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RESEARCH OFFICERS' GROUP

1959 - 1977



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

(11, UPPER GROSVENOR STREET, LONDON W1X 9PA)



31 July 1977

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The Research Officers' Group has been functioning since 1959. During this period, it has met 18 times - on 4 occasions in UK, twice in each of Netherlands, Sweden, France and Italy, and once in each of Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Norway, Austria, Switzerland and Poland

The Group had discussed subjects of consumer and Consumer Cooperative interest including the Research Techniques and Research Methodology relevant to Consumer Cooperative Movement.

The Role and Function of the Research Officers' Group were discussed on a number of occasions as in 1965, 1972, and 1976. A constitution was approved for the Group at its 1966 meeting.

The Research Officers' Group raise problems of topical interest and through a discussion process contribute to the policy formulation by the Cooperative Leadership and thus play a vital role in Consumer Cooperative Development in the area.

This little booklet is an attempt to give members of the ICA Research Officers' Group a bird's eye view of the scope of the discussion at the 18 meetings held between 1959 and 1976.

ICA, London
31 July 1977

S. Dandapani
Secretary for Research

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FIRST R.O.G. MEETING - OCTOBER 6 and 7 1959

LONDON (UK)

Participants:

19 from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Britain, Holland, Italy and Sweden.

Papers and Discussion:

Paper from Mr. Boggis on "The Pattern of Consumer Expenditure and Cooperative Trade in the United Kingdom". It compared spending by the nation with spending at cooperative shops. It discusses why 50% of spending in all shops was on food; whereas, 65% of spending at cooperative shops was on food. It also discusses purchases by different social groups, cooperative market share by town size in Britain and changes in the sale of different products between 1948 and 1957.

Research:

Papers summarising research work in Belgium by SGC; in Finland by SOK and KK; in the Federal Republic of Germany by ZdK and GEG; in Britain by the CU and the CWS; in Sweden by KF; and internationally by the ICA were circulated. A summary paper distinguished between research on economic information, trade studies, market research, statistical analysis, accounts, location, operational studies and economic policy.

Chairman: Mr. W. P. Watkins.

Secretary: Mr. F. D. Boggis.

SECOND R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 8 1960

LONDON (UK)

Participants:

11 from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Holland and Sweden.

Papers and Discussion

The main paper discussed was a report from Mr. Boggis on "Collaboration in Independent Retailing" in the USA, the UK and Holland. It noted that the number of single store grocers had increased by 25,000 between 1929 and 1954 and the number of multi-unit grocers declined by 55,000; but that the size of the stores of the latter and their market share had increased rapidly.

It also noted that there were 146 retailer owned cooperatives in the USA in 1958 and that 85 of them were associated in National Retailer Owned Grocers Inc. with some own brands. It supplied 20,000 member stores. Altogether the 155 retailer cooperatives had 33,000 member stores with 14% of all grocery stores. The report also noted that there were 330 wholesaler sponsored voluntary groups in the USA in 1958.

In Holland the report noted that the cooperative market share had declined and that in 1956, 15,400 out of 21,300 independent grocers were members of voluntary chains. The report analysed the performance of the buying groups, the voluntary chains, the voluntary groups and the independents.

It also noted that in Britain the cooperative market share had declined between 1950 and 1957; that

the share of the multiples had increased; and that the expansion of the voluntary groups dated from about 1954. It was estimated that there were 15,500 members of voluntary chains and 10,000 members of about 150 retail buying associations. The progress of voluntary groups in Austria, Canada and Finland was also discussed; as was the future of retail buying groups, the voluntary groups and the more closely integrated voluntary chains.

A report on ICA research activity was introduced by Mr. Watkins. Mr. Lambert suggested movements should send in annually reports on the problems they faced. There was discussion of collaboration between members of the Group and between the Group and the Cooperative Wholesale Committee and the Committee on Retail Distribution.

Chairman: Mr. W. P. Watkins.

Secretary: Mr. F. D. Boggis.

