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The International Scene

EDITORIAL

More than one path to empowerment

As many features in this issue of our magazine indicate, women are seeking to "empower" themselves by participating in work environments over which they can exert control. Yet empowerment involves more than shared decision-making; it also includes a decent income and economic security — criteria by which worker co-operatives and collectives have been found wanting. Membership too often involves 'vows of poverty' in organizations with a short lifespan.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that in Québec, the only province that has a well-developed infrastructure to support worker co-operatives, there has been a new initiative. The Québec government is now providing technical and financial support for joint ventures in which a co-operative of the workers represents one stakeholder among several in the ownership structure.

La Société de développement des coopératives, the provincial government agency that assists and assesses the financial arrangements of co-operatives, has now approved financing for 10 joint ventures, some quite large. The size of the ownership stake of the workers varies from the \$60-million plywood-board factory (Normick Chambord), where a co-operative of the workers owns only 14.5 per cent of the company, to a saw mill in Abitibi (Rollet), where the worker co-operative owns 56 per cent of the company and a private investor owns the remainder.

This shift in Québec to joint ventures with the private sector parallels the attempt by some established co-operatives to develop a multi-stakeholder model in which the workers have both 'voice and vote' in the company's control structure. The Co-operators Group, the holding company for Co-operators Insurance, and several Atlantic fishery co-operatives are experimenting with this model.

It is still too early to assess the results. At first glance, the influence of workers in decision-making has been diluted relative to small worker co-ops and collectives — whether feminist or involving both sexes. This loss, however, could be offset by having better financed enterprises with enduring prospects from which the workers can draw competitive incomes — important aspects of empowerment. In addition, these larger enterprises offer greater potential for forging alliances with the labour movement for whom the maintenance of unionized wage standards is a primary concern.

It is not an 'either/or' proposition. Worker co-operatives, collectives, joint ventures and multi-stakeholders each offers advantages and disadvantages. Depending on the requirements of a particular group, one approach may be more suitable than another. Small collectives and worker co-operatives are suited to the needs of women in the human and social services. Yet, as Melanie Conn argues in this issue's forum section, it is possible to provide homecare services, for example, through larger enterprises. For those cases, a multi-stakeholder might prove a better model to put a business on solid financial ground.

Jack Quarter
Editor

WORKER CO-OP

Worker Co-op is an independent quarterly magazine produced and distributed by the Worker Co-operative Network of Canada. The French section is prepared by the Co-opérative de développement régional de Montréal-Laval.

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Add your name to the Worker Co-op donor box with a donation of \$100 or more.

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Typesetting, artwork, design, and printing and binding by co-op and union labour at Our Times. ☎

LETTERS

Announcement for letters

Worker Co-op welcomes letters and conference information from its readers.

Write to: Jack Quarter, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street W., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6; (416) 923-6641, Ext. 2576.

We need your help

To the Editors:

Our Times is a magazine published by a unionized co-operative in Toronto. In existence for eight years, we present lively views on Canadian politics, the future of unions, education, minority rights and more.

Since the magazine runs a deficit, it has always relied on the support of its printshop. The co-operative that publishes *Our Times* decided this year that if the magazine wanted to grow, it had to become more self-sufficient.

Unlike the federal government and its deficit, we want to do this not by cutting back, but by extending ourselves, improving and expanding in every way.

We've improved the magazine's content, and it's starting to shape debate as well as respond to it. We've made the design and layout more attractive. And we've devoted more time to promoting the magazine, so that people get a chance to see *Our Times*. Subscriptions have grown by 30 per cent in the last two years.

We've pursued advertising more aggressively than ever before, and with good results. Since 1987, advertising revenue has more than doubled.

It's not enough, though. A magazine, like ours that takes critical stances will never be able to sustain itself through advertising alone. We need your help.

You can help us in a number of ways:

- Become a sustainer: give \$75, \$100, \$150 or whatever you can afford, and we'll start for



renew) your subscription to *Our Times*, plus send a gift subscription to whomever you choose.

- Distribute promotional flyers: just tell us how many you can use.
- Buy a subscription: subscriptions are \$18 (individual, 1 year), \$33 (individual, 2 years) or \$30 (institutions, 1 year). If you send payment along with your order we'll send you a free copy of our 16-page supplement, *Unmasking the Labour Board*. Sample copies are free.

Thank you.

Rhonda Sussman,
for Our Times Publishing Ltd.
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Tel. (416) 531-5762
Fax (416) 533-2397

History Valuable

I particularly appreciated the Summer, 1989, historical issue. It helped me put the struggles and successes of The Big Carrot into a context and enabled me to think through several problems I have not previously been able to articulate. The article by Marty Frost of CRS raised issues, like fair salaries, that we have laboured through at The Big Carrot. The worker co-operative movement needs more ways to dialogue around major issues like self-exploitation, co-operative management and lack of support

from the established co-operative sector.

This past weekend I was visited by A.J. Suwamo, the Director of The People's Handicraft Foundation of Indonesia. He was in Canada at the invitation of the Canadian Co-operative Association as one member of an exchange mission. As well as spending time with the Arctic Co-operatives Limited, he investigated the Canadian market for Indonesian crafts. The Big Carrot has been test-marketing these crafts since May. His visit reminded me of the sophistication of Indonesian non-governmental organizations in teaching co-operative principles

and in their ability to develop local programs based on the real needs of the participants.

If we are to become a meaningful social and economic force, we need to gather and share information among ourselves and be open to ideas from the broader co-operative movement.

Mary Lou Morgan
The Big Carrot
348 Danforth Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M4K 1N8
(416) 466-2129

Nice goin'

I know how much time and effort goes into *Worker Co-op* magazine, so I wanted to compliment you on the last issue.

In particular, I noticed the improvements made in the magazine's layout and design. You get high marks from me for giving Canada's "voice of worker co-ops" the improved professional image it deserves.

Veronica Gillies
Extension Dept.
St. Francis Xavier University
Antigonish, Nova Scotia
B2G 1C0
(902) 867-2208

Valencia-Mondragon Study-Tour April 20-May 4, 1990

Greg MacLeod will lead his fourth study-tour to Mondragon and Valencia — two very successful community-economic-development experiments in Spain. The tour will last approximately two weeks. There will be classes and discussions in the mornings with a number of site visitations in the afternoons. Prospective students will be provided with advance study materials. Attention will be paid to the applicability of their principles to the North American situation. Approximate tour cost is \$3100. This includes air fare, hotels, two meals per day and all course costs. Opportunity will be provided for private tourism.

For more information contact **Greg MacLeod**, The Centre for Community Economic Development, P.O. Box 357, Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 6H2; (902) 562-2233.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Nova Scotia Happenings

By Veronica Gillies Benefit package in the works

St. Peter's — If all goes according to plan, worker co-operatives in Nova Scotia will soon have access to a benefit package through Co-operators Insurance and the Community Development Co-operative (CDC) of Nova Scotia.

Co-operators Insurance is holding a series of meetings with worker co-operatives across the province to explain how the package would work and to determine their interest in such a service. The Nova Scotia CDC would administer the plan.

The benefit package for worker co-operatives has been a goal of the CDC since it was established in 1987. CDC manager Peter Hough says, "the more worker co-op members that take part in the plan, the lower the cost will be."

More information can be obtained from Peter Hough, R.R.#2, St. Peter's, Richmond Co., N.S. BOE 3B0; (902) 535-2022.

Student co-op seeing green

Dartmouth — Three university students from Dartmouth have had great success operating their summer landscaping worker co-operative. Mark Owen, Art MacDonald and Dave Jennex started their College Landscaping Co-operative after hearing about the provincial Youth Enterprise Skills (YES) program.

The group members paid off their YES loans by June, and will have enough money to pay for the upcoming school year. One of their biggest contracts was doing the landscaping for Farmer's Co-operative Dairy in Bedford. The group still has not decided if it will continue the business next year, as MacDonald has already



Innovations Project staff: (from left) Veronica Gillies, Donna Huffman, Maureen Coady (and sitting) Rita Murray.

graduated and Owen will be graduating next spring.

Green Butler thriving

St. Peter's — Add another to the growing list of successful worker co-ops in the St. Peter's area. The Green Butler Landscaping Co-op, which started in May, is enjoying a booming business. According to member Clair Rankin, the existence of other worker co-ops in the area provided them with credibility and also enabled them to get valuable advice. Other co-ops in St. Peter's have also benefited from Green Butler's success — Constructor's co-op got a job because of a recommendation from Green Butler and The Greenhouse Co-op has supplied the new co-op with flowers.

Cape Gael conducts national survey

River Denys — The four members of Cape Gael Associates Co-operative in Cape Breton have received \$12,489 from the Multicultural Directorate of the Secretary of State to conduct a national survey of endangered heritage languages. "This is certainly a very exciting opportunity for us to offer something substantial to Canada from Scottish Nova Scotia, and benefit in return by gaining access to some of the successful educational

prototypes that have been evolving in other areas of the country," said Cape Gael's John Shaw.

Worker buyout

Glace Bay — Patience is a virtue. After long delays, the Glace Bay Worker's Co-op is set to go. The co-op is made up of former employees of McKinlay's Beverages Ltd. (in Glace Bay) which went into receivership last year. It will be bottling beverages for co-op grocery stores at a new, expanded location, and is currently looking to expand its market to Halifax and New Brunswick.

According to Gerald McKinlay, the manager, the biggest delays occurred when the co-op tried to obtain financing from the banks and the provincial government. There was "a negative attitude towards co-operatives and economic development in Cape Breton in general."

Sexual abuse program

Guysborough — The Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre has just finished its second successful educational program this year. *Feeling Yes, Feeling No* uses songs, sketches and participatory-theatre techniques to educate children about sexual abuse. "We feel that our pilot project has shown the effectiveness of this program in providing children

with some degree of protection against sexual abuse," says project co-ordinator Ed McKenna.

The other program, called *Working Theatre*, tackled illiteracy. Five people were hired for 16 weeks. They trained as theatre workers, developed a script, and created and performed a play.

Copies of reports about either program are available from Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre, Box 219, Guysborough, N.S. BOH 1N0.

Worker co-op video

Antigonish — The Innovations Project has completed an educational video about worker co-ops in Nova Scotia. *On Their Own Terms: The Worker Co-operative Experience in Nova Scotia* is a 22-minute production that focuses on Future Forestry Services Co-op, The Greenhouse Co-op, Constructors Co-op and Cape Gael Associates Co-op.

It is available from the Extension Department, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 1C0; (902) 867-5165; or the Community Development Co-operative, R.R. #2, St. Peter's, Richmond County, Nova Scotia BOE 3B0; (902) 535-2022.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Decision-making workshop a success

Antigonish — More than 20 worker co-op members attended a workshop on September 9 to learn about democratic decision-making. The workshop was conducted by Wilf Bean, a lecturer at the Coady International Institute. It focused on who has the authority to make particular decisions within the co-op and the relationship between management, boards of directors and membership. Bean said, "a co-op cannot be totally production-oriented; it must also be organized in a way that allows members to grow in their work. A balance must be found between getting the job done and developing good working relationships. Without attention to the latter, productivity will decrease." Evaluations of the workshop were excellent.

Innovations Project completes mandate

Antigonish — The Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University has just completed a three-year research project to determine the potential for worker co-operative development and methods of supporting it. The Innovations Project was funded by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. Innovations was an action-research project; that is, it attempted to learn about ways to help worker co-operatives through direct involvement with them. The Community Development Co-operative of Nova Scotia was the main thrust of the Innovations Project's activities. The Innovations Project provided the CDC with financial and professional assistance in return for the CDC's participation in the research.

Over the three years since its inception, the CDC has faced many hurdles, one being the continual challenge of raising operational funding. Because of their small number and low incomes, worker co-ops alone cannot support the CDC. Other co-ops and sympathetic organizations have been reluctant to provide operational funding because their own



Members of The Greenhouse Co-op tell others how they make decisions at a democratic decision-making workshop held at St. F.X. in September. From left to right: Candita Chadoka of Zimbabwe; Greenhouse members Connie Stewart and Carole Dixon-Nightingale; and Robin McGinn, of Halifax.

budgets are limited and they view worker co-operative development, with its emphasis on job creation, as a responsibility of government. Government officials, in turn, view worker co-operative development as a responsibility of co-operative organizations.

As a result, the CDC is now operating on a shoestring budget, with a part-time manager and no support staff. Despite this, it is still providing many worthwhile services to worker co-ops and potential worker co-ops. Its workshops have given worker co-op members a chance to exchange views.

Many of the services provided by the CDC and Innovations were of a general nature: information to prospective worker co-ops on incorporation, assistance with organizational forms and management advice. The CDC and the Innovations Project also have had more in-depth involvement with 10 worker co-ops.

The research has shown that a support agency like the CDC is required if the numbers of worker co-ops are to grow. This agency should ideally provide a range of services, but the most urgently needed is promotion, so that all players in the economy — government, development workers,

the educational system, and small and large businesses — will become aware of the structure, objectives, and experience of worker co-ops. For the CDC to effectively serve worker co-operatives, it needs long-term funding in conjunction with a partnership for action. The ideal form of partnership involves leadership and expertise coming from established co-ops, direction coming from existing worker co-ops, and financial resources coming from government — with contributions from labour,

church and co-operative groups.

More detail on the findings of the Innovations Project are found in 10 separate volumes, and are available from Rita Murray, Extension Department, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S. B2G 1C0; (902) 867-3923.

Veronica Gillies was a Communications Assistant with the Innovations Project, St. Francis Xavier Extension, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 1C0; (902) 867-5165.

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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Ontario Beat

By Judith Brown
Carrot bits

Toronto — For the first time since its expansion from a small natural-food market to a (super) market with a staff of 66, The Big Carrot has turned a profit. The Carrot's sales are strong in the buoyant organic-food market, and its expenses, which spiralled in order to undertake the expansion, are now under control.

The Carrot's shareholders' agreement is now being reviewed because it lacked a clause to cover losses incurred because of a major expansion. Incorporated under the Corporations Act, The Carrot has modelled its by-laws after the Mondragon co-ops. When The Carrot was a small market turning a regular profit, the Mondragon model seemed like a good idea because it meant that sizeable dividends were flowing into each member's account. However, it seems unfair to have members who undertook the expansion shoulder a full share of the losses, if they leave the co-op before dividends flow from profits that are anticipated in the coming years.

The Carrot is also studying proposals for reducing a member's personal income-tax payment on dividends that are re-invested in the co-op. Other co-ops that have modelled their by-laws after The Big Carrot's may want to review these matters.

The Big Carrot has announced an Employee Assistance program under which all members and their families can receive confidential counselling services. The Carrot will pick up the cost.

For more information contact Robert Allan, The Big Carrot, 348 Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8; (416) 466-2129.

Community development
Sault Ste. Marie — Transcend Homes Incorporated is a six-member worker co-operative that produces custom-built shells and wall panels for homes, garages



Members of the Big Carrot Worker Co-op.

and extensions. These products are manufactured year-round in a climate-controlled plant and then shipped to the construction site. A locktight shell can be constructed within one day. The company emphasizes extensive quality control from the factory through to the building site.

The feasibility study for the co-op was undertaken with the support of Offing Community Development Corporation, the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation and the Ontario Department of Northern Development and Mines.

The company is currently offering a limited number of preferred shares to non-member investors. These Class-A shareholders will elect two of their group on the basis of one vote per share to the eight-member board of directors and will receive dividends as declared by the board. The company hopes to redeem these shares after three years.

Handyworkers multiply
Toronto — Handyworkers Co-op is also in the process of developing a new worker co-operative. It will be incorporated independently of Handyworkers, and will provide home services such as maintenance work, yard and eavestrough cleaning, window washing and community recycling. The project is supported by United Church funding and a local community economic development organization. It will bring low-skilled and low-

income workers into the workforce and provide hands-on training in co-operative management. The organizers have researched the market and have been recruiting members.

Inglis buyout dead
Toronto — A proposal for a worker buyout of Toronto's large Inglis plant has gone up in smoke. The United Steelworkers of America has accepted a recommendation from Peat Marwick, its principal consultant for the proposal, that a worker buyout of the closing plant was not feasible primarily because Inglis had no interest in such an arrangement.

The Steelworkers did negotiate an excellent severance package for the 600 workers affected by the shutdown and still is considering a proposal from Peat Marwick to start a small worker-owned business in another industry for some of Inglis's workers.

Inglis, a subsidiary of the American corporation Whirlpool, made a \$2.1 million profit on its Canadian operation during the last fiscal year. The Toronto plant closing is blamed on the free-trade deal which phases out over 10 years a 12.5 per cent tariff on appliances. Whirlpool is expanding its operation in Clyde, Ohio, to service the Canadian market.

