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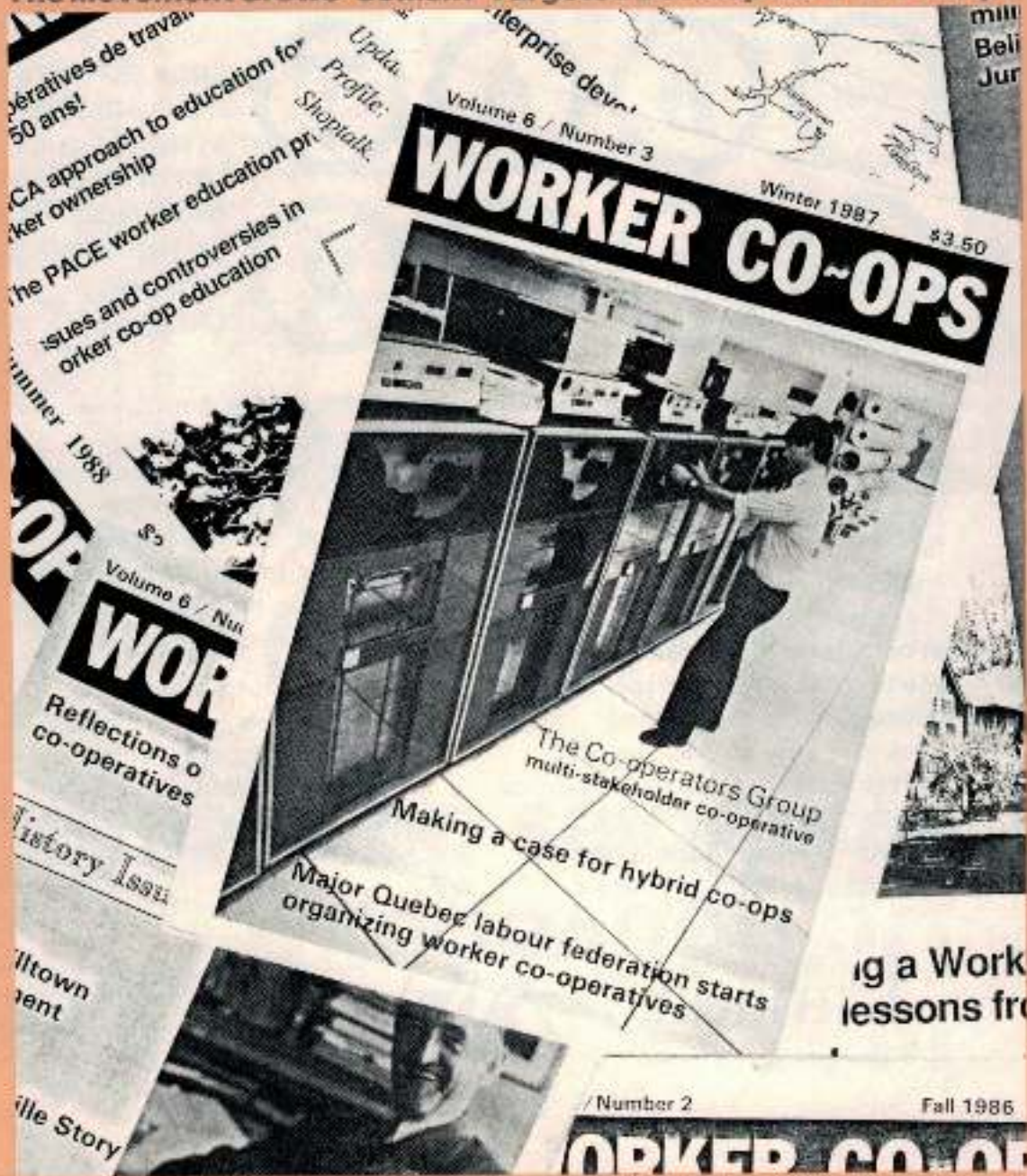
CO-OP

The Voice
of Economic Democracy
in Canada

Vol. 8
no. 2

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Run away and join a ...worker co-op? (The Clown Jewels, a Scottish touring clown/worker co-op).

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BUILDING A MOVEMENT

The English and French groups of Canada's worker co-operative network have come together in an interesting arrangement whereby the *Worker Co-ops* magazine now starts with one cover in English and with the other in French. There is no back to our magazine but rather "two fronts" joined together -- symbolic of what we hope will become one movement.

As before, the magazine is being produced at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Saskatoon. The hub of the English-language editorial network is the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, Toronto, and the French-language material is being prepared at the Coopérative de développement régional de Montréal-Laval by Luc Labelle, the director of development. Labelle is being assisted by the Centre de gestion des coopératives.

At this time, it seems appropriate to thank the many people no longer with us who have helped the magazine get to where it is today: namely, the original newsletter group -- Judith Forrestal, Paul Jones, John Jordan, Carla Salvador, Bob Schutte -- and subsequently Don Altman, Nancy Armstrong, Karen Knopf, Hugh Lawson, Joanne Lindsay, Pat MacLeod, Fred Mathews, Suzanne Rancourt and Steve Schildroth. Chris Axworthy and Skip McCarthy ensured support from the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives that enabled the change to be made from a newsletter to a magazine, and the

Centre's staff -- Jo-Anne Andre, Margret Asmuss and Aina Kagis -- handled the production and business administration.

I would also like to thank the many regional contributors who have helped out: Lars Apland, Doug Davison, Mark Goldblatt, Andrew Goussaert, Lynn Hanley, Donna Huffman, Laird Hunter, Gilles Michaud and Robert Thompson. We're particularly indebted to the Quebec group -- Johane Berard, Alain Côté, Sylvie Desrochers, Jean-Claude Guerard -- who laid the groundwork for a bilingual magazine.

It may seem extravagant to thank so many people, but our publication is based on volunteers who give generously of their time. I have deliberately not mentioned the many people who are current participants because they are listed on the masthead. I do thank them, however, and note that some have been volunteers since the original newsletter.

I also thank our many subscribers for their loyalty, their advice (informal and through our readers' survey) and their willingness to help through donations and promoting the magazine to their friends and co-op members. Unlike other publications with a strong capital base, we depend upon the movement for support. We are grateful to the many people who have helped us to grow, and we remind you that your support for the magazine is helping to strengthen the movement.

Jack Quarter
Editor

International Conference on Local Development Montreal December 7-10

The newly-created Institute for Community Economic Development (IFDEC), a non-profit organization in Montreal, is sponsoring an international conference drawing speakers from Europe and North America with experience in CED. A detailed program can be obtained from IFDEC, 2561 Rue Centre, Suite 102, Montréal, Quebec H3T 1A9; (514) 931-5737. The registration fee is from \$150 to \$300, depending upon affiliation.

Worker Co-ops welcomes letters and conference information from its readers. Write to: *Worker Co-ops Magazine*, c/o The Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 348 Danforth Ave., Suite 212, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1A9.

International Co-operative Alliance

I receive your publication *Worker Co-ops*, which is an excellent one.

You are aware of the existence of several Specialized Organisations within the International Co-operative Alliance dealing with specific sectorial activities. I am in charge of these specialized organisations and in particular of CICOPA (a French acronym for "International Committee of Industrial and Artisanal Cooperatives").

CICOPA organizes annually a General Assembly to discuss different concerns of producer co-operatives. From time to time it organizes world conferences, the last one (the Third) was held last February in Paris. More than 200 participants from 63 countries attended. The proceedings of that conference are already available in French and will be published in English early in 1989.

I would be very grateful if you could inform me about co-operative organizations which might be interested in offering a forum for worker co-operatives to exchange views, to help each other with training and education, to promote trade links with each other etc., CICOPA is essential.

Lajos Varad:
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Editor's Note: Membership forms for CICOPA can be obtained by writing Lajos Varad; at ICA.

Dauncey to MacDonald

Grant MacDonald (*Worker Co-ops*, Summer 1988, p.6) takes a few enjoyable swings at "community economic development", saying it has become a buzzword for virtually any kind of economic development effort. For sure! Just as all the politicians in Europe are falling over themselves to show off how "green" they are in the wake of the ever-growing green movement. What this says about both the Green movement and community economic development is that these are impulses whose time has come, not that they are just the latest fashion.

All the more important that we articulate our full vision of a changed society and a changed world, and keep on pushing forward the frontiers of social and economic transformation. Speaking from this side of the Atlantic, I sense that Canada has a very special role to play in building a better world. I think growing numbers of Canadians feel the same way.

Guy Dauncey
17 Mackeson Road
London NW3 2LU
U.K.

Guy Dauncey is author of After the Crash: The emergence of the Rainbow Economy (Greenprint, 1988).

WINGS

Women In Nurturing Group Support (WINGS, Inc), a support system for low-income single parents, is looking for resources that will enhance the idea of self-employment ventures. Our women are researching the possibility of starting an association of workers who will sell their products in a co-operative way.

Any information you could send us would be greatly appreciated.

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Worker Co-ops welcomes letters and conference information from its readers. Write to: Worker Co-ops Magazine, c/o The Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 348 Danforth Ave., Suite 212, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1A9.

A response to Dauncey and MacDonald

Dauncey and MacDonald represent two different dimensions of the traditional co-operative movement for social reform: a moral vision and an empirically-based programme for action. Most of the time these two dimensions are in conflict, or at least in tension. Usually the visionaries end up by limiting themselves to very marginal economic activities, while the hard-nosed pragmatists end up with quite successful co-operative businesses without much evidence of social reform.

For me the term "community economic development" (CED) is a reformulation of the traditional aspirations of the co-operative movement. I understand it as meaning the democratic control of the economic resources by the local community for the good of the people who live there. Rather than being a unity of money, it is a unity of people. Thus, I tend to include the community development corporations of America and the community businesses of Britain to be part of the same movement as co-operatives.

The annual report of Strathclyde Community Business Limited states the following defining principles:

1. they are owned by the community through the open membership;
2. they are democratically controlled by the membership through the one-vote principle;
3. the assets are held in common for the community and not distributed for private gain;
4. profits must at least in part be reinvested in the local community or area of benefit.

Not every co-operative and not every community business contributes to social reform. Kropotkin said that many co-operatives were becoming exercises in collective egoism. For instance, a

worker co-operative or a housing co-operative may be a convenient technique for a small group to benefit themselves without concern for sharing and contributing to change in other parts of the economic system where others are not so fortunate. In other cases, a worker co-operative or housing co-op can be part of something bigger which is changing the control of wealth in a particular society. It depends on the case. Any business which considers itself part of the movement referred to here must, by its nature, try to grow and expand so that the benefits will be spread to more.

Perhaps Dauncey exaggerates the achievements. If we are empirical, then we must admit that we control only a very small percentage of the economy. The aspirations far outweigh the achievements. On the other hand, MacDonald may become frozen with inaction because there are no clear techniques and nobody is too clear on what works. I suppose that nothing works perfectly; I claim that we have to do the best we can in the circumstances, even though it falls short of the ideal. Yet, we have to honestly look at the concrete results and be open to change the next time around.

Also, I hope that nobody is claiming that co-ops and community businesses are enough to change society in the way we require. That would be irresponsible dreaming. We need our political movements and we need also our labour movement. Though their roles are distinct, the three types of movement are essential for serious reform.

Greg MacLeod

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Did you Know...that there are 72 forestry and related services worker co-ops in Canada? Québec has 52, B.C. has 11, Nova Scotia has 2, P.E.I. has 1, Manitoba has 4, and Saskatchewan has 2.

Worker Co-ops as Workplaces for Women: The CRS Experience

An interview by Melanie Conn

The negative experiences of women working in conventional workplaces have been well documented. Sexual harassment, gender-based pay differentials and restricted access to management roles are a few of the conditions that regularly confront women workers.

How different from conventional workplaces are worker co-ops for their women members?

Recently I met with four women to talk about their experiences at CRS, a worker co-op in Vancouver. Judy Harper, Anne Romanow and Elaine Young have worked for three years at CRS; Maureen Collier has been a member for more than 10 years.

Over the course of the conversation, I asked them a number of questions about gender issues at CRS. They had some very positive things to say about the co-op and the role of women in it. They also talked about some of the problems that still exist for women and men learning how to work together as equals.

Why do you think the co-op is different from a conventional workplace for you as a woman?

Maureen - I've been working in the administrative collective in a bookkeeping and accounting function since 1982. I could get



Photo: Diane Strandberg

C.R.S. Workers' Co-op Horizon Distributors
Jennifer Setterfield and Joy Clifford

hired as an accountant somewhere else, but I know I'd have to struggle for credibility. Here I never have to worry about being discounted - I don't have to fight to be heard at team meetings. Sometimes I wonder if that's because we're a co-op or because we're all progressive people who believe in the equality of women and men.

Judy - I think it's both, but the important thing is that we're on the hiring committee! We ask prospective male members about feminist issues: how do you feel about working with women? how do you feel about being trained by women? A big part of the history of CRS is that it was shaped by strong feminists and

those questions get kept as part of the interview process for every prospective member.

Elaine - Before I worked here, I was a coordinator at Fed-Up (a wholesaler owned by consumer co-ops). The co-op structure enables me to be who I am - an out lesbian - in a way that I couldn't be in a conventional workplace. I'm living the kind of life I want, consistent with my goals.

Has sexism always been considered to be a co-op issue?

Maureen - Not as clearly as now. Years ago when I was working at the bakery (one of CRS' three divisions), I was very involved in a personal struggle to make sure that as a woman I was

acquiring the same skills as the men had. It was very important to me then to put a lot of my energy into the mechanical aspects of the work: fixing machinery, moving heavy items and so on. I often felt that the men were leaving me out of those activities, that I was invisible. I felt angry a lot of the time and I was irritated with some of the women who weren't taking the same kind of initiative to pick up non-traditional skills.

Anne - I think that's a real problem; if women don't take on that kind of work, then the men will do it all or some of it won't get done.

Maureen - That's what happened, but I think what I should have done was to raise the problem as a co-op issue. Instead, my demand that the co-op make a priority of skill-sharing was not explicit because I only presented it to individual men. I saw it then as a "work relationship" problem rather than as a collective issue. We could have decided as a co-op to specifically allocate time for women to pick up non-traditional skills. It works more like that now.

