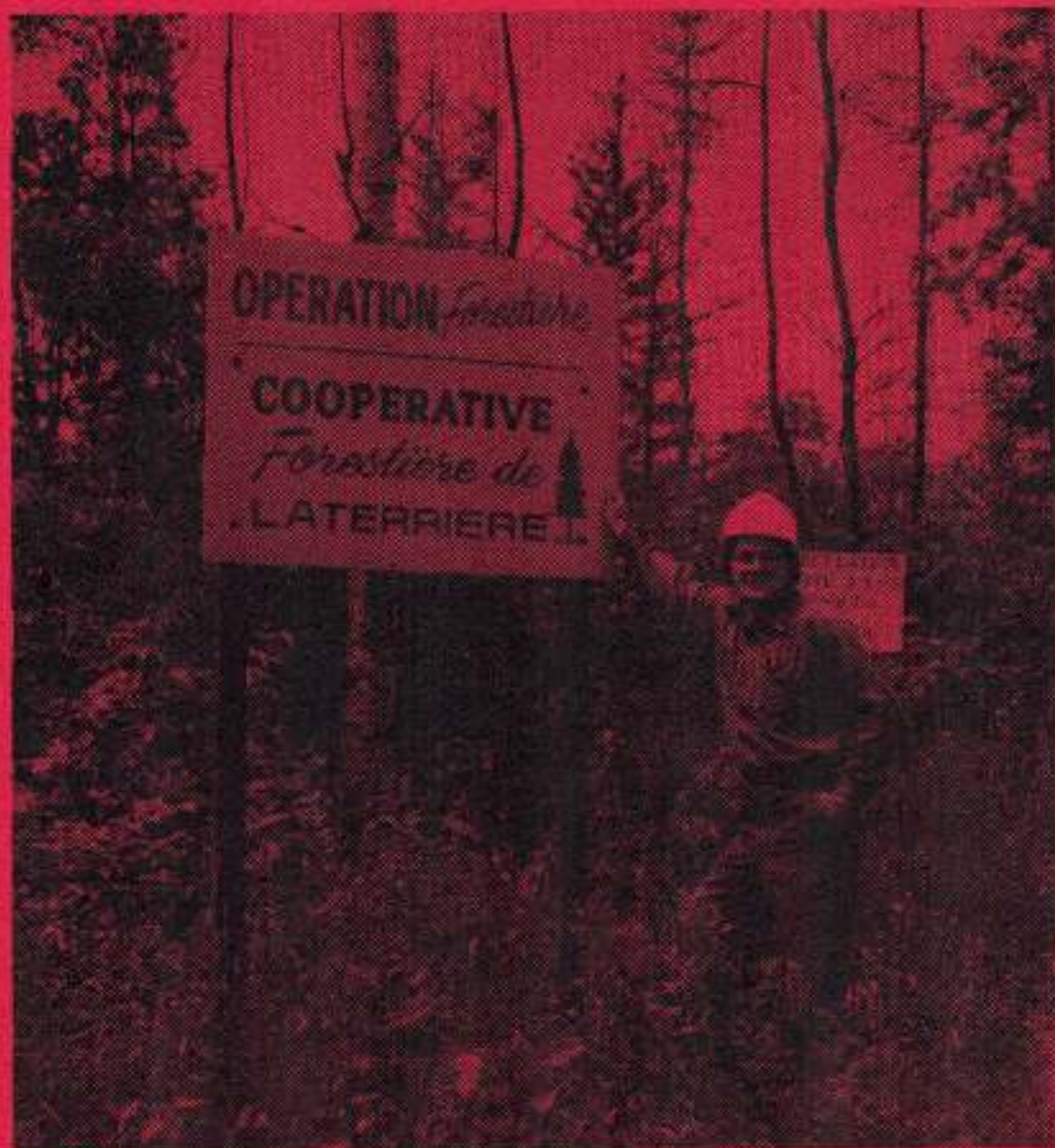


WORKER CO-OPS

Les serres coopératives de Guyenne: bâtir son milieu par la coopération

Believe it or not: a worker co-operative in Junior Achievement



Quebec's forestry co-operatives: a major

0140.11 ess story

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Work in Quebec's forestry co-ops. (Story p. 21.)

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Ad Size	Cost per issue /per 4 issues
3"x 5"	\$40/\$150
1/2 page	\$100/\$375
Full page	\$200/\$750

Another Step Forward

Readers of *Worker Co-ops* will notice something different in this issue -- French! Our magazine will now have a regular supply of feature stories, book reviews and notes about worker co-operatives in Quebec and in other French-language communities in Canada and internationally. Some of this material -- particularly the feature stories -- will be translated into English.

The French-language materials will be co-ordinated by a team headed by Alain Côté (a researcher in the co-operatives department of Quebec's ministry of industry and commerce), Jean-Claude Guérard (a professor at the business school, University of Montreal), and Louis-Philippe Beaudin (director of the Montreal commercial-services resource group for worker co-operatives). Claude Carbonneau (la Société de développement des coopératives) will continue to do the Quebec section of "Across the Nation".

Any French-language material or correspondence for *Worker Co-ops* should be sent to: Jean-Claude Guérard, Centre de gestion des coopératives, 3535 Queen Mary Rd., Montreal, Quebec H3V 1V8; (514) 340-6011.

We are interested in knowing what our readers think of this change. And, as always, your letters -- in English or French -- about any of the issues raised in the magazine are most welcome.

Jack Quarter
English-language
editor

Désireux d'étendre la portée du magazine, les promoteurs du *Worker Co-ops* entreprenaient, le 15 mai dernier, une démarche auprès du CIRIEC afin d'augmenter le nombre de leurs collaborateurs au Canada français et, si possible, le nombre d'abonnés.

Vous aurez donc remarqué la proportion du contenu francophone (environ 8 pages par numéro), contenu qui sera préparé par un comité francophone nouvellement constitué. De plus, certains articles paraîtront dans les deux langues.

Soulignons également que, dans un premier temps, cette collaboration (*Worker Co-ops* - CIRIEC) demeure informelle. Comme le premier objectif visé est la diffusion d'expériences variées dans le domaine qui nous intéresse, d'autres collaborateurs pourraient être appelés à se joindre à nous.

On ne le dira jamais assez: l'argent est le nerf de la guerre... et de l'édition! Seuls vos abonnements pourront assurer à la revue le "fonds de roulement" nécessaire à sa parution régulière.

Le comité de rédaction publie également des textes, notes d'actualité ou revues de livres qui lui parviennent. Dans ce cas, veuillez faire parvenir vos contributions, si possible dans les deux langues, à l'adresse suivante: M. Jean-Claude Guérard

Centre de gestion des coopératives
3535, Queen Mary, suite 508
Montréal, Québec
H3V 1H8 (514) 340-6011

Alain Côté
Coordonnateur

Dear reader:

The rapid growth of the *Worker Co-ops* magazine during this past year has greatly taxed our resources. We are primarily a volunteer organization with no government or other external support. Please take a moment to read the following list of suggestions and see whether you can help us in any small way:

1) Renew without reminders, and if possible take a two-year subscription. This saves us work and money;

2) Take a sub for a friend or at least try and spread the word about the magazine;

3) See whether your co-op, credit union, workplace or other organizations to which you belong will subscribe;

4) If you belong to a large co-op or credit union, see whether it will take a bulk sub for its board and management. Bulk subs of 50 or more are \$9 and less than 50 are \$10;

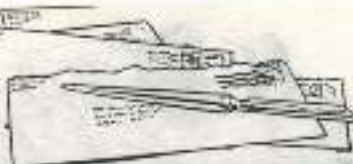
5) For a mere \$100 (or more), add your name to the list of illustrious donors to *Worker Co-ops* (see inside of front cover). And if not yourself, see whether your co-op or credit union might become a donor;

6) Consider advertising your worker co-op's services or products in this magazine, or suggest that your consumer co-op or credit union do so. Rates are inside the front cover.

Taking up any one of these suggestions would help us, and taking up more than one would be even better.

Sincerely,

Karen Knopf
Marketing Manager,
Worker Co-ops



Soho personally embarrassing

I am writing to support Maggi Redmonds' letter of protest about the flippant tone of "Soho Strippers" (*Worker Co-ops*, December 1985). An apology from the editor was certainly in order, but it seems a bit hasty to say that there will be "no more Sohos" in *Worker Co-ops*. It was not the subject matter of the article which was offensive, but the style in which it was written. The Peep-show co-op, as described in the U.K.'s *Co-op News*, seems to be a serious attempt to bring a degree of justice and control to workers who are among the most exploited in our society.

I have also found the Soho item personally embarrassing. Because I am a contributing editor for the international scene, people are jumping to the inaccurate conclusion that I wrote the item. I'd be most grateful if you would publish this letter to assure your readers and my friends in co-ops around the world that I did not write the piece in question.

Robert Briscoe
Little Clifton Cottage
27a South Town
Dartmouth, Devon
England TQ69BX

Australian Venture

The Australian Christian Worker Movement is currently establishing a small co-operative venture. As such, it would be interested in receiving information concerning readers' experience on co-ops.