THIRD R.O.G. MEETING - JUNE 13, 14 and 15 1961

ROTTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

Participants:

16 participants from Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Holland and Sweden. Also Nordisk Andelsforbund.

Papers and Discussion

The main papers were from Germany on "The Co-operative Image"; from Holland on "A Survey of a Dutch Co-operative"; from Mr. Boggis on "The Organisation of Research Work"; from Mr. Moback on "Capital Accumulation and Planning in Sweden".

During the discussion Mr. Kerinec spoke of French Shopping Centres. Mr. Moback spoke of surveys and Mr. Timm of research work in Germany and of resale price maintenance. Mr. Van Netten spoke of regional warehouses and Mr. Lambert of Market Research at the CWS.

Mr. Nyman spoke of catalogue trade in the SOK movement in Finland; Mr. Boggis spoke of the need for further study of market research in co-operatives; Mr. Van Netten on the value of central research; Mr. Viita on forecasting in Finland; and Mr. Moback on planning in Sweden.

Chairman: Mr. W. P. Watkins

Secretary: Mr. F. D. Boggis

FOURTH R.O.G. MEETING - AUGUST 27 to 31 1962

STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

Participants:

21 from Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

Papers included two from KF and CU both on "Establishing local levels of retail trade and the Cooperative Share"; two from KK and FNCC on "The use of Future Demand in National Economic Plans by the Cooperative Movement"; one on "Organisation and Democracy in the Swedish Movement"; and others on "The Place of Cooperative Research Departments in the Management Structure".

The meeting began with reports on current research activity. Dr. A.M. Salonen introduced Mr. Pentti Viita's paper from KK. It discussed the study of population trends, changes in labour productivity and estimates made by KK for the 1960's; also the impact of savings, investment, imports, exports, etc. It made estimates of increases in demand for food and greater increases in the demand for motor fuel, consumer durables, etc. It also covered KK's recruitment plans.

Chairman: Mr. F.D. Boggis

Secretary: Mr. F.D. Boggis

FIFTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 9 to 13 1963

PARIS (FRANCE)

Participants:

17 from Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany; Britain; Holland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.

Papers and Discussion:

The main papers were on "Survey of a Co-operative Supermarket", CWS; "Planning the Network of Shops: a Methodological Survey", KF; "A Note on Current Economic Problems in the British Co-operative Movement", CWS; "Report of the EFTA Co-operative Working Group 1961-1963: with a survey of Co-operative wholesales, report on CWC Working Parties & Statistics": N. Hoff, Co-operative Wholesale Committee; "Report on Assortment Policy": with papers on canned food, toothpaste and footwear; from SOK, Finland; "Assortment Policy" by the Coopérateurs de Champagne; and a paper on "Consumer Classification" from VSK, Switzerland.

Introducing the discussion on shop networks Mr. Moback, KF, discussed the compilation of a Shop Register covering assortment, the character of the area, self service or not, prices and profitability. The Register in Sweden covered 6,000 shops and gave sales, location and shop type and had been relatively cheap to compile. Mr. Van Netten, Co-op Nederland, discussed the use of a Shop Register in relation to co-operative objectives. The possibility of a Shop Register for Europe was discussed; and the ICA was asked to enquire into terminology.

Mr. Lambert, introducing the CWS paper, spoke on calculating the area of influence of a shop, and discussed the impact of supermarkets and their ability to attract young customers from a distance. Mr. Lindberg, KF discussed collaboration with Town Planning Departments. Mr. Lambert spoke of amalgamation and relations between the CWS and retail societies in Britain, Mr. Van Netten of changes in Holland, Mr. Hoff of economic integration and the work of co-operative research officers and Mr. Semler Colliery of the Common Market and the Co-operative Movement.

Chairman: W. G. Alexander

Secretary: F. D. Boggis

SIXTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 7 to 9 1964

ROTTERDAM (NETHERLAND)

Participants:

13 from Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Holland and Sweden.