Judy - Defying the typical job classifications has become part of the history of the warehouse: There have been continual attempts to have women doing warehouse work, truck driving and deliveries and to have men working on the order desk. And, at the bakery the maintenance coordinators have been women,



Photo: Diane Strandberg

Penny Scheurer, Marcia Hamacher, Jacinthe Fortin
of Wild West Organic Harvest Co-operative.

Is there any written policy concerning sexism?

Elaine - Our statement of purpose says that men and women will work together on the basis of equality. That gives - on paper - the right of any member to give criticisms around gender issues. And, of course, there's no pay differential based on gender. Differentials are all additive relating to dependants, seniority or management role.

Anne - In practice, the men who become members are those who share our attitudes and values and have a commitment to work on personal change.

Judy - And we helped a member to take courses in constructive criticism and mediation. Those skills facilitate the discussion process when problems occur.

Is it always the women who raise issues around sexism?

Maureen - Generally, it is the women who present the problem to the co-op or to individual

men. The men have often been supportive, especially when it comes to dealing with sexism *outside* the co-op. One CRS legend concerns a woman member who was offended by a pornographic pin-up calendar she encountered while she was out doing deliveries. She "corrected" it and when the supplier called to complain, many members, both male and female, signed a letter that described our disapproval of pornography as insulting and degrading of women.

Elaine - Men in the co-op will take on sexist customers, too. In the old warehouse, I could always tell when a particular customer came by because of the rumble downstairs. Everybody took their turn at trying to change his behaviour.

Maureen - The issue of directly confronting sexism with customers and suppliers is a tricky one. My goal is to find a way of indicating my disapproval of unacceptable behaviour or

attitudes without alienating the man (or occasionally the woman!). But sometimes you just do it. One time, a customer came into the bakery and made an incredibly hostile homophobic comment. He was told to leave.

Judy - Then there are the customers who insist on talking to a man. It takes a lot of energy to overcome people's stereotypes and expectations. I work as one of the purchasers and if I sense a man is being sexist on the phone, I can get this icy tone creeping into my voice...

Do women have leadership roles in the co-op?

Maureen - When we were hiring for a management position a few years ago, only one woman from within the co-op applied and then withdrew her application because of a lack of support from the collective. I was a collective member at that time and I've been thinking about it lately. I had no question about her competence, but I think I underestimated her leadership abilities because of some sexist assumptions I had.

Elaine - Leadership often gets defined as aggressive, inspirational, dynamic behaviour - a way many men are trained to act in the world. Generally, women are less aggressive but we're very good coordinators and team-builders, we take care of people and we follow through. We need to recognize that these qualities are the ingredients of a different style of leadership that's also effective, and maybe even more appropriate in a co-op structure.

Anne - It's also true that women still generally defer to men, expect them to be the managers. It's harder for women to imagine ourselves being managers, putting out criticisms without feeling as though we're not being "nice".

purchaser, a man, was enjoying. We worked it out though. Judy raised the issue with the other purchaser and they agreed that each of them would handle specific accounts from start to finish - from the clerical work to the wheeling and dealing.



John Hamm of Eastside Data Graphics

Photo: Diane Strainberg

Judy - I agree that part of the problem comes from internal messages, not having enough confidence and so on. There are external factors, too, such as family pressures. Women may be less willing to put in all the extra time and energy that management jobs require.

Elaine - There have been problems with men in the co-op around this, too. Part of the purchaser job involves wheeling and dealing with the old boys' network. It's a responsible role and it carries a lot of weight in the co-op. For awhile there, it seemed as though Judy was doing a lot of the set-up work but wasn't getting the same status of the position that the other

What's the mix of women and men at CRS? Is this a good gender blend?

Maureen - When I think about the mix, it seems about 50-50. In fact, there are 20 women now who are members and 12 men! To me that feels about right, and that's with almost two-thirds women.

Anne - I think that's the point. It's not just equal numbers or working with men who don't exhibit overt sexist behaviour. Men need to make an effort not to take up extra space at meetings, to refuse special status, to insist that customers deal with women. Otherwise, the problems persist and women end up putting out enormous amounts of energy to deal with them.

Judy - Some of the numbers are interesting to notice. Two of the four management positions are currently filled by women and more than half the Board is composed of women.

You've all been incredibly open in your discussion of the issue. Will any of this surprise co-op members when it appears in print?

Elaine - There isn't anything we've said that we wouldn't talk about within the co-op.

Very little has been published in English about women's experience in worker co-ops. For that reason, Mary Gerritsma's *Women in Worker Co-ops: Creating Signposts to New Ways of Working* just published by the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, is a very welcome event. (available from WODF in Toronto for \$15).

Melanie Conn shares the B.C. Desk for Worker Co-ops with Dana Weber. She works with *Community Economic Options in Vancouver*, a Vancouver-based program which focuses on increasing the participation of women in community economic development. For a brief list of articles and (the very few) books on the subject of women in worker co-ops, write to her at *Community Economic Options, 4340 Carson St., Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2X9*■

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Did you Know...there are four waste material recycling worker co-ops in Canada? All of which are in Québec.

Auxi-Plus brings decency to an exploited profession

by Jo-Ann Hannah

Auxi-Plus is a co-operative of homecare workers in Montréal. The workers, referred to as auxiliaries, provide support services such as meal preparation and personal hygiene to people who want to live at home but require some assistance.

The co-operative was formed in 1986 with the technical advice of the Groupe Conseil de Montréal-Laval (GCM). Funded by the provincial government, the GCM offers technical assistance, free of charge, to groups wishing to establish a co-operative business. Auxi-Plus was started with an initial investment of \$25,000. After one year it has reached sales of \$100,000 per month and provides jobs for 150 auxiliaries.

Auxi-Plus has made a major achievement in providing fair salaries and decent working conditions for workers who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. In general, auxiliary work is unstable and the wages are low. Workers must be available on short notice and wait out the "slow periods." For minimum wage workers, these are difficult demands. Furthermore, the majority of auxiliaries are women and many of them must scramble to find childcare if they are called to a job.



Equipe d'Auxi-Plus

Auxi-Plus has striven to create stable employment, ensure a fair financial return, and educate the members on co-operative ownership -- all the while competing with privately-operated service agencies. This is no small task. As Auxi-Plus grew, the administrative work

became more complex, and there was a need for a full-time general manager.

Luc Labelle took time from his job with Co-opérative de développement régional (CDR) to act as temporary general manager for Auxi-Plus. The temporary position has become permanent.

As general manager, Labelle oversees the finances and member education. Lucie Bernard is the assistant general manager and responsible for daily operations. Membership with Auxi-Plus is a two-stage process. To even be considered for membership, the auxiliary must have completed an 800-hour government course. The course is not required by law, and many employees of private agencies have not taken it.

After a one-month probationary period with Auxi-Plus, the worker can become an auxiliary member (as in "partial" member). In this first stage of membership, the workers purchase a \$50 social share which entitles them to all membership rights except a vote. The workers also buy into the business through a 30-cents-per-hour wage deduction. The deduction is mandatory for all members of Auxi-Plus and based on the hours actually worked. If

members leave the co-operative, they can apply for total reimbursement. Workers can invest in additional shares which are subject to tax advantages under the provincial government's Co-operative Investment Plan.

After 1200 hours of work in the co-operative, the worker becomes a regular member with the right to vote at the General Assembly and stand for election to the Board of Directors. With each stage of membership also comes a small wage increase.

Salaries above average

Auxi-Plus has provided its members with some important benefits. The members' hourly wage of \$6.70 is substantially above the average rate of \$5.00 at private agencies, although still below the \$10 wage of government employees. Even unionized workers in private agencies earn less than Auxi-Plus

workers. At Auxi-Plus work is ensured for specific days; most are able to work a 35-hour week if they so desire.

Auxi-Plus workers can also feel that their work is respected. Twelve per cent of Auxi-Plus's earnings goes into administration and the remaining 88 per cent goes to members' salaries. Any surplus earnings are divided according to membership decision at the Annual General Meeting. Last year Auxi-Plus paid a dividend based on the hours worked in the co-operative. As Labelle says: "We don't send a cheque to another country -- we send it back to you."

Homecare workers are isolated from one another. Developing a sense of collective ownership among the members is difficult. All new members are given educational instruction on the co-operative structure and philosophy of Auxi-Plus. Upon election to the Board of Directors, members receive 30 hours of instruction on financing as well as their responsibilities as board members.

Labelle also praises some of the initiatives that the Board members have taken to increase member involvement in the co-operative. They have organized social events for the members and their families, and last year designed a course on working with people with Alzheimer's disease.

Financing a problem

The Groupe Conseil de Montréal-Laval spent six months doing the original feasibility and



Luc Labelle and Lucie Bernard

business plan for the Auxi-Plus proposal. In their words, they had a plan that was "socially and financially profitable." But the bank would not provide a loan without collateral. Like most minimum wage workers, the auxiliaries were not in a position to offer collateral.

A religious order lent them the \$25,000 and thus Auxi-Plus came to be. Today, Labelle wryly comments, the bank is very interested in proposals from Auxi-Plus.

A major issue for Auxi-Plus workers is to improve their earnings. They are hopeful that the government will proceed with plans to make the auxiliary training course mandatory for all auxiliary workers. Because Auxi-Plus workers have taken the course, they will be in a good position to increase their service fee.

Labelle also sees possible expansion for Auxi-Plus. He hopes to increase the home cleaning division (Quali-Plus) and to develop a new division for nurses. Rather than wait for a grassroots initiative, Labelle is optimistic that CDR can establish the business plan and then seek interested participants. Given the success of Auxi-Plus, his optimism is well founded.

For more information contact Luc Labelle, ADM. A., Development Director, Groupe conseil des coopératives de travail de Montréal-Laval, 3514, ave. Lacombe, Montréal, Québec H3T 1M1; (514) 340-6061.

Jo-Ann Hannah is a doctoral student in Community Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and a member of the Worker Ownership Development Foundation in Toronto.



Luc Labelle, Director

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The Souris Valley Echo

by Jeremy Hull

The Souris Valley Echo is a rural weekly newspaper which has been in operation for over a year, southwest of Brandon, Manitoba. Initially, the group who formed the worker co-op to run the paper was invited into the community of Souris by local business people who were interested in establishing a competitor to the existing newspaper, the *Souris Plain Dealer*. According to the co-op manager, Jim Ritchie, those inviting them into the community agreed not to establish another newspaper if the Echo would agree not to enter the printing business.

Dirty tricks

The Echo was successful in outcompeting the Plain Dealer, which went bankrupt. However, a new Souris Plain Dealer was then created by the same group who had invited the Echo to the community in the first place. Therefore, the co-op has found itself facing stiff competition. The number of new subscriptions has slowed since and the Echo has lost advertising revenues. Nevertheless, the Echo continues to build up its circulation, now at about 1300 per week and 200 more than the Plain Dealer.

Quality important

Ritchie attributes the Echo's success, and some of the paper's problems, to its willingness to take a critical stand on local issues. He also says that the quality of its product is much better than that of the competition. While the Plain Dealer operates on volunteer labour, the Echo has four-and-one-half paid positions (co-op members) as well as a number

of paid "stringers." The Echo also has entered the printing field, printing regional newsletters (*Rodeo News* and the monthly *Plumb Creek Post*) and mass mailings. It is also considering expanding into electronic media, and may take on the operation of a student co-operative program for the Department of Co-operative Development. The Echo has just about reached the break-even point.

Ritchie notes the lack of support for their enterprise from other co-operatives. Although the Echo has a line of credit with the local credit union with which it has deposits, the co-op feels that it has been charged high interest rates. (The Echo's in the process of attempting to renegotiate this arrangement.) He also notes that the volunteer photographer for the Plain Dealer is the manager of the local Wheat Pool.

Even though the Manitoba government worker co-operatives program has not resulted in a large number of new enterprises, some relatively small worker co-ops like the Echo are making a go of it. These co-ops are finding that they experience a lack of support from the broader co-operative community and that they must rely heavily on their own resources.

For more information, contact the Souris Valley Echo, Box 1175, Souris, Manitoba R0K 2C0; (204)483-2335

Jeremy Hull is a consultant with WMC, 200-651 Croydon Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0W3; (204) 453-6137.

THE FOGO PROCESS

TV is solving social problems for Newfoundland's Co-ops

by Jim Winter

In the mid-1960's rural Newfoundland was experiencing a social and economic crisis. The ways of the past were being overshadowed by a demand for change and "progress".

Fogo Island was a case in point. Some 25 kilometers off the northeast coast of the province, the people of this island had always enjoyed a stable living from the sea. As "modern times" arrived, the fish buyers began to leave, and it was becoming more and more difficult to sell the year's catch. The Smallwood government, taking advantage of the situation, encouraged resettlement to the mainland of the province. The people didn't want to go, but could see no alternative. Many of the younger people moved in search of work. The communities of Fogo Island had decisions to make.

Take one

Around the same time, the National Film Board was developing a new program called "Challenge for Change", which would use film as a tool for "preparing Canadians for social change". Well, "social change" is



Photo: J. Winter

The management team of the Fogo Island Co-op discuss issues with the public on live T.V.

just what the people of Fogo Island were experiencing. So, Colin Low, famed documentary filmmaker and "father" of the new program came to Fogo Island.

The Extension Service of Memorial University (MUN) was also on Fogo Island trying to help the people make their fateful decisions. Between them and the NFB there began something that

is now known as the "Fogo Process". And, as they say, "the rest is history". The people discovered themselves through Low's camera -- who they really were and how much they wanted to stay on the island. The Fogo Island Co-operative was formed as a result of this process. However, while Challenge for Change faded, its legacy continued, and not least on Fogo

Island. Nineteen eighty-seven was the twentieth year for Fogo, Newfoundland's most successful worker/producer co-operative. Over these years it had gone from a boat-building collective to a large fish-processing and marketing co-operative with 1800 members. Growth caused problems; the board and members were feeling distant from each other. The challenge was to bridge this gap. After some discussion it was decided to invite MUN Extension Service to return and see if the Fogo Process would work again.