M.J. Bellew
Australian Christian
Worker Movement
38 Sandleheath Road
Elizabeth Grove
South Australia 5112

Unionization and worker co-ops

Andre Cardinale is wrong when he suggests that members of worker co-ops cannot be unionized. (*Worker Co-ops*, Spring, 1986, pp. 19 - 21.)

This issue has been considered by labour relations boards in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, and it is clear that employees of worker co-operatives may join trade unions, and their trade unions may obtain collective bargaining rights and enter into collective agreements with worker co-ops.

The normal rules applicable to labour relations apply to worker co-operatives. Excluded from the bargaining unit and participation in union activities are only those co-op members who exercise management functions.

In a small worker co-op operating substantially as a

collective, it is conceivable that every member of the co-op would be excluded as management. On the other hand, in a larger co-op in which members of the board of directors and managers make decisions on working conditions, wages, etc., they would be the only members of the co-op excluded from the bargaining unit.

Theorists and organizers have recognized the valuable contribution trade unions and collective bargaining can make to the success of the worker co-op. Labour relations law presents no impediment to that contribution.

Brian Iler
Iler, Campbell & Associates
Suite 201, 136 Simcoe St.
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 3G4

Mondragon discussion interests reader

I find these discussions about Mondragon (*Worker Co-ops*, Spring, 1986, pp. 4 - 6) very interesting. The point that seems to be missed about Mondragon and its astonishing growth is that, like all co-op development, it began from an idea of passionate conviction, that was incorporated into the education of a community, with well-defined needs. That idea -- co-operation -- was able to respond to the needs, resulting in the growth of the structure we can now envy, admire or criticize.

The startling fact about Mondragon is that it represents not merely an economic response but a whole response to community needs. In this respect, there is a parallel to the Maritimes' Antigonish Movement.

We need a support system for worker co-ops that will itself respond to the emergent needs of communities to develop economically in the tough and essentially greedy world of corporate concentration. What we need is

that essential unity (solidaridad) and social responsibility which is constantly emphasized about Mondragon. Grant MacDonald brings up substantially the same point in his article on "Co-ops and labour in the Maritimes" (*Worker Co-ops*, Spring, 1986, pp. 17 - 18).

As an example of this unity, the annual general meeting of Co-op Atlantic, held in March, passed a resolution empowering the Board to take the lead in creating a pool of start-up capital and/or vesting funds for worker co-ops. This resolution was noteworthy because the warmth with which it was passed reflected a sense that the delegates felt themselves to be part of the co-op movement rather than just members of Co-op Atlantic.

David Carrington
Caledonia Products Co-op Ltd.
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Montague, P.E.I.
COM 1R0



P.E.I. organizer

We are interested in organizing worker co-ops here. There is one, started by David Carrington. He is helping us learn how.

I'd be interested in hearing what is happening with you.

We are now organizing a Co-operative Community Council for P.E.I. so that people in credit unions, co-operative stores and handicraft co-ops will get to know each other through educational and social affairs -- and help others and ourselves to form worker co-ops.

Gertrude Partridge

R. R. 2

Montague, P.E.I

C0A 1R0

B.C. Co-op

There is a group of people, mostly construction workers, in this small island community, which is considering forming a co-operative. The function of the co-op would be to serve as a bookkeeping agency: to collect from owners of construction projects and to pay taxes, Canada pension and unemployment insurance on behalf of the workers. In an area where work is spotty, the opportunity to pay and to collect unemployment insurance would be appreciated. The co-op could also serve as a hiring agency.

We are, at the moment, at the "data-gathering" stage, and would appreciate any help you could give.

Bill Adams

Hornby Island

B.C. V0R 1Z0

(604) 335-0898

In Worker Co-ops (Spring, 1986), David Ellerman (p.4) and Terry Mollner (pp. 42 - 43) wrote articles that were critical of Chris Axworthy's analysis of Mondragon ("Some 'cons' about Mondragon: what the BBC neglected to say", Worker Co-ops, Fall, 1986). In the following, Axworthy responds to his critics.

Chris Axworthy

Mollner and others advocate Mondragon as the model to be adopted. To do so is unsound without recognizing the model's flaws and attempting to rectify them for North America. To point out the less-than-desirable features, in such circumstances, seems to me only responsible.

The point of my criticism was merely to put into context the glowing reports of Mondragon as a model of worker co-operation. My point of reference was my visit to Mondragon with a group of Canadians and Americans in October, 1984, the animated discussions which took place at that time and subsequent reflection. As Ellerman indicates, much scholarly work needs to be undertaken about Mondragon.

Ellerman's commentary

I basically agree with David Ellerman's comments. Two things deserve particular note, however. Ellerman criticizes my reference to Mondragon's lack of concern with high unemployment outside the co-operative system. My point was to put the oft-stated nationalism of Mondragon into perspective. It is not a question, as he suggests, of my ignoring the survival techniques utilized at

Mondragon. Rather, Mondragon uses its resources to consolidate its position rather than to direct its energy towards reducing unemployment in the Basque region. Mondragon's nationalism is either much less pronounced than has been argued or it is taking a back-seat to pragmatic business concerns. Either way there is an inherent conservatism at Mondragon.

Ellerman also is more tolerant than myself of the anti-trade union bias at Mondragon. The arguments presented at Mondragon against the role of trade unions in worker co-operatives and about the role of their social councils are indistinguishable from those of corporations, such as Michelin, which have been successful in keeping unions out of their operations.

Again my point was not that Mondragon's worker-members *should* be represented by trade unions (although I am firmly committed to the view that in Canada unions are an essential component of any worker co-operative development strategy). I was commenting on the less-than-constructive attitude of management towards worker-members.

Here's an example. One of the managers indicated that plans were well afoot to close a rather antiquated factory and to open a new one which would utilize the most modern robotic technology. Initially, this would involve the loss of several hundred jobs. Although Mondragon has impressive schemes for dealing with such dislocations, the manager indicated that no consultation with the worker-members had yet taken place!

Mollner's criticisms

Either I missed Mollner's point or he missed mine. His main criticism appears to be that, with regard to Mondragon, I am more concerned with things than with relationships. However, my concern is precisely with relationships. I criticized the nature of the relationships between managers and workers at Mondragon. From what I saw, work relationships were quite traditional.

He argues that I fail to see the need for a hierarchy within Mondragon (or, I suppose worker co-operatives in general). This is not so. The question surely is, what type of hierarchy is appropriate in a worker co-operative? Is it answerable to the worker-members? My impression is that the Mondragon hierarchy is not, but rather that the tail wags the dog -- a common phenomenon in large co-operatives.

Mollner argues that hierarchy is about efficiency and that I erred in my "unconscious" assumption that hierarchy is about power. On the contrary, my assumption was an entirely conscious one. Also, to suggest that Arizmendi was not powerful because he did not occupy an official position in the Mondragon hierarchy seems to me to be nonsense. Power is wielded in many ways. Catholic priests who "live like a saint, eating simply, refusing material possessions and avoiding attention" can, and do, exercise power.

Mollner says that "Mondragon is both democratic and hierarchical; however, it gives priority to democracy." Mollner does not say what he means by "democracy". Perhaps all he means is that the hierarchy is elected by the worker-members. Surely, in co-operatives there is more to democracy than this. Co-opera-

tives have traditionally argued for, though not always practised, participatory democracy. However, I would be very surprised if, like hierarchies in general, the Mondragon hierarchy did not exercise its power to ensure the election of its chosen people. The clear class distinctions at Mondragon would make this probable. It is naive to think, as Mollner does, that "the people in the Mondragon co-operatives enthusiastically embrace hierarchy for its efficiency value only."

Mollner's answer to my criticism of the vice-like grip of the Caja (the central bank) over new co-operative development is to ask whether it is advisable to have more than one body carry out this function. I think he missed my point: there is something incongruous about central control over what in traditional co-operative philosophy is seen as spontaneous activity. The idea of people coming together to establish a co-operative is inconsistent with centralized control.

Mollner suggests that if potential worker co-operative members do not like the activities of the Caja, "there is nothing preventing anyone from leaving the system and starting a co-operative on his or her own." One has to be realistic. The Caja gives out cheap and some free loans and possesses important influence over co-operatives once they are established. To suppose that potential co-operators have any real power to search elsewhere for funds is foolhardy.

Mollner criticizes my concern about Mondragon's anti-union bias by saying that I ignore Mondragon's criticisms of conventional management. I do not see a link between the two. Whatever their view of conventional management may be, the approach of the establishment at Mondragon is to discourage

unions.

My comments on the Caja's investment policies should also be seen in perspective. If the Mondragon model is to be pushed in North America, then it should be recognized that the Mondragon co-operatives are subsidized through investments in the private market. In North America, it would be difficult to arrange for a similar level of subsidization.

Furthermore, an organization which is prepared to invest in the private market is diverting its attention and resources away from worker co-operative development. Is this desirable? In a real sense it reflects a less than totally committed opposition to traditional wage relationships and work organization. How can an organization which engages in speculative and thus oppressive investment practices legitimately and aggressively oppose them? This was the thrust of my comments on the Caja's investments in the Mondragon co-operatives as compared to its private investments.

In conclusion, I stand by the general thrust of my impressions of Mondragon. Mondragon's lack of co-operativeness should be troubling to Canadians because they should expect more from it than Mollner, in particular, seems to require. It is not just Mondragon's economic success which is of interest, but the extent to which it has made *real* contributions to the reorganization of the workplace and to workers' control over economic resources. On the basis of what I saw, I remain sceptical.

