should associate with statutory and voluntary organisations and make full use of their provisions, providing directly only those educational services not available elsewhere. On the whole, the trend has been to the second alternative in the belief that the Movement has neither the resources nor the need to adopt the first.

Table 2: Some figures for the Department

	<u>1946/47</u>		<u>1976/77</u>	
	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Students</u>
Local classes - in Co-operation and Social Studies	203	2924	65	1411
			<u>Groups</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Local groups - on three topics set within the annual National Consumer Project			60	Over 1000
Local classes - for employees	251	3880	No figures recorded	
	<u>Enrolments</u>	<u>Enrolments</u>		
Correspondence Courses - largely for employees	1684 (Mainly on Education Dept syllabuses)	1617 (through Dept in joint schemes with Institute of Grocery Distribution for Introductory and Advanced Certificates in Distribution and Certificate in Distributive Management Studies)		
	<u>Members</u>	<u>Members</u>		
Co-operative Youth Movement in three age ranges	31,179	(No figures recorded)		

The Department does not lend itself as readily as the College to a comprehensive presentation in precise figures - much of its service was in provisions for use in the groups of members and employees which local societies could bring together, and complete annual statistics for these were difficult to attain in spite of annual and desperate appeals. Thus the Department was heavily committed even before the Second World War and much before the rest of the retail trade, to its own structure of courses, examinations and awards for retail employees and managers which I have already noted - Diplomas in Salesmanship, Branch Management, Departmental Management and General Management. Then too it provided in member education, syllabuses for local classes in Co-operation and

social studies and for “short lecture courses” in the Co-operative Guilds. Despite the qualifications I have mentioned, the figures should give some help in identifying features of commission and omission, of “challenge and response” over the period.

Department figures compared

In the categories above some of the significant features are quite explicit. There is the reduced but still tenacious commitment of local societies to classes in Co-operation and Social Studies. There is withdrawal from the provision of Co-operative classes for employees and a great part of the Co-operative structure of courses and awards has given way to the adoption of national courses in retail distribution - in whose institution, indeed, the Department had played a part - including its pressure to have provision within the new structure or in additional endorsements for attention to distinctive features of Co-operative distribution.

The National Consumer Project was part of a venture to strengthen the consumer movement’s service along the lines of G.D.H. Cole’s exhortation in his lecture Democracy and Authority in the Co-operative Movement in 1953 - to involve itself in “an active and continuous process...” “to educate the consumer aesthetically as well as economically”. The Project always acknowledged that what was available in the Co-operative shop was more important than what went on in the study group, but educationally we felt we had something to contribute. We also drew, from the general effort in consumer education, a particular disappointment which I still feel rather poignantly. The relation we had built up with the Council of Industrial Design led to their agreement to act as adviser, for expenses only, on the questions of design which arose either in our day-to-day operations at the College, or in particular projects of adaptations or extension. Well - in the event, the decision was “No, thanks: we can rely for such guidance on resources within the Movement”. I still feel sad over the loss of the opportunity offered by this possibility for a people’s movement to take such a lead.

The Co-operative Youth Movement which had been a substantial response to social need and governmental support during the War had been reduced to sporadic devotion in a few societies. The ending of the wartime pressures, the judgment in many societies that youth work was not an urgent responsibility arising out of the nature and needs of Co-operative organisation and the inability of the Department to maintain a specialist staff were high among the contributory factors. It should also be said that the Woodcraft Folk continued and continues still in some vitality.

There are also interesting additions to be made to Table 2 above. There was a greatly increased reliance on short courses for employees which

have defied translation (at least by me) into tidy numbers, but the 1976/77 record shows strong evidence of "problem led" provisions of great variety ranging from "skills for the job" for women supervisors to pension fund administration to security techniques, all in response to consultation with societies and the professional associations within the movement. There is particular significance in the increasing prominence of CWS short courses for retail society staff and management: in 1976/7, in total 87 courses on retail society premises, 5 in Manchester and 5 at the College. These provisions by the CWS were impressively backed by its trading experience and its enviable resources.