Although this shutdown has stirred a lot of criticism, because the implications are ominous if other American corporations follow Whirlpool's example, the right to close a profitable opera-

tion without permitting its purchase by either the workers or another appliance manufacturer was never contested in any organized campaign by the union or other groups.

Ontario Federation
Toronto — Worker co-operatives in Ontario are moving towards a federation. After a number of meetings over this past year, a questionnaire has been circulated to prospective member organizations to determine their needs. A series of workshops is being tailored to the survey's response.

For further information contact Paul Gibbard, The Big Carrot, 348 Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4K 1N8; (416) 466-2129.

Montréal's gain
Toronto — Louise Matchett, a long-time supporter of worker co-operatives, has left the Worker Ownership Development Foundation to create a new worker co-operative in the film industry. Louise is opening a retail outlet offering educational and alternative videos in Montréal. Her energy and enthusiasm are missed in Toronto.

A novel idea
Toronto — In response to the mounting waste crisis in Metropolitan Toronto, Just Work, an established construction co-operative, is developing a new worker co-op that would recover recyclable products from con-

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

struction waste. John Brouwer, manager of Just Work, estimates that 50 per cent of materials presently going for landfill could be used for other purposes. The low market value for these materials has meant that it was often cheaper to throw them out than to recycle them. However, current high disposal costs of about \$100 per ton have made it possible to consider other uses.

Just Work's plan calls for the development of a facility which would receive building-renovation and construction-waste materials and recover those materials (e.g., wood, drywall, metal) that can be used in other markets. While such a plan has obvious social and environmental benefits, the capital costs are high. The Ministry of Environment would cover a portion of the capital costs, though the co-op must bear the start-up costs for site selection and engineering. There is the additional risk that the completed site would not receive a permit to operate. Nevertheless, Just Work is hopeful that financing required to launch the 20-member co-op will be secured.

For more information contact **John Brouwer**, Just Work, 947 Queen St. East, Toronto, Ontario M4M 1J9; (416) 466-9964.

The Ontario Beat has been prepared by **Judith Brown**, a doctoral student in Community Psychology at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6; (416) 923-6641, L. 2576.

Investors wanted

Toronto (W.C.) — Canada's first nationally-incorporated worker co-operative has been formed. ORIGINS Co-operative Inc. will purchase organic foods from farmers, and market the products under its label to the co-op wholesale network using the mark-up to sustain the business. At present, organic farmers usually do their own marketing using individual labels and un-professional packaging.



Just Work members Earl Groeneweg (top), Jose Colindres (middle) and Dwight Doan (bottom).

The members of ORIGINS are Mary Lou Morgan, a driving force behind The Big Carrot (a natural-food market in east-end Toronto), Russ Christianson, a former manager of the Ontario Federation of Food Co-operatives and Clubs, and Jacques-Andre Pelland, formerly of La Balance, the wholesaler for Québec's consumer retail co-ops.

Mary Lou Morgan anticipates that ORIGINS will have its first products on the market in September, 1990. The pre-operational year will involve extensive market research and product development, costing at least \$200,000. Socially-conscious investors are wanted!

For more information contact **Mary Lou Morgan**, 32 Mountainview Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6P 2L3; (416) 766-3056

Unemployment insurance for starting worker co-ops?

By Myrna Barclay

Ottawa — Barbara McDougall, Canada's Minister of Employment and Immigration, is now on record as stating that "Un-

employment insurance recipients with a viable business plan would be allowed to collect U.I. benefits while starting a business or becoming self-employed." The Unemployment Insurance Act is being amended (Bill C-21) to make this change possible.

The impact of this policy upon U.I. recipients wanting to start a worker co-op remains unclear. The Canadian Co-operative Association has prepared a brief to the Minister stating that, "the

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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

unique status of worker co-op members... may pose difficulties... in accessing such a scheme." Worker co-op members are employees, as defined under co-operative legislation, and therefore are eligible to participate in the U.I. programs as employees. But they are also co-operative entrepreneurs and should be eligible for assistance from U.I.C. programs available to other entrepreneurs.

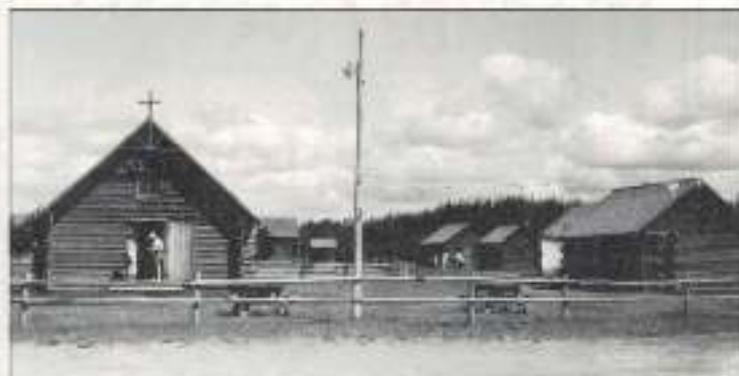
The three-page brief was presented on October 18th to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-21 and to a task force studying programs for U.I.C. recipients. The task force is part of a major consultation process undertaken by the federal government. Drawn from private sector, labour, business and training institutions, the task force will prepare a discussion paper for public presentation at a symposium to be held later this year. Four other symposia will deal with different topics on training and adjustment programs for unemployed Canadians.

For further information, contact the Canadian Labour Market Productivity Centre at (613) 234-0505 or Karen Jackson at Employment and Immigration Canada, (819) 997-1631.

Myrna Barclay is the Director of Education and Development at the Canadian Co-operative Association, 400-275 Bank St., Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2L6; (613) 238-6711.

Community development the Acadian Way

By Amand Arsenault
Mont Carmel, Prince Edward Island — The Acadian Pioneer Village Co-operative in Mont Carmel is a community development co-operative with a membership that is broadly based among the local people. Since its inception in 1964, the co-operative's purpose has been to



Le Village Pionnier Acadien

initiate projects that bring employment to Mont Carmel's residents.

The first project was the creation of a fishing co-operative. Subsequently, the co-op branched into tourism. Money from a winter works project was used to build log cabins, depicting the way of life of the Acadians in the 1800s.

A few years later, the members of the Acadian Pioneer Village Co-operative added a restaurant to this complex. Over the years, other structures were built, until today we find a complete tourism facility with 50 hotel rooms, banquet facilities, a dinner theatre, a bar/lounge, tennis courts and other recreational items. The co-operative now employs about 85 people on a seasonal basis and three full-time.

Another stepping stone for the Acadian Pioneer Village Co-operative was the establishment of its own tour company, "Tours Acadie". This tour company now provides employment to local residents in the "shoulder season" of May, June, September and October by promoting bus tours and other tourism activities.

For more information on Tours Acadie and the Acadian Pioneer Village Co-operative call (902) 854-3228.

La Coopérative du Village Pionnier

Mont Carmel — Le développement coopératif nous arrive dans toutes formes et grandeurs, mais plus importants, pour répondre à divers besoins personnels et communautaires.



Le référent surtout de la coopérative du village pionnier Acadien, située à Mont Carmel, dans la région Acadienne de l'île-du-Prince-Édouard. C'est une coopérative unique en son genre, c'est une coopérative touristique.

La co-opérative du village pionnier Acadien a été formée en 1964 par un groupe de paroissien de Mont Carmel afin de créer de l'emploi. La pêche de ce temps là était abominable, alors les pêcheurs étaient plus ou moins forcés de regarder à d'autres formes de revenus pour nourrir leurs familles.

Le tout a commencé avec la construction de quelques bâtiments qui représentaient le style de vie des Acadiens pendant les années 1800. Cette construction, un projet d'hiver patronné par Emploi et Immigration Canada, a permis à ces pêcheurs desse

produire des maigres salaires en ces temps durs et pénibles.

Au fur et à mesure, les membres de la coopérative ont vu l'importance d'y installer un restaurant. Ceci fut le commencement d'un plan de développement qui s'allèvera en 1989 avec l'établissement d'une auberge de 30 unités ultras modernes.

La coopérative du Village Pionnier Acadien emploie maintenant 85 employées pour une période de cinq mois.

On y trouve un excellent restaurant "L'Étoile de Mer", un salon bar "Au Quai", une salle de spectacle, et 24 autres unités d'hébergement sous forme de chalets.

Le bureau de direction a bien vite réalisé l'importance de promouvoir les forfaits Acadiens comme expérience unique de culture et de cuisine. Alors une

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compagnie filiale "Tours Acadie" n'été crée. Maintenant en sa troisième année d'opération, Tours Acadie aujourd'hui prend la relève des opérations du Village Pionnier Acadien pendant les mois de Mai, Juin, Septembre et Octobre.

Pour plus d'informations sur la coopérative du Village Pionnier Acadien et de Tours Acadie, vous pouvez signaler (902) 854-3228.

Student school-supply co-op

Abram's Village, Prince Edward Island — When students of the Evangeline Education Centre in Abram's Village thought that they were paying too much for their school supplies at chain stores in Summerside, they decided to do something about it. They formed their own school-supply co-operative.

This project was initiated by an economic's teacher at the school. The students buy supplies directly from wholesalers for their shop in the school cafeteria.

The co-operative is open every noon hour, and most of the students are members. Profits are used to buy more merchandise, and the members get a discount on their purchases.

For the students of the Evangeline Education Centre, their co-operative provides excellent service that is available right in their school.

For more information contact Amand Arseneault, director, Evangeline Service Centre, P.O. Box 58, Wellington, Prince Edward Island COB 2E0; (902) 854-3131.

Phoenix rising

North Lake, Prince Edward Island (W.C.) — The North Lake Fishermen's Co-op, formed from the ashes of the bankrupt United Maritime Fishermen's Co-op, turned a profit of \$100,000 on sales of \$2.5 million in its first full year of operations. Nevertheless, general manager Chuck Scully is concerned about the future because of the depleted fish stock and the high dollar which is



Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-operatives meeting with the Premier.

Left-Right: Ken Kavanagh, President; Glen Fitzpatrick, Managing Director; Premier Clyde Wells.

hurting exports to the United States and Europe.

North Lake has a multi-stakeholder structure with representatives of the fishers, plant workers and the local community on its board. Scully feels that the arrangement works well.

For more information contact Chuck Scully, North Lake Fishermen's Co-op, P.O. Box 430, Souris, Prince Edward Island COA 2B6.

Federation fights for more fishery co-ops

St. John's (W.C.) — The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives has called upon the provincial government to develop a comprehensive plan to overcome the fishery crisis, including "alternative structures, such as producer and

marketing co-operatives". There are currently three fishery co-ops in Newfoundland: Petty Harbour, near St. John's; Fogo Island, off the coast of Gander; and Torngat, which draws much of its membership from Inuit communities along the Labrador coast.

Tom Best, manager of the Petty Harbour co-op, that hosted an international conference on fishing co-ops this past year, is quite outspoken in his analysis of the problem:

"It's clear that something is wrong out there. The cod stocks are so badly depleted, they [the fishers] have no choice but to go into capelin."

The in-shore fisheries in the Atlantic provinces have been hurt by the increased fishing on the Grand Banks and the use of factory trawlers by foreign fishers, in which the catch is processed on

the ship rather than on-shore as in the past. Government scientists have had difficulty monitoring and managing the supply and have reduced the current year's recommended catch to 125,000 tons from its traditional level of 400,000 tons.

Among fisheries, Petty Harbour is doing relatively well, having seen its revenues increase from \$350,000 to \$2.5 million in five years, with a \$140,000 profit in 1988. The larger Fogo Island Co-operative, with 1,200 members and \$13 million of sales, has suffered heavy financial losses for two years and is examining a plan to replace its five processing plants with one facility, thereby reducing staff and costs.

The plant workers are often the wives and children of the fishermen. Fogo and Torngat include them as members of the co-op; Petty Harbour doesn't.

The fishing co-ops were formed in an effort to preserve local communities. Best feels that the co-ops permit the members "to control their destiny" better than through working for the large fish companies. Recently, the fishery co-ops have formed their own association, with Bernadette Dwyer of Fogo Island as its president.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives has argued that "if there are to be more fisher co-operatives, there needs to be stronger government support". Premier Clyde Wells, himself a

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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

co-op member, spoke at the Federation's annual general meeting in October. The Federation is urging him to form a separate department of co-operatives.

Overcoming handicaps

Gander (W.C.) —The Gander Employment Development Corporation is planning to create a worker co-operative for mentally-handicapped individuals. The co-op would do household cleaning.

The Gander project is inspired by HUB, a service centre for the physically disabled, which has been using a Section-38 grant from the federal government to provide training in leathercraft and lifeskills. At this point, the feasibility of organizing the trainees through a worker co-operative is being explored.

For more information contact **Jim Winter**, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives, The Co-operators Building, Crosbie Place, P.O. Box 13369, Station A, St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4B7; (709) 726-9431.

"Symbol of hope"

Bell Island, Nfld. (W.C.) — The Bell Island Community Development Co-operative has received the equipment for its bakery/coffee shop. Since the mining operations closed in 1966, Bell Island (in Conception Bay near St. John's) has seen its population slide from 14,000 to 4,500 with an unemployment rate of about 35 per cent. The local CDC was formed in an effort to stop this population haemorrhage and to revitalize the island. The CDC's first project was a ten-unit senior citizens' apartment which it now operates. The bakery co-op — "a symbol of hope" — will create five or six jobs.

"These five or six jobs mightn't seem like much," says Ken Kavanagh, past president and driving force behind the co-op, "but they're the first permanent jobs created here despite millions spent on various job-creation schemes over the years."

Financing has been an ongoing



Petty Harbour, near St. John's, Newfoundland, location of a fishing co-operative.

problem for the CDC. Manager, Mary Jewer, says that the bakery has cost about \$315,000 to date.

Organizations and individuals with an interest in making loans and donations should contact **Ken Kavanagh**, Bell Island Community Development Co-operative Society Ltd., P.O. Box 969, Bell Island, Newfoundland A0A 4H0; (709) 488-2221.

Student Worker Co-ops in New Brunswick

By Maureen Edgett

Moncton — Two student worker co-ops provided summer employment in New Brunswick this year. Contract-a-student (CAS) was first incorporated in Moncton in 1988. It operated this year with five students. A manager and an assessment officer were hired through the provincial JETT STREAM program. Sheelagh Greek, of the Canadian Co-operative Association, and Roy Garner, Co-op Atlantic, were the advisors. Office space and a telephone were provided to the co-op at no charge by Co-op Atlantic. A local car dealership, Lounsbury's, provided a car to transport the students and their

equipment to the job sites. The Co-operators Insurance Company provided the car insurance on a short-term basis and bonding and liability coverage free of charge. The 1989 revenue amounted to just over \$3,000. In addition to 540 hours of work mowing lawns, painting, and doing janitorial and yard work, some volunteer hours were contributed but not recorded. The president of CAS was Dave Copeland.

For additional information contact **Sheelagh Greek**, CCA, P.O. Box 1488, Moncton, N.B. E1C 8T6.

Fredericton — The Capital City Student Worker Co-op was incorporated in 1989. Ten students from the local high school found employment painting, handling children's birthday parties, doing yard work, etc. Their volunteer work included distributing advertising flyers, planning displays, visiting the hospital and working in the office. As in Moncton, the provincial JETT STREAM program provided funding to hire an office manager and a job assessor. The total revenue was \$9,599 and a surplus of \$2,413 was divided among the 10 students according to the percentage of volunteer hours. The volunteer hours totalled 1771.

Rhonda McLaughlin was the co-op's president.

For additional information contact **Jamie McGloin**, c/o **Beryl Savage**, The Co-operators, K-Mart Shopping Plaza, 1110 Smythe Street, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 3X2.

Maureen Edgett is a co-op activist in the Atlantic region. She can be contacted at 76 Woodleigh Ave., Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 8Z8; (506) 384-8563. Our thanks to **Udo Staber** who previously prepared the New Brunswick news.

Native self-reliance in food co-op

By Jeremy Hull

Winnipeg —The Winnipeg Native Family Economic Development Inc. (WNFED) has opened a food store to serve the native community living in Winnipeg's north end. This store, known as Neechi Foods, functions as a worker co-operative for day-to-day commercial decisions, but is wholly owned by WNFED, a federation of Native businesses and social projects. WNFED, a non-share company, is governed

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by representatives of its affiliated projects. At present, WNFED's projects include an office-and-home-cleaning business run as a worker co-op (One Earth Collective), a private Native crafts retail store, a publicly-funded Native child and family support agency, a resource group and a subsidized housing co-op.

Neechi Foods tested its market during the winter of 1987-88 by opening a small store every second Saturday for about four months. This also allowed the group to gain practical experience and develop its organizational skills. Following this, an appeal to the public for loans or contributions raised \$10,000 in pledges. In January, 1989, the Native Economic Development Program approved a capital contribution of \$76,800 to the project. Additional support is now anticipated from the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative along with bank financing.