Chris Axworthy is director of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Diefenbaker Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0; (306) 966-8503.■

Forum

Finding a common ground: employee ownership and worker co-operatives

Wally Brant

Is Canada just copying the U.S. again? That's the question raised by Wes Hare, president of North Carolina's Twin Streams Educational Center, because of the current interest among Canadians in employee stock-ownership plans (see *Worker Co-ops*, Spring, 1986)

For example, Ontario has recently become the third province in Canada (after Alberta and Quebec) to provide tax incentives that encourage workers' investment in the company that employs them.

In spite of these trends, I'd like to think that we still value worker co-operatives over the other forms of employee ownership that have emerged in the U.S. and Canada. However, in our search for both allies and members of worker co-operatives, we may find that others do not share our vision. We can enter by their door and leave on our own. Therefore, we may have to understand their way of looking at employee ownership and see where there is common ground.

In this spirit, I recently attended a seminar in Toronto titled, "Employees Share Ownership in Private Companies" and which was sponsored by the Profit Sharing Council of Canada (91-1262 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W7; (416) 449-3488.

The first speaker was David Knowland, chairman of the recently formed Employees Share-Ownership Committee and former president of Rumble Equipment Ltd., a thriving Rexdale, Ontario company, control of

which passed from the estate of George Rumble to the employees in 1982. Rumble Equipment is totally owned by 68 per cent of its workforce, and the top five shareholders own 61 per cent of the company.

Knowland quoted the basic recommendations made by Richard Long and Donald Nightingale in a booklet called *Gain and Equity Sharing* in Labour Canada's "Quality of Working Life" case study series. Though a good deal of the focus is on increasing productivity, with little change these principles could apply to worker co-operatives:

1. Participation in ownership should be significant. There is a direct relationship between the amount of employee-held equity and the success of the firm.

2. Employee shares should be broadly distributed. A direct relationship has been found between the number of employees participating in ownership and company success.

3. The investment should be real. To be most effective, the

employee should be able to use his (sic) investment in a real sense, as income, as a source of cash, or as collateral. To maximize commitment, the employees should be required to make some financial outlay for their shares, although other plans providing stock as compensation are also of value.

4. Direct ownership is more effective than indirect ownership. Forms of ownership that operate through a trust type of mechanism have been found to be less successful than direct investment by employees.

5. The mechanism for administering the share-ownership system must be fair and clearly spelled out.

6. An employee share-ownership plan should not be considered a substitute for good pay and fringe benefits.

7. Employee ownership will only be effective to the extent that employees are able to increase their involvement with the firm in an effective way. Employee-owners will have a greater interest and desire to be

Tax break set
for workers

buying shares
in their firm

Queen's Park to consu-
on share ownership plan

Employee buyouts: an idea that can wo-

ESOPs diverge in approach to tax credits

Labor assails employee share plan
boost

How Ontario will boost
employee share ownership

involved in company matters. They will desire increased information on operations of the company as well as opportunities to contribute to and participate in company decisions.

8. In order to achieve this involvement in an effective way, training of managers and supervisors is likely to be required.

9. Communication between management and employee-shareholders should be top quality and regular.

10. Finally, the implementation process may be crucial. A good plan may fail because implementation was hastily carried out without due regard for employee concerns or needs. Employee input and very extensive communication prior to implementation will greatly increase the chances of success.

Though the Long/Nightingale principles do not stress one person - one vote, they do not directly oppose it. In fact, one logical conclusion from the second principle of "broad distribution" is equal ownership amongst all the employees. Indeed, broad distribution of ownership is more likely to be attained in a worker co-operative than in an ESOP-firm.

The gathering at the Profit Sharing Council seminar included a small sampling of Canadian business. However, represented in the room were three of the "Top 100 Best Companies to Work for in Canada" as determined by the *Financial Post* in a recently published book. All three have profit-sharing programs and two have employee share-ownership programs.

A number of things struck me about this gathering. Many of the participants were considering a friendly buyout by their

employees. An often-stated reason for selling the company to the employees was to prevent it from being bought "by a big company from the States", in part, because Canadian companies were often undervalued in foreign buyouts. Also, many of the participants felt indebted to their employees because it was the employees who generated a good deal of the (company's) goodwill.

I felt that there would be a real openness amongst these people to the worker co-operative model if they could be convinced that "effective management" was

possible. Whether any Profit Sharing Council members go the worker co-operative route or even give it consideration, they definitely are looking seriously at employee share-ownership and have already developed and will further develop resources and expertise that are of value to the worker co-operative movement.

Wally Brant is a part-time instructor at York University and a board member of the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 357 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S5; (416) 928-9568.■



Conferences—

Grindstone Co-op Movement Strategy Conference

Details are now available for this conference to be held August 10-15 on beautiful Grindstone Island in southeastern Ontario.

The topics and speakers include: worker co-ops (Laird Hunter and Don Mitchell); credit unions and government relations (Gary Gillam); teaching co-operation (Jean Stevenson); politics of food (Don Mitchell and Russ Christensen); community health centres (Marianne Cheetham); public image (Barry Zwicker); alternative investment (J.C. Burns).

For a modest fee of \$250, there are stimulating presentations and discussions and the opportunity to share an interesting week with other co-operators.

For more information, contact **John Schaffter**, Grindstone, P.O. Box 564, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1; (416) 923-4215.■

Alternative Enterprise Development

This conference is intended for individuals and representatives of organizations (e.g., unions, religious groups, community groups and government) with an interest in alternative economic development.

Sponsored and co-ordinated by the Worker Ownership Development Foundation, the conference looks at various models of alternate enterprise development including worker co-operatives, community economic development corporations, employee-owned businesses and collectives.

Last, but not least, Alternative Enterprise Development is to be held at Grindstone Island, September 7-10, for a modest fee of \$170 which includes a 332-page manual on starting a worker co-operative. There will also good food and pleasant friendships to enjoy.

For information, contact **John Schaffter**, Grindstone, P.O. Box 564, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1; (416) 923-4215.■

Ten thousand Quebec workers try another way

Alain Côté

(Traduction française suit.)

Worker co-ops have been experiencing a resurgence in Quebec during the last 15 years, especially since the beginning of the 1980s. In fact, more than half of the 265 worker co-operatives existing today were created within the last four years, and more than 85 per cent of them have come into being since 1970.

Two sets of factors explain the sudden rise in popularity: on the one hand are economic factors induced by the recession plus new aspirations among workers towards collective ownership and regional development; on the other hand, development and financing of worker co-ops have been facilitated by support structures put into place by the Quebec government. These structures include la Société de développement des coopératives, regional technical advisory groups, and more recently, le Régime d'investissement coopératif, as well as the Programme d'aide à la constitution de coopératives de développement régional (CDR).

Diverse and productive enterprises

Two out of five Quebec worker co-ops are active in natural resource sectors (forests, agriculture, mines), and another 40 per cent are active in service industries such as transportation, vehicle service, academic and cultural activities like research, consulting, communications and the arts. The remaining 15 to 20 per cent of worker co-operatives are found in the manufacturing sector in industries requiring a

small to moderate amount of capital investment, including commercial printing, electrical supplies, construction and public works.

A close look at the worker co-operative sector reveals a striking diversity among the various enterprises. With less than 40 per cent of the 10,000 worker-owners, the 64 forestry co-ops have sales of \$106 million or about 78 per cent of the worker co-operative sector's sales.¹ If we add Harpell Printing (with sales of \$11 million in 1985) to this select group, these co-operatives account for 86 per cent of the total amount of business done by all worker co-operatives in Quebec.

If the surprising number of new co-operative ventures does not warrant a detailed financial analysis, a recent study focuses nonetheless on the strong economic impact of the sector.² Based on a representative survey of each sub-sector of activity, the study has found, among other things, that:

- worker co-operatives are, on average, 6.2 per cent more productive than their traditionally-structured counterparts;
- despite limited resources, the sector as a whole shows a good capacity to meet its short term financial responsibilities;
- worker-owners make enormous efforts to overcome problems of under-capitalization. In fact, each worker-owner invests, on the average, \$1,600 in his or her worker co-op, and in 70 per cent of worker co-operatives, most of the surplus is reinvested in the enterprise itself; and
- eighty-eight per cent of the enterprises have a positive net worth, despite the fact that 52

per cent of them have been in existence for less than four years.

Finally, contrary to popular belief, the same study showed that only 30 per cent of the enterprises surveyed in 1984 had received direct financial aid from either the federal or provincial government. And, in most cases, this aid consisted not of grants, but of job creation funds. The government of Quebec, then, provides more technical and management support than direct financing.

Advisory groups and regional development co-operatives: a new framework for development

The provincial Department of Co-operatives is the central element in the framework for co-operative development. Part of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Co-operatives branch administers co-operative law, supports the development of co-operatives and co-ordinates the activities of various government agencies in the area. This is done through two interrelated programs, the "Groupe-conseils" (GC) (advisory groups) and the "Coopératives de développement régional" (CDR) (regional development co-ops).