Take two

MUN Extension had adapted the Fogo Process. Instead of using film, field workers were now using television.

For five days and nights technicians set themselves up in different communities on the island. By about four o'clock in the afternoon each day, people could tune in to pretaped TV programs about their Island and their co-operative, all being transmitted from the community hall. These were interspersed with local community news and announcements, given live by high school students.

Each evening there was a panel discussion with the president and the senior management of the co-

op. After some discussion of contemporary issues, the public and members were given the opportunity to phone in questions for the panel. This was followed by a panel made up of the manager and the board of directors. The evening wound up with a live program of local entertainment.

The result of this member-development effort was not difficult to measure. At the next AGM of the Fogo Island Co-operative there was standing room only. People felt it was most valuable to be reminded of the dramatic history of their co-op, and this helped put its problems into perspective.

Mo' Fogo

The process was used again a few months later, in another part of Newfoundland, by the Petty Harbour Fisheries Co-operative. Petty Harbour is a small compact community just a few minutes drive from St. John's. While community support for this co-op has always been strong, there were some vocal critics. The use of public television to discuss the issues seems to have created greater understanding and general support for the co-op.

Many other communities in Newfoundland and Labrador have used the Extension Service's Low Power Transmitter services to build community interest in

the support for local issues. This service is a powerful community-development tool that seems to draw its effectiveness from TV's ability to objectify issues and problems.

The process is potentially useful in any number of situations. It can be very helpful where the membership is dispersed and otherwise hard to bring together for meetings.

The tool need not be either complex or expensive to set up. Many Canadian communities are now served through local cable companies. These have as part of their licence requirement the mandate to produce programs of local interest. Most would be more than willing to work with a co-operative or potential co-operative. Some video recording capability, a studio and a phone/microphone hookup are all that should be needed.

Any co-operative or community group interested in the Fogo Process may contact either: Jim Winter, Co-op Development Specialist, Nfld.-Lab. Federation of Co-operatives, P.O. Box 13369, St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4B7; (709)737-8474 or Roger Carter, Extension Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5S7; (709)737-8474.

REWI ALLEY

Architect of the world's largest worker co-op movement



The Gung Ho co-ops involved 300,000 workers

by Robert Briscoe

Guerrilla Co-ops

Rewi Alley, a co-op pioneer on par with Coady and Tompkins, is almost unheard of in North America, yet he was the inspiration of the largest worker co-op movement the world has ever seen. At the height of his influence, in the late 30s and early 40s, he was the leader of some 3,000 co-op factories employing the skills of over 300,000 workers, most of them refugees.

The factories were spread across 16 of China's 24 provinces, and they operated under the most trying of circumstances. They were, in effect, mobile guerrilla industries, supplying the war needs of China in its defence against the invading Japanese. But the armies of Japan were not the only enemies. When they prospered, the co-ops were often brutally plundered by Chinese elites and the army of Kuomintang.

The road to Shanghai

Rewi Alley was born in New Zealand in 1899. His father was a school teacher of Irish descent who campaigned for farming co-ops. His mother was a

leader of the women's suffrage movement which had secured votes for New Zealand women as early as 1893. But it was his aunt who gave him his unusual name, after Rewi Maniapoto, a Maori chief who had fought the British in the 1860s.

After fighting in the first world war, Rewi returned to New Zealand to try his hand at sheep farming. It was not long before he got bored with the Canterbury plains. He worked his passage to Shanghai and got a job with the fire brigade. His next job was as a factory inspector. He was horrified by the conditions he found: dozens of children crammed into tiny, unventilated rooms; gruesome accidents caused by unfenced machines packed too closely together. In his autobiography, he recalled a man being pulled into the cutting line of a sawmill and being sliced in half from head to toe. He also recalled the amusement of the officials who reviewed the accident.

Conditions in the silk-filature factories were as grim as in the worst days of the Industrial Revolution. Children as young as eight-years-old

stood 12 hours a day over boiling vats of cocoons, while foremen punished mistakes with whips made of eight-gauge wire. Shocking as all of this was to this rather conservative young man from New Zealand, the incident which really changed his way of looking at the world took place on a sightseeing trip to a pleasant country town. He came upon a group of soldiers carrying six young men slung from poles. They stopped before the railway station where the officer got off his horse and proceeded to shoot each of the prisoners in the head. Rewi learned later that he had witnessed the summary execution of six organizers who had been helping silk-filature workers to form a union. The incident made him realize that "industry was like a war in which factory owners were always the victors."



First Gung Ho Headquarters housed in the Yokohama Specie Bank in Wuhan (1938).

When the Japanese invaded Shanghai destroying much industry in their wake, Rewi recognized that something had to be done to rebuild the industries which supplied the country's basic needs. Something like 600,000 factory workers were pouring into the interior of China. Rewi began to scheme about how to organize them into a resistance industry which would meet the workers' needs as well as those of the wartime economy.

The Gung Ho co-ops

The answer proved to be a movement of worker co-ops which Rewi named Gung Ho (Chinese for "Work together"). He wrote a pamphlet to publicize the idea and managed to impress both the Kuomintang government and the Communist Party.

The idea was to set up a chain of tiny industrial co-ops across unoccupied China to employ refugees and provide the manufactured goods China needed so urgently. With the blessing of unlikely patrons like Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Gung Ho was officially launched in August, 1938, with Rewi as technical advisor. The approach was to evacuate industries from war zones and to raise funds overseas for the capital and training needs of new co-ops. Unlikely support came from Henry Ford who paid for 100 Chinese technicians a year to study in the States and bring back much needed skills to the movement.

The first co-op was a group of seven blacksmiths, who set themselves up with capital borrowed from Gung Ho at annual interest rates below the going monthly rates. Within a matter of weeks, there were dozens of co-ops producing basic commodities -- food, clothing, shoes, blankets and bandages. Blacksmith co-ops repaired farm implements, but also turned their skills to making hand grenades and mines. Gung Ho's technical experts would visit new co-ops to see how their skills could be quickly developed to meet urgent needs.

Within a year, in the Ganzhou area alone, there were 130 co-ops producing clothing, leather goods and textiles. There were co-ops building boats and churning out bricks and tiles. Political prisoners in a Kuomintang jail co-operated to make hemp sandals. Buddhist nuns ran a weaving co-op which did so well that local landowners demanded a share and sent in thugs to beat up the co-op's members.

Rewi was continually amazed by the ingenuity of his unschooled co-operators. Machines that seemed useless because of electricity failures were made to work again with water power. A textile mill was converted to water power -- to the astonishment of the Ford-trained technicians, who had never seen the like in all their studies.

"Many of the principles developed to organize Gung Ho co-ops were remarkably similar to those formulated decades later by the successful Mondragon movement."

Organizing principles

Many of the principles developed to organize Gung Ho co-ops were remarkably similar to those formulated decades later by the successful Mondragon movement in Spain.

At least seven people were needed to set up a co-op, and each member had to own at least one share. No member could own more than 20 per cent of the total share capital and have more than one vote.

Members determined hours and wage rates and elected a president from their own ranks. Disciplinary problems were adjudicated by the membership as a whole.

Echoes of Mondragon can be found in regulations about the disposition of profits. Year-end profits had to be divided as follows -- 20 per cent to a reserve fund, 10 per cent to a "common good fund", 10 per cent to finance the operations of the Gung Ho Federation and 10 per cent to buy shares in a Co-op Development Fund. The remaining 50 per cent went to the members with the requirement that at least two-fifths had to be held in individual members' share account.

Against the odds

Sometimes when we are overwhelmed by the difficulties of setting up new co-ops we explain away our problems by blaming people's attitudes. We complain that the public sees co-ops as too left-wing or too right-wing, as farmers' organizations, or for the poor only. We complain that our efforts to start new co-ops are tainted by the failures of the past. The Gung Ho movement succeeded against much more serious odds.

In many parts of China, the very concept of a co-op was discredited, and persuading people to try the idea again was an uphill battle. In one district, Rewi was asked with suspicion if his co-ops were anything like the "kerosene co-ops". Kerosene co-ops were notorious organizations set up by local gentry to buy and hoard commodities like kerosene. The rich did very well out of them, but the local farmers, forced to join, found themselves getting deeper into debt. It was not unheard of for a farmer's wife to be taken away and sold to pay his kerosene debts. In Rewi's words, "Houses and land could also be taken, or boys sold to take the place of some landlord's son as conscripts in the army. That was what the word "co-operative" meant to many a peasant."

You can imagine the persuasion needed by Rewi and his colleagues to get people to try co-ops again. But they did try them again. Doing so made all the difference to the Chinese war effort and taught hundreds of thousands of people that industry could be run for the benefit of all.

For more information see: 1. Rewi Alley: an autobiography, New World Press, Beijing China, 1987 (distributed by Government Printing Office Publications Division, Mulgrave St., Wellington, New Zealand). 2. Wilfred Burchett with Rewi Alley. China: the quality of life, Penguin Books, 1976.

Robert Briscoe teaches at the University of the South Pacific, Department of Management and Public Administration, P.O. Box 1168, Suva, Fiji; (Phone) 313900; (Telex)FJ2276.

A TARGETED APPROACH TO WORKER CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Lessons from Mondragon and northern Italy

by Sherman L. Kreiner

PACE of Philadelphia has used an extremely "targeted" strategy in developing worker-owned enterprises in the food business. Our results include a food-brokerage company, a lobster plant and distribution warehouse and a network of supermarkets (the O&O Store) in the Philadelphia area. The O&O stores are formally linked through a second-degree co-operative which sets standards for use of the trademark and tradename, establishes requirements for technical assistance, facilitates deals for goods and services for all stores and serves as a locus for discussion of common problems. Assistance is also being provided to a second worker-owned supermarket network and the conversion of a food-processing plant to worker ownership.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Targeted strategies offer several advantages. First, there is expertise which permits the rapid assessments of prospective deals. Second, by concentrating on businesses which have some similarities, it is possible to build links, formal and informal, and in so doing, create the potential for common problem-solving and economies of scale in the purchase of goods and services.

Targeting also has disadvantages. The flow of quality deals may be limited. Targeting also implies a lack of diversification and a vulnerability to changes in a local economy.



UFCW Local 1357 union officials at Roslyn O&O Supermarket.
(l to r) Bob Wolper, Wendell Young, Pres., Pat Scarcelli,
John Nicholson
Photo: A.T. Lamas

Mondragon

The PACE strategy was created after a careful evaluation of successful international experiences. The most elaborate network of targeted businesses is the Mondragon worker co-operatives in the Basque region of Spain. There, 85 industrial co-operatives employing about 20,000 worker-owners are individually linked through contracts of association with an entrepreneurial credit co-operative, the Caja Laboral Popular, whose board is controlled by representatives of member businesses. These businesses are also linked through several other second-degree co-operatives, which provide social-security benefits, health benefits and unemployment

insurance, technical and other education for members, and technological research for the system. In addition, the individual businesses are formed into federations, both geographic and sectoral, to capture economies of scale and to undertake planning and development activities.

Northern Italy

PACE has also learned from the metal-fabricating industry of northern Italy. That system not only includes worker co-operatives, but non-co-ops in the same industry. Relationships among businesses which perform various portions of a manufacturing process are facilitated by a proactive trade association. Businesses are encouraged to form consortia to bid on some contracts although they may bid against each other on other jobs. The trade association also provides goods and services to the members, offering the benefits of economies of scale in pricing and in purchasing. The association identifies gaps in the capacity of the system and encourages the creation of new enterprises to fill those gaps. Those new enterprises are, in fact, the "targeted" businesses. Once created, they become a part of the larger system, competing and co-operating as appropriate.

As stakeholders in the northern Italy system, existing worker co-ops have a vested interest in assuring that new businesses succeed. However, there is no independent loan fund for new enterprises. Instead, each of the members in the system participates in a credit co-operative that serves as a surety for a local bank loan to a new business. Loans are guaranteed with unencumbered assets of co-op members. That financial stake, and the authority to approve deals, prompts a level of scrutiny which has been instrumental in keeping loss rates extremely low -- less than one per cent.

Management development

The O&O group has also been influenced by the approach to management development in Mondragon and northern Italy. The northern Italy group identifies new managers from existing businesses in the system. O&O has already adopted this practice.



Grand Opening 1982 Roslyn O&O Supermarket
"the nation's first O&O Supermarket"

The Mondragon approach is even more elaborate. There, prospective managers are linked with business consultants employed by the Caja who, on a one-to-one basis, help to develop a business plan, and who also serve as a management consultant ("godfathers") as needed, after startup. In addition, the system develops managers through its technical-training school which has more than 1,000 students annually.

Consider also the scale of the financial and entrepreneurial divisions of the Mondragon system. The Mondragon bank has over 1,000 workers, 120 branches and 500,000 customers throughout the Basque region of Spain. As a credit co-operative of the associated co-operatives, its primary loan activity must be with those co-operatives. Its banking division performs all the usual functions of a modern savings bank. Its entrepreneurial division, with more than 100 employees, systematically goes about the process of creating new firms at the rate of five new industrial co-operatives per year. Its functions include the exploration of market and product possibilities, the training of managers and the development with them of specific business plans, the financing of startup costs, the packaging of the permanent loan request to the banking division and the provision of ongoing technical assistance.

A new approach

How do we get from here to there? We must not limit our vision of system participants to worker-owned business. The manufacturing network of northern Italy suggests that it is possible to create a dynamic system through linking worker-owned businesses with conventionally-structured businesses that share common needs. As the network of businesses expands, the employees and worker-owners become a natural constituency.

The financial institution we develop needs to be depositor-based, like Mondragon's Caja Laboral Popular or some of our most well-endowed American counterparts -- the Community Center for Self-Help credit union in North Carolina being an important example. It may be that we are simply talking about a proactive bank -- an entrepreneurial business-development bank.

On the other hand, perhaps we want something like The Solidarity Fund, developed by the Québec trade-union movement. Legislatively created, and funded exclusively by payroll deductions of unionized workers, (with federal and provincial tax credits associated), its purpose is business development in Québec, which may include worker co-operatives and other alternatively structured businesses. It is fundamentally a ventures fund. A major portion of its portfolio must be used for equity, rather than relatively short-term loans. It does not provide conventional banking services to depositors, but rather is obligated to pay out the initial investment plus the mandated return on that investment, at retirement.