As a result, Neechi Foods plans to open a 3,500-square-foot store with three full-time and three half-time staff. It is anticipated that there will be \$80,000 in monthly sales within six months. Supporters are being asked to make donations or one-year loans to the company to provide it with operating capital. The organizers see Neechi as part of a broader effort to build self-reliance and pride within the Native community.

Jeremy Hull is a consultant with the Working Margins Consulting Group, 200-651 Croydon Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0W3; (204) 453-6137.

The B.C. Desk

By Pam Tranfield
18 years at CRS

Vancouver — CRS, a Vancouver worker co-op, is celebrating 18 years in business, the addition of its 40th member, and \$8 million of projected sales in 1989-90. The "commitment of our members to the co-op, a sound business sense and increased demand by the public for natural foods are factors in our success,"

says CRS's general manager Marty Frost. "Our emphasis has always been on environmental concerns, safe food processing and worker autonomy. As we move into the '90s our co-op will be well suited to meet the challenges the wider public now demands."

CRS (Collective Resource and Services Workers' Co-op) consists of two businesses in Vancouver — a retail bakery of 15 worker-members and a natural foods wholesale warehouse with 19 worker-members. In addition, there is an administrative group of six. The natural-foods warehouse, Horizon Distributors, is the largest natural foods wholesaler in Western Canada. The bakery, Uprising Breads, reached production capacity last year and is planning its direction for the next five years.

The bakery expanded in 1986 to over 3,000-square-foot. Last year, the warehouse moved to a building three times the size of the previous space.

The history of CRS dates back to 1971 when a small group on an LIP grant encouraged the development of consumer co-ops. The business began in earnest in 1974 as a foods' brokerage, canner and honey collective, all funded by government grants. From the revenues generated, about \$96,000 was re-invested and used to establish Uprising Breads in 1976.

CRS's mandate includes a commitment to educational and social issues. The co-op has worked with the Vancouver Native Education Centre to develop course material on the realities of the worker co-op ideal, and is involved with the Worker Ownership Resource Centre of New Westminster.

Wild West expands

Richmond — Wild West Organic Harvest Co-operative hopes to be offering preferred shares by early 1990. "We're waiting for our financial statements so we can make a presentation to the provincial government," says financial director, Deb Foote. Foote hopes to make the present-

ation by November.

Revenue from the shares would go towards further upgrading of the co-op's fruit packinghouse in Cawston, in the British Columbia interior. Over the year, members upgraded and improved safety conditions in the plant, purchased in 1988.

Wild West is Western Canada's largest distributor of organic produce, through its main warehouse in Richmond, B.C. The packinghouse has four cooler spaces with a capacity for 5,000 apple bins. Some of the coolers are now leased to local growers, and the co-op hopes to offer a new packing line, both as an incentive to leaseholders and to improve its own packing operations.

A small retail store is planned for a corner of the building. Farmers' markets were held over the summer, with organic fruit and other natural foods being sold.

"It's exciting, scary. We're setting new ground in the area of co-op development...There's a lot of discovery, a lot of work to do," says Foote.

Pam Tranfield is a worker-

member at CRS, 3450 Vanness, Vancouver, B.C. V5R 5A9; (604) 439-7977. She now shares the B.C. Desk with Melanie Conn. Many thanks to Dana Weber who has helped to prepare this section of the magazine for several years.

Carling-O'Keefe worker buyout

Saskatoon (W.C.) — The worker buyout of the Carling-O'Keefe plant in Saskatoon is expected to be finalized very soon. "The plant will operate as an independent brewery in a similar manner to Northern Breweries," says Greg Kitz, a leader of the buyout. The buyout will be incorporated under company law rather than as a co-operative, because financing from the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation requires this. The exact ownership and control structure is yet-to-be determined.

The Carling-O'Keefe plant was slated for closure at year-end 1989. The workers are represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 346 W. The union has taken "a hands off" position with respect to the

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buyout, though in the estimation of Kitz, who is also vice-president of the union local, the bargaining unit would remain intact within the new company. It is anticipated that more than half of the 27 workers at the plant will retain their jobs under the buyout and that the number will increase as the new company develops.

For more information contact Greg Kitz, 134 Tobin Cr., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 4N1; (306) 242-3388.

La Belle Province

By Claude Carbonneau
(translated by Rosemary Oliver)
New president of forestry co-operatives

Shawinigan — On July 13 and 14, the Conference of Forestry Co-operatives of Québec held its annual general meeting in Shawinigan and elected Fernand Miron president. Miron is chairman and managing director of the Guyenne greenhouse co-operative. The other members of the executive committee are Gaston Lavoie (chair), Jacques Verrier, René Langevin and Jean-Guy Morand.

The Conference brings together 32 of the 49 forestry co-ops in Québec. These worker co-operatives are a very dynamic sector in the Québec co-operative movement.

New theatrical centre

Victoriaville — On Tuesday, August 29, the Bois-France theatre worker co-operative (le Théâtre Parminou) opened its new theatrical centre.

With its head office in Victoriaville, this co-operative is the biggest touring company for adults in Canada. It specializes in the creation and production of lively plays which focus on social concerns.

From trees to tomatoes

Abitibi — The Guyenne co-operative is thinking of investing in greenhouses that would enable it to specialize in tomato production with a capacity of 25,000 plants. For several years,



Members of Auxi-Plus of Montréal, a 150-member worker co-op specializing in homecare.

Guyenne, which had been using greenhouses to grow tree plants, has been gaining experience in this new type of production. The results are excellent. The new greenhouses would enable the co-op to increase its business considerably. The produce would be sold in the regional market of Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

New course

Québec City — A Télé-Université team is now completing a course aimed at members of worker co-operatives and similar organizations. This course is designed to make them aware of all the dimensions related to their roles as managers and owners of an enterprise. The course would be given by correspondence in all regions of Québec.

In addition to the written material, Télé-Université has prepared a supplementary video for the course. Among the topics covered are: the history of the worker co-operative movement, various aspects of management, and the collective life at the heart of this type of enterprise. The course should be available soon.

Recycling used tires

Anjou — Twenty-one former employees at two companies which specialize in the conversion and recycling of used tires (UniRoyal and Servaas Rubber Co. Inc.) in Ville d'Anjou have formed a co-operative that will operate a factory in this same field. Since the closure of these two businesses, there were no factories in Québec that could convert the whole tire.

The co-operative also plans to sell products converted from the rubber in carpets, undercarpets, transmission belts, etc.

This business plan will be firmed up in the next few months. When it's launched, the co-operative will employ 14 people. The initial investment will be \$1.3-million.

The phoenix rises

Rimouski — Since the closure of the Rimouski division of Marine Industry Ltd., the former employees have been looking for ways to start up again. After many studies, they've decided to form a co-operative that would operate a factory specialized in the manufacture of metal frames and tanks, winches and hydraulic vans.

At one point, Marine Industry employed 230 workers. The new enterprise will have fewer than 30 workers when it's launched. The initial investment will be about \$2-million. To get the project underway, the workers have received support from the consulting group of the CSN labour federation, the Société de développement des coopératives, their former employers, and from several economic agencies in the region. If all goes as planned, the workers could launch their business in the next few months.

Joint ventures

Granby — Several new joint ventures, in which a co-operative of the workers is one stakeholder in the ownership structure, are being launched in Québec.

In Granby, the workers of ACG

Jean Inc. have decided to form a co-operative in order to become shareholders in the business. The worker co-operative will own close to 30 per cent of the firm's shares. This new investment will permit ACG to create approximately 40 additional jobs.

In Mont Joli, the workers at the J.D. Dionne & Sons Ltd. mill have also decided to form a co-operative that would become a financial stakeholder of this company. These 16 workers will be able to participate more directly in the development of the company.

Claude Carbonneau is the communications director of the Société de développement des coopératives, 430 Chemin Ste. Foy, Québec City, Québec G1S 2J5; (418) 687-9221.

Success story continues

By Luc Labelle
Montréal — Auxi-Plus, a homemaker's co-op involving 150 members, has received the Montréal 88 Entrepreneurship Award in the women's category, for its accomplishments since its creation in 1986.

Auxi-Plus has opened new markets recently which have added to the company's success. It has made an agreement with the Régie de l'assurance automobile du Québec whereby a person injured in a car accident can receive services at home from Auxi-Plus's homemakers. The co-op has staff who accompany handicapped people when they travel. Auxi-Plus has also become a training centre for homemakers taking the standard 800-hour course for accreditation.

AROUND THE WORLD

ZIMBABWE

Women become militant

Women co-operators in Zimbabwe have emerged from a special workshop with a series of resolutions which are designed to help eliminate sexual inequalities. The key resolutions include:

- "Women must be free to elect each other to leadership positions.
- Workers must behave themselves so that their behaviour does not become a barrier to development.
- The Central Association should have a special unit for women's projects.
- There should be special training courses for women.
- Women should participate fully in the economic activities and in general meetings.
- The election of an interim committee to monitor progress and co-ordinate activities."

For more information contact Vanguard: The Co-operative Newspaper, c/o OCCZIM, Box 66102, Kopje, Harare, Zimbabwe; (tel) 737663.

UNITED STATES

ESOP boom continues

The worker-ownership movement in the U.S. continues to grow because of the tax benefits to owners who create ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Plans). Latest figures compiled by the National Center for Employee Ownership estimate that in 1988 there were 775 new ESOPs involving 865,000 employees. In 1987, there were 730 new plans involving an estimated one million employees.

The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) is one of the strongest backers of ESOPs in the U.S., just recently organizing the \$220-million purchase of the steel-bar plant in Canton, Ohio,



Photo: OCCZIM/B. Paton

Sekusile Supermarket All Are One Co-operative, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

from LTV, and then the purchase of the Cytemp division with 1,200 employees from Cyclops Steel (Pennsylvania). An earlier buyout of Bliss-Salem, organized by the USWA, has grown from 40 to 250 employees in two years. Pittsburgh Forgings, also a recent USWA buyout, is now showing its first quarterly profit.

Employee buyouts using ESOPs have been widespread in the steel, garment and healthcare industries — all of which have experienced financial difficulties.

The influential Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives has voted to maintain the tax benefits for ESOPs that own at least 30 per cent of a company's stock. However, some tax writeoffs were taken away from ESOPs that own less than 30 per cent of a company. The maintenance of tax benefits assures that the ESOP boom in the U.S. will continue through the coming year.

Privatization

A controversial proposal ("Fed Co-op") to privatize the federal service in the U.S. through employee buyouts that would maintain contracts with the government is not going anywhere, according to a report by the General Accounting Officer (GAO). The privatization proposal was announced in 1987 under the Reagan administration and is backed by President Bush. The

GAO report ("Status of the Federal Employee Direct Corporate Ownership Opportunity Plan") is available without charge by phoning (202) 275-6241.

For more information about ESOPs in the U.S. see *The Employee Ownership Report, The National Center for Employee Ownership, 2201 Broadway, Suite 807, Oakland, California 94612.*

BRITAIN

Sexual harassment grievances

During the first five months of 1989 there were 82 worker co-operatives registered in the U.K. using ICOM rules. The numbers are down slightly from the previous year.

Among the new registrations is the U.K.'s first worker co-operative of solicitors and legal workers. Berry's Legal Services in Bristol consists of seven women, including two solicitors. All of the members (solicitors and non-solicitors alike) receive equal salaries and participate in management.

ICOM'S Women's Link-Up held its annual conference September 1-3. The conference focused on sales and marketing and devoted one full day to the needs

of black women. The Women's Link-up has developed a comprehensive set of procedures for dealing with sexual harassment grievances in worker co-ops and co-operative development agencies:

- "respect for all parties involved
- issues of discrimination raised are accepted as true for that person
- focus on the central grievance, not background issues
- identify and deal with people's feelings separately
- grievance and issues raised must be openly discussed
- confidentiality must be maintained
- have a clear grievance procedure as part of the employment contract
- procedure must be agreed, tried and tested
- it must be accessible and clearly communicated to everyone
- it must ensure the right to representation or support
- it must resolve issues quickly
- it must be impartial
- everyone needs to be trained in grievance management."

Dealing with harassment grievances is particularly problematic in small co-ops. There, it is recommended that an outsider be brought in as quickly as possible.

Top-down

The Middlesborough Initiative, a project in northeastern England funded by the Conservative government, continues to show results. This project differs from

AROUND THE WORLD

the usual approach to co-operative development in the United Kingdom in that the Cleveland Development Agency which is co-ordinating the work initiates the feasibility analyses rather than simply awaiting grassroots initiatives.

Among its most recent projects is the First Driving School. Each driving instructor — currently seven — pays a franchise fee to the co-operative of £150 in return for a vehicle with the insignia of the school and pupils. The co-operative pays for marketing and administration whereas each driver-member receives lesson fees in full. All instructors and employees are eligible for membership after a six-month probation.

More information about British worker co-ops is available from *The New Co-operator*, ICOM, Vassalli House, 20 Central Road, Leeds LS1 6DE; (0532) 461-738.

SCOTLAND Shifting gears

The Scottish Co-operative Development Committee (SCDC), the primary development group for worker co-operatives in Scotland, is continuing to shift its energies toward creating larger enterprises which are planned in a "top-down" manner. There were 26 start-ups in Scotland last year (the same as in the previous year), but the enterprises involved 172 jobs as compared to 123 in 1987.

In its top-down co-ops, the SCDC undertakes the market research, feasibility studies and product evaluation before members for the co-op are found. Its first top-down venture, Electrostatic Spray Painting (ESP), refurbishes metal office furniture and external metal fencing in Glasgow.

A second top-down co-op, Daythem, will manufacture light-transmitting, insulating ceiling panels in East Kilbride. This product was designed by a private entrepreneur. Lacking capital to manufacture and market it, he



Basilis restaurant, a Glasgow worker co-op, receives rave reviews.



Green City Whole Foods in Glasgow.

turned to the SCDC which has arranged the financing for the Daythem Co-op.

Much of the SCDC's success is because of its venture capital fund, now holding over £500,000. During the last fiscal year this fund loaned £161,800 to 31 worker co-operatives.

The plan for the future is to develop more capital-intensive enterprises. As a reflection of its success, the SCDC has expanded from its original office in Glasgow and now has branches in Aberdeen, Fife, Stirling and Dundee.

For more information contact Alex Smith, director, SCDC, Templeton Business Centre, Templeton St., Bridgeton, Glasgow G40 1DA; (041) 554-3797.

U.S.S.R. First worker buyouts of state firms

By David Ellerman

The first Soviet ESOP-style worker buyouts of state-owned firms have been arranged in a Moscow firm manufacturing food-processing equipment and in a building-materials firm outside of Moscow. The buyouts were designed by Valery Rutgaizer, an economist and deputy director of the All-Union Center for Public Opinion Research, headed by Tatian Zaslavskaya (a leading sociologist,

Gorbachev's "pollster", and an architect of the Perestroika).

Both of the firms have operated for over a year as "lease firms" — a legal form also pioneered by Rutgaizer. A lease firm rents the fixed assets from the supervisory ministry. The worker buyout goes the next crucial step of buying the means of production from the ministry in a credit transaction. The Soviet Union has nothing resembling Anglo-American trust law, so the ESOP has to be "internal" to the company instead of as a separate trust. This, however, only makes a necessity out of a virtue since the whole ESOP structure can be simplified.

There are new statutes for co-operatives in the U.S.S.R., and over 100,000 co-ops have sprung

AROUND THE WORLD

Educational co-operative in Moscow: coach Olga Novikova with her trainees.



Photo: A. Yakovlev/TASS

A co-operative outpatient clinic: receiving clerk Daiga Megne talks to a patient.



Photo: V. Liehtyn/TASS

MA 02144; (617) 629-2700. Ellerman is preparing a book, *The Democratic Worker-Owned Firm: A New Model for the East and West*. He has written extensively about worker ownership.

Union of worker co-operatives in the U.S.S.R.

The first national congress of Co-operatives in Production and Services in the U.S.S.R. has established a union of member-co-ops. The Congress also endorsed a charter, and it adopted a work program which includes the formation of its own bank, a training centre and a foreign trade firm. The union of co-ops is expected to establish contacts with the International Co-operative Alliance.

There are now about 100,000 worker co-operatives in the U.S.S.R. Their sales for the first quarter of 1989 were \$4.5-billion roubles, nearly as much as all of 1988.

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

up in the small business sector in the last few years. But the 1,000 or more lease firms have been converted state firms (not start-ups), and they have not been organized under the co-operative statutes. Rutgaizer is writing a first draft of proposed legislation for the lease firms and the ESOP-type firms.