The Department of Co-operatives has a staff of about 40 development officers who work, through the GCs and at no charge, helping workers interested in creating a worker co-operative. The development officers are involved from the planning stage through to the first few months of operation of a worker co-operative, helping with feasibility studies, preparation of financial projections and aid requests, and development of an appropriate internal

structure. In addition, they refer the worker-owners to other organizations, when necessary, and undertake follow-up activities with the new co-ops.

Gradually established in each region of Quebec between 1983 and 1985, the GCs have been instrumental in the start-up of 53 new co-operative enterprises and in the conversion of 14 conventional enterprises to worker co-operatives. Since the creation of this program, the worker co-ops which were developed have resulted in almost 600 permanent jobs. Moreover, about 250 new projects are on the drawing board with the potential of creating 2,000 jobs.⁵ On average, each position created costs the Quebec government only about \$4,300⁴, which is about 40 per cent less than most federal or provincial job creation programs.

The second arm of the program, which will cost about \$2 million in 1986-87, involves the Coopératives de développement régional (CDR), or regional development co-ops. To ensure worker co-operatives optimal success, it is important to identify the most promising prospects for worker co-op development and to match these up with people who have the necessary resources and potential to make a go of them. This identification requires the development of strategies and information networks for each region. This is where the twelve CDRs come into the picture.⁵

The GCs concentrate their efforts at the technical level, and the CDRs, like godfathers, try to ensure that a maximum of human and financial resources are available in their region. As organizations which promote development of worker co-operatives,

these "incubation" centres try to bring together existing worker co-operatives, co-operatives in other sectors, educational institutions, unions, and various social and economic agencies. They are partially financed by the government and partially by their member organizations. Finally, their activities vary from one region to another, ranging from the provision of education, management consulting and "resource banks" to supplying marketing expertise.

Conclusion

Utilizing the two-pronged⁶ development program outlined, co-operatives and their federations, with the help of la Société de développement des coopératives, may be able to create 3,000 jobs in three years.

It is not easy to isolate the factors which prompt people to choose the co-operative route for developing new enterprises; similarly, it is not easy to identify the type of client who favors co-operative services. In analyzing individual cases one is struck by the diversity of circumstances

and environment which give rise to the development of worker co-ops and of activities that they are involved in. Despite the multiplicity of ideologies and motivations of proponents of worker co-ops, the constants that emerge are the willingness of workers to try another way and the desire to preserve a social and cultural identity. The development of worker co-operatives is, then, less an effort to change the system, than an attempt to contribute in the fight against unemployment, dependence and insecurity.

(French translation by Jo-Anne André.)

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¹ Including sawmills and subsidiaries held by forestry co-operatives.

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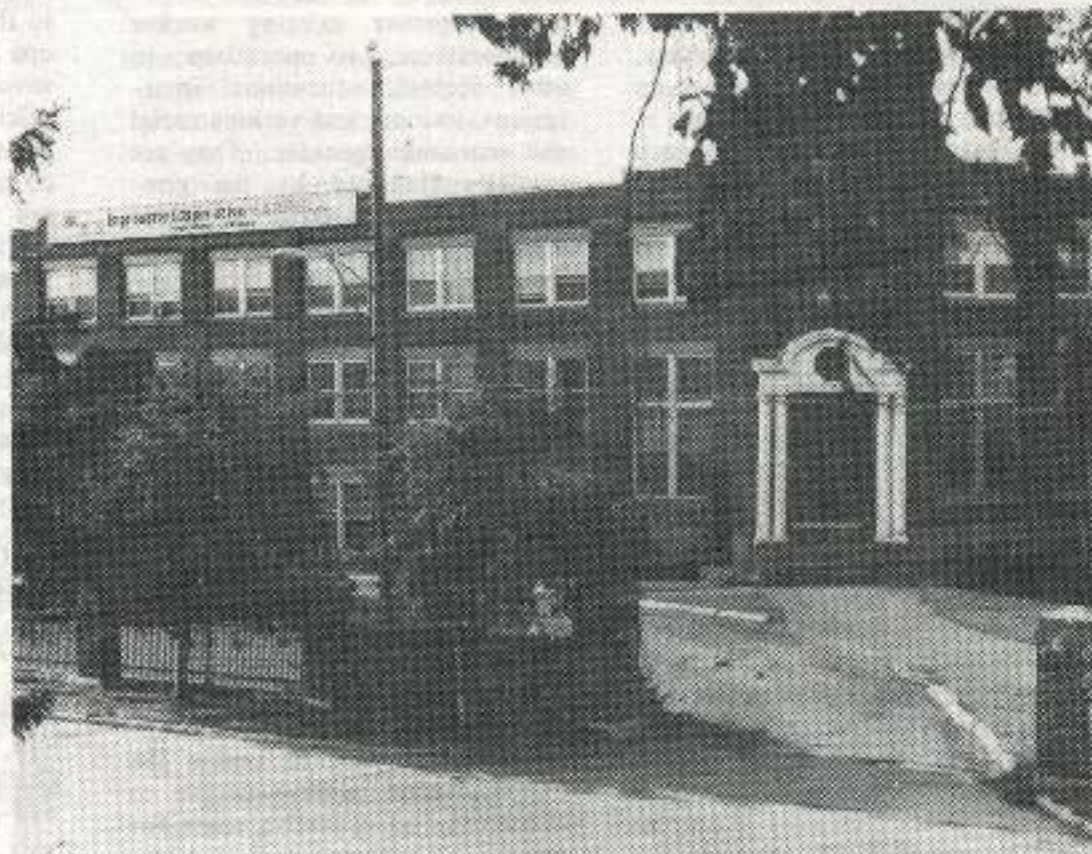
² See B. Lévesque, A. Côté, O. Chouinard and J.-L. Russel, *Profil socio-économique des coopératives de travail au Québec*, Montréal, UQAM/Comité provincial des coopératives de travail, 1985, p. 103 and following.

³ It is interesting to note the efforts of the GCs to highlight projects in the manufacturing sector which account for 28 per cent of the total number of new projects and more than 40 per cent of potential jobs.

⁴ Calculated by dividing the annual costs of the GC program by the number of jobs created annually.

⁵ At the time of writing, 11 CDRs were in place and one was in the process of formation.

⁶ We have not spoken here about the specialized GCs which provide targeted sectors with specialized expertise.



*One of Quebec's most successful worker co-operatives: L'Imprimerie Harpell.
L'Imprimerie coopérative Harpell.*

Au Québec, 10 000 travailleurs ont choisi d'entreprendre autrement

Alain Côté

Les coopératives de travail connaissent un regain de popularité au Québec depuis une quinzaine d'années et particulièrement depuis le début des années '80. En effet, plus de la moitié des 265 coopératives existantes furent créées au cours des quatre dernières années et plus de 85% après 1970.

Deux séries de facteurs expliqueraient cette popularité

soudaine: d'un côté les effets induits par la crise économique de même que les nouvelles aspirations des travailleurs (entrepreneurship collectif, développement régional, etc.); de l'autre, les structures d'appui au développement et au financement mises sur pied par l'État québécois comme la Société de développement des coopératives, les groupes-conseils régionaux et spécialisés (aide-technique) et plus récemment, le Régime d'in-

vestissement coopératif de même que le Programme d'aide à la constitution de coopératives de développement régional (CDR).

Des entreprises différenciées et relativement performantes

Du point de vue de l'activité économique, les coopératives de travail se retrouvent surtout dans des activités liées aux ressources naturelles et au secteur tertiaire. Alors que deux coopératives sur

cinq opèrent dans des secteurs de production liés aux ressources naturelles (forêt, agriculture, mines), la même proportion est spécialisée dans la production de services (services matériels comme le transport, les messageries, les garages; services intellectuels et culturels comme la recherche, la consultation, les communications et le théâtre). Reste donc 15 à 20 pour cent des entreprises dans le secteur manufacturier à faible et moyenne intensité capitalistique comme l'impression commerciale et le matériel électrique, de même que dans le bâtiment et les travaux publics.

Mais lorsque l'on regarde de plus près la structure du secteur, on est frappé par la très grande différenciation entre les entreprises. Avec moins de 40 pour cent des 10 000 travailleurs-membres, les 64 coopératives forestières effectuent près de 78 pour cent des livraisons, soit 106 m \$ sur 136 m \$.¹ Puis si l'on rajoute l'imprimerie Harpell à ce groupe sélect (11 m \$ de vente en 1985), on atteint 86 pour cent du chiffre d'affaires de l'ensemble.

Si l'impressionnante proportion d'entreprises nouvelles n'autorise guère une analyse financière détaillée, une étude récente n'en fait pas moins ressortir une performance fort appréciable du secteur.² Basée sur un échantillon représentatif de chaque sous-secteur d'activité, l'étude dégage entre autres:

- que les rendements des opérations sont de 5,7% en moyenne, alors que le rendement des actifs atteint quant à lui 11,9%;

- que ces entreprises démontrent dans l'ensemble une bonne capacité à faire face à leurs engagements à court terme (fonds

de roulement de 1,6%) malgré leurs faibles ressources;

- que les travailleurs-membres font des efforts énormes pour surmonter leurs problèmes de sous-capitalisation. En effet, chaque travailleur investit en moyenne 1 600 \$ dans son entreprise, et dans sept coopératives sur 10, on réinvestit la grosse majorité des surplus dans l'entreprise;

- que 88 pour cent de ces entreprises ont un avoir net positif, malgré que 52 pour cent d'entre elles ont quatre ans et moins d'existence.