Finally on Content I should acknowledge a double responsibility which itself generated quite heavy pressures. There was, first, the task for staff of representing the College and Department over the great range of organisations with which our work was concerned - giving and gaining in the exchange of experience. Secondly, there was the task of local engagement with societies - participation in the lecture courses, weekend and summer schools, etc., etc. I believe that this latter commitment gave good service to the cohesion of the movement and to its regard and support for the College and Department.

b. Method

Entry into the general methodology of education and training is a temptation I resist here, and anyhow much of my experience and effort would be common to most practitioners. However, three experiences or reactions rather shoulder their way insistently to the front - two specific and one general.

(i) Member Service

One of our provisions of short courses, under the title Member Service, was addressed to a decisive level of Co-operative action - service in the shop to the consumer. It was a venture in which we drew on the experience of the Harold Whitehead consultancy partnership. The essence was that the branch, not the individual, was taken as the unit to be trained - a distinctive extension of the co-operative quality we sought generally in our method; its success was widely acknowledged. The firm requirement was that a sequence from senior to junior staff would go through the course so that each trainee was returning to a group which was, or would be, sharing a set of common standards and practices. Our hope, of course, was that this venture would add encouragement and a model for further reliance on 'co-operative' method in education and training.

(ii) Residential education

Secondly, I should acknowledge the importance of the residential character of the College. This is both expensive and demanding. We met its demands well, and I pay tribute to the efforts of colleagues and their spouses who responded beyond the strict terms of their appointment. Particularly I pay tribute to my wife who, at some sacrifice of her own career, gave unstinted support. This quotation fits her share:-

“In her bright existence” (there was) “a clearness of discernment and a noble loyalty of heart which are rare. For (50) years she has been the ever-loving help-mate of her husband and by act and word universally forwarded him in all of worth that he did or attempted.”

It is unfortunate that the quotation is from Thomas Carlyle’s tribute to his wife. Thomas is one of her least favourite authors, and I do not know that this resort to him will elicit her indulgence for him or indeed for me. However, this chronicle would be sadly deficient if it did not express my thanks to her.

(iii) Basic Method

Finally on this question of method, there is in the Business Plan a general commitment to which my experience particularly responded. As recorded in the Plan, the objectives set out in the Trust Deed for the College include a limited co-operative and Co-operative reference, but in the Mission Statement, the College is more specifically “dedicated to the promotion of co-operative values, ideals, principles and practice.” This small “c” in preference to the large “C” is important in the perspective of some partners who are sought for College development, for instance agencies dispensing grants from public funds and required in doing so not to serve party political purposes, or sectoral Co-operative organisations who have maintained political neutrality. It is also important for the College on the evidence of the Plan’s commitment to Quality Assurance and Management, set out well in its section 6.3 with its emphasis on

quality control measures involving - an open intellectual community by the encouragement of open discussion, critical reflection and personal development by both educational staff and students

3. Organisation for the College and Department

Given such definition of the Purpose of the College and Department and the Content and Method of their programmes, what Organisation will bring appropriate staff and participants together in a setting as supportive as possible? Ours was quite a complicated as well as a democratic one; let me recall - again - a small incident when I came close to acknowledging that rather unfairly. We were engaged at the time in some debate among Co-operative educationists when a letter came from a main disputant posing for me some large questions of educational structure. We did not yet have an answer for our correspondent and, for once, I had the honesty to say so. I dictated a letter which made that confession and I included the sentence "I am still making my way warily through the complexities of Co-operative organisation". When the letter came back for signature it was impeccably typed - except for one small alteration. In the version now revised I said "I am making my way wearily through the complexities..." and for a brief moment I looked with auspicious eye on the indulgence of letting it pass.

a. Ownership and Responsibility

The general framework, as I understood, was set by the Trust Deed for the College in its status as an educational charity. The practical effect for my responsibility was that the Co-operative Union represented by the Central Executive was the landlord for the accommodation of the College and Department, and the Education Executive of the Union (subject to the final authority of the Central Executive) was the tenant charged with providing education and training services and, of course, paying a rent for the accommodation. The composition of the Education Executive was changed from time to time in my period. In 1976 it had eight members elected from the Sectional Educational Councils and six appointed from the CWS, the Central Executive and General Purposes Committee of the Union and the Joint Auxiliaries Council.

b. Committee Structure

My direct accountability for all the services of College and Department was to the Education Executive until the 1970s, when the services in staff education and training to retail societies were placed for monitoring and co-ordination within the scope of a Training Executive - though financial responsibility for the operation of the College and Education Department remained with the Education Executive. The Training Executive included representatives from the Central Executive, the Education Executive, the

Wholesale Society, the Co-operative Personnel Services Association and the College and Department staff.