Papers and Discussion:

The papers included one from Mr. Moback on "Research on Democracy in Larger Integrated Systems"; one from Mr. Tonus on "Dividend Accounting, Verification and Control"; one from Mr. Lambert on "Regional Warehousing"; one from Mrs. Stettner on "Implication for Consumer Co-operatives of Changing Patterns of Consumer Demand".

Mr. Moback advocated a functional approach to co-operative democracy with clarity of goals and the dissemination of adequate information. Mr. Walther said that in the Federal Republic of Germany there was some apathy and there were communication problems but efforts were being made to revive co-operative ideas. Mr. Tonus spoke of the verification of purchases for dividend calculations and of dividend "clearing" between societies. He compared the UK system with the stamp system. Mr. Hoff spoke of the work of the Co-operative Wholesale Committee and of Euro-coop; and Mr. Alexander said the Committee on Retail Distribution was inactive. Mr. Moback said there was a need for more collaboration between co-operatives.

Mrs. Stettner spoke of the effect of aging populations, rising living standards, a greater variety of goods and services, shorter hours, more working wives, more home ownership, more social mobility with a continuing movement to the town, more cars, more changes in employment etc. on consumer demand and co-operative trading. Mr. Lambert spoke of a new warehouse in the Newcastle area and of plans for nine new regional warehouses.

Chairman: Mr. Moback

Secretary: Mr. L. Stettner

SEVENTH R.O.G. MEETING - NOVEMBER 9 - 11 1965

FRIEDRICHSRUHE (GERMANY)

Participants:

15 from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Holland, Italy, Sweden.

Papers and Discussion:

Papers included one from Mr. Schulze, Co-op Nederland, on "The Adaptation of Shop and Store Networks to Future Demand"; one from Dr. Salonen, KK, on "Consumption Forecasting"; one from Mr. Pelster Z.d.K. on "Adaptation of Assortment to Prospective Development of Consumption"; and one from Mr. Moback, KF, on "Co-operative Development: a problem of Formal and Structural Dynamics".

Mr. Schulze predicted increased sales for convenience foods, for consumer durables, fashion goods, leisure goods and services: and a growth of supermarkets and variety stores. He foresaw Co-op Nederland selling more domestic appliances and home furnishings in departmentalised Co-op Centres with national basic assortments.

On forecasting Dr. Salonen spoke of the short term effects of wage levels and taxes and the longer term effects of relative prices, advertising, credit, income distribution, population changes, family size, home ownership, age of population on some of which official forecasts were available. He thought it difficult to predict medium term cyclical changes.

Mr. Pelster spoke of the work of the ZdK Assortment Committee, noting that there was little demand for half the 2,700 lines sold by successful societies and how 4% of the goods provided half the sales. He also noted that in six retail societies only 273 out of 2,832 lines were common to all six. The Working Group on Consumer Goods promoted CO-OP brands, medium quality, preference for goods occupying little space or having high turnover, more textiles and hardware etc. Mr. Moback described the centralisation and rationalisation of assortment in Sweden. ZdK distributed information on good value assortments.

Mr. Moback later spoke on amalgamations in Sweden. The role of the Research Officers' Group was discussed.

Chairman: Mr. Moback

Secretary: Mrs. Stettner

EIGHTH R.O.G. MEETING - NOVEMBER 7, 8, and 9 1966

STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

Participants:

32 from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, Holland, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden.

Papers and Discussion:

Papers included one from Mr. Semler Collery, FNCC on "The Structure of the Network of Shops"; one from Mr. Maandi, KF, on "Cars, Shops and Buying Habits"; one from Mrs. Schikowsky-Borin, Zdk, on "Co-operatives and their Competitors"; and one from Mr. Rappaport, KF, on "The Flow of Capital to and from Members".

Mr. Semler Collery discussed the French Shop Register, assortment, changes from counter service to supermarkets, to what extent trading areas were rural, and their size, and the use of computers. There were reports on the scope of shop registers etc. from other movements represented.