Afin, contrairement à certaines croyances populaires, la même étude démontre qu'à peine 30 pour cent des entreprises enquêtées en 1984 ont reçu une aide financière direct des gouvernements fédéral ou provincial. Et dans la plupart des cas, il s'agissait, non pas de subventions, mais bien d'aide à la création d'emplois. C'est donc davantage en terme de garanties de prêt, d'aide technique et d'encadrement à la gestion qu'il faut mesurer l'appui du gouvernement du Québec.

Les groupes-conseils et les coopératives de développement régional: une nouvelle structure d'encadrement

La clé de voûte de l'encadrement des coopérateurs est la Direction des Coopératives. Rattachée au ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, elle administre la loi sur les coopératives, favorise leur développement et coordonne les actions des différents organismes gouvernementaux. Pour l'heure, la priorité de la direction est d'appuyer la création des coopératives de travailleurs. Pour ce faire, elle s'appuie sur deux programmes qui sont interreliés, les "Groupe-conseils" (GC) et les "Coopératives de développement régional" (CDR).

Par l'intermédiaire des GC, la direction des Coopératives finance une quarantaine d'agents de projets qui soutiennent gratuitement les travailleurs (euses) qui désirent créer leur coopérative. Ces derniers interviennent entre le moment où la coopérative est à l'état de projet jusqu'aux premiers mois de fonctionnement: aide à l'étude de

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faisabilité, demande de financement, mise en relation avec des organismes pertinents, aide à l'organisation interne et suivi.

Mis en place graduellement dans chaque région du Québec entre 1983 et 1985, les GC ont permis le démarrage de 53 nouvelles entreprises et la transformation de 14 entreprises patronales en coopérative. Déjà la création nette d'emplois permanents s'élève à près de 600 depuis la mise en marche du programme. De plus, environ 250 nouveaux projets d'entreprise sont présentement à l'étude pour près de 2 000 emplois potentiels.³ En moyenne, chaque nouvel emploi ne coûte que 4 300 \$ à l'état québécois⁴ ce qui est inférieur d'environ 40 pour cent aux coûts de certains programmes, tant fédéraux que provinciaux, selon les informations dont nous disposons.

Le deuxième volet de ce programme qui coûtera près de 2 m \$ en 1986-1987, concerne les Coopératives de développement régional (CDR).

Pour mettre toutes les chances de réussite du côté des coopératives de travailleurs, il est important de bien dépister les projets prometteurs et de faire la jonction entre ceux-ci et les promoteurs ayant le potentiel requis pour les réaliser. Ce dépistage ne peut être que le fruit du développement des stratégies et des réseaux d'information particuliers à chacune des réalités régionales. C'est là qu'interviennent les douze CDR réparties sur l'ensemble du territoire.⁵

Si les GC sont appelés à concentrer leurs efforts au niveau de l'assistance technique proprement dite, les CDR, en tant que parrains des GC, doivent voir à regrouper un maximum de

ressources humaines et financières de leur région pour les mettre éventuellement aux services des entrepreneurs coopératifs. En tant qu'organismes de promotion du développement des coopératives de travailleurs, ces "mini-centres d'incubation" cherchent à regrouper bien sur les coopératives de travail existantes, mais également les coopératives des autres secteurs, les institutions d'enseignement, les syndicats, les organismes sociaux-économiques divers, etc. Leur financement est en partie assuré par l'état et en partie par les membres. Enfin, leurs activités varient d'une région à l'autre: elles touchent aussi bien la formation, les services de gestion, la constitution de banques de ressources, que l'approvisionnement et la commercialisation.

Conclusion

En utilisant ce programme à deux volets⁶, les coopératives et leur fédération, pense-t-on, pourront, avec l'aide de la Société de développement des coopératives, créer 3 000 emplois en trois ans.

Isoler les raisons qui poussent ces acteurs à choisir la formule coopérative n'est pas chose facile; de même lorsque vient le temps d'identifier la clientèle-type des programmes.

C'est en analysant des cas que l'on est frappé par la diversité des milieux de naissance et des activités prises en charge. Malgré la multiplicité des idéologies et des motivations des promoteurs, il existe cependant une constante: c'est pour préserver leur identité sociale et culturelle qu'ils décident "d'entreprendre autrement". Il s'agit donc moins d'espérer chan-

ger le système que d'espérer contribuer à combattre le chômage, la dépendance et l'insécurité.

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¹Incluant les scieries et les filiales détenues par les coopératives forestières.

²Voir B. Lévesque, A. Côté, O. Chouinard et J.-L. Russel, *Profil socio-économique des coopératives de travail au Québec*, Montréal, UQAM/Comité provincial des coopératives de travail, 1985, p. 103 et suivantes.

³Il est intéressant de souligner les efforts des GC pour encadrer les projets d'entreprises manufacturières qui comptent pour 28 pour cent de l'ensemble des nouveaux projets et pour plus de 40 pour cent des emplois potentiels.

⁴Calculé à partir des coûts annuels du programme GC divisés par le nombre d'emplois créés par année.

⁵Au moment d'écrire cet article, onze CDR étaient formées et une était en formation.

⁶Nous n'avons pas parlé ici des groupes-conseils spécialisés qui apportent une expertise particulière dans des secteurs-cibles.

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Les serres coopératives de Guyenne: bâtir son milieu par la coopération

Robert Laplante

(English translation follows.)

Située à une cinquantaine de kilomètres au nord-ouest d'Amos, la paroisse de Guyenne n'a jamais été "une paroisse comme les autres". Dernière-née des colonies de l'Abitibi, elle se distingue, par sa naissance même, de tout ce qu'on peut imaginer sur l'histoire de cette région. En effet, qui donc voudrait croire que Maurice Duplessis lui-même aurait pu accorder à un groupe de colons la gestion collective du canton qu'ils entreprenaient de défricher?

Incroyable mais vrai.

En 1947, le Syndicat des pionniers de Guyenne, par l'intermédiaire de la Fédération des sociétés de colonisation, réussit ce tour de force. C'est le commencement d'une grande aventure. Guidés au départ par le chanoine Émile Couture et l'agronome Joseph Laliberté, ils sont cent jeunes hommes dans la vingtaine, en grande majorité des célibataires. Leur idéal: s'établir en coopération et garder la mainmise sur les destinées de leur paroisse. Ils sont déterminés et débordants d'enthousiasme. Ils se donnent des règles de conduite rigoureuses et s'imposent une vie collective qui exige beaucoup d'abnégation. Plusieurs d'entre eux, d'ailleurs, ne pourront pas suivre le modèle qu'ils s'étaient eux-mêmes donné: ils s'en iront.

En dépit des grands sacrifices qu'il demande à chacun, le travail coopératif porte ses fruits. La colonie se développe rapidement. Et l'intensité de la vie collective confère à la paroisse une atmosphère, un climat très particulier. Les colons des alentours ne manqueront pas de

le noter. À la fois étonnés et envieux des progrès rapides de la colonie, mais plus ou moins rébarbatifs à l'idée de se soumettre à pareille discipline collective, ils surnomment Guyenne "la p'tite Russie". C'est un nom qui lui restera.

Pendant plus de dix ans, la paroisse élaborera des institutions coopératives fort originales. Mais les grands chambardements économiques et sociaux de la Révolution tranquille porteront un coup très dur à l'idéal de départ. L'agriculture de subsistance qu'ils avaient rêvé de faire n'est plus possible; l'exploitation forestière se mécanise et exige de plus en plus de capitaux, etc. Dans ce nouveau contexte, la situation économique de Guyenne se détériore rapidement. Plusieurs familles quittent la paroisse: les unes parce qu'elles ne croient plus à l'idéal, les autres

parce qu'elles ne peuvent plus supporter les difficultés économiques. Les gens qui restent essaient de reformuler l'idéal coopératif et de l'adapter aux nouvelles conditions. Les débats sont très vifs et l'avenir difficile à entrevoir.

Et les choses sont d'autant plus difficiles qu'au début des années '70, comme plusieurs autres dans son cas, Guyenne est décrétée "paroisse marginale". Dans le jargon technocratique, cela signifie: paroisse condamnée à disparaître. Les experts de toutes sortes qui défilent à Guyenne se disent en effet convaincus qu'il n'y a rien à faire. Ce verdict a évidemment semé la colère.

Mais il a aussi contribué à stimuler davantage l'idéal coopératif. "Nous, on savait qu'on avait des ressources et du potentiel," déclare Yoland Marois,



Les serres de Guyenne.
The Guyenne greenhouses.

alors présidente du comité des paroisses marginales. "Et ici à Guyenne, on était convaincus plus que jamais que c'est par la coopération qu'on pourrait les mettre en valeur. Mais il fallait d'abord convaincre les fonctionnaires et le gouvernement qu'on a le droit de vouloir vivre ici."

Le moins qu'on puisse dire, c'est que personne n'était guère disposé à se laisser convaincre. En 1972, le moulin scie coopératif doit fermer parce que le gouvernement ne lui concède pas de droits de coupe. De nombreux projets de coopératives sont laissés en plan faute d'appuis suffisants. Pour le comble, en 1980, le ministère de l'Éducation, après de multiples tentatives, ferme définitivement l'école du village. Cette série de cuisants revers a ébranlé beaucoup de monde. La paroisse, qui a déjà compté au-delà de 800 habitants, n'en compte plus que 250!