The two ESOPs are democratic in the sense that the workers vote on a one-person/one-vote basis to elect the workers' council (a.k.a., Board of Directors) and on all other votes put to the membership. Rutgaizer calls this form of ownership "kollektivnaya sobstvennost" which he trans-

lates as "collective job ownership." Collective refers to the fact that as in the American ESOP the workers do not individually own shares that they can sell; the ownership is held in trust. However, there are individual capital accounts which record each worker-member's share of the net asset value.

Dr. Rutgaizer learned about ESOP-style credit transactions at the January, 1989, Oxford Conference on Industrial Partnerships and Worker-Owned Business, co-sponsored by Robert Oakeshott's Job Ownership Ltd. (JOL) in London and the Industrial Co-operative Association

(ICA) in Boston.

Since a worker buyout of a state-owned firm is unprecedented in the modern U.S.S.R., it must be approved by the Council of Deputies' Standing Commission on the Economic Reform headed by the leading Perestroika economist, Leonid Abalkin. He is solidly behind the worker buyouts; indeed, his exhortation to Dr. Rutgaizer was "more, more."

For more information contact David P. Ellerman, Industrial Cooperative Association and Employee Ownership Services, 58 Day St., Suite 203, Somerville,

A worker-ownership strategy for women to fight free trade and privatization

By Melanie Conn

When women dream about starting a co-op business, we are often drawn to service-sector industries. Our inclinations reflect the experience of Canadian women in general: 87 per cent of women in the paid workforce in this country are employed in service-sector jobs. As Canadian manufacturing jobs continue to be exported to Mexico and off-shore locations to capitalize on cheap labour, the service sector will swell further.

The majority of these jobs are non-unionized and low-paying, with a high incidence of part-time and seasonal work, and few benefits such as medical, dental and pension plans. (The low pay is typical of female-dominated occupations in general, even professions such as nurses.)

Free trade threat

In addition to contending with poor working conditions, women in the service sector face a dramatic new threat: the Free Trade Agreement. When the FTA was ratified last January, the government agreed to eliminate practices that had fostered the service sector in Canada. These included preferential treatment to Canadian firms and requiring foreign-owned firms to hire Canadian labour. With one stroke of the pen and without proper research into the impact of the Agreement upon this country, the enormous U.S. economy was presented with a golden opportunity to expand into the Canadian market.

As a result of the FTA, service-sector jobs will be much more easily exported to the United States. Data processing, for example, where 30 per cent of female service-sector workers are employed, is a particularly vulnerable industry which has already experienced serious job loss.

Other service-sector jobs that might appear immune from the FTA because

they must be provided within Canada are also at risk. The Agreement allows U.S. firms the right to establish in Canada and the right to be treated as Canadian firms whether they are located within this country or not. Using healthcare as an example, this means that privately-owned U.S. management groups will increasingly administer Canadian hospitals and supply other health services, altering working conditions and wage scales to meet their bottom-line objective.

The healthcare scenario is aggravated by the complementary move of the federal and provincial governments towards privatization of publicly-funded services. For example, the closure and downsizing of residential treatment centres in British Columbia has resulted in the establishment of numerous, small private companies which compete for contracts by cutting wages and benefits and reducing staff. Privatization of other health services, such as long-term care and homecare, has resulted in similar alterations in working conditions and standards.

Worker co-ops in the service sector

Given the nature of many service-sector jobs and the drastic changes in the economy represented by the FTA and privatization, what sense does it make to establish a worker co-op in a service industry? Wouldn't such a project be doomed to a marginal existence at best, forcing its members to participate in the overall conservative agenda to drive down wages?

Some interesting ideas for building a successful worker co-op strategy in the service sector emerged from research into the subject for the Canadian Co-operative Association project on worker buyouts.

The service sector for small, local

markets has a degree of protection from the increased competition promised by the FTA. Communities will continue to support retail stores with specialty products and personal services such as cleaning, catering and hairdressing. If women can gain access to adequate capital and appropriate skills (not an easy task), small neighbourhood worker co-ops are as likely to be financially successful as conventionally-owned enterprises.

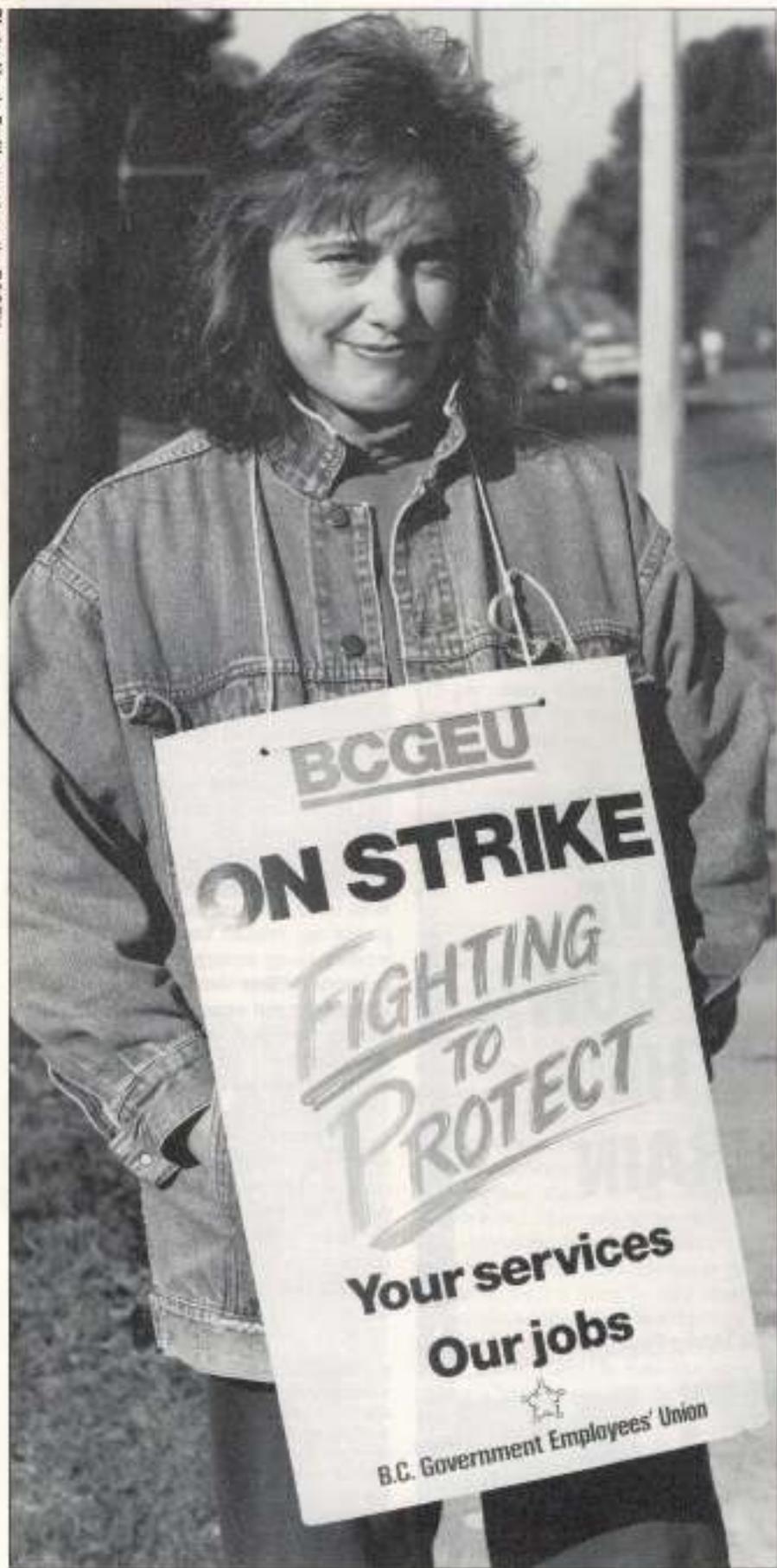
The service enterprises described in this issue of the *Worker Co-op* magazine are examples of neighborhood co-ops. The co-op sector, including community economic development organizations, has played a crucial role in providing a range of assistance from financial support to community networking. For neighbourhood service co-ops to succeed, a continuing commitment from the co-op sector is necessary.

A larger-scale approach

There is also potential for worker co-ops to be part of a strategy to counteract the negative impact of "economic restructuring". The co-op commitment to job stability through local ownership and control can provide the community with an economic model that builds self-reliance and enhances community health.

Such a large-scale approach in the service-sector industries where women work would require the participation and support of some powerful new players, such as service-sector trade unions and the feminist movement, in addition to the co-op sector.

Within the trade union movement, worker ownership has been generally perceived as a small-scale strategy that may occasionally provide a degree of job security for workers. But faced with the deadly combination of the FTA and privatization, trade unionists are uneasy



The Government Employees' Union has led the fight in British Columbia against privatization and free trade.

about worker co-ops. The biggest concern is that the worker co-op option would strengthen privatization. Former government employees would be forced to cut their wages drastically in order to compete for government contracts with private companies.

Although the issues are complex, there is potential for worker ownership to be an important part of an overall strategy involving an industry-wide campaign to maintain wages, working conditions and a high quality of service. For example, in the case of the privatization program underway in British Columbia, the trade-union fight to maintain jobs in residential treatment and homecare health services already involves a number of strategies: rallying public support to restore budget cuts, organizing workers in private sector companies and gaining the right for workers to be transferred from about-to-be-privatized services.

Union fights back

The BCGEU (British Columbia Government Employees Union) has focused on negotiating dozens of collective agreements for employees of newly-privatized group homes, long-term-care facilities, and homemaker and nursing services. The workplaces, many already operated by U.S. companies, illustrate some of the worst conditions for women workers in the industry. One homemaker association, for example, paid overtime and travel costs for men, but not for women workers. In another situation, a large U.S.-owned nursing-care service with branches across Canada charges out nurses' aides at a \$15 hourly rate (which the government pays) but pays the workers only \$7.

The BCGEU believes that the manipulation of labour for profit by large American companies will increase as the FTA

FORUM

takes effect. However, assuming union contracts can push up wages and increase benefits, there will be less profit for private owners. The workplaces could then become appropriate sites for worker co-op buyouts. The wisdom of such a strategy depends on the success of the union's campaign to maintain government expenditures for home healthcare at current levels or higher, an objective requiring considerable community support.

An employment strategy that brings together public-sector unions and worker ownership is an exciting idea. But building such an alliance will involve dropping some old perceptions and recognizing the value of a new and multi-faceted

approach to maintaining job stability. Under siege from the FTA and privatization, perhaps public sector unions can be encouraged to consider some possibilities for collaboration with the co-op sector.

A feminist strategy

An important aspect of the feminist movement has been to analyze the role of women in the service sector and to fight for unionization and improved working conditions such as pay equity, childcare, job security and access to skill development. This increasing militancy of women in service-sector unions (banking, nursing) may be the key factor that

changes the stereotype of women as secondary income earners to a realistic assessment of our major contribution to the economy.

The FTA and privatization present a grave threat to women working in service-sector industries. Devastating job losses and wage cuts seem inevitable if the move towards a big business-marketplace economy is consolidated. The issue is an urgent one, calling for innovative solutions.

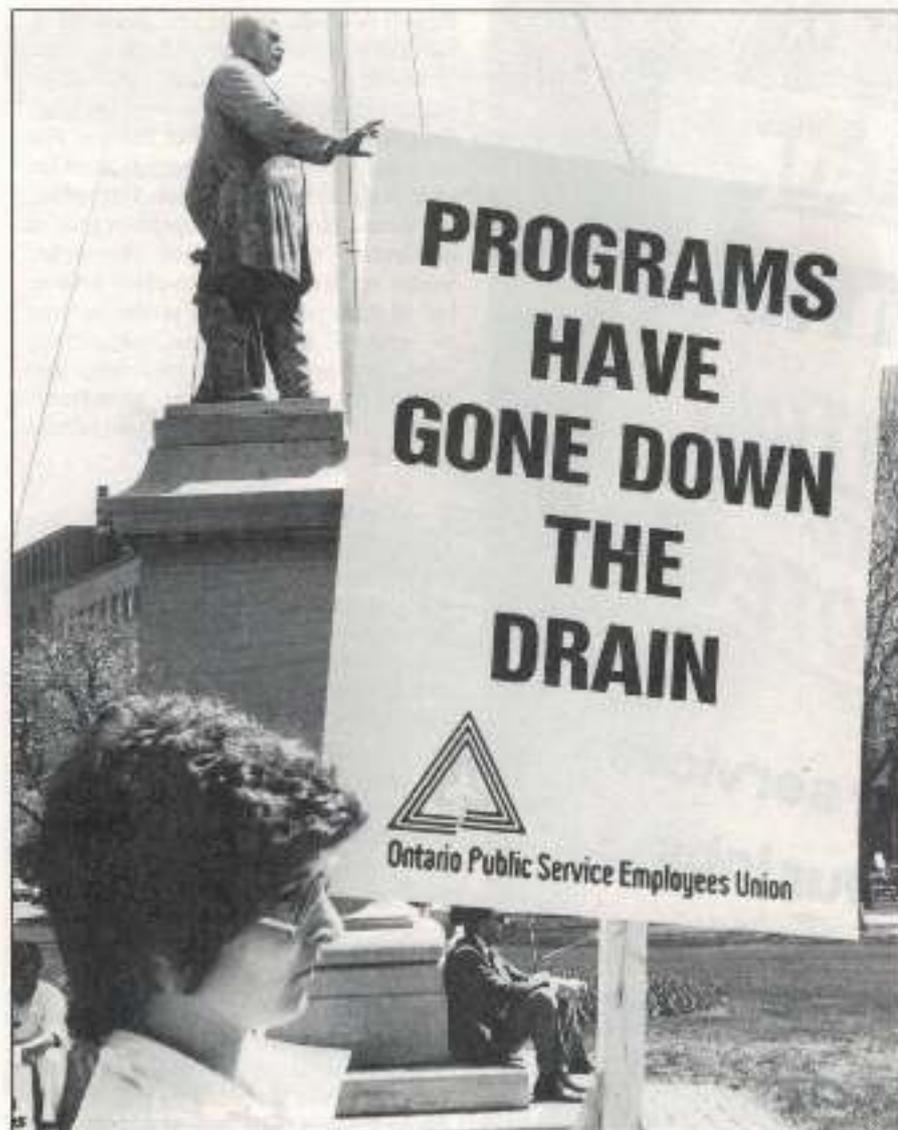
A large-scale worker-ownership strategy in the service sector that brings together a number of community players would provide an opportunity for women to participate in creating a better future than the current economic climate promises. Establishing a network of unionized homemaker or cleaning co-ops, for example, would be a dramatic way to initiate a broad-based alliance that strengthened the economy of the community and invited the full participation of women as workers and as organizers. Feminists would provide experienced and enthusiastic support for a worker co-op project with such a vision.

Making It happen

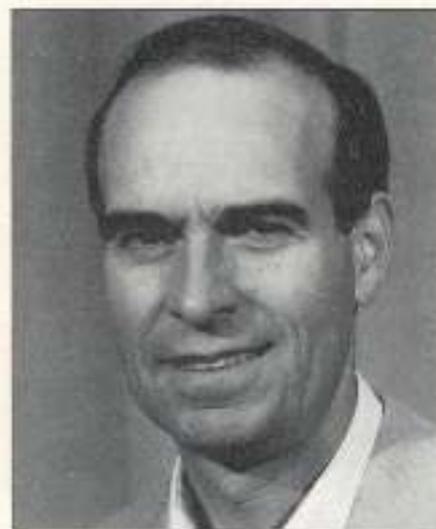
Both trade unionist and feminist participation are critical for the success of a worker co-op strategy in service-sector industries where women work. With its experience and expertise, the co-op sector can provide leadership by investigating possibilities for collaboration and initiating contact amongst appropriate organizations.

Women have been active participants in worker co-ops for years. We understand the potential of the structure to empower women in the workplace. Now is the time for us to ensure that the co-op sector accepts the challenge to undertake projects that make change in the lives of women.

Melanie Conn works with WomenFutures, a Vancouver-based organization that undertakes research, education and consulting about women and community-economic development, and administers the WomenFutures Loan Guarantee Fund for women's community economic-development projects. She can be contacted at #206-33 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1V4; (604) 874-1777.



THE BUSINESS CORNER



By Marty Donkervoort

Worker co-ops have to overcome hang-ups about promotion

There are many factors that are essential to the success of a worker cooperative. They are not that different from those encountered in other forms of business enterprises. They include a well-developed business concept and plan, sound financing, competent management, skilled and trained workers, entrepreneurial leadership and a good marketing plan. I intend to address all of these factors and other management issues in future editions of this column. Perhaps, due to my specialization in business school, I would like to start with marketing, particularly promotion.