Similar approaches more explicitly geared to the development of worker-owned businesses might identify other constituencies of investors, including members of religious organizations, women's organizations and organizations of minority groups.

In summary, targeted development has been extremely successful internationally, and in limited American experiments such as O&O. To take this model further we need to develop a depositor-based financial institution that is also entrepreneurial. That institution should have a governance that is dominated by businesses from the system that it is helping to create.

Sherman Kreiner has been executive director of PACE of Philadelphia for 10 years. He is currently president of the Lanark Development Corporation, a PACE-created enterprise-development organization. For more information he can be reached at PACE, 2100 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; (215) 561-7079. ■

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Did you know...there are 14 entertainment and leisure worker co-ops in Canada? Nova Scotia has 1, Québec has 12 and Manitoba has 1.

Forestry co-ops predominate, national survey shows

by Alain Roy

By the end of 1987, there were 393 worker co-operatives in Canada. With the exception of forestry co-operatives which are the only important concentrated group (mostly within the

There are worker co-operatives in every province; the province of Québec being where we find most of them, with 275 (70%), followed by Manitoba, Nova Scotia and British Columbia

this survey. In this case both fish catchers and workers in the factory are eligible for membership, with limited access to the board being the main constraint faced by employees.

TABLE 1: Number of Workers' Co-operatives in Canada - 1987

PROVINCE	TYPE OF CO-OPERATIVES			TOTAL	%
	FORESTRY	PRODUCTION	SERVICES		
British Columbia	12	6	11	29	7.4%
Alberta			2	2	0.5%
Saskatchewan	2	3	5	10	2.5%
Manitoba	2	14	16	32	8.2%
Ontario		1	3	4	1.0%
Quebec	53	87	135	275	70.0%
New Brunswick			4	4	1.0%
Nova Scotia	1	13	16	30	7.6%
Prince Edward Island	1	1	3	5	1.3%
Newfoundland			2	2	0.5%
CANADA	71	125	197	393	100.0%

Source: Co-operatives Secretariat, Government of Canada and all provincial governments.

province of Québec), 50 per cent of the worker co-operatives are found in services and the other 50 per cent are of the production type including those in activities related to forestry.

with 32 (8%), 30 (7%), and 29 (7%) respectively.

In the Maritime fishery sector, mixed co-operatives also exist but they are not included in

Since the beginning of this decade the interest in worker co-operation is growing as shown by the increased number of incorporations each year.

In Québec and Manitoba,

where governments established development programs respectively in 1983 and 1985, the relationship between the establishment of those programs and the number of incorporations is evident.

jobs should be seen as very conservative.

In terms of success rate, Table 2 indicates that after 8 years, 32 per cent of the worker co-operatives formed in Québec in 1979 are still active. The

a major mutation since 1980 (48 per cent of the co-operatives were formed after that year). A new class of worker has been emerging; now factory workers are members along with traditional woodcutters. Also the co-operatives are attracting more

Table 2: Quebec workers' co-operatives active in 1988 by year of incorporation - 1978-1987

Year	Number incorporated	Number still active in 1988	Percentage
1979	19	6	32%
1980	20	7	35%
1981	19	8	42%
1982	27	11	40%
1983	34	18	52%
1984	38	20	53%
1985	77	42	55%
1986	87	39	45%
1987	42	34	81%

Source: Direction des coopératives
Gouvernement du Québec

Before 1982, around 20 worker co-operatives were created each year in the province of Québec. After the establishment of Québec's government program on worker co-operatives, the number of incorporations increased slowly for the first two years. By 1985, their number more than doubled.

In Manitoba, the number of incorporations goes from 1 to 1984 to 6 in 1985, 11 in 1986 and 16 in 1987.

Data collected on employment in worker co-operatives are very limited. However an estimation of between 15,000 and 20,000

major reduction seemed to occur during the very first year. After the second, third and fourth years the rate stabilized at around 50 per cent before diminishing more slowly. These results can be advantageously compared to what happened in the private sector.

Based on data from 40 per cent of the total number of worker co-ops in 1986, forestry co-operatives are by far the most important group in Canada. Located mostly in Quebec, they account for 64 per cent of the total volume of business in 1986.

This sector had gone through

highly educated people, engineers accountants, etc.

Canada's forestry worker co-ops represent 61 per cent of all worker co-op members, 64 per cent of the total revenues of worker co-ops, 92 per cent of total assets and 78 per cent of total equity.

Alain Roy is a researcher with the Co-op Secretariat, Room 1070, Sir John Carling Building, 930 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5; (613) 955-4787. This article represents part of a lengthier paper prepared for the Co-op Secretariat presentation at the Ministers' Conference, Halifax, June 13-14.

CCA makes worker co-ops an election priority

by
Albert Chambers



Lynden Hillier, Executive Director
Canadian Co-operative Association

Ottawa -- The Canadian Co-operative Association board has approved a motion that calls on the federal government "to capitalize five regionally-based worker co-operative enterprise centres over the next three years, with at least two centres being launched in the first year of the program." This motion follows from the CCA presentation at the Ministers of Co-operatives conference in Halifax (June, 1988).

The preamble to this motion recognizes the federal Minister of Co-operatives, Charles Mayer's, support for various research and development projects about worker co-operatives, including the CCA buyouts' project which was funded in June (see *Worker Co-ops*, Summer 1988, p.7).

The CCA resolution on worker co-ops is one component of a broader election strategy called "on the doorstep." "What is your party's platform on co-operative development?" is being asked of candidates throughout the country.

This election strategy, organized by the major co-operatives, is non-partisan and low key. In addition to making worker co-operatives their first priority, the co-operatives are seeking from the federal government an increased commitment for co-operative development and an improved working relationship. (The latter is seen as the second phase of the National Task Force on Co-operative Development.)

The CCA is also seeking a "co-operative capital formation" incentive within the Income Tax Act. This would benefit worker co-operatives and co-operative development in general.

Albert Chambers is the director of government relations at the Canadian Co-operative Association, 275 Bank Street, Suite 400, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2L6; (613)238-6711.

Winnipeg buyout doing well

by
Jeremy Hull

Winnipeg -- United Messenger, a recent worker co-op buyout of a privately-owned parcel-delivery company in Winnipeg, is doing well. Manager Bob Morton is quoted as saying, "Our financial picture is very solid. We're in no rush to become a giant outfit, either...We could probably have 100 units on the road, but we want to make sure people who come with us are doing well before we take on more."

United Messenger was profiled in *Worker Co-ops* (Volume 7, number 4).

For More information, contact **Bob Morton** United Messenger, 247 McPhillips Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 2K5; (204)783-6311.

Manitoba employment co-operatives program under review

Winnipeg -- The Progressive Conservative minority government which was elected this past spring has combined the Department of Co-operative Development with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. All programs are currently under review. However, no change is apparent at this point in the Employment Co-operatives Program, which has been funded to the end of the current fiscal year.

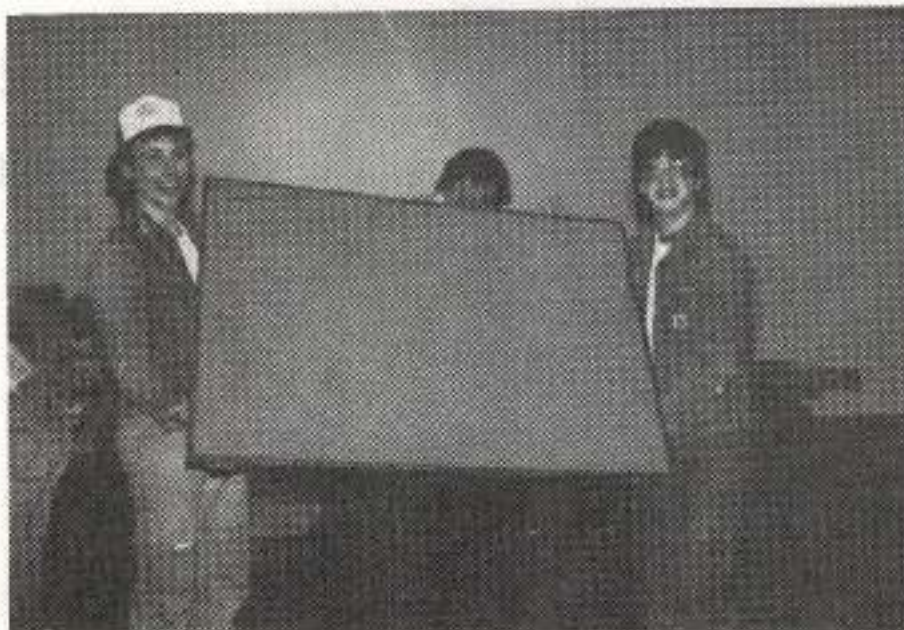
The new Manitoba government is also participating in the federal-provincial committee which was established at the meeting of Ministers of Co-operatives in Halifax, June 13-14. That committee is to identify impediments to developing worker co-operatives across Canada. The committee met in September, and its report is expected this December. Its recommendations are to be addressed by the Ministers' meeting in Quebec next spring.

Jeremy Hull is a consultant with WMC, 200-651 Croydon Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0W3; (204) 453-6137.

Worker co-ops in Junior Achievement

Saskatoon (CCA) --

There were co-operative Junior Achievement projects this past school year in three Saskatchewan communities -- Yorkton, Swift Current and Saskatoon. These projects were sponsored by the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association and carried out with the assistance of advisors from local co-operatives and credit unions. The participants were high school students who met weekly for 30 weeks during the school term to establish a business, produce and sell a product, and distribute the earnings. The businesses had the basic structure of a worker co-operative.



Members of the Yorkton Junior Achievement Bulletin Board Co-operative display their product.

Mulgrave co-op tours K.C. Irving Superstar



Members of the Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre (from L to R) Michael Gobee and Gay Mauser. (Photo courtesy of Innovations Project).

Halifax (CCA) -- The Mulgrave Road Theatre co-operative Sept. 17 began a six-week tour of 20 communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Maine with its latest production, K.C. Superstar.

It is a mixed-media musical play set in a television game show. It explores the story of K.C. Irving, the maritime mega-industrialist, as Maritimers have come to understand it. The production combines song, pre-taped video sequences and down-home drama.

Kagiwiosa wild rice produced by co-op

Dinorvic, Ont. (CCA) -- Kagiwiosa Manomin Inc., a co-operative on Wagigoon Lake Band 27 Reserve near Dinorvic in northwestern Ontario, is the only native-owned and operated processor of wild rice. Its product, manomin, is low in fat and twice as high in protein as brown rice. It takes less than 30 minutes to cook and yields four to five times its dry volume.

The Ojibway people of northwestern Ontario have harvested wild rice for more than 1,000 years. Until 1978, Canadian wild rice crops provided 42.2 per cent of the world's supply. Since then, wild rice has been grown in paddies in California and Minnesota and they now account for 94 per cent of the world's production.

Paddy rice is shorter than manomin and is produced using chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides. The processed paddy rice loses much of its nutty, natural smell and flavour. It is less nutritious and less easily digested than manomin, and takes longer to cook.

Information about manomin is available from either Kagiwiosa Manomin Inc., Wagigoon Lake Band 27, Box 39, Dinorvic, Ontario POV 1P0 or from Ontario Federation of Food Co-operatives and Clubs Inc., 22 Mowat Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3E8.



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Worker owned co-operative.

WODF publishes national directory of worker co-ops

by Ethan Phillips

Toronto -- The Worker Ownership Development Foundation's Directory and Portrait of Worker Co-ops in Canada is out. The Directory includes a province-by-province breakdown of worker co-ops by sector of the economy as well as a list of resource groups. Addresses and telephone numbers are also included. The Directory can be obtained by sending \$10.00 to the Foundation office.

The CCA has agreed to contract much of the Toronto portion of its \$250,000 Innovations grant to the Foundation. The two-year project, to be divided between Winnipeg and Toronto, focuses on worker co-op buyouts in industries hurt by the Free Trade Agreement and technological change.

The Foundation's video on Toronto-area worker co-ops is ready. The video provides an entertaining look at the growing Toronto movement from the point of view of the worker co-op members themselves.

The Foundation's second Grindstone worker co-op conference was well attended. Spirits were high as participants strategized about the future of worker

co-ops in an uncertain federal political climate. A summary of the conference proceedings is available from the Foundation.

Co-operative Work

Co-operative Work's latest project is a business plan for Toronto's Women's bookstore. The business plan provides a guide for the bookstore's expansion.

Big Carrot Update

Business is booming at Toronto's Big Carrot worker co-operative. July sales were \$319,000 -- up 55 per cent from last July. Annual sales for the fiscal year are expected to top \$4 million. The Carrot has approximately 45 workers, 15 part-time. There are currently 19 members, with a number of others about to finish their probation.

Ethan Phillips is director of the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 348 Danforth Ave., Suite 212, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8; (416) 461-6992.

Women's Health Clinic opens as worker co-op

by Louise Matchett

Toronto -- Ontario's newest worker co-operative, *A Women's Choice Health Clinic*, officially opened its doors in late September. Located in east Toronto, the non-profit clinic will offer birth-control counselling, sexually-transmitted-disease testing and treatment and abortions. The clinic eventually plans to offer other woman-centered health care services, as well.

Since the recent Supreme Court ruling on abortion came down, it has become obvious that more clinics offering the service will open. The group felt strongly that they wanted a model for the future, and saw the structure of a non-profit worker co-operative as being best suited to provide their services efficiently and compassionately.

For further information contact **Sandi Eggleton**, 597 Parliament Street, Suite 207, Toronto, Ontario; (416)975-9300.