Mais perdre des batailles ne veut pas dire renoncer à se battre. "Finalement, on a perdu bien des batailles parce que le rapport de force était trop grand. Et puis, peut-être qu'on ne s'y est pas toujours pris de la bonne manière. Mais on ne perd jamais complètement. On apprend dans une défaite et à la prochaine bataille, on fait mieux."

Yolande Marois ne peut mieux dire. L'école n'est pas aussitôt fermée que la paroisse se lance dans un audacieux projet économique!

Sur l'initiative de deux jeunes biologistes dont l'un réside dans la paroisse, le projet de faire la production de plants de conifères en serres voit le jour. C'est un gros risque puisqu'il faut mobiliser des sommes considérables qui drainent une grande partie de l'épargne locale. La

Caisse populaire paroissiale, l'Association coopérative de travail, la Société de recherches scientifiques NORBI et les membres sociétaires rassemblent les fonds nécessaires. La coopérative ouvrière de production de plants de conifères en serres de Guyenne voit le jour.

Les serres coopératives ne pourront démarrer que si elles obtiennent du ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources du Québec un contrat de production de plants. Or, ces contrats sont octroyés par appels d'offre. Il faudra travailler fort, car la compétition est féroce. Un comité est formé pour préparer l'offre de service. Il a bien travaillé. La Coop décroche à la barbe de compétiteurs beaucoup plus puissants un contrat de cinq ans pour la production de treize millions de plants d'épinettes noires et de pins gris. C'est l'allégresse.

À l'automne '80, la coopérative, forte de son contrat, consolide sa situation financière avec l'aide de la Société de développement coopératif et de l'Union régionale des caisses populaires. Elle obtient, de plus, une subvention dans le cadre du programme PACLE. L'équipe a le vent dans les voiles. On entreprend immédiatement la construction d'un complexe de serres d'une superficie d'une acre. Il faut faire vite car les semences doivent avoir lieu en décembre.

Les travaux se déroulent dans une atmosphère d'enthousiasme fébrile. Quand, en décembre, la première vingtaine d'employés entreprend les semences, c'est l'exultation. Le plus gros producteur de plants de conifères en serres du Québec vient de commencer son exploitation!

Mais la tâche est considérable: il faut tout apprendre sur le tas. Une fois les semences faites, seulement six employés à temps plein veilleront à faire fonctionner le complexe: arroser, chauffer, fertiliser, ect.

Ils travaillent d'arrache-pied et avec une vigilance de tous les instants. Il suffit que la température tombe au-dessous d'un certain seuil pendant une heure seulement et c'est la catastrophe. La serre est plus fragile qu'une rose, se répète-t-on par les froids de moins 40 degrés celsius quand les hommes suffisent à peine à fournir les chaudières à bois qui rugissent à tordre le métal.

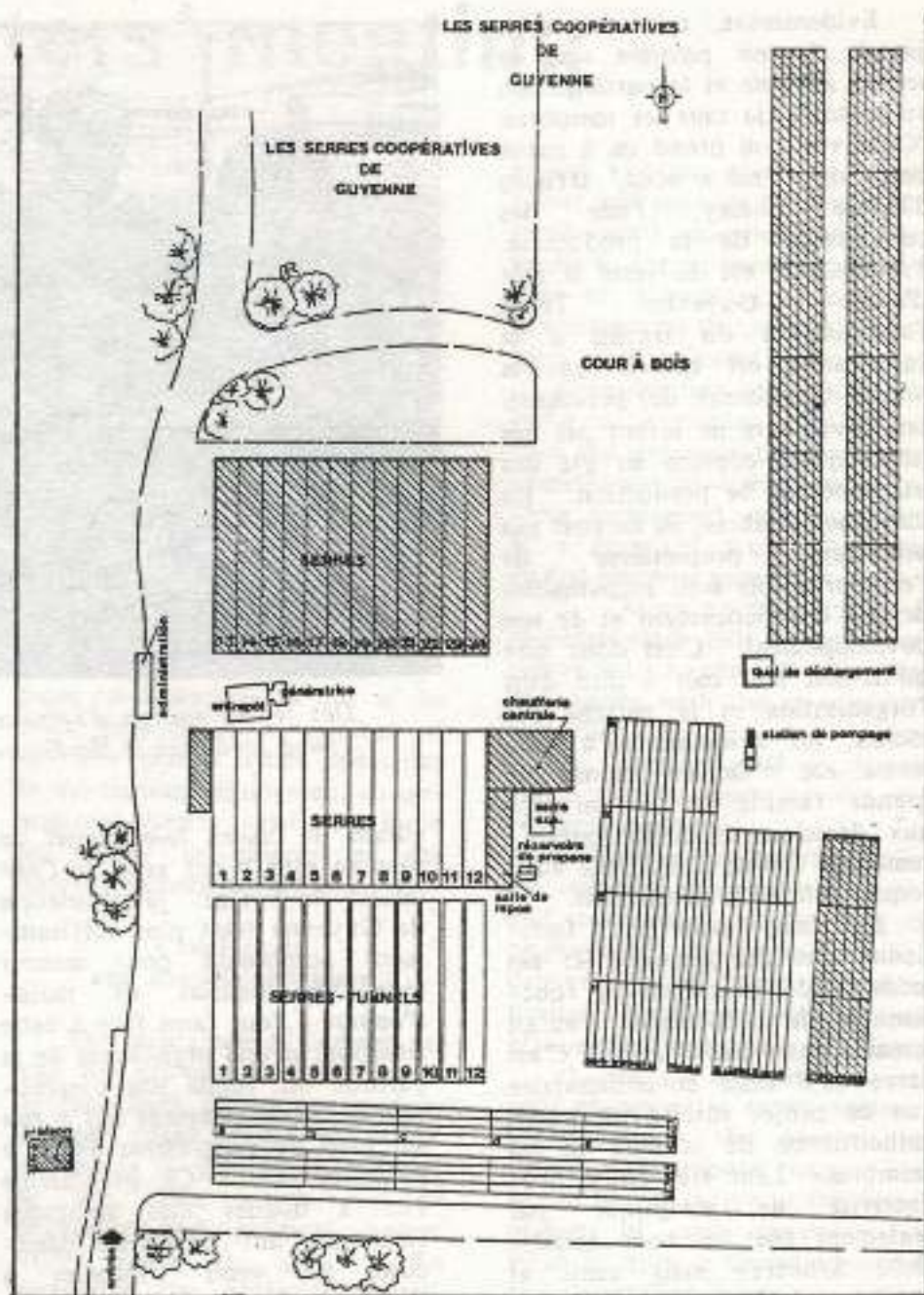
Peu à peu ça commence à verdier dans les serres et jamais, comme dira l'un des travailleurs, la verdure n'aura évoqué autant d'espérance! Des jeunes pousses d'épinettes vont alors devoir être éclaircies et repiquées. Une opération d'envergure. C'est aux femmes de la paroisse qu'elle sera confiée. Une trentaine d'entre elles apprennent à repiquer, c'est-à-dire répartir les plants de manière uniforme dans les contenants. Chaque contenant contient 80 alvéoles où doit pousser un plant. Elles devront, à chaque production, répéter la même opération pendant plusieurs jours.

À la fin de la période de croissance, c'est-à-dire environ quatre mois et demi après les semences, il faudra sortir à l'extérieur un million deux cent milles plants d'épinettes noires. Et dans les serres, on fera une autre semence, de pins gris cette fois. Et ainsi de suite, en alternance. Une fois sortis, les plants seront laissés à l'air libre pendant quelques semaines. Ils doivent s'acclimater aux condi-

tions naturelles de l'Abitibi. Ensuite, ils seront triés pour éliminer ceux qui ne correspondent pas aux normes (hauteur, diamètre, état de santé, etc.). Ils sont finalement chargés sur des camions qui les distribuent aux quatre coins de la région. Des équipes travaillant pour le ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources se chargeront de les planter.

La production de la première année a donné des résultats fort acceptables, compte tenu de l'inexpérience du groupe. La seconde a été plus difficile: l'équipe connaissait désormais les problèmes qu'elle allait devoir affronter! L'anxiété a été grande tout au long de l'année. Et comme c'est souvent le cas dans ces situations, de vives tensions se sont créées dans l'équipe: certains conflits ont été vraiment très durs. Mais la motivation, la discipline et le sens des responsabilités ont primé. Des changements ont été apportés à l'organisation du travail et au partage des responsabilités de direction et grâce aux efforts de tous et chacun la coopérative a surmonté ses difficultés.

Dès la troisième année, les choses allaient déjà beaucoup mieux. La situation financière a commencé à réellement prendre le dessus sur son travail. Les innovations techniques ont été nombreuses et les méthodes de production ont subi d'importantes modifications. Au terme de son premier contrat, la coopérative est devenue une entreprise rentable. Plus encore, le talent et l'imagination de ses membres lui ont permis de mettre au point des méthodes de production qui placent la coopérative en tête de file dans ce secteur industriel de pointe que constitue la produc-



tion de plants destinés au reboisement.