Promotion hang-ups

In general, worker co-ops could improve their promotional efforts greatly. There are a number of reasons for poor performance in this area. They include a lack of awareness of the importance of promotion, unfamiliarity with marketing strategies and promotional tools, a philosophical dislike for promotion and a shortage of funds. Whatever the reason, without proper attention to promotion your worker co-op is doomed to failure! Opening a business and simply waiting for customers or clients to knock your door down, just isn't a viable approach.

Yet this 'wait for the consumer' attitude is common among emerging worker co-ops in Canada. For example, Household Services Co-operative, a cleaning business for residential and commercial clients in St. John's, Newfoundland, began in 1988 with no promotion prior to start-up and very limited promotion since. It has struggled for survival, never really getting off the ground. Similarly, Transcend Homes, a worker co-op in the manufactured-homes industry in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, is having difficulties getting a foothold in the market because of a lack of promotion.

Although some aspects of promotion may be apparent, there is more to it than meets the eye. Advertising, personal selling, publicity and sales promotion are the four components that make up the promotional mix. The first three are self-explanatory; the fourth, sales promotion, includes displays, shows and exhibitions, demonstrations and various non-recurrent selling efforts that are not routine.

Tailoring the strategy

The relative weight given to these four promotional components depends on the type of product and industry. For instance, personal selling is usually more important in industrial markets and advertising more important in consumer-driven markets. Personal selling should be a key feature of the promotional mix for Transcend Homes in that co-op's bid to get builders to use its manufactured products. Advertising should be the key component of Household Services promotional mix in an effort to reach customers for the co-op's cleaning services.

Since there is a time lag between promotion and the purchase of a product or service, promotion needs to be initiated well before the business is operating. Resulting sales will develop gradually as potential buyers go through their adoption process. Remember that it is not enough to create awareness or interest in a product or service. The promotional campaign needs to generate adoption by potential buyers.

Implementation of the promotional strategy is just as important as its development. Implementation requires both human and financial resources. The business plan should take into account the budget for the promotional campaign and the availability of human resources for its implementation. Very often the budget designated for a promotional campaign gets redirected to other areas due to overruns in start-up costs. This is very shortsighted. Without proper promotion, predicted sales will probably not materialize; then cash-flow problems and business failure follow.

More attention has to be given to marketing strategies, particularly those related to promotion, in the start-up of new worker co-ops. This is probably the greatest shortcoming of this type of business.

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SHOPTALK

Wild West women have created a million-dollar business

By Debbie Aldana



Wild West women at work.
Back (from left): Debbie Aldana,
Leslie Hope, Barb Wilde,
Darcy Hamilton.
Front (from left): Deb Foote,
Jamaica, Sangam Grant.

Wild West Organic Harvest is the largest organic-produce wholesaler in Western Canada. Started in 1977 by a group of dedicated individuals, Wild West has grown into a prosperous business with annual sales of \$2.8 million. In addition to a full line of certified organic produce, Wild West carries a wide variety of organic grocery items ranging from juices to seaweed.

Wild West began with a mixed group of people, but for the last 12 years it has been a women's collective. Recently, Wild West bought a packinghouse in the Okanagan Valley and hired two men to operate this part of the business. The Richmond location will continue to be a women's co-op.

In the following article, Debbie Aldana, Wild West's manager, discusses some of the issues that the co-op faces.



From left: Sangan Grant and Deb Foote, doing business at Wild West.

Benefits for women

Worker co-ops have many positive benefits for women. Co-ops are more willing to train women, even in non-traditional work areas. Some women will start off at a lower payscale to gain experience while working their way up. They will also take on different jobs for the benefit of the business. At Wild West everyone has always been paid the same hourly rate — members and non-members alike — although that doesn't stop some people from doing more than their share. I think the fact that we are all women has a lot to do with our equal pay.

Finding women to become collective members has not always been an easy task at Wild West. The low pay and lack of business-minded people with organic-food backgrounds has made it difficult to find qualified members to fill certain positions. For example, this year we tried to hire a class-3 truck driver on three occasions. We found only one applicant with the driver's qualifications, but without the business experience.

Wild West has attracted idealistic people who have helped the co-op survive hard times. Unfortunately, the combination of a low skill level associated with many of Wild West's jobs and an un-

structured workplace has led to a high staff turnover. As a result we now have an equal number of members and non-members working at our Richmond warehouse. Although there are some differences in the benefits for both groups, we strive as a team to keep the business growing and prospering. At Wild West we encourage everyone to take equal responsibility for the day-to-day jobs as well as unusual problems requiring extra attention (which tends to be overtime). Quite often extra tasks get put off causing unfinished jobs to pile up.

Women have to change

Women have to stop being "maintainers" and set goals for themselves and the business, and achieve them! Women may work most of their adult years, but not necessarily towards a career goal. In the past, more so than now, women were not encouraged to be financially independent or to develop a career in the workforce as much as men. One of Wild West's latest policies requires that each member take one course a year that will enhance her business knowledge. Examples are: accounting, writing, public speaking, computer technology, agriculture, organic cultivation and marketing. We feel this is

a positive step.

It's a physical feeling that I can't explain — working in a group of sisters. She who feels it knows it! Sometimes it feels like a premenstrual-syndrome therapy session, and yet I feel the thread of understanding in all that we go through. Our approach, demonstrated by a non-tiered structure, minimizes power struggles within our co-operative environment. Each of us keeps track of her own hours, takes breaks when it's convenient and helps with the scheduling that changes weekly. Most of the decisions at Wild West are made by consensus by the members. Our non-members also take initiative and are asked to offer their opinions and ideas on certain issues. The year that I have worked at Wild West has been a very positive one in a lot of different ways. If you are a person who loves good food and have a keen interest in taking on new challenges, Wild West is a great place to work.

For more information, Debbie Aldana can be contacted at Wild West Organic Harvest Co-op, 150-2471 Simpson Rd., Richmond, British Columbia V6X 2R2; (604) 276-2411.



Breaking down barriers to women

Bernadette Dwyer, president of a Newfoundland "fishermen's" co-op

By Roger Carter

Historically, one of the major weaknesses of the co-operative movement in Newfoundland and Labrador has been the lack of participation by women. This was true in the early days of the movement and it is still true today, although the situation appears to be changing slowly. To the extent that women were involved at all, it was usually in their traditional, subservient role, almost as a backdrop to their fathers, brothers and husbands.

Producer co-operatives were particularly male-dominated with few or no female members. Consumer co-ops and credit unions were more likely to have female members, but women's participation in leadership positions was still very limited. Most women who made it to the board of directors were given the position of secretary. The more powerful positions (especially that of president) were almost certainly reserved for men.

Co-ops different?

The situation with co-operatives should not be surprising; after all, male domina-

tion of co-operatives was only a reflection of the society at large. While exclusion of women — and all their talents, abilities and even sheer numbers — is a problem in any society, lack of involvement in Newfoundland and Labrador co-operatives has been a particularly acute problem. In many communities most of the men are away for long periods of time — fishing in Labrador or on the Grand Banks, working on construction sites or in the woods. As such, it is impossible to arrange meetings of co-op boards, committees, and even annual general meetings (AGMs).

Breaking down stereotypes

Women are present in the communities and have a better opportunity to make the co-op function than the absentee men. Also, in Newfoundland and Labrador women tend to have more formal education than men and are often more capable of making co-operatives work.

Patriarchy does not break down quickly. While change comes very slowly, there are some very good examples of how

women are getting involved in leadership positions in co-operatives, and how these women are highly regarded (by both women and men) for their abilities and dedication. One such example is Bernadette Dwyer of Fogo Island.

For several years Bernadette was president of the Fogo Island Co-operative — an organization composed primarily of fishermen and plant workers. She was the co-op's first female board member and its first female president. The fishing industry has traditionally been very male-dominated, but as president, Bernadette Dwyer was very highly regarded, both by members of the co-op and people in the fishing industry in general.

The Fogo Island Co-operative was organized in 1967 as a response to a severe community crisis. The Island's traditional fish merchants had left or were leaving and the communities were under threat of resettlement by the provincial and federal governments. From very modest beginnings (with share capital of about \$600), the co-operative has developed into a modern, diversified fishing operation.

into a modern, diversified fishing operation. Running the Fogo Island Co-operative requires a high degree of sophistication among managers, board members, and particularly among the society's executive. With 1988 sales of about \$13 million, the Fogo Island Co-operative is not a corner store; it is a medium-sized business operating in an extremely volatile and complicated industry.

Starting from scratch

Bernadette Dwyer began working in the co-operative's Joe Batts Arm plant as a cost clerk. When she started she knew very little about fish. But she learned quickly. She enjoyed her work and spent her lunch breaks in the plant. Gradually, she got to know most of the workers and to understand the operation.

Just before the AGM several years ago, some people in the lunch room suggested that Bernadette should run for the board. At first she didn't take this suggestion seriously, but at the AGM a plant worker nominated her. She was elected as the first woman on the board. According to Bernadette, "there were a few people shocked at the meeting that night."

Bernadette was elected secretary in the first year. "That came normally from the fact that I was a woman...the men felt that I should hold a pen and keep the minutes."

Over the next year she was approached by several board members who encouraged her to run for president. For Bernadette, as for many other people who are interested in taking leadership positions, there were concerns about what this involvement would do to her family life. "I was very apprehensive of taking the position at that time, and my husband was very apprehensive, but I finally made up my mind that I would and I had the full support of the board." She also had the support of her family — support which was instrumental in allowing her to fulfill her responsibilities as president.

President Dwyer

Bernadette was well-suited to the position. "I had close contact with the plant workers and I could see the fishermen's



▲ Fogo Island Fishing Village.



▼ Fogo Island Fishing Plant.



PEOPLE



"The co-operative here is our lifeline. We have to protect the jobs in our plants and we have to do everything in our power to protect our fishermen."

view because my husband was a fisherman." For Bernadette it is knowledge, not gender, which should determine the role which people can or should play in organizations. "I don't think that I should be recognized as, 'well she's a woman,' I feel that if I have the knowledge I should be able to fill any position that knowledge allows me to fill."

There are many other qualities which made Bernadette a good president. For example, she feels that "In a position of leadership you need to be able to compromise and be willing in some cases to swallow your pride when you recognize that you've made a bad decision."

During her tenure as president, Bernadette's approach to leadership earned her widespread support and respect. Among the changes which she helped introduce was the involvement of women. In the past, few women ever attended co-op meetings on Fogo Island. Women were reluctant to go to meetings, afraid that they would stand out in a room full of men. Bernadette helped break down this situation. She said she walked into many rooms where she was the only woman present. "Now the ice has been broken. Women are coming out of their shells and realize that they are members

of the co-op and they have a right to express their opinions. They're becoming involved." Another woman was elected to the Fogo Island Co-op's Board two years ago and a third woman came very close to getting elected last year. A lot more women are attending and participating in meetings.

Bernadette chose not to run for president during the last election. However, she is still busy as a leader in the province's co-op movement. She is on the board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives and she is president of the Co-operative Fisheries Association. Those positions, together with her job as supervisor of incentives and costing, keep her very busy.

Fisheries crisis

In the past few years the Fogo Island Co-operative has been caught in the throes of a major crisis in the Atlantic fishery. Low fish landings this year and a high debt load incurred from last year have placed the Fogo Co-op in a difficult position. Survival and growth of the co-op will require the dedicated support and involvement of all members. Bernadette Dwyer challenges everyone — men and women — to get involved:

"The co-operative here is our lifeline. We have to protect the jobs in our plants and we have to do everything in our power to protect our fishermen. If there are decisions being made or things happening that people are dissatisfied with, they have to become actively involved in order to change them. This co-op belongs to us all and we are all responsible for running it. Anyone who is willing to be aggressive enough to take on the challenge to run for the board of directors and to make a contribution, should do so because they are contributing to their own future and the future of their children."

The idea that men and women should share equally in the responsibilities, and the costs and benefits of leadership has been around for a long time. Like Bernadette Dwyer, we are all responsible for seeing that this idea takes root and bears fruit.

Roger Carter is a member of the faculty at the School of Continuing Studies and Extension, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5S7; (709) 737-8477. He has just completed a history of the Fogo Island Co-op and is currently working on a history of Newfoundland co-operatives. He also has produced a video series on women leaders in Newfoundland.

PROFILE



Left to right: Catherine Monahas, Shirley Lappin, Marie MacDonald (manager, seated), Rochell Axworthy, Pat DiVito, Brian MacNeil.

Home healthcare the co-op way

Cape Care's first year a success

By Veronica Gillies

It's just one year old, but Cape Care Services Co-op, in Sydney, Nova Scotia, is quickly carving a niche for itself in the home healthcare field. Members of the new worker co-operative have already established a solid reputation for their services, whether it's helping a 90-year-old with housework, spending time with an Alzheimer's patient or caring for the terminally ill.

The co-op's progress has been faithfully recorded in a scrapbook, since it opened for business in September, 1988. Since then, it has experienced steady growth, realizing a surplus after only three months of operation. New clients have meant an increase of 100 hours of business each month, and there is a waiting list of people who want to become members.

A New Dawn

The seed for Cape Care was planted, and carefully nurtured, by New Dawn Enterprises Ltd., a community-development agency in Sydney. After conducting several market studies that showed a strong demand for senior-citizens' home healthcare services in the Sydney area, New Dawn set the wheels in motion. When it received funds through Canada Employment and Immigration's Job Re-entry Program in early 1988, it not only arranged training in home healthcare for nine women, but it also encouraged them to form a worker co-operative. The program included 12 weeks of classroom training, 12 weeks of work experience in guest homes for seniors and educational

sessions about worker co-operatives with the Community Development Co-operative (CDC) of Nova Scotia.

Last fall, after the training program, five of the nine women incorporated as a worker co-op. New Dawn provided them with interest-free loans for their membership shares, provided them with office space, deferring payment for all administrative and overhead costs until July, and contracted a manager.

When a request is received, a nursing assessment of the client's requirements is done and a member is lined up to take the assignment. If members are unavailable, there is a roster of seven employees who can be called. Rochell Axworthy is one member who is quite happy with this arrangement. A single parent with three young children, she says being her "own boss" allows her to work when her children are in school. She plans to work more when her children are older.

Variety is the spice

So far, the co-op has been able to handle any request that has come its way, and no two assignments have been alike. The co-op became even more diverse last winter, when it extended its services to include registered nurses and certified nursing assistants. It took another step in May, when it accepted five new members. At the same meeting, members decided to cut the cost of membership shares to half of the original \$1,400. New Dawn, which provided interest-free loans to assist the original five members with the purchase of their shares, agreed to do the same for new members.

Future plans for Cape Care's members include regular medical in-services and co-operative education sessions, so that the co-op will continue to diversify. Undoubtedly, the scrapbook documenting the co-op's progress will also continue to grow.

For information contact Marie MacDonald, manager, Cape Care, 56 Napean St., Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 6J7; (902) 562-2444. Veronica Gillies was the Communications Assistant of the Innovations Project, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 1C0; (902) 867-5165.

The changing face of



Québec's forestry co-ops

Women become part of a male-dominated industry



Coopérative Forestière des Hautes-Laurentides.

By Nicole Giroux and Marie-Claire Malo

Usually when we think of forestry co-operatives, we imagine strong woodcutters lifting heavy chainsaws. We do not expect to find women. But the image is changing. Research indicates that there are 190 women-members of Québec's forestry co-operatives.¹ These 190 women represent seven per cent of the forestry co-ops' total membership and 21 per cent of the female membership of all of Québec's worker co-ops.

One might think that women in forestry co-ops are relegated to traditional clerical and administrative jobs. However, this explanation tells only half the truth: in 16 forestry co-operatives there is only one woman, but in six others there are more than 10. For sure, a forestry co-operative does not need ten secretaries!

A profile

To know more, we did a survey. The results give us a profile of 76 women-

members of 24 forestry co-operatives. They are relatively young (60 per cent between 25- and 35-years-old). Fifty-four per cent are married and 48 per cent have completed high school. On average, they have been members of their co-operative for more than three years. Eighty per cent became members to get or to keep a job, and through that job are aiming to reach financial autonomy (65 per cent). Only one-third reported that creating a co-operative organization was a reason that they joined.

Therefore, it seems that economic motivations are more important than ideological ones in explaining their participation in co-operatives. But economic needs are not the sole stimulus for their participation. These women also wanted to have a more interesting job (60 per cent) with more responsibilities (66 per cent), and they wanted to share a common project with other people



The greenhouse at the Guyenne Worker Co-op.

(75 per cent). These desires are clearly demonstrated by their participation in their co-operatives: 21 per cent are or were members of the board of directors and 30 per cent are members of at least one committee. Forty per cent have a clerical job in their co-operative, but the majority (56 per cent) work in production.