This division in my time between two committees, as the division now between the Board of Management for the College and the Education Executive, made the comprehensive responsibility of the chief officer the more relevant. I note also the incorporation in the present Board of experience from other Co-operative sectors and indeed from outside the Co-operative Movement - with commendation and indeed envy. I recall how, on my recommendation, the Education Executive took tentative steps in the same direction - and in spite of the high quality of the people we co-opted in an initial experiment, soon retraced these steps due, at least partly, to my lack of adequate preparation for the change. Even if this ambition had been more successful, I expected the main role of the committees to remain, not in taking over responsibility for detailed proposals of policy but in providing scrutiny and decision on such proposals from the officers, and in helping in effective communication with our constituents.

c. Staffing

(i) This was, and is, first in importance if not in my analytical order. The quality of the staff is the main determinant of the appeal to and the response from the market for the College and Department service, and salaries will continue to be a powerful determinant of that quality. I acknowledge gratefully however, the pervasive commitment among staff in all areas to the character of our institutions and their social significance which elicited service beyond the strict letter of duty. In College teaching, the full-time staff of around ten was supplemented by visiting teachers from the movement and from neighbouring universities and colleges. The Education Department had its expansive seasons - with, for a time, a complement of Youth Officers and a comprehensive provision of Sectional Education Officers. However, under the limitation of resources and the great reduction in small societies who were more dependent on the service of officers from the Department, that staff became fewer and more centralised.

(ii) Much more particularly I welcome in the Business Plan unification in one appointment of comprehensive professional responsibility for the College and Department services - provided, of course, there is a supporting staff which allows the Chief Executive Officer to concentrate adequately on the planning and monitoring of the service and on the vital relations on appropriate level with the user organisations.

d. Students

“Bless them all, the Long and the Short and the Tall”. Our aim was to

make our courses and awards as accessible as possible through local classes and correspondence courses as well as through College residence and many societies gave good support for participation in such classes and courses, including day-release provisions for employees. In this section of my chronicle I refer to College students - many of whom, indeed, reached Stanford Hall by such routes. And certainly they were a company varied in nationalities, social origins, religions and politics, in ambitions and careers. There were, of course, tensions in practices and standards as students settled into the intimacy of College accommodation - but settle they did, with a development of understanding and cohesion which was itself a powerful educational experience.

One of the tasks of organisation was, as I wrote above, to bring together "appropriate participants": out of that preoccupation here are a few points of reference.

(i) Social Studies

Predominantly these devotees were in the two-year course for the University of Nottingham's Diploma in Political, Economic and Social Studies. We belonged, then, to the small group of long-term adult education colleges, the "colleges of the second chance", and secured recognition and financial support both from national ministry of education and - in respect of discretionary grants to students - from local education authorities. The attraction of our Co-operative title and Co-operative studies was less powerful than we should have liked. The record is still of promise and achievement among our students in which the Movement can take pride.

(ii) Management and Secretaryship

Students for the longer-term courses for professional qualifications, generally Co-operative employees, were largely dependent for support on Co-operative resources, particularly scholarships, covering College charges offered for competition by local societies, sections or national Co-operative organisations and, very often, generous provision by societies in the maintenance of wages of employees. We encouraged the awarding agencies to be more positive in nominating to the College candidates identified for their promise for Co-operative management responsibility. The role of the national awards was distinctively important in bringing to us candidates of merit whose societies or sections did not provide for them. The participants in the Short Intensive Courses which developed so strongly were, of course, nominated by their societies.