Ce leadership s'est réellement concrétisé en 1985, lorsque la coopérative a réussi un formidable coup d'audace. En moins de six mois en effet, les Serres coopératives de Guyenne se sont donné les moyens de quadrupler leur capacité de production,

passant de trois à onze millions de plants produits annuellement. Des contrats ont été obtenus soit par négociation directe avec le ministère Énergie et Ressources, soit par appel d'offre et soumission publique. Cinq ans après sa fondation, la coopérative est désormais le plus gros producteur de Québec!

Évidemment, cela ne serait jamais devenu possible sans le travail acharné et la participation responsable de tous les membres. "C'est vrai, on prend ça à coeur parce que c'est à nous," affirme Thérèse Lemay, l'une des responsables de la production. Participation est du reste le mot d'ordre à Guyenne. Toute l'organisation du travail à la coopérative est centrée sur la notion d'autonomie des personnes: les travailleurs ne seront pas des pions qu'on déplace au gré des exigences de la production. En tant que membres, ils ne sont pas seulement propriétaires de l'entreprise; ils sont responsables de son fonctionnement et de son développement. C'est donc dire qu'ils ont leur mot à dire dans l'organisation et le partage des tâches, les orientations à long terme, etc. "On est comme une grande famille et on participe aux décisions et à la gestion," remarque Odette Lebel, elle aussi responsable de la production.

En fait, sans son fonctionnement démocratique et ses modèles de participation fonctionnels, la coopérative n'aurait jamais connu pareil essor. C'est parce qu'il reste communautaire que ce projet suscite un pareil enthousiasme de la part de ses membres. Leur très haute productivité ne s'explique pas seulement par les bons salaires (9,00 \$/heure) mais aussi et surtout par le fait qu'ils sont parfaitement conscients de travailler à bâtir leur communauté, à se donner dans leur village une qualité de vie qu'il n'est certainement pas facile de retrouver ailleurs en milieu rural.

Évidemment avec une pareille croissance, les serres vont avoir un impact considérable sur la vie de la paroisse. Car pour produire



*Des jeunes pousses d'épinettes dans les serres de Guyenne.
Young seedlings in the Guyenne greenhouse.*

autant, il faudra faire appel de plus en plus à des gens de l'extérieur du village: la population de Guyenne n'est plus suffisamment nombreuse pour assurer tous ses besoins de main-d'oeuvre. Pour faire face à cette situation, divers organismes de la paroisse ont fondé une corporation de développement qui a mis sur pied un programme d'aide à l'établissement. Ce programme vise à donner une assistance financière aux personnes désireuses de venir s'installer à Guyenne. L'emploi créé par les serres permet ainsi de régénérer la paroisse non seulement en augmentant le niveau de vie des résidents, mais aussi en offrant à d'autres la possibilité de venir se faire un avenir. C'est une préoccupation majeure à Guyenne: avoir une prise sur son milieu, se donner les moyens de contrôler son avenir, son développement.

C'est aussi dans cette perspective qu'a été fondée la coopérative d'habitation qui a cette année six logements pour des jeunes gens et des familles. C'est également dans l'intention de continuer de se développer par soi-même que la corporation de développement travaille actuellement à un gros projet de pisciculture. Les serres coopératives ont aussi l'intention de continuer d'aller de l'avant: d'autres projets d'expansion sont à l'étude dans le domaine de la production de légumes.

Mais tous ces projets s'articulent autour d'une même stratégie: pour participer pleinement, il faut avoir accès à l'information et avoir les moyens de bien la comprendre. Aussi, n'y a-t-il jamais de projet mis de l'avant sans qu'un programme de formation ne l'accompagne. C'est donc dire que de biens de

manières, quel que soit son niveau d'instruction, chacun peut bénéficier d'une véritable formation continue. Chaque projet collectif devient ainsi également une occasion de développement personnel.

Le village a beau être petit, ses horizons sont grands comme on peut le constater. La vie y est trépidante. L'action ne manque pas.

Évidemment, toute cette effervescence ne va pas sans accrochages. Guyenne n'est pas un paradis. Les débats sont souvent vifs. Il y a parfois des affrontements. Mais tout cela fait partie de la vie. Le seul moyen d'éviter que cela paralyse les réunions. À Guyenne, il y a en a pratiquement tous les soirs. Et de toutes sortes: magasin co-opératif, corporation de développement, coopérative d'habitation, les serres coopératives, la caisse populaire, l'Association coopérative de travail, etc. Et comme la population n'est pas nombreuse, les mêmes personnes se retrouvent souvent autour des mêmes tables: seuls les ordres du jour changent. Mais peu importe; "Il faut s'impliquer". C'est un impératif qu'on entend souvent. Et ceux qui ne s'y conforment pas sont jugés sévèrement.

Les serres ont beaucoup changé la vie à Guyenne. La détermination et la ténacité des gens sont restées les mêmes, mais au lieu de servir à résister à la fermeture de la paroisse, elles servent maintenant à construire un avenir. Et par les temps qui courent, c'est toute une chance d'entrevoir un avenir. Mais il faut savoir faire sa chance.

Et pour ça, la coopération est un bon moyen.

Guyenne: the fascinating growth of a co-operative community

Robert Laplante

About 50 kilometers northwest of Amos, Quebec, is the parish of Guyenne -- one that has always been a little different from the others. In 1947, under the guidance of Emile Couture, a canon of the church, and Joseph Laliberté, an agronomist, 100 young men in their twenties, bachelors for the most part, set out to establish a co-operative settlement. Taking the future of the parish into their own hands, they were determined and enthusiastic. They imposed upon themselves rigorous rules and a collective way of life that demanded a lot of sacrifices. Unable to live under the model that they themselves had created, many of them left.

Little Russia

Despite the sacrifices demanded of everyone, co-operative work bore fruit; the colony developed rapidly. And the intensity of the collective way of life gave the settlement a unique atmosphere. Other colonists in the surrounding area were quick to notice. Surprised and envious of the rapid progress made by the colony, but unreceptive to the idea of submitting themselves to such discipline, they nicknamed Guyenne "Little Russia". The name stuck.

For more than 10 years, the settlement created highly original co-operative institutions. But the great economic and social up-

heavals of the quiet revolution brought a hard blow to their original ideal. The life of subsistence agriculture that the Guyenne settlers had dreamed of living was no longer possible -- forestry had become mechanized and more capital-intensive. The economic situation of Guyenne deteriorated rapidly. Many families left: some because they no longer believed in the ideal, others because they could no longer face the economic difficulties.

By the beginning of the 1970s, things were so bad that Guyenne, like other areas in similar situations, was decreed a marginal settlement (in the economic sense). In technocratic jargon that meant that it was destined to disappear. Experts of all kinds who visited Guyenne agreed that nothing could be done.

In 1972, Guyenne's co-operative sawmill was forced to close after the government took away its cutting rights. Many co-operative projects were left in the lurch because of insufficient financial support. To top it off, in 1980 the Minister of Education, after numerous attempts, closed Guyenne's school. This series of setbacks managed to shake many of the settlers. The parish, which once had a population of more than 800, shrunk to only 250.

But losing battles does not mean giving up the fight. The school was barely closed when the parish initiated an audacious economic project.

Worker co-op nursery

On the initiative of two young biologists, one of whom lived in the settlement, a worker co-operative producing conifer seedlings got off the ground.

The co-op managed to beat out much more powerful competitors to win a five-year contract from Quebec's Ministry of Energy and Resources for the production of 13 million black and grey pine seedlings.

Strengthened by the contract, in the autumn of 1980 the co-operative consolidated its financial situation with the help of la Société de développement coopérative and the regional federation of credit unions. A federal government grant enabled the co-operative to begin construction of a nursery with a one-acre floor space.

The work got underway in an atmosphere of feverish enthusiasm. But the task was formidable; much had to be learned on the job, and constant vigilance was required. If the temperature were to fall below a certain threshold for more than an hour, the result would be catastrophic. The workers were ever conscious of the fragility of the greenhouse, especially when, at a temperature of 40 below, they could barely provide enough wood to keep the furnaces going.

Results good

Little by little the greening of the nursery began, and, as one of the workers put it, growth never evoked such hope! The first year of production yielded highly acceptable results, given the experience of the group. By the third year, the financial situation had begun to improve. Many

technical innovations were introduced, and the production methods underwent important changes. By the end of the first five-year contract, the co-operative had become a viable enterprise. Moreover, the talent and the imagination of the members had enabled it to create methods that put the co-operative at the top of the line in seedling production.

In 1985, the co-operative was successful in an audacious initiative: in less than six months, it managed to quadruple its production capacity, going from three to eleven million plants annually. Contracts were gained through tenders, public offers and direct negotiation with the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

Five years after its inception, the Co-operative Nursery of Guyenne is now the largest producer in Quebec. Its productivity is explained not only by the high salaries (\$9 per hour), but also (and particularly) by the fact that the members are conscious that through their work they are building a community and a unique way of life.

More settlers

Obviously, with such growth, the nursery will have a considerable impact on the life of the settlement. Production on such a scale requires the help of more and more outside people, and the population of Guyenne is no longer sufficient to provide the labour required. In order to deal with this situation, the settlement has founded a development corporation to help people, financially and in other ways, to relocate to Guyenne. The employment created by the nursery has regenerated the village, not only by raising the standard of living, but also by offering others the possibility of making Guyenne their home.