Members of the Woman's Choice Health Clinic: Genevieve Miller, Sandi Eggleton, Janet Mawhinney, Bonnie Burgess, Nikki Colodny, Margaret Shaw

Handicraft co-op for handicapped workers

Jim Winter

St. John's -- A group of people with a variety of physical handicaps are enrolled in a job-readiness program to develop their skills in sealskin handicrafts as well as their entrepreneurial abilities. The HUB, is the sponsor of the project. HUB has approached the Newfoundland Federation of Co-operatives to explore the possibilities of forming a worker co-operative. Under normal circumstances, a

co-op to produce and market crafts fits the worker co-op model quite well. In this case the challenge comes in finding design that will respect the autonomous nature of the co-operative and yet provide the necessary supports.

For more information contact Jim Winter, Newfoundland Federation of Co-operatives, P.O. Box 13369, St. John's Nfld. A1B 4B7; (709) 737-8474.



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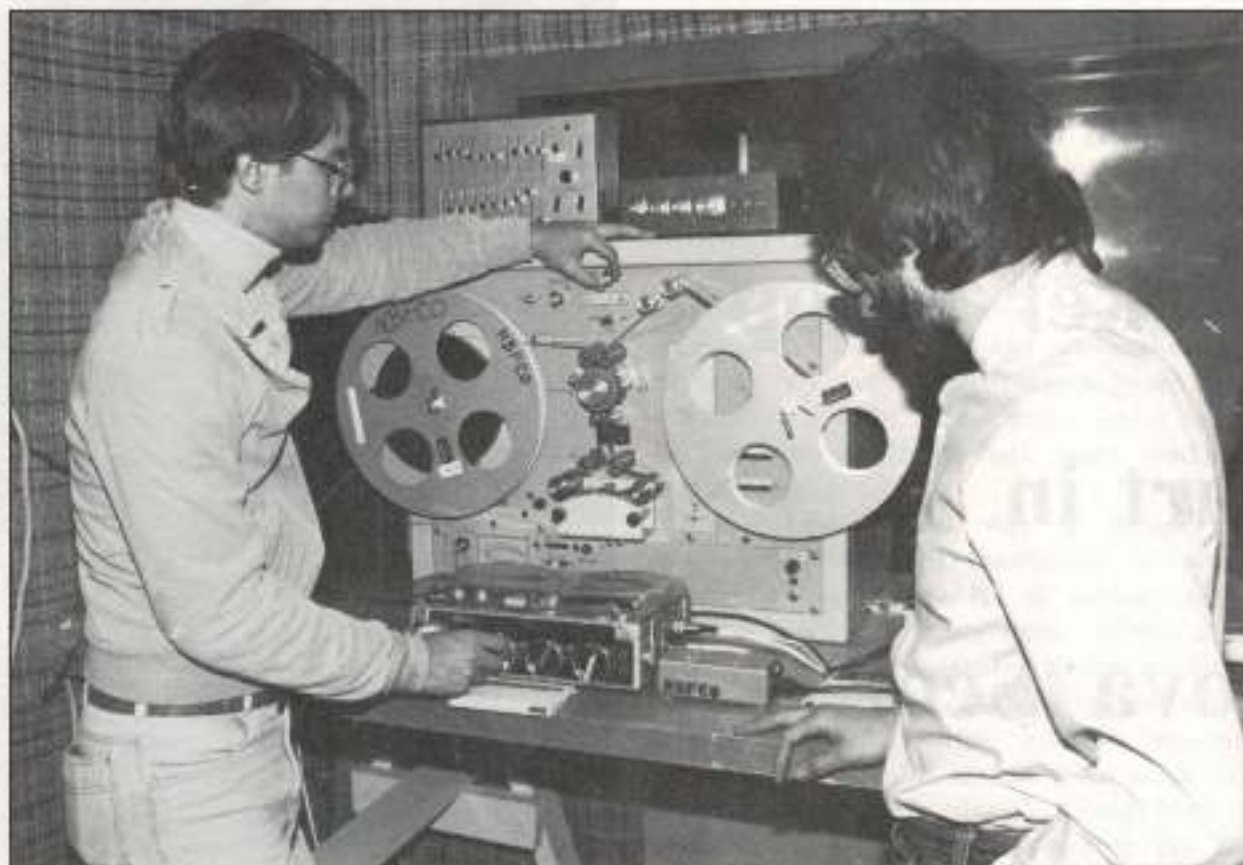
stories in STONE

Montreal -- Kisi sculptures from Kenya and Inuit sculptures from Northern Québec are being exhibited by the Centre of Cognitive and Ethnographic Studies at McGill University. This current exhibition follows a successful joint showing in Kenya two years ago. The first co-operative in northern Québec was established in the late 1950s and an Inuit governed federation of community co-operatives was incorporated in 1967 to manage the marketing of soapstone carvings and handicrafts as well as other activities. La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec has grown into a

major economic institution which has made a large contribution to the expansion of employment and the improvement of living conditions in northern communities. Handicraft production, soapstone carving particularly, is a significant source of income for many families. Co-operative craft marketing has assured a steady income, improved the quality of artistic production and, in addition, given Inuit artists, through their Federation, control of their work. The Federation's successful experience is being shared by handicraft producers in Kisi who are establishing their own co-operative to market soapstone carvings locally and abroad.

New wave, service co-ops in New Brunswick

by Udo Staber



Kevin Holden, film director and Chris Crawford, sound technician

Fredericton -- The N.B. Filmmakers' Co-operative is part of a wave of service-oriented worker co-operatives emerging in New Brunswick since the late 70's. This organization is a non-profit group of independent filmmakers involved in the production of 16 mm motion pictures. The co-op was incorporated in 1979 and has grown to over 30 members, about half of whom are actively involved in film production at any one time.

The co-op sees itself primarily as a resource pool and training ground for people interested in producing short, non-commercial films of diverse types -- animated, dramatic, documentary, and experimental. A wide range of services are offered, such as access to equipment, studio space, editing facilities, and workshops. Members are encouraged

to contribute their expertise and share responsibilities.

The co-op has been very successful in developing the skills of individuals now working as film technicians in major Canadian film centres and in helping members to eventually form their own audio-visual company. Many films produced through the co-op have had very successful public showings over the years.

For more information please contact Tony Merzetti, Co-ordinator, N.B. Filmmakers' Co-operative, 51 York Street, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 4Y1.

Udo Staber teaches at the Faculty of Administration, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5A3.

Four new worker co-ops start in Nova Scotia



by
Veronica Gillies

Women Happy with budding co-op

St. Peter's -- Three women who formed The Greenhouse Co-operative near St. Peter's, Nova Scotia, last February have had a better first year than anticipated. They broke even, and more than that, they bought the business and also land on which to build two more greenhouses.

"It's been a lot of fun, as well as hard work," says co-op member Kathleen MacNearney. "But we're glad we incorporated as a worker co-op. Equal ownership and input works great because the three of us get along so well. It was the right thing for us."

Health care co-op for Pictou seniors

Pictou -- When Anne Willis and Kathryn Bubar saw a need for senior citizen's homecare services in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, they decided to do something about it. They formed Pictou Country Home Health Care Co-operative Ltd., to help the elderly, convalescent and handicapped in their own homes. Since the co-op's incorporation in July, two healthcare aids and a homemaker have begun working part-time with three clients. Fifty-six more people, from registered nurses to homemakers, have applied for jobs with the co-op.

Willis and Bubar, both R.N.'s, visit seniors in their home for an initial assessment. Then they check every week to make sure they are happy with the service and staff. Although building a clientele is a slow process, Bubar is optimistic that there will be a demand for the services they offer -- so optimistic in fact, that long-term goals for the co-op include the establishment of seniors' daycare and drop-in centres.

Homecare for seniors

Sydney -- A new worker co-op has recently formed that will provide homecare services to the elderly in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Cape Care Services Co-operative Ltd. was formed in July by five women after they participated in a CEIC Job Re-Entry training program organized by New Dawn Enterprises Ltd., one of Canada's oldest and most successful community development corporations.

New Dawn became involved in the project after three years of market surveys showed strong demand for such services in Sydney. When the six-month training program ended at the beginning of June, five of the nine participants agreed to form the worker co-op. Two other participants will work part-time for the co-op. New Dawn will provide financial and management assistance to the worker co-op.

Co-ops Focus on future

Antigonish -- Two Nova Scotian worker co-ops are focusing on their futures with some help

from St. Francis Xavier University's Extension Department. Eleven-year-old Mulgrave Road Theatre Co-op of Guysborough and two-year-old Cape Gael Associates Co-op (dedicated to the promotion of Gaelic language and culture) of River Denys, participated in a series of workshops to identify their long-term goals.

The four-part process was based entirely on the members' own ideas and planning, according to Extension fieldworker John Hugh Edwards, who facilitated the sessions.

International exchange

Antigonish -- Five Nova Scotian worker co-operatives have played an important role in the development of worker co-operatives internationally. The participants first completed a month of specially designed courses at the Coady International Institute in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. After that, 10 pairs (one Sri Lankan and one Canadian per pair) started on-the-job training with 10 Nova Scotia co-operatives. The five participating worker co-ops included Co-operative Artisanale de Cheticamp Ltée.; Cheticamp Fish Co-operative Ltd.; Water Street Studio Craft Co-operative; Future Forestry Services Co-operative Ltd.; and Red Herring Co-op Books Ltd.,

From mid-October to March, the participants will be in Sri Lanka helping establish 10 co-ops proposed by their youth groups. Besides their role as resource persons to the new co-ops, the Canadians will be reporting to their own communities about their experiences, when they return home in March 1989.

Veronic Gillies is a researcher with the Innovations Project, St. Francis of Xavier Extension, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 1C0; (902)867-2348. She is replacing Donna Huffman as Nova Scotia editor. Many thanks to Donna for her contributions this past year.

NFB films Evangeline co-ops

by Frank Driscoll

Charlottetown -- The National Film Board of Canada will receive \$55,000 to produce a half-hour documentary film on local development and entrepreneurship in the Evangeline area of Prince Edward Island. Announcement of the project funding under the Canada-Prince Edward Island Industrial Development Sub-Agreement was made jointly by the Hon. Leonce Bernard, Provincial Minister of Industry, and the Hon. Tom McMillan, on behalf of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

"The film will show how local initiative in the Evangeline area helped shape the identity of the Island's French Community," Mr. Bernard said. "The history and cultural importance of co-operative entrepreneurship to P.E.I.'s Acadian people will be a feature." The film is planned for use across Canada, in both English and French, by educators and co-operative enterprises.

Frank Driscoll can be contacted at the Ministry of Industry, Government of Prince Edward Island, Box 2000, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7N8; (902 306-4240).



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Mr. Pierre MacDonald, Québec's Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology. He is the minister responsible for co-operatives.

Québec City -- The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology has renewed its support to Québec's regional development co-operatives (CDR). Grants totalling almost \$900,000 were approved for the 1988/89 fiscal year. The four CDRs who will share this sum are from the l'Estrie, Montreal, Québec and Outaouais regions.

Pierre MacDonald has replaced Daniel Johnson as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology with the responsibility for co-operatives.

The ministry of Energy and Resources has also renewed its financial support to the Assembly of Forestry Co-operatives of Québec. This subsidy enables the Assembly to operate a specialized resource-group for forestry co-op management.

Changes to the Ric

As announced in the last budget speech, the Québec government is making it easier for members of co-ops to invest in their enterprise through the Régime d'Investissement Coopératif. Co-ops no longer have to resubmit their application every two

years as in the past and the ceiling of \$5,500 has been eliminated. As well, the minimum period for holding shares has been reduced. Members will be able to recover their investment after the third year and regulations have been relaxed for the redemption of preferred shares in cases of retirement, resignation or the exclusion of a member.

Québec Forestry co-ops making an impact

Lac St. Jean -- The eight member co-ops of the Federation of forestry co-operatives of Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean did almost \$30 million of business in 1987. Cutting wood is the principal activity, but they also engaged in plant production, forestry management and processing.

The annual meeting of the Assembly of forestry co-operatives of Québec, July 14 and 15, re-elected Raymond Barrette as president of the organization; other members of the board of directors are Yves Latour, Jacques Verrier, Fernand Miron and René Langevin.

The assembly's closing dinner was presided over by Albert Côté, the minister responsible for forests. Among the other guests of honour were Gérard Barbin, president and general director of the SDC, and deputy ministers Gilbert Paillé and Rémy Girard of the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

The World of Business

Montreal -- The regional development co-operative of Montreal-Laval and Société de développement cooperatives (SDC) had exhibits at the "World of Business" show in Montreal, September 21-25. The exhibit displayed the aid available to co-ops in Québec.

Claude Carbonneau is an information officer at the SDC, 430 Chemin Ste. Foy, Québec City, Québec G1S 2J5; (418)687-9221.

(Translated by Rosemary Oliver) ■

SCOTLAND Wanted: Co-operative Entrepreneurs

by Jack Quarter

The SCDC -- Scotland's primary development group for worker co-ops -- has shifted away from its traditional strategy of "reacting to the plans of would-be co-operators" in favour of a "proactive" "top-down" approach adapted from Mondragon.

Deputy Director, John Whyte, who is co-ordinating the new approach, starts the process by "identifying market gaps". After an initial feasibility assessment, a "co-operative entrepreneur" is sought to head up the project. That person is put on salary for up to six months. Half of the salary is paid by the SCDC and the other half by the European Social Fund (ESF).

The co-operative entrepreneur then works with an SCDC development officer to create a business plan, to recruit and train members (also paid from the ESF) and to arrange the financial package.

The SCDC has departed from the British ICOM tradition by encouraging member investment in a co-op -- "£1,000, a minimum financial input" according to Whyte. Financing also is assisted by the SCDC Co-operatives Venture Capital Fund (now with £150,000). It provides either loans or equity financing as required by a new co-op.

Over the next three years, the SCDC intends to set up 10 new co-operatives, each with about 10 members, using this top-down approach. Its first project was a Glasgow co-op that resprays metal office furnishings. "If it succeeds," Whyte states, "we'll replicate the co-op in Aberdeen and other cities."

A major factor in the success of the top-down approach is the recruitment of co-operative entrepreneurs. In the Mondragon group, the entrepreneurs for new co-ops usually are members of existing co-ops with appropriate talents. Lacking the 20,000 membership of Mondragon, the SCDC foresees the need for external recruitment. Whyte wonders whether there might be a "psychological profile" that could be used to identify appropriate individuals.