Other research

There has been some previous research of women-members of forestry co-ops who worked as a secretary and as an accountant. In that research, Denise Julien tells us that these women faced many challenges.² First, they had to get used to forestry activities and to create control systems adapted to these activities. They had to understand government programs and explain them to the workers in simple terms. Second, being members of a co-operative, they had to become entrepreneurs. Their participation in the co-operative forced them to take more responsibilities than they would have had as employees in private enterprise. Third, participation in a co-operative required a lot of extra time and effort, so they had to reconcile their work commitments with the demands of family life.

Women in production

Little is known about the women engaged in forestry production. Their presence in such activities is relatively re-

cent. However, forestry co-operatives now do more than cut trees. During the last decade, they have been engaged in the processing of wood, the production of plants for reforestation and the management of forestry resources.

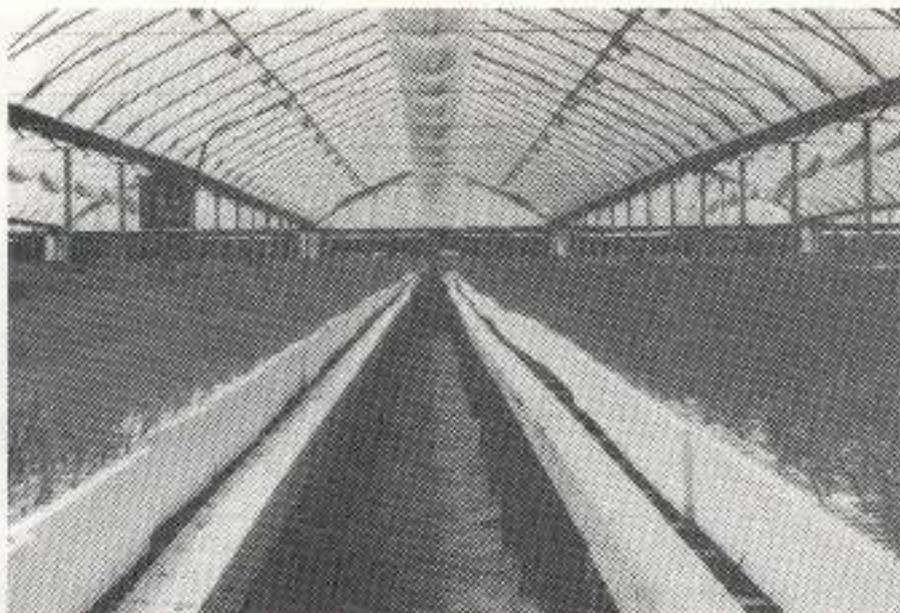
A study by the government of Québec in 1988 shows that forestry co-operatives are either full or partial owners of eight sawmills and two factories producing cedar shingles and oil.³ They produce 35 million plants annually in seven locations for the Ministry of Energy and Resources (MER), and are responsible for a third of all the development work in Québec's public forests. In 1988, they planted more than 42 million trees. Two sectors of activities — planting trees and producing plants — have been growing steadily since 1985. In the period 1985-87, the revenues from forest development increased by 161 per cent and the revenues from plant production increased by 169 per cent.

This diversification of activities in some forestry co-operatives has offered new opportunities for women. (If they can't cut trees, they can produce plants in greenhouses!) Our research indicates that in six co-operatives producing plants for the government of Québec, there are 91 female members. In *Les serres coopératives de Guyenne*, there are 46 women and 14 men.⁴ This co-operative was the first private enterprise to produce plants for the MER. When the government

Pierette Lacroix planting trees.



Guyenne: Rows of future trees in Guyenne greenhouse.



launched its program of reforestation with the objective of planting 250 million trees in five years, co-operatives were invited to submit proposals. Les Serres coopératives de Guyenne has played a major role in the development of plant production by transmitting its know-how to new co-operatives.

The future

There is some uncertainty about the future of forestry co-ops that may affect the jobs held by women. Co-operatives produce only 14 per cent of all plants needed

by the MER and face fierce competition from public and private nurseries.

Nevertheless, they are expected to maintain their position in that market. However, during the last few years, the government's demand for reforestation plants has declined. To adapt, co-operatives have stopped building new greenhouses and two co-operatives started growing vegetables in their greenhouses. Two other co-operatives are planning to do the same. So, in the years to come, we will still see women in forestry co-operatives working in greenhouses producing young trees...and ripe tomatoes.

Nicole Giroux and Marie Claire Malo are members of the teaching faculty at the Business School, University of Montréal. They are also researchers in the Centre de gestion (5255 Avenue Decelles, Montréal, Québec H3T 1V6; [514] 340-6358).

1. Research in progress by a group of women interested in the participation of women in worker co-operatives: M.C. Malo and N. Giroux (Centre de gestion des coopératives, HEC, University of Montréal) and N. St. Martin and D. Ouellette (IRECUS, University of Sherbrooke).

2. Julien, Denise, "Deux femmes membres d'une coopérative forestière: Franchine Fiorant et Diane Trotter," *Coopératives et développement*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1985-1986, pp. 149-157.

3. Clement, Michel, *Profil des coopératives de travailleurs du secteur forestier en 1987-1988*, Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'industrie du commerce et de la technologie, Direction des communications, 59pp.

4. Laplante, Robert, "Les serres coopératives de Guyenne," *Worker Co-op*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 17-19.



Members of Les Serres Coopératives de Guyenne taking inventory.

Press Gang Printers:

Spreading the word

By Sheila Gilhooly & Lynn Giraud

Press Gang Printers and Publishers originated as a community printshop in the early 1970s and became a collectively-operated women's business in 1974. Around the same time, the Press branched into feminist publishing with its first book, *Women Look At Psychiatry*.

Over the years, publishing has taken on a life of its own and is now a separate but sister collective operating out of the same location and employing three permanent staff. Anne Cameron's *Daughters of Copper Woman*, is now in its thirteenth printing with over 100,000 copies.

A unique operation

While there are women's publishing companies scattered throughout Canada, Press Gang Printers is the only women's printshop in the country. As we have grown and developed, we have done a lot of resource sharing and networking with individual women and printers we have met at conferences in the United States.

Last summer, one of our members attended a Progressive Printers Conference hosted by Cleveland's Organd Blossom Press. We were the only Canadian representative and one of only two women's shops present. The conference gave us a chance to discuss issues of common concern with 16 other progressive printers. We found that all of us face the basic difficulty of integrating the personal and the political with the financial — that is, finding ways to stay alive in a competitive business like printing, while maintaining our political integrity and respecting ourselves as workers.

In a trade dominated by men, Press Gang Printers has provided on-the-job training and permanent employment for women in the printing trade for over 15 years. Because we are a feminist press, access to equipment and skill development are essential aspects of our work, as is control over the kinds of words and images we will print.

It is important to us to help create printed material which contributes to social change and supports the progressive community. Since the content of what we print, as well as the quality of our

work, are things in which we take pride, we have developed policies which state that we will not print anything sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise oppressive to any person or people.

Feminist vision

We are a feminist, anti-capitalist collective. Our customer base is mostly co-ops, progressive political groups, community groups, and other women's organizations and businesses. We spend a lot of time advising our customers on different printing options and also offer the use of our layout and bindery equipment to groups who want to save money. In addition, we have a policy which allows us to donate printing on a regular basis to groups with no money and something important to say.

We operate as a worker co-op, and all workers have an equal voice in decision-making. Since 1985, we have had a worker contract outlining our rights, responsibilities, and conditions of employment. This contract contains several model clauses. It grew out of our commitment to balance in a responsible manner our roles as political activists, business people and workers.



Our contract gave us all new insights and respect for ourselves as workers. This process was part of the workplace democracy we actively promote and develop.

Supporting unions is another way of supporting ourselves and other workers. We have always actively endorsed trade unions with donations and letters of support, by walking picketlines and respecting boycotts.

The possibility of unionizing our own workplace has often been investigated and discussed over the last few years. Recently, we took the leap and became members of the Communications Workers of America, Local 226.

We feel that such a move reflects who we are and our commitment to both the labour movement and workplace democracy. Besides bringing us more work related to our politics, becoming a union shop will connect our existing customer base of community groups more directly with the labour movement.

We are proud that every piece of printing we produce goes out into the community carrying a logo which reads: "Printed by Union Labour."

For more information contact Press Gang, 603 Powell St., Vancouver, British Columbia V6A 1H2; (604) 253-1224 for the printshop and (604) 253-2537 for the publishing house.

Jamie McGloin initiated the Student Worker Co-op in Fredericton, New Brunswick.



Jamie McGloin leaves his mark

By Maureen Edgett

Last winter Jamie went to university. He also worked part-time as a disk jockey at a local pub and worked out at the gym. Jamie also spent over one hundred hours of volunteer time starting a student worker co-op in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

In a time when Canadian young people are often criticized as lazy, unmotivated and selfish, Jamie's story should be told.

If you should meet Jamie, you would think he was a typical student. He is outgoing, talkative and has a good sense of humor. He drives a Hyundai and has a girlfriend.

When questioned on the success of Fredericton's first student worker co-op

(SWC), Jamie plays down his involvement and recognizes all the others who contributed. But I have watched Jamie since he took the idea and made it happen.

Jamie's interest in a student worker co-op began during the summer of 1988 when he worked for the Canadian Co-operative Association, Atlantic region office in Moncton. It was there that he was introduced to the co-operative movement and specifically to worker co-ops.

That summer the first student worker co-op in New Brunswick, Contract-a-Student, was incorporated in Moncton. One of the advisors for that first group

was Sheelagh Greek, Jamie's boss. So naturally his summer job involved contact with the pilot project.

Careful planning

Jamie took the idea back home and modified it. He documented the operations, policies and problems of the first group. He asked CCA to provide an information session on worker co-ops in general, and the student co-op in particular, to a group of 20 representatives of co-operatives in Fredericton.

Then with Cathy Moulton, administrative assistant of Fredericton Direct Co-op, and Steve Dutcher, board member of Northside Direct Charge Co-op, he continued to meet with individuals and groups looking for their support. An information table was set up during student days at the local high school

which has a student body of 3,000. Approximately 25 applications for membership were received. After an information meeting 10 students were chosen on the basis of their eagerness to work, their willingness to be involved in the project and their skills. In their worker co-op, all members share ownership, decision-making and surplus earnings. Some of the services they offer are painting, lawn mowing, organizing birthday parties, cleaning canopies for local businesses, making meals for seniors and distributing pamphlets.

On their own initiative the students also contributed volunteer hours to their community, raising funds for the hospital by washing cars and dressing up as clowns to visit the hospital and local kindergartens. This was part of their commitment to the co-operative way of

people helping people.

They opened for business in June, 1989. The ceremonies were attended by Mike McKee, New Brunswick's Minister of Labour (a supporter of student worker co-ops), and by the Mayor, Brad Woodside. And as is his way Jamie stood back and watched the students. Although he is not a member of the co-op, and therefore does not vote or share in the surplus, he is very much a part of the core of the group, the spirit which made the student worker co-op a reality.

Maureen Edgett is a regular columnist with the Atlantic Co-operator and Vice-President of Co-op Centre, a 4,750-member Direct Charge Consumer Co-operative in Moncton. She may be reached at 76 Woodleigh, Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 8Z8; (506) 384-8563.

Grand Opening, June 22, 1989.

Left to right: Jonathan Coates (Treasurer), Danielle Noble (Vice-President), Hon. Mike McKee (New Brunswick Minister of Labour), Mayor Brad Woodside (Fredericton Mayor), Rhonda McLaughlin (President), Wendy Anderson (Secretary).



Nine Partners

Partners in Enterprise: The Worker-Ownership Phenomenon
Edited by Jack Quarter and George Melnyk, Black Rose, Montréal, 1989, 201 pp.

Reviewed by Tom Webb

It is hard enough to review a book written by one person. Dealing with a book edited by two people and written by nine is a bit like wrestling with an octopus. Having registered that complaint, it must be said that this is a pleasant octopus, and I hope this review will be decent enough to make you want to read the book. There are lots of reasons to read *Partners in Enterprise*. If you care about democracy, communities, dignity, co-operatives or public policy, this book is worth your time. It is also worth your time if you simply like to have your mind stimulated.

The readability of the book varies from chapter to chapter. It ranges from acceptable to excellent, academic to folksy. The content is varied, and the changing perspectives are both disconcerting and welcome.

Many Issues

The book deals with a number of issues and perspectives related to worker co-ops and co-ops generally. It starts with a good solid look at worker ownership — what it means and why it is important to our democratic society. Co-editor Jack Quarter then also examines the need for resource organizations to support the development of worker co-operatives, what is happening, who is involved and who should be involved.

In the following chapter, Jo-Ann Hannah and Jack Quarter review some case histories of "buyouts and conversions" and draw some lessons for the future. George Melnyk looks at the experiences of co-operative farms with an interesting analysis of their successes and failures. Given the escalating crisis on Canada's farms, and the resulting questions about the role of co-operatives



Peter Day of Co-operators Communication, a multi-stakeholder co-op, discussed in *Partners in Enterprise*.

in agriculture, this is especially valuable.

Judith Brown provides some insights into one of the less-written-about applications of worker co-ops — giving persons with disabilities a more meaningful role in our society. It is fitting that this is followed by Gregory Baum's analysis of the relationships between ethics, religion and co-operatives. This is another area where there has been too little written lately.

History Important

The greatest growth of worker co-ops has been in Québec. Therefore, an understanding of the Québec scene is important. Ginette Lafrenière and Alain Bridault look at the social contexts which have surrounded 100 years of worker co-op development in Québec. These authors help us learn from that history.

As a fellow Maritimer who is partial to the exquisite musings of Greg MacLeod, I especially enjoyed his look at the link with community economic development. I purposely left John Jordan's contribution on the multi-stakeholder concept to the last because it seemed linked to Greg MacLeod's thesis: just because the workers own it doesn't mean that worker co-ops necessarily do good things. Of course they won't! I have never yet seen a co-op full of saints; having worked in them has not erased my limitations. Surely the question is: Do they provide a structure which is more likely to empower people? Perhaps one of the stakeholders that can be empowe-

red by including it in the structure is the local community. John Jordan's inside tour about how the Co-operators corporation has experimented with the multi-stakeholder approach suggests that if you want to implement a sound concept, a way can be found.

This book invites and provokes. It leaves us with lots of questions, which need to be explored if we are to achieve strong worker co-op development in Canada. Would a co-op resource group have had more success than government in establishing co-operative farms in Saskatchewan? Can the co-op sector leave long-term development to government and expect the commitment to be sustained?

Many questions

Can we overcome the language problem, illustrated by David Ellerman's work, which Jack Quarter discusses in the first chapter? How can we become precise about what worker co-ops mean and still reach a mass audience? We still have not solved the problem of surplus vs profits. Mass communication demands that we say "profits", but then we no longer say what we mean. The same is true of many other concepts associated with worker co-ops. They are often difficult to communicate.

Both Quarter and Melnyk raise the question as to who will be the driving force behind worker co-op development: Government? Existing co-operatives? Corporations? It seems clear that if it is

not co-operatives taking the lead, worker co-op development will be stunted or warped. Should the existing co-op system take the lead with a built-in mechanism to transfer control to the worker co-ops which are successfully developed? Such an approach would require government matching funds.

Perhaps what I liked most about this book is that it does not shy away from viewing worker co-ops as a preferred option for economic activity. It is not afraid to suggest that there should be an ethical preference for co-operatives because they are structures which are more empowering than the alternatives. It is not too timid to suggest that local ownership and control and stakeholder representation will tend to produce a more sane and livable society and stronger communities. For years, big business has not even blushed at making the most outrageous

P.E.I. potato-chip-co-op truck making deliveries. Potato chip co-op discussed in Partners in Enterprise.



Editor Jim Erikson of Co-operators Communication with client.

claims about the marketplace, free trade and the benefits of competition. Too often, co-operators seem afraid to blow their own legitimate horn because someone, somewhere, might think it is a bit exaggerated. It is time to feel good about promoting economic democracy.

Buy the book! It's worth it!

Tom Webb is manager of member and public relations, Co-op Atlantic, P.O. Box 750, Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 8N5; (506) 858-6382. He is the author of *Workers' Co-operatives: A People-Centred Approach to Regional Development*, published by the Institut Canadien de Recherche sur le Développement Regional, Moncton.

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The O&O Way

Job Saving Strategies: Worker Buyouts and QWL

By Arthur Hochner, Cheryl S. Granrose, Judith Goode, Elaine Simon, Eileen Applebaum.
Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1988, 345 pages, including bibliography and appendices.

Reviewed by Jeremy Hull

A major experiment in employee ownership has been taking place in Philadelphia since the early 1980s. In 1982, the A&P supermarket chain was about to close most of its remaining 29 stores in the area. A few days after the A&P announcement, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) made a bid to purchase 21 of these stores. This led to an agreement between the union and A&P to re-open most of the stores under the Super Fresh name, although still under A&P ownership. The union made concessions in form of wage reductions, fewer holidays and greater control by management over hiring and work rules (e.g., being able to hire more part-time workers). Management also agreed to institute a Quality of Work Life (QWL) program and a new bonus system for the workers. The QWL program was to provide for worker involvement in store-based decision-making and greater autonomy for individual stores.