Mr. Maandi discussed the effect of car ownership on shop location and co-operative trading, with information collected from customers in two big towns. Mrs. Schikowsky-Borin noted that German families were spending a lower proportion of their incomes on food and that the number of shops had fallen by 20% in seven years but that selling area had increased. Small co-operative shops had been closed and "Co-op Centres" with

food and non food were being opened. She said the voluntary chains had 37.4% of the food market in 1965 and the co-operatives of retailers such as Edeka (41,000 retailers) and Rewe (13,000 retailers) had 26.8%. Consumer co-ops had 7.7%.

Mr. Moback described the KF family account system with dividends on purchases of over 3% paid into special accounts withdrawable at age 60. Mr. Halvorsen said that an NKL advertising campaign had increased member investment in Norway. Dr. Lindblad spoke of capital problems and Dr. Wittwer of VSK bonds sold on the Swiss capital market. Problems of self financing were discussed. A Constitution for the Research Officers' Group was approved at the end of the meeting.

Chairman: Mr. Moback

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

NINTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 27 - 29 1967

MANCHESTER (UK)

Participants:

19 from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "Computer Application to Research Projects" and papers included one from Mr. Busse, Zdk. on "The Application of Computers to Co-operative Research in the German Movement"; one from KF on "The Flow of Goods: Experience, Experiments and Research"; one from Mr. Langlet, FNCC, on "Possible Research Applications of Electronic Techniques"; and from Mr. Lambert and Mrs. Cross, CWS. "Experience in using Computers in Survey Analysis".

Mr. Busse in his paper noted that in Germany 10% of the goods make up 50% of the turnover and 50% of the goods 90% of the turnover. Success depended on turnover in relation to sales area, profitability in relation to various product groups and sales per employee.

Chairman: Mr. Lock

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

TENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 25 and 26 1968

ROME (ITALY)

Participants:

22 from Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The overall theme was "Planning the Shop Network" and there were papers on the theme from the Lega, the Co-operative Union, the CWS, the KF, NKL, OTK, SOK, and FNCC.

Dr. Amaduzzi for the Lega said that thirty provincial consumer wholesales had been amalgamated with a national wholesale to form CO-OP ITALIA; and that the number of warehouses had been reduced from 22 to 11. The number of self service shops and supermarkets had increased from 452 to 681 between 1966 and 1968 and supermarkets with over 400 square metres selling space had been increased from 11 to 49. Many small shops had been closed.

Mr. Andersson and Mr. Karlström KF described a development plan for Kristianstad society with account taken of distribution of population, incomes, consumer demand, buying trends and competition. New supermarkets had a minimum surface of 800 square metres with non food up to 30% and up to 3,000 lines. Mr. Halvorsen said that rural Norwegian societies needed a wide assortment.

NKL had 3% of the urban market and 25% of the rural market.

Mr. Heikkila SOK said Finnish retail margins were low and that SOK had been closing general stores and opening new service units. They had a Shop Register and had discussed structure and democracy. Mr. Kuusinen said - KK had a shop register and 5 regional warehouses. Mr. Semler Collery said FNCC hoped to build about 40 new supermarkets a year but they had to be the right size and take account of competition. Mr. Lock spoke of the Co-operative Union plan for 50 regional societies.

Chairman: Mr. Lock

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

ELEVENTH R.O.G. MEETING - AUGUST 18 - 21 1969

HELSINKI (FINLAND)

Participants:

23 from Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Committee on Retail Distribution.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "Research Techniques for analysing the Co-operative Image".

Papers included one from Professor Laakkonen, University of Helsinki, on "Co-operation in Finland"; one from Liisa-Maria Piila, OTK, on "The Image of the E-Shops created by Consumer Education"; one on "Some Studies of the SOK Image" by Reima Hongisto, SOK; one from Bertil Allard, KF, on "Methods of Measuring Consumer Attitudes"; and one from Mr. C. Cross, Co-operative Wholesale Society, on "Measuring the Co-operative Image: Shops and Production".

The Swedish paper was based on comprehensive surveys carried out in Vasteras and Vaxjo and the two Finnish papers were comprehensive and interesting.