The Middlesbrough Initiative

The SCDC's approach is very similar to that being applied by the Cleveland Co-op Development Agency in northeastern England. Dubbed the "Middlesbrough Initiative" (because of its location), this project has received the political support of Kenneth Clark, Minister of Trade and Industry in



the Conservative government.

After his visit to Mondragon in 1986, in which his positive impressions were widely quoted, Clark has channelled £200,000 per year to the Middlesbrough Initiative. According to its co-ordinator, Peter Smith, 120 jobs are projected for creation this year. Market gaps are identified, and then flyers are circulated through out Middlesbrough with the heading: "Wanted: Co-operative Entrepreneurs."

For more information, contact John Whyte or Alex Smith, SCDC, Templeton Business Centre, Templeton St., Glasgow, Scotland G40 1DA; (041)554-3797; or Peter Smith, The Middlesbrough Initiative, 8 Albert Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS1 1QA, U.K.; (0642)210-226.

UNITED STATES

Trucking industry ESOPs prove worthless

ESOPs have had a very "bumpy road" in the American trucking industry. Writing in the newsletter of *The National Center for Employee Ownership*, Michael Friedman (a Teamsters' member) states that of ESOPs once existing at 19 major trucking companies only three remain, and two of these are about to be terminated.

When price deregulation was brought into the trucking industry in 1980, many of the companies ended up in financial difficulty. At first they demanded wage reductions from their employees, and when resistance grew, ESOPs were created as "a way of giving people something for their sacrifice."

The pattern was a 15 per cent reduction in annual

wages over five years in return for 30-49 per cent of the company's stock and one to three seats on the Board of Directors. Friedman notes that the Teamsters' Union remained aloof from the negotiations. Companies in financial difficulty shifted corporate debt and unfunded pension liabilities to the ESOP. Management remained unchanged, and in some cases increased its compensation. In the end, these trucking companies either closed down or were bought out by new owners who terminated the plan.

Friedman's complete analysis can be obtained from the National Center for Employee Ownership, 426 17th Street, Suite 650, Oakland, California 94612.■

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SOVIET UNION

Crime a problem in co-ops

"Mafia-type gangs in Moscow have fastened onto newly-licensed co-operative enterprises, mainly in service industries such as catering and in small-scale manufacturing," writes Andrew Wilson of the *London Observer*.

"Co-operatives refusing to pay the gangs protection money find their premises mysteriously burned out, or their windows smashed. Others, less scrupulous, pay the gangs to put their rivals out of business."

Existing taxes perceived as discriminatory

Worker co-operatives are taking hold in the northern U.S.S.R., in young cities like Novy Urengoi, where state enterprises have not satisfied the vast market for goods and services. According to the city's mayor, Vladimir Gorkovenko, many co-operatives are comprised of women.

A problem facing co-operatives in the U.S.S.R. is a discriminatory tax system and the denial of benefits provided to state-employed workers in regions with a harsh climate. Tax privileges have been granted only to co-operatives supplying consumer services. However, the law on co-operatives (see *Worker Co-ops*, Vol. 8, no. 1) that went into effect on July 1, 1988,

permits worker co-operatives in other market areas to request tax privileges from the State.

For more information contact the Press Office of the Soviet Embassy, 1108-400 Stewart Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6L2.

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Editor Bengt Abrahamsson
Arbetslivscentrum (The Swedish Center for
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Did you know...there are a total of 343 worker co-operatives in Canada?

**BIRTH OF A CO-OPERATIVE,
HOEDADS, INC. - A worker Owned
Forest Labour Co-op**

by

Hal Hartzell, Jr.
Published by Hulogos'i
Communications, Inc., 1987,
351 pages.

Reviewed by Marty Donkervoort

The birth of a co-operative is the first of three books written by Hal Hartzell about the Hoedads. It covers the period of its conception in 1970, when a few tree planters decided to manage their own work and eventually incorporated as a co-operative in 1974.

The author is an active participant in the story as he joined the Hoedads in 1972. The book is a social history of not only the evolution of a co-operative but also of a way of life in the Oregon woods. In fact, the emphasis in this volume is more on tree planting and tree planters than on co-operation and co-operative development. I was disappointed with the treatment of the co-operative development.

Hartzell uses a lot of written material by the membership to develop the historical account. Although the members' accounts give the reader a broader perspective, they can also be confusing. Quotes often refer to events that have already been covered in other parts of the book or have not yet been introduced. The text is supplemented with numerous pictures and illustrations throughout which give the reader an opportunity to meet the players visually and better identify with the setting.

Birth of a Co-operative is a very subjective historical account reflecting the views of Hoedads's members. This book does not reflect the views of other contractors in the industry, civil servants who supervised the reforestation projects or others in the community who came in contact with the co-operative.

"Two women on the slopes"

The role of women in the co-op and remuneration among members were two areas that particularly interested me. The Hoedads broke new ground in the industry by hiring women as tree planters. By 1974, 25 per cent of their membership were women. Although Hoedads actively recruited women their status reflected inequality and sexist treatment by their male peers. Women had to be better than their male counterparts to be accepted and respected.

A Hoedads's newsletter, reproduced in the book, contains an interview which starts out: "Ron Barber, a member of the Red Star crew, recently set a precedent in Hoedads's history by being the only male on a seven-man crew". He was then asked if he had any sexual fantasies related to the experience. Hartzell doesn't help matters by including pictures of female Hoedads and making them nameless. The caption with one picture reads: "Two women on the Slopes!"

Remuneration for similar work could vary from \$15 to \$75 a day. A lot depended on the nature of the contract assigned to a crew by Hoedads's central administration. In addition, a number of crews were paid on a piecework basis -- i.e., the total number of trees planted by each member per day. This created some ill feelings at times, particularly in the allocation of contracts.

Overall, I would recommend this book only for people with a particular interest in forestry and forestry co-ops. There are better books available on the subject of worker co-op development.

Marty Donkervoort is a member of Co-operative Work, a resource group for the development of worker co-ops and other community-development initiatives. He has a degree in forestry and previously did business planning for a major forestry corporation in Canada. He can be reached at Co-op Work, Carrot Common, Suite 212, 348 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8; (416)461-7371.

**MAKING MONDRAGON:
The Growth and Dynamic
of the Worker Co-operative Complex.**

by

**William Foote Whyte &
Kathleen King Whyte**

**Cornell International
Industrial and Labour Relations
Report Number 14, ILR Press
New York State School
of Industrial and Labour Relations
Cornell University, 315 pps.
1988**

Reviewed by Ethan Phillips

Making Mondragon is a significant new contribution to the growing Mondragon literature. Its publication is the culmination of 13 years of research by William Foote Whyte, a respected American social scientist and Kathleen King Whyte. Without question, the book represents the most sophisticated attempt to date to detail and explain to English-speaking readers the phenomenal success of this worker co-operative complex.

The book is both a history of Mondragon and an assessment of the implications of this experiment for the American economy. Of particular historical interest are sections dealing with the conflicts experienced by the larger co-operatives in the mid-1970s and Mondragon's response to the worldwide recession of the early 1980s. Both sections are done extremely well and describe in considerable detail examples of creative responses to difficult economic and social circumstances.

Lessons to be learned

The most interesting part of the book for North American readers will be the discussion of the lessons to be learned from 30 years of worker co-operative development in the Basque region. In this section, the Whytes discuss the legislative implications, the challenge of maintaining worker ownership and control, the need to have institutionalized representation of the members in

both their capacity as workers and as owners, the need for dynamic leadership and support organizations, the difficulty in transferring Mondragon "social inventions" to very different cultures and economies and the lessons to be learned for regional economic-development initiatives.

The discussion of balancing workers' and owners' interests is especially relevant, given the ambivalence that the North American Labour movement feels towards worker ownership. In response to organized labour's question, "How can we bargain against ourselves?" the Whytes' argue that in a worker co-operative a union is not really bargaining against itself. Rather, it is bargaining against management appointed by a board of directors that is legally required to represent the interests of the co-operative corporation. Even though members of a co-operative -- who are its owners-in-common -- may belong to a union, that same union may also represent these members in their capacity as workers. The union concerns itself with such issues as salaries, working conditions and grievances, over which management and labour may not agree.

In summary then, *Making Mondragon* is a book that those interested in worker co-operatives should not miss.

Ethan Phillips is director of the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 348 Danforth Avenue, Suite 212, Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8; (416)461-6992.

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et des nouvelles brèves en page 10



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Le développement coopératif dans les nouveaux secteurs a toujours été l'oeuvre de coopérateurs éclairés, rassemblés pour trouver des solutions et des moyens nouveaux aux besoins économiques des hommes et des femmes de leur communauté, dans le respect des valeurs coopératives. Adaptée à la coopération de travail, la mission de la Coopérative de développement régional de Montréal (CDR) est de rassembler pour développer.

Le succès de cette mission exige que nous profitons de toutes les tribunes pour promouvoir la formule coopérative et développer l'indispensable solidarité autour des projets.

Aussi, c'est avec enthousiasme que nous avons accueilli l'offre de collaboration avec *Worker Co-ops*; voilà certes un instrument qui va nous permettre de renforcer l'unité coopérative au Québec dans la diversité canadienne.

Cette entente de coopération, que nous n'hésitons pas à qualifier d'historique, va nous permettre de publier huit pages de contenu exclusivement québécois, dans chaque parution de la revue.

Bien sûr, nous allons nous en servir pour étaler nos réussites québécoises, sans complaisance mais avec fierté; mais nous voulons surtout en faire un instrument militant de développement. Il est déjà la première base ouvrant la voie à un réel mouvement de coopération de travail au Québec. En conséquence, nous avons tenu à ouvrir nos colonnes à toute la communauté de la coopération de travail, sous la supervision d'un comité de rédaction largement représentatif du milieu.

Comme vous pourrez le constater à sa lecture, cette première livraison présente les points de vue des principaux intervenants du milieu ou du gouvernement. Ils reflètent assez justement la situation de la coopération de travail au Québec ainsi que des débats en cours.

Malgré certaines différences d'opinions, liées essentiellement aux moyens et aux instruments dont nous disposons, nous pouvons constater une grande convergence de vues sur la nécessité du développement de nouvelles entreprises dans le but de renforcer le jeune mouvement des coopératives de travail.

Nous souhaitons que notre magazine *Coop de Travail* devienne l'instrument de l'expression des multiples solidarités dont les coopérateurs ont besoin pour atteindre cet objectif.

Pierre Marin,
président de la CDR de Montréal

Raymond Barrette,

Président de la Conférence des coopératives forestières du Québec

Les coopératives forestières existent au Québec depuis maintenant 50 ans. Plus d'une quarantaine sont en opération et elles présentent, avec leurs filiales, un chiffre d'affaires de plus de 180 millions de dollars pour 1986. Pourriez-vous me présenter le rôle de la Conférence des coopératives forestières du Québec dans le développement de ce secteur important des coopératives de travail?

La Conférence est un organisme jeune. Ses premières interventions, sous la forme d'un organisme *bona fide* remontent au début des années '80. Elle est alors un organisme composé de bénévoles qui voit à échanger des informations et à défendre, de façon ponctuelle, les intérêts de ses membres. À différents moments, des ressources humaines à temps partiel sont déployées par des coopératives membres pour assurer une certaine permanence.

À partir de 1984, on peut dire que le membership des coopératives forestières est en mutation. Il y a une arrivée importante de gestionnaires, d'ingénieurs, de techniciens forestiers et de biologistes possédant de solides formations. Cet apport de sang neuf, qui vient s'ajouter à des équipes de travailleurs d'expérience, contribue à expliquer une bonne part du nouveau dynamisme dont commence à faire preuve la Conférence.

En 1985, la Conférence se donne le statut d'une coopérative de service et obtient du ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de la Technologie (MICT) le financement d'un groupe conseil spécialisé en coopération forestière. Progressivement, la Conférence passe d'une stratégie défensive à une stratégie de développement. Mais elle doit s'en donner les moyens. La question d'une véritable permanence revient de plus en plus souvent à l'ordre du jour des assemblées de la Conférence. En 1988, elle procède à l'engagement d'un directeur général qui aura pour mandat de travailler à faire avancer les différents dossiers jugés prioritaires.

Les priorités retenues à la dernière assemblée générale annuelle de la Conférence (septembre 1988) sont les suivantes:



Monsieur Raymond Barrette

- le traitement fiscal des ristournes;
- le nouveau régime forestier;
- le développement des activités de formation;
- le maintien du groupe conseil spécialisé en coopération forestière (maintenant financé par le ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources);
- l'établissement de nouvelles relations avec REXFOR;
- le financement de la Conférence;
- la taxe de vente sur les équipements utilisés en aménagement;
- la mise sur pied d'un fonds de développement des coopératives forestières.

On peut donc dire que depuis cette année la Conférence est vraiment outillée pour travailler efficacement au développement du secteur. Il est encore trop tôt pour parler d'un bilan.

Le gros défi des coopératives forestières est donc d'apprendre à s'associer avec les industriels dans tous leur secteurs d'activité économique

Comment voyez-vous l'avenir des coopératives forestières?

L'avenir des coopératives forestières tourne beaucoup autour de deux questions:

- leur capacité d'adaptation au nouveau régime forestier;
- leur habileté à s'impliquer dans des activités de transformation, afin d'être moins dépendantes des débouchés externes.

Avec le nouveau régime forestier, la

responsabilité de la pérennité des forêts revient maintenant aux industriels, alors que l'aménagement était précédemment le rôle du Gouvernement. Le gros défi des coopératives forestières est donc d'apprendre à s'associer avec les industriels dans tous leurs secteurs d'activité économique: non seulement dans l'exploitation forestière, mais aussi dans l'aménagement, la production de plants et la transformation. Le principal atout des coopératives forestières est leur grande expertise de la forêt. Elles peuvent offrir aux industriels des services d'une grande qualité.

Cette nouvelle réalité a un impact primordial sur l'ensemble des coopératives forestières. Pour certaines, ce sera l'occasion de grands développements. Pour d'autres, il pourra y avoir des menaces de disparition si elles manquent de vigilance. La Conférence doit faire les représentations nécessaires pour faire reconnaître les coopératives, et travailler à mieux équiper ses membres en vue de négocier avec les industriels.