The O&O scenario

As part of the same agreement, two of the stores known as "O&O" (Owned and Operated) were purchased by former A&P employees. Forty worker-owners each raised the \$5,000 required to purchase the stores, with the assistance of loans from the UFCW credit union. Six months after the closure announcement, following intensive planning and development in the areas of worker training, financing and organizing by the UFCW and its consultants, these two O&O stores opened with an organizational



Grand Opening 1982: Roslyn O&O Supermarket.

structure based on the co-operative principle of one-member/one-vote.

Job-Saving Strategies is a study by five academics comparing the experiences of these former A&P workers who ended up in the Super Fresh stores and those who became co-operative owners of the O&O stores. Three types of stores are compared: the O&O buyouts, the Super Fresh stores in which the Quality of Work Life program was taken seriously and Super Fresh stores in which the QWL program existed in name only. The Philadelphia A&P experience is seen as a natural experiment in which many of the variables — such as the industrial and regional economic characteristics — are controlled, while the type and degree of participation of employees varies.

O&O women advance

One of the key findings of the research is that the QWL program, as implemented in the Super Fresh stores, extends participation only to the upper echelon of staff, and tends to widen the division between a relatively small number of secure, full-time, male workers at the senior levels and the large number of part-time workers, many of them women, who are excluded from senior jobs. In comparison, the O&O stores have a more meaningful type of participation and very few part-time workers. While the O&O stores have not eliminated the sexism they inherited from the A&P experience, they have improved conditions for women by giving them full-time hours and more exposure to store-wide functioning

and decision-making, which at least creates the possibility for them to advance within the organization.

Another important finding is that profits improved for the O&O stores to a greater extent than for the Super Fresh stores. Conventional wisdom in the industry suggests that profits can most easily be maintained and improved by reducing the number of full-time workers and replacing them with cheaper, part-time workers. In other words, reduce labour costs to increase profits. However, the O&O stores did just the opposite of this — the worker-owners were largely experienced, full-time workers at the top end of the wage scale; and being worker-owned, the stores certainly did not encourage turnover. Therefore, labour costs were higher than in the Super Fresh stores. But worker productivity improved even more, markets were expanded, and the result was more profitable stores. All this was done in the face of a very competitive industry.

The worker-owners of the O&O stores were much more satisfied with their work lives than the employees of Super Fresh. However, they had sacrificed a great deal of time in the process of becoming collective entrepreneurs, and were much more dissatisfied with their family life and leisure time activities than their counterparts in the Super Fresh stores. It is also important to note that the worker-owners were experienced food-store workers, and that their skills and experience were found to be important to the success of the O&O stores. Level of education was also found to be an impor-



The O&O
cake-cutting
ceremony.

tant factor — those who had completed high school were much more involved in decision-making than others.

Advice for others

The book ends with some practical conclusions:

- The larger the firm, the more important it is to have competent and co-operative management and staff.
- Supermarkets, as labour-intensive businesses with local rather than national markets, may be a better environment for worker buyouts than many other industries.
- Worker-owned supermarkets might not function as well if staffed with inexperienced workers.
- Specific efforts are required to overcome patterns of discrimination within an industry, even when the business is a worker co-operative.
- Sympathetic union leadership and pre-closure preparation on the part of the union are important to the success of buyouts.
- Governments should legislate six months' advanced notice in the case of closures to provide adequate time for worker buyouts.
- Governments should consider providing incentives for worker participation as part of its business loan and technical assistance programs.

This book is an important study of the issues most central to the debate over worker ownership and worker buyouts. The book will be of particular interest to researchers and policy-makers. It includes theory, technical analysis, tables, and a description of the events surrounding the creation of this important experiment in worker ownership.

Jeremy Hull is a consultant with The Working Margins Consulting Group, 200-851 Croydon Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0W3; (204) 453-6137.

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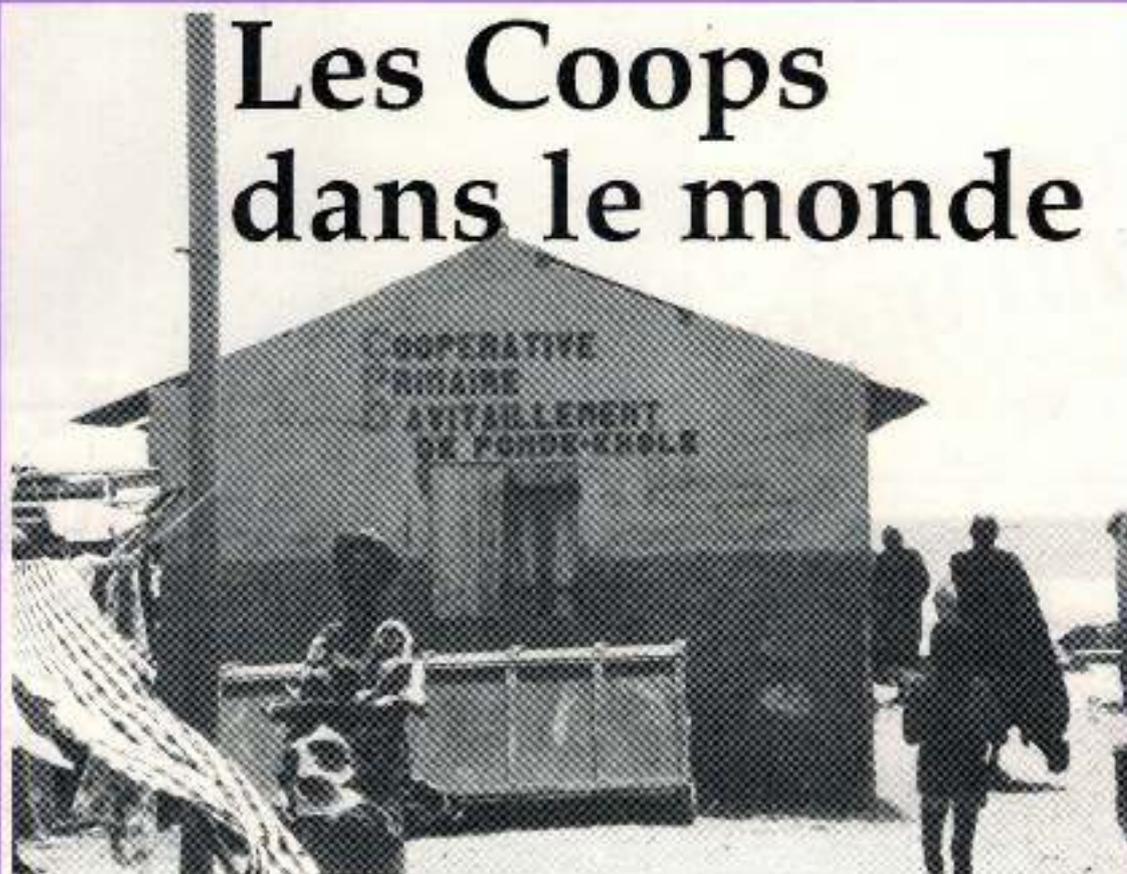


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Les Coops dans le monde



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Le MAGAZINE
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Volume 9 Numéro 2
Automne 1989

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La coopération ici et ailleurs

Le Québec est une société où la coopération est une réalité vivante et dynamique. C'est aussi une longue tradition, entre autres dans la coopération de travail avec les coopératives forestières. C'est enfin un instrument de développement économique, très évident en région. Pour certains secteurs durant les années 1970, la coopération est même devenue un véhicule de changement social allant même jusqu'à modifier «l'art de vivre»: que l'on pense à la coopération de consommation dans les zones urbaines et à la coopération de travail où l'idéologie de la libération du salariat prenait une place importante en ces années.

Les années 1980 et la crise économique ont amené un discours plus économique, la réalité coopérative est cependant plus vivante que jamais. Vivante ici, et vivante ailleurs. Ce numéro de Coop de travail est consacré à la présentation de différentes activités de coopération. Tout d'abord un portrait de C.A.C. Internationale, coopérative de travail québécoise qui oeuvre dans le domaine de la coopération internationale depuis les années 1980. Cette coopérative démontre par son succès l'immense champs d'action que peut occuper la coopération de travail.

Des nouvelles des cousins de France aussi par un article de Pico Olhagaray, coopérateur à l'Union régionale de Bordeaux de la Confédération générale des SCOP (Sociétés coopératives ouvrières de production) en France qui nous trace un portrait des SCOP en France et présente une expérience originale Campus Coopératives au pays Basques français.

Enfin, des textes venus d'outre-mer qui abordent l'idéologie de l'économie sociale, thème encore nouveau ici, mais qui dans un avenir rapproché sera peut-être la bannière sous laquelle se retrouveront coopérateurs de coopératives et coopérateurs de d'autres mouvements.

Donc, des idées, des portraits d'ailleurs pour créer de nouvelles solidarités et nous enrichir de l'expérience de nos compagnons et compagnes d'ailleurs.

Le Comité d'orientation

CAC Internationale

Une coopérative québécoise ouverte sur le monde

Fondée à Montréal en 1977 par dix intervenants en développement des ressources humaines, la Coopérative d'animation et de consultation a développé une culture organisationnelle originale qui a permis l'ajout constant de ressources nouvelles, le développement de son expertise et une capacité d'adaptation face aux exigences du marché de l'intervention en développement économique et social.

Sa philosophie d'intervention dans les pays en voie de développement est de maximiser la capacité d'organisations locales en entreprenant avec elles une démarche interactive basée sur la méthode de l'animation dans le travail de groupe et la formation des ressources humaines qui resteront sur le terrain, une fois le mandat terminé.

C'est ce qui fait de CAC Internationale, un acteur important et apprécié dans le domaine du développement international.

Historique et développement

D'un groupe s'occupant essentiellement d'animation (colloques, congrès) sur le marché local (gouvernement provincial et fédéral, CLSC) pendant les trois premières années de son existence, la Coopérative évolue, particulièrement depuis 1981, vers le marché international. Cette volonté de changer l'orientation de la firme se manifeste dès 1980 alors que les

membres adoptèrent la raison sociale actuellement en vigueur abandonnant ainsi l'appellation de Coopérative d'intervenants en développement des ressources communautaires.

C'est dès cet instant que les membres de la coopérative ont résolument misé sur la responsabilité de chacun vis-à-vis la recherche de la clientèle et l'accomplissement des mandats, tournant résolument le dos à une formule du type table rotative.

LOUISE BOUCHER

avocate

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PHOTO: Gilles Beaulieu

Pour Oxfam-Québec, CAC Internationale a entrepris une recherche-action en vue d'identifier les potentiels de regroupement des femmes vendeuses et petites commerçantes dans les marchés publics d'Abidjan.

Ce choix impliquait et implique encore une grande responsabilité de chacun dans l'exécution de ses mandats et une grande collégialité au niveau de la vie interne de la coopérative mais parallèlement, assurait à l'organisme client un service d'une égale qualité et donnant des résultats probants.

À l'animation directe de groupes de travail, la coopérative a ajouté les dimensions de planifi-

cation, d'évaluation ou encore de la recherche-action dans le cadre d'une démarche participative pour permettre à l'organisation locale de se structurer et de croître. Elle peut aussi prendre en charge la formation des leaders locaux et coordonner les activités des équipes intervenant auprès de la clientèle.

La Coopérative s'est aussi dotée

suite à la page 5

suite de la page 4

d'un volet développement organisationnel de façon à pouvoir intervenir à chacune des étapes d'un projet soit au niveau de la planification, de l'implantation ou encore de l'évaluation d'un projet. Pour compléter la gamme de services, le support technique n'a pas été mis de côté; la planification financière, la comptabilité, le contrôle interne, la vérification et la revue des procédures administratives.

Enfin, CAC Internationale ne veut absolument pas se figer dans le seul axe Nord-Sud; dans ce sens, la porte est grande ouverte à la collaboration et au partenariat avec les organismes d'ici (ONG canadiennes, entreprises privées, CDR) qui ont développé des expertises particulières et de qualité.

L'expérience internationale

La Coopérative d'animation et de consultation intervient dans une trentaine de pays en voie de développement soit en Afrique, en Amérique latine et aux Caraïbes en desservant une clientèle variée: des organismes et Agences des Nations-Unis (tel que le Bureau international du travail, l'Unicef ou autres), des agences gouvernementales (tel que l'Agence canadienne de développement international ou encore la United State Agency for International Development), des organisations non gouvernementales telles que le Conseil canadien pour la coopération internationale, l'Institut africain pour le développement économique et social ou encore Oxfam-Québec et enfin avec le secteur privé, entre autres Teccart International ou le groupe Pragma Corporation de Washington.



PHOTO: Gilles Beaulieu

CAC Internationale s'est dotée d'une expertise reconnue dans le secteur «Femmes et développement». Ses interventions furent nombreuses dans des pays comme le Rwanda, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Zaïre, le Congo et l'ensemble de l'Afrique francophone.

Quelques exemples

La Coopérative, engagée par l'ACDI, a fourni une assistance technique auprès d'Inades-formation, de l'IPD et d'autres organismes d'éducation des adultes en Côte-d'Ivoire, au Togo, au Rwanda et au Cameroun dans le cadre des services qu'elle offre en éducation et formation.

Géomines a accordé à CAC Internationale la conception d'un programme de formation à l'animation pour un projet d'hydraulique villageois au Bénin et au Togo dans le cadre des services qu'elle offre en animation et développement communautaire.

L'ACDI a commandé à la Coopérative un plan d'opération pour le projet de contribution canadienne au programme d'alphabetisation de l'Église catholique d'Haïti dans le cadre des services qu'elle offre en planifi-

cation, gestion et administration.

NGLS a confié à la Coopérative l'évaluation projet «International Tree Project Clearing-house» dans le cadre des services qu'elle offre en études, recherches et évaluation.

Oxfam-Québec a retenu la Coopérative pour une recherche-action auprès des vendeuses et petites commerçantes des mar-

chés publics d'Abidjan en Côte-d'Ivoire et pour l'élaboration d'un plan d'opération du projet vu l'expertise dans le domaine femmes et développement.

C'est sur cette expertise que mise la Coopérative d'animation et de consultation, dont le siège social est à Montréal pour redévelopper un marché local sans pour autant abandonner son rayonnement international.

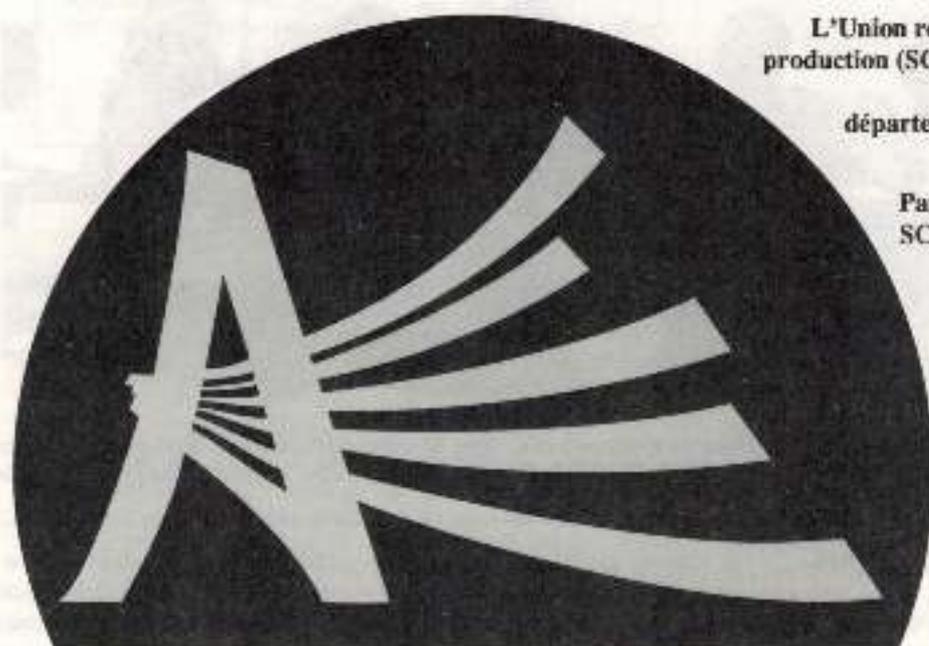


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L'Union régionale des SCOP d'Aquitaine

Des entreprises solidaires au service de la région



L'Union régionale des Sociétés coopératives ouvrières de production (SCOP) d'Aquitaine, association de type loi 1901, rassemble les coopératives de production des départements de Gironde, Dordogne, Lot et Garonne, Landes et Pyrénées Atlantique.