Chairman: Mr. Lock

Secretary: Mr. P. Derrick

TWELTH R.O.S. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 16 - 18 1970

PARIS (FRANCE)

Participants:

27 from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "Structural Integration and Management Decisions" and papers included one from Mr. Semler Coltery on "The French Consumers' Co-operative Movement"; one from Mr. Veverka, SGCC, on "Structural Integration and Management Decisions"; one from Mr. R. Heikkila, SOK, on "Principles of Integration and Co-ordination in the long range programme of the SOK Movement"; one from Mr. Rantala on "Shop Network Planning within the E Co-operative Movement"; and one from Mr. Seyfritz on "Planning and Management of Supermarkets"; and one from Mr. Lindberg, KF.

Mr. Semler Coltery said that the membership of FNCC was stable at about 3.5 million with amalgamations proceeding steadily. The movement was strong in the North. More than half the turnover, however, was still through traditional shops. Mr. Veverka said that the French movement was planning expand at about 13 or 14% a year so as to increase its market share; and that a Central Council of thirty people responsible for planning policy on expansion.

Mr. Heikkila said that SOK movement was guided in its planning by 18 basic principles and there was close close collaboration between retail societies and the central organisation. Mr. Rantala spoke of the shop network and the analysis of the movement's market share in different parts of the country.

Mr. Dupuis spoke of statistical methods in marketing, Mr. Linblad of market shares in France, Mr. Quin of assortment in France and Mr. Seyfritz on planning.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

THIRTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 15 - 17 1971

TRONDHEIM (NORWAY)

Participants:

12 from Finland, France, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

There were two themes at the meeting. One was "Distribution Costs" with papers from FNCC, SOK and NKL; and the other was "Dividends" with papers from the CWS and KF.

Dr. Goran Lindblad, KF, in his paper on dividends noted that between 1953 and 1970 dividends on purchases had been highest in Switzerland, averaging about $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ and lowest in SOK, Finland, averaging less than 1%.

Over the same period they had declined in Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany from about 5% to less than 3% while they had averaged about $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ in Sweden, less than 2% in Austria and more than 1% in Norway. In Denmark it was sometimes over 3% but tending to decline.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

FOURTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - OCTOBER 23, 24 and 25 1972

LONDON (UK)

Participants:

19 from Austria, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "The Role of Research and Planning in Co-operative Organisation" and there were papers on this theme from the Co-operative Union, the CWS, OTK, SOK, NKL, Co-op Nederland, Konsumverband, KF, Czechoslovak Co-operative Council, the Labour Research Institute in Helsinki and the ICA Secretariat.

Mr. Tonus said KF Research concerned itself with the economy; marketing, sites for shops and opinion surveys. General research was free, special research was paid for by other departments and societies. Mr. Halvorsen said NKL collected information but market research was undertaken locally in Norway.

Mr. De Groot said there had been discussion in Holland on the advantages of a single national society. Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Cross said that the CWS undertook market research and the Co-operative Union general research and statistics. Collaboration in research with universities was also discussed.

Dr. Rosenberg said research in Austria was undertaken by the Vienna society and by the bank. Mr. Rantala said there was long term planning at society level, market research by OTK and economic research by the Economic Research Institute. Mr. Semler Collery said FNCC research was on the economy, statistics and consumer attitudes; a weekly paper was published.

Mr. Semler Collery said in France dividends on purchases were about 3% and declining and paid in stamps. Mr. Rantala said price controls in Finland meant dividends below 2% and Mr. Heikkila said SOK made special offers instead. In Austria the dividend was limited to 3% by law and was often about 2½%. Co-op Nederland no longer paid dividends. In Sweden the dividend was about 1.8% and declining.

The meeting ended with discussion of the role of the Research Officers' Group.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

FIFTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - JUNE 11 to 13 1973

VIENNA (AUSTRIA)

Participants:

22 from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and USSR.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "Communicating with the Consumer" with papers from the Co-operative Union, NKL, Central Agricultural Union, Poland, FNCC. An ICA Secretariat paper on the structure and work programme of the ICA Research Officers' Group was also discussed.