Le Gouvernement de par l'aide qu'il peut apporter à différents niveaux constitue un acteur important. Sa non implication éventuelle pourrait affecter sérieusement le développement du mouvement. La Conférence s'interroge ainsi sur la volonté du MICT de restreindre l'accès aux garanties de marge de crédit de la SIDC. La fiscalité des ristournes est un autre problème qui affecte chaque coopérative forestière. Beaucoup de défis attendent les coopératives fores-

tières. Mais elles se donnent de plus en plus les outils pour y faire face.

La non implication éventuelle du Gouvernement pourrait affecter sérieusement le développement du mouvement

Que pensez-vous des coopératives actionnaires de compagnies comme le cas Normick-Chambord au Saguenay/Lac St-Jean?

Cette formule est appelée à se développer et la Conférence pense que ça pourrait se reproduire dans plusieurs régions. Comme la capitalisation nécessaire est très importante, s'associer avec d'autres partenaires est une façon de réaliser conjointement un projet et de s'impliquer davantage dans la transformation. Le chiffre d'affaires des coopératives forestières est de 85 millions de dollars. Si on rajoute les ventes de leurs filiales, on arrive à un chiffre d'affaires global de 180 millions. On voit alors clairement l'importance des opérations économiques de leurs filiales.

Des problèmes communs mériteraient d'être étudiés comme par exemple la question du traitement fiscal des ristournes

Les coopératives forestières ont des problèmes de développement qui leur sont propres. Existe-t-il des problèmes semblables à ceux des autres coopératives de travail et qui pourraient entraîner des solidarités communes?

Il y a énormément d'échanges entre les coopératives forestières. Relativement peu avec d'autres types de coopératives. Régionalement, des coopératives forestières s'impliquent dans des CDR (par exemple Saguenay/Lac St-Jean, Outaouais). Mais il n'y a pas vraiment d'échanges entre le mouvement des coopératives forestières et le mouvement des autres types de coopératives de travail. Il y a probablement des problèmes communs qui mériteraient d'être étudiés, comme la question du traitement fiscal des ristournes, par exemple. Mais aucune piste n'a pour l'instant été explorée.

Cette entrevue a été réalisée à Montréal le 14 octobre dernier par Marc-André Leboeuf

Richard Messier,

Président de la Fédération québécoise des coopératives de travail

La Fédération québécoise des coopératives de travail est encore très jeune (1985). Où en est-elle par rapport aux objectifs qu'elle s'était fixés au départ?

Au dernier congrès tenu à Bromont, nous avons identifié entre autres trois objectifs soit:

- amener du capital de risque dans le secteur des coopératives de travail;
- intervenir sur la fiscalité nettement défavorable aux coopératives;
- ouvrir des marchés aux membres par le développement de l'intercoopération.

Le premier objectif est déjà atteint via une entente avec le Fonds de solidarité de la Fédération des travailleurs du Québec (FS-FTQ) où les projets de développement provenant de coopératives de travailleurs sont reçus avec un préjugé favorable. La Fédération québécoise des coopératives de travail (FQCT) introduit et pousse le dossier à travers la structure d'analyse du FS-FTQ. Mais il faut que le projet soit bon! Cette entente est en place actuellement et constitue donc une nouvelle source de capital de risque pour les coopératives.

Sur le plan de la fiscalité, nous informons les coopérateurs sur les avantages fiscaux retirés par l'effet combiné de l'investissement dans le régime d'investissement coopératif (RIC) des économies d'impôts réalisées via un investissement dans le FS-FTQ. Pour chaque dollar investi dans un fonds de retraite, on peut obtenir un dollar si ce dernier est réinvesti à l'intérieur de sa coopérative.

Enfin, par nos représentations auprès des grandes coopératives (Fédération, Mouvement Desjardins, les Coopérants, etc.) visant à faire connaître le secteur des coopératives de travail, des membres de la FQCT sont maintenant invités à soumissionner pour divers contrats de ces grandes coopératives.

De plus, au niveau national, nous assumons notre rôle de représentation, économique et politique. Par exemple, pour la première fois, les coopératives de travail ont un représentant élu au conseil d'administration du Conseil de la coopération du Québec (CCQ). Il est important de



Monsieur Richard Messier

souligner que la FQCT dispose de peu de ressources financières. Une large partie de l'effort vient de l'implication bénévole des membres du conseil d'administration de la FQCT.

Notre nombre est encore trop faible pour que le secteur des coopératives de travail supporte lui-même son développement. L'État doit donc s'impliquer davantage à ce stade-ci

Sachant que des coupures ont eu lieu dans les programmes des Coopératives de développement régional (CDR) et au niveau de l'accessibilité des programmes d'aide de la Société de développement coopératif (SDC), êtes-vous satisfait de l'aide actuelle de l'État au développement des coopératives de travail?

L'État doit investir davantage pour quelques années, puis se retirer. Notre nombre est encore trop faible pour que le secteur des coopératives de travail supporte lui-même son développement. L'État doit donc s'impliquer davantage à ce stade-ci.

Je désapprouve les coupures mais je me demande si les intervenants touchés ont bien joué leur rôle. Ont-ils pris les moyens pour promouvoir la formule coopérative auprès des jeunes? Il aurait peut-être dû y avoir un programme global d'information par ceux qui en ont les moyens et ce programme aurait peut-être dû consi-

tituer un effort concerté du milieu. Ceux que les coupures ont touchés auraient dû investir dans la promotion d'une image plus favorable aux coopératives.

À la FQCT, comme on n'a pas ces ressources, on trouve rentable de se rapprocher des grandes coopératives qui elles, pourront nous «défendre» par la suite, nous connaissant mieux.

Il faut repenser la loi et pas uniquement modifier quelques articles. Il faut recommencer en affirmant la différence avec la compagnie et non essayer de s'en rapprocher

Selon vous, quelles sont les contraintes légales ou fiscales au développement et que fait la FQCT par rapport à ces contraintes?

Il faut repenser la loi et pas uniquement modifier quelques articles. Il faut recommencer en affirmant la différence avec la compagnie et non partenariat collectif avec des avantages légaux et fiscaux collectifs plus qu'individuels. Dans le cadre de l'étude sur les modifications légales et fiscales menées par le CCQ, nous entendons faire connaître mais surtout évaluer l'impact réel des revendications des coopératives de travail. À la FQCT, on considère que le mouvement des coopératives de travail n'a pas la force politique pour faire bouger les gouvernements. Dans ce contexte, on trouve pertinent de se rapprocher du reste du mouvement coopératif regroupé au

CCQ, qui lui, a le pouvoir politique d'infléchir les décisions gouvernementales. Leur appui nous semble donc essentiel.

Quelle est votre vision du développement à venir dans le secteur des coopératives de travail?

Le développement viendra probablement plus de la transformation d'entreprises saines en coopératives de travail en autant que l'on se donne l'accès au capital de risque nécessaire pour ce faire. L'avenir du secteur ne passe certainement pas par les coopératives d'investissement surtout si celles-ci n'ont pas un départ 51% des actions. Ce type d'entreprises me semble peu compatible avec la coopération.

La FQCT veut participer à refaire l'unité du mouvement des coopératives de travail

Quelles interventions ou sur quel dossier la FQCT va-t-elle porter son attention, les revendications sur la loi mises à part?

Ouvrir des marchés pour nos coopératives surtout par l'intercoopération. La FQCT est la seule qui peut parler aux grandes coopératives. Il faut donc faire l'unité pour arriver à des résultats intéressants. La FQCT veut participer à refaire l'unité du mouvement des coopératives de travail parce que ce type d'intercoopération est essentiel au développement des coopératives.

Cette entrevue a été réalisée à Montréal le 11 octobre dernier par Luc Labelle

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Juliette Bonneville, Directrice générale de la CDR de Québec

André Paquette Vice-président de la CDR de Québec

Quelles ont été les contributions des groupes-conseils puis des CDR dans le développement? Pourquoi note-t-on une baisse du nombre de nouvelles coopératives depuis environ 2 ans? Quel est votre rôle dans le développement du secteur de la coopération de travail par rapport aux autres intervenants?

Bonneville: Sans leurs apports, il ne se serait certes pas créé autant de coopératives de travail. À Québec, nous avons travaillé avec 60 coopératives ou projets de coopératives et nous en avons 35 en opération suite à notre intervention.

Denault: La baisse du nombre de nouvelles coopératives vient du fait qu'on est plus sélectif. Notre objectif n'est pas seulement de créer des emplois mais des entreprises fortes.

Paquette: Cela s'explique aussi par le fait que l'image des coopératives n'est pas très bonne et la formule mal connue.

Allard: En crise économique, la



Dans l'ordre habituel, madame Juliette Bonneville, monsieur André Paquette, monsieur Jean-François Denault et monsieur Pierre Allard

formule est plus populaire. Plus nous sortons de la crise et que nous nous rapprochons du plein-emploi, plus l'entreprise traditionnelle apparaît attrayante.

Bonneville: On se rend compte par exemple que les coopératives devenant très rentables se transforment en compagnies dû aux méadaptations

légales et fiscales. On a six cas de ce genre à Québec.

Allard: Un autre facteur, c'est l'absence de mouvement. Nous sommes une religion sans église. Ce n'est pas les CDR seules qui peuvent régler cela. Les coopérateurs sont isolés.

Bonneville: Il n'y a pas de solidarité même parmi les organismes de développement. Il faut se rappeler que les groupes-conseils se sont développés malgré le CCQ!

Il n'y a jamais eu de promotion nationale par le MICT pour les programmes de coopératives comme il y en a pour les autres programmes

Croyez-vous que l'ensemble des mécanismes d'aide au développement fournis par l'État est approprié aux besoins des coopératives de travail en matière de développement?

Denault: Il y a le Régime d'investissement coopératif (RIC) et d'autres outils disponibles, mais je déplore le regret qu'a l'État en nous aidant. L'État induit alors des incertitudes qui nous contraignent à la planification à court terme. Cela ne nous aide pas à développer un mouvement à plus long terme.

Bonneville: Il n'y a jamais eu de promotion nationale par le MICT pour les programmes de coopératives comme il y en a pour les autres programmes.

Paquette: Nos créneaux s'en trou-

vent restreints. Le financement des coopératives est très difficile à obtenir et nous sommes mal connus. Les jeunes ne connaissent pas notre programme.

Bonneville: La SDC n'a pas de programmes adaptés à notre secteur coopératif. Elle s'est retirée des secteurs d'où venait le développement en terme de coopérative de travail, soit le secteur des services. Par ailleurs les intervenants du milieu et l'État ne travaillent pas ensemble. Le développement devrait être planifié en concertation entre les intervenants impliqués dans le développement.

Allard: En effet, alors qu'il y a un programme d'aide au démarrage via les CDR, la SDC n'a pas de programme de financement spécifique au démarrage. Cela dit, le Québec comme État, est à l'avant-garde dans les moyens de favoriser le développement. Le problème, c'est que le gouvernement ne comprend pas la spécificité de nos entreprises. Notre programme est comparé avec les mêmes critères de performance que les compagnies. Dans une coop de travail, on s'astreint à des règles auxquelles les compagnies ne s'astreignent pas.

Bonneville: Quand un coopérateur de travail met de l'argent dans son entreprise, on dit qu'il schète sa job; quand le travailleur d'une compagnie fait de même, on dit qu'il investit. Le langage est incorrect et fait ressortir qu'on n'a pas dépassé l'aspect social de ces coopératives.

Suite à la page 7

La Direction des coopératives du
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Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce
et de la Technologie

Jean-François Denault | Pierre Allard

Directeur général de la CDE de l'Estrie

Directeur général de la CDR de Montréal

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Denault: Les autres intervenants doivent nous percevoir comme un laboratoire: on lance des entreprises dirigées à 100% par les travailleurs. Nous devons amener le travailleur à perdre ses réflexes de salarié et lui faire prendre conscience de ses responsabilités. Le Gouvernement doit nous évaluer en terme de laboratoire, pas seulement en terme d'emplois créés. Par ailleurs, si nous avions un mouvement fort, nous pourrions provoquer le législateur.

Paquette: Faisons valoir les éléments idéologiques liés à la qualité de vie au travail telle qu'elle se vit en coopérative. La formule a le potentiel pour répondre aux valeurs des gens. Quant au fait qu'il n'y ait pas de répondant ministériel c'est la conséquence du manque de pression venant du milieu. Cela prend d'abord un mouvement pour revendiquer un sous-ministre. On aura un interlocuteur ministériel quand il y aura concertation dans le milieu.

Le Québec, comme État, est à l'avant-garde dans les moyens de favoriser le développement. Le problème, c'est que le Gouvernement ne comprend pas la spécificité de nos entreprises

Quelles contraintes légales et/ou fiscales gênent votre travail de développement?

Allard: Ce débat doit être fait par l'ensemble du mouvement. Je veux seulement dire que le traitement fiscal du coopérateur est scandaleux. On nie sa qualité d'entrepreneur, les ristournes étant considérées comme surplus de salaire. Par ailleurs, si nous comptons le secteur de l'alimentation, les coopératives en milieu scolaire, les coopératives d'habitation, la SDC, la loi sur les coopératives, on se rend compte qu'il est pertinent d'avoir un sous-ministre adjoint aux coopératives. Tout cela est actuellement géré par un directeur par intérim. C'est nous enlever

du poids politique.

C'est donc par la promotion au niveau régional que nous pourrions rassembler tous les secteurs coopératifs autour de l'idée du développement de coopération de travail

Quels outils devons-nous mettre en place ou quel défi devra-t-on relever pour que les coopératives se développent davantage dans les prochaines années? Comment allez-vous intervenir?