(iii) Co-operation in Developing Countries

The participants here were predominantly from government service in the

countries of the Third World and reached us by nomination from their governments and by support from British governmental aid programmes. The College had modest but useful funds for bringing into the courses worthwhile candidates who otherwise might not have the chance: officers in the Co-operative Movements in developing countries, for whom nomination by their government might be difficult or, occasionally, candidates in the UK who wanted to go into expatriate service.

e. Location of College and Department

It was a satisfaction to share in the adaptations and extensions of the Hall and estate over the years. This was true even of that most hectic of experiences, the contrivance in the summer of 1946 of accommodation for up to 100 students due in the autumn, within a building which had been designed as a family home and had been strained to deal with 25 students in 1945/6. I hope that throughout the years we had some success in achieving standards of utility and design which were serviceable and creditable to the movement. At least one reassuring tribute came our way after some years of Co-operative occupation. We had agreed to a request from the All-England women's hockey association that they might, on the eve of an overseas tour, send their team for a few days of preparation at the Hall and on our sports fields. At the end of their visit, a member of the party came to see me - and offered warm congratulations on the facilities and appearance of the Hall and estate. She turned out to be a member of the Ratcliffe family which had lived in the Hall and she had wondered what had happened to her old home. She felt we might like to know she had been impressed by the standards she had found. Well - we did like to know!

The ambitions, of course, continued: my final report for 1976/77 recorded

Since the brief reference in the report for 1975, agreement has been reached on an extension and improvement of the College facilities to be achieved in part by the construction of a completely new wing in which individual rooms would be equipped with private bath and toilet facilities; the second element is the adaptation of the existing premises to secure improvements not only in residential accommodation but also in facilities for teaching and administration".

The estimated cost was £450,000 and the report has the warm-hearted thanks that "The Education Executive joins the Central Executive in expressing appreciation of the generosity of the CWS, the CIS and retail societies in making this financial provision".

I worked and lived at Stanford Hall for over 30 years and was grateful that "my lot was cast in a pleasant place" and my attachment to the place is strong. In recent times the primary question has not been whether to stay at Stanford Hall or not; it is what should be the services provided and then whether, on all the realistic considerations including the Movement's sentiment for Stanford Hall, the College and Department should remain there.

f. Financing

I am impressed, and indeed awed, by the care and courage of the targets and financial predictions in the Business Plan. I limit myself here to the general outline of our financial arrangements - which were accompanied by continuing anxiety and yet, I note gratefully, and sympathetically, were not set within the pressing stringencies which have marked the consumer movement within recent years.

The general principle of our financing was that we earned what we could from fees and from grants (in particular from the national ministry of education and the government's overseas aid programme) and the Union made up the difference between that and our expenditure. In addition there was a special fund contributed by local societies especially for experimental projects not sustainable from the main source.

The element of financial support from the Co-operative Union was not only substantial but, in a distinctive sense, significant. It represented a contribution from the consumer movement as a whole, and the case was argued for it that the improvement by the College or Department of the capabilities of societies' staff would be a gain for the movement as a whole, particularly through the mobility of "graduates" from the College and Department courses.

An excerpt from the 1976/77 report is illustrative:

At its meeting in November 1976 the Executive received revised estimates for that year envisaging an excess of expenditure over income of £140,320. Estimates for 1976 presented to the Executive in November 1975 had shown an estimated excess over income amounting to £133,791. The latter estimates, however, had shown the College rental charge at £42,000, whereas in the revised calculation, the agreed charge of £87,500 had been included. A substantial increase in the rental was inevitable in order to maintain the financial position of the Co-operative College Trust but the rate of increase necessary may create problems for the College over both adjustment of fees for overseas students and the

deficiency grant made by the Department of Education and Science.

It is a moderate statement of relationships, redolent of harmony and maintained constantly - well, most of the time!

Looking around - and within

Let me end on a note of general reflection and indeed of confession. Responsibility for a large residential College with a wide range of studies and a Department also serving various forms of liberal and technical education inevitably generated a host of demands on limited resources. Looking around my record under these pressures I see some achievements but also detect some initiatives which were not taken or were not followed up. And looking not only around but within myself, I can see also broader ambitions which I carried into my Co-operative service but which in deference to the immediate practical necessities of College and Department work were far from completely fulfilled - the ambition, for example, to share actively by study and advocacy in the movement's response to the economic and social challenges it faced.

Someone of a different temperament and approach might have been more successful than I was in securing resources and in instituting a more balanced system of priorities and holding that balance firm even under the pressures which a democratic structure can generate so powerfully.

In this interim judgment day, I had better rest, if I can, on the formulation made, as I recall, by Chancellor Willy Brandt - "I did what I could"!

Dr R.L. Marshall was Principal of the Co-operative College from 1946 until 1977