Mr. Cross said that television and press advertising were the main means by which the co-operative movement communicated with consumers. There was joint advertising with manufacturers. Co-operative labelling provided more information and the Co-operative News provided information to members.

Professor Boczar said that in Poland the basic form of contact was members' meetings: attendance was about 55%. There were also contacts through co-operative shops, through consumer centres such as Practical Woman and "Good Housekeeping". There is also contact through womens' and youth organisations and through research.

Mr. Halvorsen said that in Norway societies were scattered and the NKL magazine was one of the main points of contact; and meeting and consumer advice centres also provided contact, as did shop committees and study groups and courses.

Mr. Semler Collery said that FNCC advertised extensively while Le Cooperateur de France had a sale of 1,500,000. A recent Consumer Exhibition attracted 200,000 visitors; Consumer corners were being developed in supermarkets; and 3,000 people were participating in a Consumer Panel.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

SIXTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 23 - 24 1974

FLORENCE (ITALY)

Participants:

20 from Austria, Finland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Intercoop, ICA Regional Office Moshi.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme was "Structural Changes in Co-operative Movements". Papers included one from the Lega on "Some data about the Italian Co-operative Movement"; one from Co-op Suisse on "Structural Changes within the Co-op Suisse Group"; from Konsumverband on "Research and Planning within the Austrian co-operative Organisation"; from OTK on "The Effect of General Environmental Factors on Long Range Co-operative Planning"; from CAU, Poland, on "The Interaction between Co-operative Planning and National Planning in Poland"; from KF on "Organisational Changes in Kooperativa Forbundet"; and from NKL on "Planning and Financing Structural Changes in Norway".

Dr. Amaduzzi spoke of the links of the three co-operative movements in Italy with political parties. He said that consumers' co-operatives did not pay dividends on purchases because competition was tough and that co-operatives of retailers affiliated to the Lega had been expanding. Shop meetings were organised.

Mr. Rantala, OTK, emphasised that the success of co-operatives depended very much on adequate research and information. Dr. Bannier, CS, spoke of the abandonment of dividends on purchases amalgamations and convenience shops. Mr. Tonus, KF, said KF had considered merging retail societies in a single national society but had decided instead to develop specialised organisations. Professor Boczar, CAU, said Polish co-operative planning was closely linked with state planning but that co-operatives now financed development from their own resources. Mr. Halvorsen said NKL drew savings from the public as well as from members.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mrs. L. Stettner

SEVENTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 16 - 19 1975

SION (SWITZERLAND)

Participants:

15 from Canada, Finland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting: "Democracy and Efficiency in Co-operatives" and after reports from movements, papers on this theme from Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada and Japan were dealt with.

Professor Laakkonen, from the University of Helsinki, discussed changes from direct to indirect democracy and argued that a clear definition of roles and functions helped efficiency and democracy to support each other. Mr. Norman KF, distinguished between business efficiency, qualitative efficiency, organisational efficiency and goal efficiency. He discussed the concept of consumer utility.

Mr. Marelli, CS, defined democracy and efficiency and said that in Switzerland co-operative democracy tended to be more effective at the federal level than at the retail level. He said Swiss cooperatives had to operate in a competitive environment and that the cost of supplying remote mountain villages was high; while integration was combined with a clear

consumer commitment and the promotion of consumer activities. Mr. Cross said that in Britain dividend stamps had reduced the incentive to membership; and that the movement served not only members but all customers and the consumer interest generally.

Mr. Yoshida, JCCU, spoke of the 70,000 "Han Groups" in the Japanese consumers' co-operative movement through which members participated in control. The groups with about ten members were active in consumer campaigning and there was good attendance at meetings. Mr. Harman, UCO, introduced a paper by Mr. Craig distinguishing between efficiency and effectiveness and emphasising the importance of leadership style and informal democracy.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mr. P. Derrick

EIGHTEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 7 - 9 1976

WARSAW (POLAND)

Participants:

23 from Austria, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Papers and Discussion:

The theme of the meeting was "The Response of the Co-operative Movement to Social and Economic Change". Papers included one from Professor Boczar CAU, on "Social and Economic Development in the Polish Peoples' Republic and in the Co-operative Movement"; one from Mr. Broniec on "Organisation and Tasks of the Co-operative Movement in Poland"; one from Mr. Ramaekers, Febecoop, on "The Co-operative Response to Social and Economic Change"; one from Mr. Kornholz, Zentralkonsum, on "the Austrian co-operative movement"; one from Dr. Geyenes, Hungary, on "Decision making in Hungarian Co-operatives from a sociological point of view"; and one from Mr. Hjalmarson KF on "The Response of Co-operative Movements to Social and Economic Change".

There was a lively discussion after Mr. Broniec's paper in which he provided further information about Polish co-operatives; and after Professor Boczar's paper about the role of co-operatives in a planned economy. It was followed by discussion of co-operative progress in Sweden over the previous

twenty years, the Consumer Congress of 1971, consumer activity and the new KF Programme of Action. In introducing his paper Mr. Kornholz discussed integration in the Austrian consumers' co-operative movement, supplying remote villages and small convenience shops in towns.

Mr. Ramaekers' paper discussed ways in which the co-operative movement in Belgium might expand and full information was provided by participants on the development of the co-operative movements in the German Democratic Republic, in Hungary, in Finland and in Switzerland. The meeting also discussed the role of the Research Officers' Group and the resignation of Mr. Heikkila as Chairman was followed by the election of Mr. Kornholz as the new Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Heikkila

Secretary: Mr. P. Derrick

NINETEENTH R.O.G. MEETING - SEPTEMBER 4 - 7 1977

STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN)

Main Theme: 'Market Research - cooperative strategic planning - techniques and organisation'.

Sub-themes:

- (a) An integrated development of research on cooperatives.
- (b) Changing demands and consumer cooperative assortment policy in departmental stores (non-food sector).

Chairman: K.P. Kornholz

Secretary: Dr. S. Dandapani

I.C.A. Research Officers' Group

CONSTITUTION

1. The purpose of the Group is to stimulate an exchange of experience and techniques among officers engaged in economic and market research with a view to accumulation of a joint pool of knowledge on research methods, sources of information, problems and solutions common to various national cooperative movements. This objective will be pursued through personal contacts, correspondence, meetings, contacts with other research organisations and maintenance of a register of research being undertaken by member organisations. The Group will bring to the attention of the I.C.A. Executive Committee and Central Committee research problems requiring a coordinated international approach; it will also endeavour to carry out any specific task referred to it by the Executive or Central Committee.

2. Membership in the Group is open to all organisations affiliated to the I.C.A. and such other members as the Group may decide to invite. Each organisation is entitled to one vote although it may send to meetings as many participants as it chooses.

3. The Group has two organs, a Board and a Planning Committee. The Board of the Group consists of a Chairman, elected by the members at the end of each meeting and a Secretary in the person of the I.C.A. Secretary for Research.

The Planning Committee, which arranges meetings, consists of the Board and a representative of the next host country.

The functions of the Secretary are: to assure continuity of the work of the Group; to maintain contacts with members and notify them of arrangements for meetings; to serve on the Planning Committee; to compile and circulate the Research Returns; to draft and circulate a report of the meetings; to inform the I.C.A. Executive and Central Committees of the activities of the Group; to maintain such contacts with other research organisations as requested by the Group and/or the I.C.A. Executive and Central Committees.

4. Meetings of the Group shall take place as a rule annually at times and places agreed by the members of the Group or the Board, for the purpose of discussing papers on themes decided on by the Planning Committee, which will also arrange for papers to be prepared. The meetings will be conducted in English; participants who cannot work in English should arrange together with the host country for their own interpretation. The report of the meeting will be prepared by the Secretary and circulated to members.

5. Research Returns. Each member represented in the Group will submit to the Secretary one month previous to each meeting a report of the (a) major research projects on which it was engaged and (b) major research projects completed since the last report. These reports will be collated by the Secretary and distributed before the meeting to the members of the I.C.A. Executive Committee.

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