Denault: Il y a des secteurs coopératifs bien implantés et d'autres en émergence, telles les coopératives de travail. Nous devons nous allier les autres secteurs bien implantés. Là-dessus, les CDR peuvent faire ce rapprochement au niveau régional. À l'intérieur de nos organismes (CDR) nous pouvons faire la promotion de notre formule auprès des autres secteurs déjà bien implantés. C'est donc par la promotion au ni-

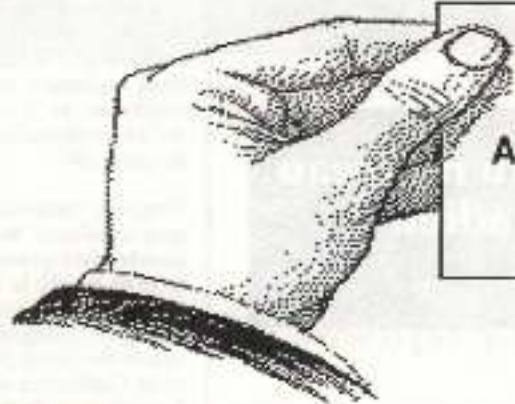
veau régional que nous pouvons rassembler tous les secteurs coopératifs autour de l'idée du développement de coopération de travail. Cela nous renforcerait.

Allard: Dans la ligne traditionnelle des coopératives, il faut trouver des moyens originaux pour susciter de nouveaux coopérateurs ou pour que des promoteurs puissent trouver leur place dans les coopératives de travail. Des moyens originaux mais qui correspondent aux réalités de chaque région. Par exemple à Montréal, nous venons de lancer *Campus Coopératives*. Plutôt que de changer la loi sur le nombre de membres requis pour former une coopérative (ce qui ne serait pas pertinent), nous avons trouvé une façon d'accueillir les promoteurs individuels, et *Campus Coopératives* les accompagne jusqu'à ce que le niveau des opérations supporte du travail pour trois personnes, pouvant ainsi former une nouvelle coopérative.

Cette entrevue a été réalisée à Montréal le 14 octobre dernier par Luc Labelle



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Marc Jean,

Directeur de la Direction des coopératives

Quel bilan faites-vous de l'apport de la Direction des coopératives au développement des coopératives de travail?

La crise économique du début des années 80 a été le déclencheur d'une plus grande intervention de la Direction des coopératives dans le développement des coopératives de travail. De graves problèmes de chômage chez les jeunes ont ainsi amené la Direction à mettre sur pied des groupes-conseils supportant les jeunes entrepreneurs dans leur démarche de création d'une coopérative de travail. Considérant l'importance d'impliquer le milieu régional dans le développement coopératif, la Direction met aussi sur pied un programme d'aide aux Coopératives de développement régional (CDR).

En 1984, la nouvelle loi sur les coopératives entre en vigueur et reconnaît les particularités des coopératives de travail. Depuis 1985, le nouveau Régime d'investissement coopératif (RIC) permet à des coopérateurs d'obtenir, à certaines conditions, un avantage fiscal en investissant dans leur coopérative.

L'ensemble de ces mesures a permis, et cela s'est surtout manifesté en 1985-86, d'accélérer le développement des coopératives de travail et de faire des expériences diverses dans le développement des coopé-



Monsieur Marc Jean

tives de travail. Mais il est trop tôt pour parler d'un bilan. On n'a pas encore fait l'évaluation de l'ensemble des efforts de développement. Il conviendra bientôt de faire la somme des expériences et de voir s'il y a des modèles qui méritent d'être privilégiés.

Différents aspects légaux et fiscaux peuvent constituer des freins au développement.

Peut-on parler aujourd'hui d'un

environnement favorable au développement des coopératives de travail?

Après quelques années de croissance importante (1985-86), la progression annuelle du nombre de coopératives de travail a ralenti. Des conditions économiques plus favorables sont peut-être moins propices à l'éclosion de nouvelles coopératives de travail. L'engouement actuel vers la création d'entreprises semble plus orienté vers l'entrepreneuriat individuel. Mais les coopératives de travail demeurent, avec les coopé-

ratives d'habitation, un des secteurs coopératifs où l'on assiste au plus grand nombre de créations de nouvelles entreprises.

Différents aspects légaux et fiscaux peuvent constituer des freins au développement. Bien que l'écart se soit amoindri avec les dernières réformes, la fiscalité désavantage encore les coopératives de travail face aux compagnies. Les lois du travail ne tiennent pas compte du fait que les coopératives de travail représentent une nouvelle forme d'organisation du travail qui ne met plus en opposition les propriétaires et les employés d'une entreprise. Suite à des problèmes soulevés par le milieu, la Direction s'interroge actuellement sur certaines modifications envisagées à la loi sur les coopératives et qui pourraient peut-être faciliter le développement sans dénaturer le statut coopératif. Mais sur tous ces aspects, il n'y a actuellement pas de porteurs de proposition. Les problèmes sont discutés de façon générale, mais personne ne propose de plan d'action pour faire bouger les choses.

Compte tenu des ressources financières disponibles, le ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de la Technologie (MICT) a procédé en 1987 à un réajustement des initiatives gouvernementales en matière de développement économique. Quatre CDR continuent de profiter de l'appui du MICT. Toutefois, les coopératives de toutes les régions du Québec peuvent bénéficier de l'appui technique des bureaux régionaux du MICT où des responsables des dossiers de coopératives agissent comme répondants de la Direction. Et cette dernière continue de coordonner l'action de ces directions régionales et des ministères impliqués, et d'offrir un soutien technique en matière légale, fiscale et comptable.

Plusieurs intervenants québécois sont impliqués avec la Direction dans le développement des coopératives de travail: la Société de développement des coopératives (SDC), la Fédération québécoise des coopératives de travail (FQCT), les CDR et la Conférence des coopératives forestières du Québec (CCFQ).

Suite à la page 10

CONSEIL QUÉBÉCOIS
REGROUPEMENT DES CDR *un réseau d'appui aux coopératives de travail*

Nous souhaitons la bienvenue au nouveau magazine francophone canadien COOP DE TRAVAIL

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Gérard Barbin,

Président de la Société de développement des coopératives

Depuis quelques années, le dossier des coopératives de travail est une priorité pour la SDC. En 1987-88, près de 90% de l'aide financière accordée par la SDC était investie dans ce secteur. Comment expliquez-vous ce grand intérêt pour les coopératives de travail?

Deux facteurs peuvent expliquer la grande implication de la SDC dans ce secteur. Il y a tout d'abord les coopératives forestières, clients habituels de la SDC, qui ont développé de nouvelles activités demandant beaucoup de financement. Plusieurs coopératives forestières se sont lancées dans l'aménagement forestier, dans la production de plants en serre, et dans la transformation, en plus de leurs activités traditionnelles d'exploitation forestière.

Il y a ensuite la volonté du milieu de développer des coopératives de travail pour répondre à des problèmes de chômage, à des besoins de développement régional et à des valeurs de participation des citoyens à la vie économique. En réaction à cette volonté, le gouvernement du Québec a mis sur pied des organismes de soutien technique au développement des coopératives de travail. La SDC a donc reçu une plus grande demande de la part de promoteurs de coopératives de travail et a répondu à l'appel.

Il serait plus naturel que la SDC soit une société privée, appuyée par l'État, mais propriété «du milieu», «des coopérateurs»

On sait que les directives gouvernementales actuelles limitent les domaines d'intervention possibles de la SDC dans le développement des coopératives de travail. Comment vivez-vous avec ces contraintes?

Créée il y a maintenant dix ans sous la forme d'une société mixte, État-Mouvement Coop, la SDC est devenue, en juin 1984, une société d'État. À ce titre, il est normal que la SDC reçoive son mandat et ses directives du Gouvernement. Ce dernier lui a demandé de ne pas accorder d'aide financière à une coopérative oeuvrant dans un domaine où il n'y a pas d'aide comparable pour les autres



Monsieur Gérard Barbin

entreprises. De plus, le Gouvernement lui a demandé de ne pas intervenir dans un secteur relevant d'un autre ministère à moins d'une demande de ce ministère. Ainsi, la SDC ne peut généralement pas intervenir dans des entreprises coopératives de travail oeuvrant dans le domaine des services.

Il y a quelques années, l'État a remis en question l'existence même de la SDC. Cette période d'interrogation a été démotivante. Le mouvement coopératif a fait pression pour la maintenir. Maintenant cet aspect est clarifié et il n'y a plus de problème à ce niveau. Cependant, le fait d'être une société d'État entraîne des lour-

deurs administratives et des délais. Les dossiers présentés par la SDC sont réétudiés par des instances du ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de la Technologie. Le processus est ainsi plus lourd. La SDC a récemment soumis au Gouvernement des améliorations à ses différents programmes, qui, malgré leurs contraintes, répondent quand même à l'essentiel des besoins.

Le fait que la SDC soit une société d'État a quelque chose d'ambigu. Il serait plus naturel qu'elle soit une société privée, appuyée par l'État, mais propriété «du milieu», «des coopérateurs», bref, de tous ceux qui se préoccupent et font du développement de coopératives. Les orientations, les priorités et les directives ne viendraient alors plus de l'État, mais des coopérateurs. Il faudrait aussi que cette SDC privée soit décentralisée et centrée sur les intérêts régionaux, afin de rapprocher le pouvoir de l'action. Une SDC privée, ce n'est pas pour demain mais, à long terme, on va y arriver.

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Marc Jean

suite de la page 8

Si on fait la somme des conditions actuelles de développement des coopératives de travail au Québec, on peut parler d'un environnement relativement favorable.

La fiscalité désavantage encore les coopératives de travail face aux compagnies

Gérard Barbin

suite de la page 9

Malgré certaines contraintes inhérentes à son statut de société d'État, la SDC fait une évaluation très positive de son expérience en développement des coopératives de travail. On travaille sur des valeurs dynamiques et fondamentales: l'humain, la démocratie économique et la solidarité.

Il est cependant évident que le développement doit se faire par la base, par les CDR dans les régions où elles sont actives

Plusieurs intervenants sont impliqués dans le développement des coopératives de travail au Québec. Dans quelle mesure peut-on parler de concertation de la SDC avec ces différents organismes?

Il y eut une période d'ajustement où plusieurs zones grises ont été clarifiées. Certains voulaient restreindre la SDC à un rôle strictement financier. Celle-ci se doit d'offrir un support plus large. Il est cependant évident que le développement doit se faire par la base, par les CDR dans les régions où elles sont actives. Il faut travailler étroitement avec les ressources du milieu. Suite à quelques ajustements, on peut dire que les relations sont excellentes avec l'ensemble des intervenants impliqués. Il est important que ces concertations se maintiennent et se développent. La concertation sur les priorités semble claire. Elle reste à se développer sur les moyens.

Pour un développement important de la formule coopérative de travail au Québec, il faudra cohésion et solidarité du milieu et de l'ensemble des mouvements coopératifs québécois

Comment se vit la concertation entre la Direction des coopératives et ces différents intervenants impliqués dans le développement des coopératives de travail?

Il n'y a pas vraiment de mouvement des coopératives de travail au Québec. Mis à part le cas des coopératives forestières, les coopératives de travail ne se concertent pas. La FQCT essaie. C'est difficile. Entre autre parce que les activités écono-

miques ne sont pas homogènes. Les CDR ont des philosophies et des approches différentes. Cependant les CDR se sont données un organisme de regroupement pour gérer une expérimentation commune dans le cadre du Programme national d'aide à l'innovation (PNAI). La section francophone de la revue *Worker Co-ops* s'est donné un comité d'orientation regroupant plusieurs intervenants du milieu. Malgré un relatif isolement, on sent donc que des concertations s'amorcent, que les gens en ont le goût. La Direction ne peut qu'appuyer cette concertation émergente.

Après une phase de développement intensif, nous sommes peut-être entrés dans une phase de consolidation du mouvement

Comment voyez-vous l'avenir des coopératives de travail au Québec?

Après une phase de développement intensif, nous sommes peut-être entrés dans une phase de consolidation du mouvement. Il est important de continuer à aider les coopératives de travail existantes. Ces dernières doivent relever les mêmes défis que toutes les PME du Québec: productivité, technologie, et libre-échange. Mais en même temps, elles doivent relever le défi d'être différentes:

plus exigeantes au niveau de l'action, mais avec des résultats plus intéressants.

Le secteur de la transformation est, à l'heure actuelle, un défi important pour les coopératives de travail. Le groupe de consultation pour le maintien et la création d'emploi du Québec travaille sur quelques expériences intéressantes dans ce domaine. Les coopératives de travail, actionnaires de compagnies, présenteront aussi d'autres possibilités de développement.

La promotion doit être une préoccupation importante des acteurs du développement des coopératives de travail au Québec. Les gens ne savent pas encore que les coopératives de travail font des affaires. Il faut faire la démonstration que les coopératives de travail sont soumises aux mêmes contraintes et exigences que les autres formes d'entreprises. Ces coopératives doivent en plus assumer leur différence et leur originalité.

Aucun développement important ne se fera à l'avenir sans la concertation et la mobilisation du milieu vers cet objectif. La Direction peut jouer un rôle de soutien, mais ne peut être l'agent moteur de ce développement.

Cette entrevue a été réalisée à Québec le 13 octobre dernier par Marc-André Leboeuf

B R È V E S

Conçue pour informer le plus brièvement possible le lecteur, cette section traduit des événements ou donne des informations générales sur le secteur de la coopération de travail. Nous vous invitons donc à nous faire parvenir toute information factuelle touchant votre milieu.

La CDR de Québec annonce le début des opérations de la Coopérative des travailleurs maritimes du Québec qui fait du transport maritime dans le Grand Nord et qui procure du travail à 16 personnes. Deux coopérateurs travaillent à bord de *Kangkuk*, alors que les 14 autres sont à bord du *Fort Lauzon*.

* * *

Le ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de la Technologie du Québec a renouvelé son appui financier aux Coopératives de Développement Régional (CDR) du Québec. Pour l'année 88/89 le montant de la subvention s'élève à 900,000\$ et sera distribué aux régions de l'Estrie, de Montréal, de Québec ainsi que la région de l'Outaouais.

* * *

La CDR de l'Estrie annonce la création de la Coopérative récréotouristique qui s'affaire déjà à l'aménagement d'un réseau de pistes de randonnées de 122 kilomètres, d'Eastman à Compton.

Cette entrevue a été réalisée à Montréal le 14 octobre dernier par Marc-André Leboeuf