Partie prenante de la Confédération générale des SCOP, structure nationale, l'Union régionale des SCOP est donc une antenne déconcentrée, proche des entreprises, des hommes qui les composent, du terrain.

Regroupant 75 entreprises et 1 200 salariés, associés à 90%, l'Union régionale des SCOP est animée par un conseil d'administration et par une petite équipe de trois collaborateurs.

Les SCOP adhérentes définissent périodiquement, à l'occasion d'assemblées générales, les fonctions et missions qu'elles entendent voir assumer au plan régional.

Ainsi ont été définies et sont actuellement menées au sein de l'Union régionale, les actions suivantes:

Représentation

Il s'agit d'une fonction de lobbying auprès des partenaires sociaux, économiques et politiques afin de défendre, exposer et diffuser les idées et les convictions coopératives. C'est une fonction importante car le mouvement coopératif porte une image quelque peu désuète, sans rapport avec les performances économiques et sociales de ses membres.

Nous entrons, nous aussi, dans l'ère de la communication institutionnelle.

Rassemblement

Le fonctionnement des instances élues et l'animation du mouvement occupent également une partie de notre temps.

Cela nous permet de coordonner nos actions avec le niveau national ou inter-régional (entre UR) et de faire vivre et prendre corps tous les jours un peu plus cette notion de réseau d'entreprises qui fait notre spécificité et notre force.

Appui au développement interne

Notre Union régionale est prestataire de services en gestion coopérative sur le domaine de gestion économique, financière, juridique et fiscale.

Cela se traduit par du conseil (consulting diriez-vous) sur des thèmes précis et en fonction de besoins identifiés par les entreprises.

Depuis quelques temps, nous avons amorcé des travaux importants vers des entreprises à fort potentiel: c'est ainsi que nous réalisons périodiquement des plans de développement, depuis la définition des objectifs jusqu'à la mise en place des moyens nécessaires.

Aide à la formation

C'est un volet important de notre action car nous croyons à la formation comme outil de développement. Formation coopérative c'est-à-dire liée au statut SCOP et à ses dispositions, ou formation de type économique, elle est la plupart du temps intégrée dans des programmes pluri-annuels que nous dénommons «engagement de développement de la formation» programmes dans lesquels l'État français apporte son concours. La formation s'inscrit donc, dans nos actions, comme un investissement, générant de la croissance.

Accueil de projets

Comme toute Union régionale, l'UR SCOP Aquitaine, accueille tous les porteurs de projets qui souhaitent créer une entreprise sous forme coopérative.

De la définition du projet à l'étude de faisabilité, toutes les phases sont soigneusement étudiées. À noter que nous cherchons systématiquement à mettre les promoteurs en relation avec des entreprises existantes.

Développement externe: promotion Lanberri

La promotion Lanberri est une école expérimentale de développement d'entreprises. Cette école a officiellement démarré en septembre de cette année et, bien que ressemblant beaucoup à Campus Coopératives France, comporte certaines particularités que nous avons voulu y apporter.

Ainsi, nous avons dans ce montage associé:

Des partenaires pédagogiques: l'IUT de Bayonne et l'École polytechnique de Mondragon (École du groupe industriel de Mondragon).

Des partenaires industriels: coopératives locales ayant des projets de développement.

Des consultants: l'UR SCOP et Saiolan, Saiolan étant un département spécifique du groupe de Mondragon (135 coopératives, 20 000 associés salariés), une banque intégrée, des écoles, une sécurité sociale ...).

Enfin des promoteurs ayant l'ambition et la motivation de créer de nouvelles entreprises.

Trois projets sont actuellement à l'étude: un centre de services industriels en mécanique, une société de services en connectique, enfin un centre de service en informatique linguistique.

Tous les projets sont parrainés par un industriel qui apporte sa compétence et son expérience pendant 18 mois jusqu'au lancement définitif.

Cumuler les savoir-faire et les expériences par une synergie poussée et organisée, permettre à des hommes nouveaux de participer activement à la création et au développement économique, favoriser et stimuler la recherche-développement au sein d'entreprises coopératives existantes, enfin intégrer les entreprises dans des logiques partenariales en France, en Europe, voire au-delà ..., telle est la vocation de Lanberri.

C'est un projet ambitieux, peut-être utopique. Mais l'utopie n'est-elle pas le moteur de l'histoire?

Peio Olhagaray

*Délégué régional
SCOP d'Aquitaine*

(Collaboration spéciale)

NDLR: Dans notre série de portraits, nous avons voulu regarder les expérimentations et les réussites réalisées de par le monde. Ce texte fut écrit par monsieur Peio Olhagaray, délégué pour la région de l'Aquitaine de la Confédération générale des SCOP (Sociétés coopératives ouvrières de production, l'équivalent de nos coopératives de travailleurs) à titre de collaborateur spécial.

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Pourquoi une coopérative

Deux perspectives très différentes

Une réponse de France

J.M. Keynes, à la fin de son essai sur la monnaie, a écrit un chapitre intitulé: "Perspectives économiques pour nos petits-enfants", où il pose prophétiquement la question de la crise des sociétés d'abondance.

Il y prévoit, observant le comportement des classes oisives des années 30, que sans une mutation culturelle fondamentale, les sociétés d'abondance iront vers une "dépression nerveuse collective".

De la révolution de l'intelligence

Parler aujourd'hui d'une troisième révolution industrielle qui reproduirait le modèle technologie/matière première vécu antérieurement, serait admettre une organisation du travail où la technologie dominante tourne autour de l'informatique et où la matière première serait le silicium, dérivé du sable. En réalité, ce qui demande temps et argent dans l'économie occidentale d'aujourd'hui,

L'Université d'été du C.J.D.E.S.

Depuis quelques années, l'Université d'été du C.J.D.E.S. (Centre des jeunes dirigeants de l'économie sociale) rassemble ceux qui, croyant fermement à cette formule d'entrepreneurship, désirent se doter des moyens propres à sa réussite.

Cette année, l'Université a eu lieu du 30 août au 2 septembre, au Village Arc-en-ciel de Port d'Albert à Vieux Boucau, autour du thème «Demain l'économie sociale».

C'est dans le cadre de l'Université d'été de 1988 que monsieur Patrick Viveret propose son analyse sur la place et l'utilité de l'entreprise du type «Économie sociale». Nous tirons de sa conférence quelques éléments de réflexion.

d'hui, c'est l'organisation de l'intelligence dans les logiciels et non le sable.

La grande variable réside donc dans la capacité de nos sociétés à transformer leurs rapports sociaux et à inventer une culture adaptée à la mobilisation de l'intelligence collective: c'est poser radicalement la question de la gestion des ressources humaines.

De l'expulsion des passions

La grande entreprise industrielle fordiste ou taylorienne n'ayant aucunement besoin de l'intelligence, avait résolu la question des passions en l'expulsant de l'entreprise par le fractionnement du travail, compensant par le jeu de l'augmentation du pouvoir d'achat et par la réduction du temps de travail.

Les besoins d'ordres économiques et sociaux permettaient alors ce fonctionnement dans l'organisation du travail en vue d'une augmentation de la productivité et de la satisfaction minimale du besoin de repérage dans une société en mutation, particulièrement par l'urbanisation massive des populations.

Crise de l'économie

Keynes situait cette crise des sociétés d'abondance dans une perspective de la sortie de l'économie dans le texte ci-haut mentionné. Si l'on constate que la grande industrie produit plus de richesses et moins d'emploi, c'est qu'il y a crise au ni-

veau du modèle de développement.

Si l'on constate les efforts des dernières années de renouveau du management pour reformer le mode fordiste devenu contre productif, c'est qu'il y a crise au niveau de l'entreprise.

Enfin, si l'on constate l'effritement des réseaux traditionnels de convivialité et de solidarité dans nos sociétés, c'est qu'il y a crise de l'identité individuelle et collective.

Le rôle anticipateur de l'économie sociale

À partir du moment où le système des besoins se trouve en grande partie saturé, la guerre économique porte effectivement sur le désir. La question majeure de l'entreprise moderne, c'est qu'en voulant motiver son personnel, elle est obligée de réorganiser complètement son circuit passionnel.

Dans ce sens, l'économie sociale ou coopérative dispose d'outils majeurs. Elle sait, par exemple, le rôle du partage des pouvoirs, de la participation à un projet collectif doué de sens, du partage de la richesse et du climat convivial au sein de l'entreprise. Elle peut ainsi, dans une économie de l'information, jouer un rôle moteur en créant le lien nécessaire entre la révolution de l'intelligence et la régulation passionnelle.

Telle est sa chance.

La Direction des coopératives du ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de la Technologie

Une équipe au service des coopératives

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Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère de l'Industrie, du Commerce
et de la Technologie

Une réponse du Québec

Portrait général

Le portrait type de l'individu chargé de la gestion d'une coopérative nous présente une personne mariée, âgée en moyenne de 36 ans. Elle a en moyenne 1.5 enfant, mais 20% de l'échantillonnage ont au moins quatre enfants. Elle a complété au minimum des études secondaires et suivi des cours d'appoint en administration. Membre fondateur de la coopérative (15 cas), elle en est à sa première expérience comme gestionnaire (dans 14 cas).

Le gestionnaire d'une coopérative vient d'un milieu socio-économique moyen ou modeste qui accordait de l'importance aux valeurs religieuses et à l'autorité. L'implication dans un réseau social y était moins importante.

Pour l'ensemble des répondants, l'école était un lieu important d'apprentissage de la connaissance, de socialisation et de valorisation de la personne. Plus de 50% pratiquaient les activités sportives ou sociales en équipe et enfin ils se considéraient comme débrouillards et émotifs, perceptions qui coïncidaient généralement avec celles de leur entourage.

Le gestionnaire de l'entreprise

Les coopératives touchées par l'étude oeuvrent dans des secteurs économiques très diversifiés. Elles

NDLR: Pourquoi une coopérative de travailleurs? Les deux textes qui suivent sont des extraits de conférence ou d'étude, abordant cette question sous des angles totalement différents. La première réponse nous vient d'une analyse de la structure économique occidentale et de la place de l'économie sociale dans celle-ci que monsieur Patrick Viveret présenta à l'Université d'été du C.J.D.L.S. en 1988; la seconde provient d'une enquête de monsieur Alphonse Gasana pour établir le portrait des gestionnaires des coopératives de travailleurs de la région de Québec.

ont, en moyenne, trois années d'existence et sont majoritairement de petite taille, soit entre un et dix membres.

Ces gestionnaires accordent autant d'importance à la participation des membres qu'à la réussite financière de l'entreprise et dans les fonctions de gestion, le marketing/promotion/vente jouit d'une moindre importance. Ils consacrent le plus de temps à la production et à la gestion des ressources humaines alors que la fonction formation/information leur prend moins de temps.

L'esprit d'équipe, la résistance au stress et la confiance en soi, le leadership et l'autonomie sont, dans l'ordre les principales caractéristiques du bon gestionnaire. Par rapport à la perception que les répondants ont d'eux-mêmes, l'ordre reste pratiquement inchangé, mais le niveau d'importance baisse considérablement.

La plupart des gestionnaires pensent agir de façon démocratique et rationnelle et estiment être perçus



Le texte qui suit est le condensé d'une enquête menée par monsieur Alphonse Gasana à l'automne 1987 dans la région 03.

L'enquête voulait tracer un portrait du gestionnaire de coopérative de travailleurs et en même temps connaître ses perceptions à l'égard de cette institution.

de la même façon par leurs membres. Ils considèrent que leurs relations avec le CA et les membres sont très bonnes.

Relever un défi personnel, c'est la motivation première de 62% des répondants, près de la moitié ont connu le milieu coopératif par l'intermédiaire d'amis et de connaissances et enfin la majorité (56%) sont membres actifs d'une ou plusieurs associations.

La très grande majorité estiment que le rôle principal d'une coopérative est la création d'emplois. Quant à leur rôle, il consiste pour la moitié d'entre eux à gérer quotidiennement les activités de la coopérative qui,

pour les deux tiers, doivent permettre aux membres de se réaliser au travail.

Éléments personnels

Au cours d'une semaine de travail, plus de la moitié des gestionnaires (61,5%) consacrent moins de quatre heures à leur famille et la grande majorité (86,7%) accordent moins de deux heures aux activités de loisir social.

En fin de semaine, plus des deux tiers (71,4%) consacrent plus de six heures à leur famille. La grande majorité de ces coopérateurs (66,67%) accordent au moins deux heures de leur temps aux affaires de la coopérative.

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Conseil des coopératives de l'Outaouais **Profil des coopératives**

Le Conseil des coopératives de l'Outaouais vient de publier son répertoire Profil des coopératives de l'Outaouais. C'est un document de 180 pages, format 8 1/2 sur 5 relié par spirale. Il présente sous forme de fiches techniques le profil socio-économique de chacune des coopératives de la région administrative 07. Le répertoire offre, de plus, un aperçu du développement des coopératives au Québec, puis dans l'Outaouais. On y trouve également la liste et une description des organismes de support aux coopératives et des organismes d'intercoopération. Le Profil est un document de référence qui peut servir d'outil aux coopératives et aux entrepreneurs qui veulent obtenir un portrait global des coopératives dans l'Outaouais. Le CCO souhaite que la diffusion de son répertoire contribue à soutenir les efforts de tous les partenaires coopératifs vers une meilleure intercoopération.

Campus Coopératives Canada à Bordeaux



PHOTO: Jean-François Labrière

En juillet dernier se tenait une session d'échanges sur le partenariat nord-sud dans les PME à l'École internationale de Bordeaux. C'est sous l'égide de l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (ACCT) que ce groupe de travail composé de représentants d'une douzaine de pays africains et du Québec se réunissait.

À cette occasion, le ministère québécois des Affaires internationales a présenté la candidature de Campus Coopératives pour aller exposer le système de démarrage aux participants des pays du sud.

Le système original et unique de Campus Coopératives a fortement retenu l'attention de plusieurs délégués africains. Les participants ont noté la pertinence de la mise en place de structures Campus dans les pays en voie de développement pour favoriser l'émergence d'entreprises autochtones qui misent sur la participation des travailleurs et qui sont appuyées par un portage tant juridique que financier.

À ce jour, huit représentants de pays africains se sont montrés intéressés à examiner la possibilité de mettre en place un système Campus en collaboration avec la CDR de Montréal.

Conseil des coopératives de l'Outaouais **Agente de développement**

Madame Linda Sabourin vient de se joindre à l'équipe du CCO. Compte tenu de son expérience du développement économique dans l'Outaouais, Madame Sabourin pourra apporter une aide précieuse au développement des coopératives de la région.

Nomination au CCQ

C'est avec joie que nous avons appris la nomination de madame Juliette Bonneville au titre de Directrice générale du Conseil de la coopération du Québec.

Madame Bonneville quitte donc la direction générale de la CDR de Québec où elle a accompli un travail remarquable d'implantation et de soutien aux coopératives de travailleurs.

Le magazine Coop de travail se réjouit de cette nomination qui amènera au CCQ une personne dont l'expertise pratique est reconnue par tous. Le passé étant garant de l'avenir, nous sommes convaincus que Madame Bonneville saura mener à bien le défi nouveau qui l'attend.



Conseil des coopératives de l'Outaouais **Serriculture biologique**

Dans le cadre du PNAL, le CCO travaille à la mise sur pied d'un projet de serriculture biologique dans la MRC Papineau. Plusieurs étapes ont été franchies dont les études de pré-démarrage. Le CCO vient d'engager monsieur Louis Gagnon à titre de directeur de l'exploitation de serres. Celui-ci a une expérience de huit ans dans la serriculture comme propriétaire de sa propre entreprise. Ce projet de 1,2 millions \$ permettra de créer dix emplois à moyen terme et les travaux d'immobilisation doivent débiter au printemps 1990.

Nomination au Centre de gestion



C'est le 14 août dernier que monsieur Jean Guertin, Directeur de l'École des Hautes Études Commerciales, a annoncé la nomination de monsieur Jean-Guy Rousseau, professeur au service de l'Enseignement des sciences comptables, à la direction du Centre de gestion des coopératives, en remplacement de monsieur Benoît Tremblay qui cède ce mandat en raison de ses responsabilités sur le plan politique.

Monsieur Rousseau était déjà actif au Centre de gestion des coopératives dont il préside le comité conjoint d'orientation depuis plusieurs années. Bien connu des milieux coopératifs, il a oeuvré à la mise sur pied de programmes de formation à l'intention de gestionnaires de ce secteur. Il préside par ailleurs le conseil d'administration de la Caisse populaire St-André Apôtre, à Ahuntsic, rôle qu'il assume depuis fort longtemps.

Nous sommes convaincus que le nouveau directeur saura imprimer sa marque à cet excellent outil qu'est le Centre de gestion des coopératives.