A housing co-operative has been established, and the development corporation plans to develop a large fish culture project. Also, there are plans to expand the co-operative nursery into plant and vegetable production.

Such growth is not without its snags. Guyenne is not a paradise.

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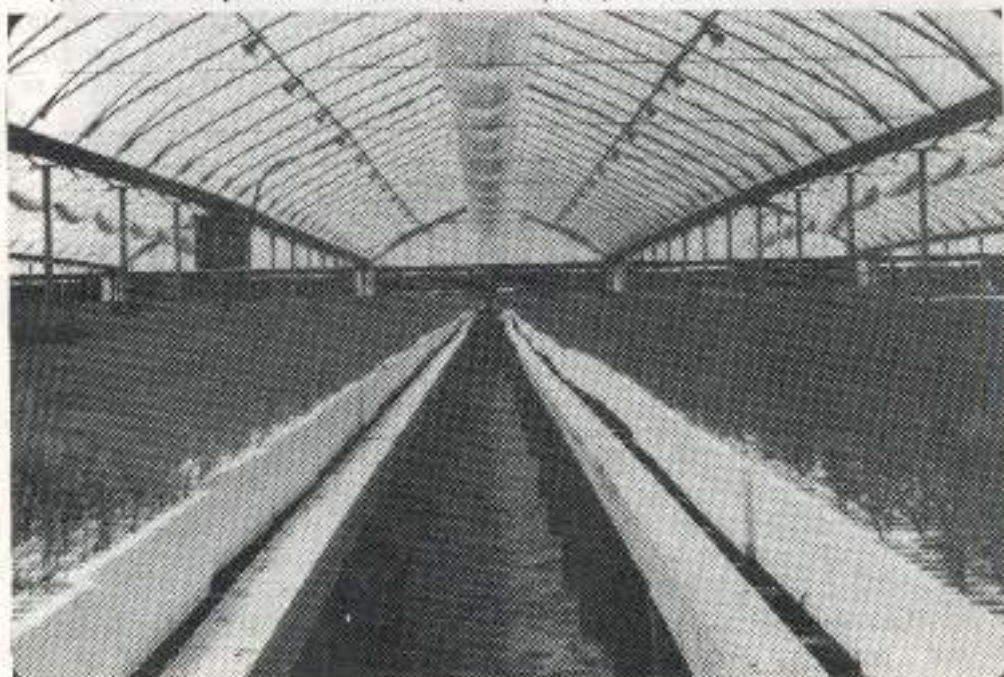
The debates continue; occasionally there is confrontation. But all of this is a part of life. The only way to overcome the obstacles co-operatively is through meetings. And at Guyenne there are meetings practically every night: of the co-operative store, the development corporation, the housing co-operative, the co-operative nursery, the credit union, the association of worker co-operatives and so on. And the relatively small population of Guyenne means that the same people often find themselves around the same tables -- only the agenda changes. But it does not matter, one must get involved. It is a command that one hears often, and those who do not participate are severely judged.

The nursery has transformed the life of Guyenne. The determination and the persistence have not changed, but instead of being

applied to resist the closing of the parish, they now serve to build a future -- a new future.

(Translated by Jo-Anne Andre.)

For more information, contact **Gillès Bérube**, president, Guyenne, Abitibi Ouest, Québec JOY 1L0; (819) 746-2261. ■



*The Guyenne nursery greenhouse.
Les Serres coopératives de Guyenne.*

Smooth sailing for "Les Nuages"

Andrée Létourneau

One day, eight young freelancers in various sectors of communications had had enough of the problems of freelance work: the impossibility of doing everything at once, the difficulty in finding a suitable place to work, the isolation. . . . They joined up with four other people and formed a co-operative. "We were looking for the most egalitarian formula for giving ourselves common services," explains Richard Messier, chairman of the board of directors. "And, to us, the principle of 'one person - one

vote' was fundamental." In February 1980, Les Nuages, a research and production co-operative in communications was launched. In five years, its annual sales have risen from \$80,000 to \$1,500,000 and its members from 12 to 21.

Why the name Les Nuages? Obviously, it's not the first time Messier has been asked this question. They wanted a name that could be easily remembered. Several of the co-operative's clients say they thought of calling on its services after hearing the word "nuages" (clouds) in a weather report!

Target: small- and medium-sized firms

"Unlike other small agencies, we can offer our clients integrated communications services, from preparing to carrying out a campaign," Messier points out. "Most other small agencies usually concentrate on a particular field such as creation, advertising management or market studies. What particularly sets us apart is the fact that small- and medium-sized firms are our preferred market." Small- and medium-sized firms represent some 60 per cent of Les Nuages' 150 active

files. According to Messier, there are not many other agencies interested in this clientele.

"Our approach is different. We consider our development to be closely linked to that of our clients. When we help a small- or medium-sized firm to expand, we grow along with it."

Les Nuages' approach has been successful; the co-op has doubled its sales every year since its creation, up from \$80,000 the first year to \$1,500,000 this year. "What we are interested in, above all, is the creation of jobs for our members," Messier adds. "For us, the long-term development of our business has priority over short-term profits."

The setup

Les Nuages has nine permanent workers, including three people in charge of accounts, a person in charge of administration, two writers, one person in charge of typesetting and two graphic designers. The co-operative also has about 12 non-permanent members, including a camera operator, sociologist, psychologist and photographer, who can be called in for specific productions. Les Nuages uses subcontractors only for special jobs, such as photo development and printing.

Salaries (\$27,000 on average) are determined on the basis of seniority, not tasks. Thus, the secretary earns as much as the person in charge of accounts who joined the co-operative at the same time. "It is not necessarily true that co-operatives pay starvation wages," maintains Messier. "A small-business owner doesn't make any more money the first few years than co-operative owners." Another myth, accor-

ding to Messier, is that in a co-operative you have to work almost 24 hours a day. "Admittedly, you must work very hard at the beginning, but, here again, no more so than during the first few years in any other small- or medium-sized business. At present we work about 40 hours a week as most people do."

The members of Les Nuages adopted a two-poled management system, very centralized at the administrative level and highly decentralized in production. The agency's workers have total autonomy with regard to their productions. "In our co-operative, there is no line of command as far as work is concerned. There is simply one co-ordinator who sees to it that deadlines are respected." Work assignments are given out at weekly production meetings.

In matters of administration, it's a different story. Power is centralized in the board of directors, and a management committee implements the board's decisions. "Our strength lies in our cohesion," maintains Messier. "In co-operatives, autonomy and self-management are very often confused." And that, according to Messier, explains the problems

encountered by some of them. "Here, the board of directors manages and the members have confidence in it. The day that ceases to be the case, the members can always make the necessary changes."

Les Nuages has been self-sufficient, explains Messier, "Except in 1983 when we had to go into deficit to invest in our development. We then received assistance from the Société de développement des coopératives. When we started our business, the SDC did not exist nor did the training programs or consultant groups which are now there to help co-operatives."

Messier is convinced that worker co-operatives will spread in Québec. "One must not forget that they appeared here only recently. In 1979, there were only 28 of them. And the majority of the 286 that currently exist have not been in operation for more than three years. Let's give them a chance to prove that they are able to offer quality goods and services."

For information, contact Richard Messier, Les Nuages, 3827 East Ontario St., Montreal, Quebec H1W 1S5; (514) 526-6651. ■



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Quebec's forestry co-operatives: a major success story

Michèle Talbot-Dagenals

There is an ecological offensive in Quebec's forests. One of its slogans is: "For each tree cut, we plant a new one." Quebec's forestry co-ops are taking a leading role in the high-budget efforts that in the last six years have become priorities of the government: economic and conservation management of the forest.

The first forestry co-op in Quebec was founded at Grande-Vallée, in Gaspésie. The idea quickly took root in other regions of endless forest, such as Abitibi and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, and by 1970 there were 170 forestry co-operatives. Until 1978, forestry co-ops consisted mainly of contractors or "jobbers" for large pulp and paper companies. They built access roads -- the basic transportation infrastructure required for exploitation of the forest.

Up until the middle of the 1970s, the forests were exploited as though they were inexhaustible. But the forestry workers noticed what was happening. "When we went to cut in territories with no access, we already were doing forestry management," says Bertin Côté, president of the Laterrière co-op which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Co-ops, by being the first to speak of the urgency of the situation and the waste of the cutting practices, carved a place for themselves in the political landscape of forestry issues. Last year 20 million trees were planted by forestry co-operatives, and between 1980 and 1984, 80 per cent of co-ops in the industry were engaged in forest management. For the government, the change in attitude has been an

ecological turning point; for the co-ops, their concerns about conservation have led to more jobs, especially for youth and women.

Setbacks, but also some progress

Since the beginning of the 1970s, Quebec's forestry industry has moved toward consolidation. The number of co-ops has

dropped to about 60, the mergers resulting from increasing attempts to rationalize work. The government revoked certain concessions and subdivided the public forest into 44 management areas. The place of co-ops in this new arrangement is sometimes discussed with bitterness. Today, forestry co-ops are involved in many aspects of the



Women in

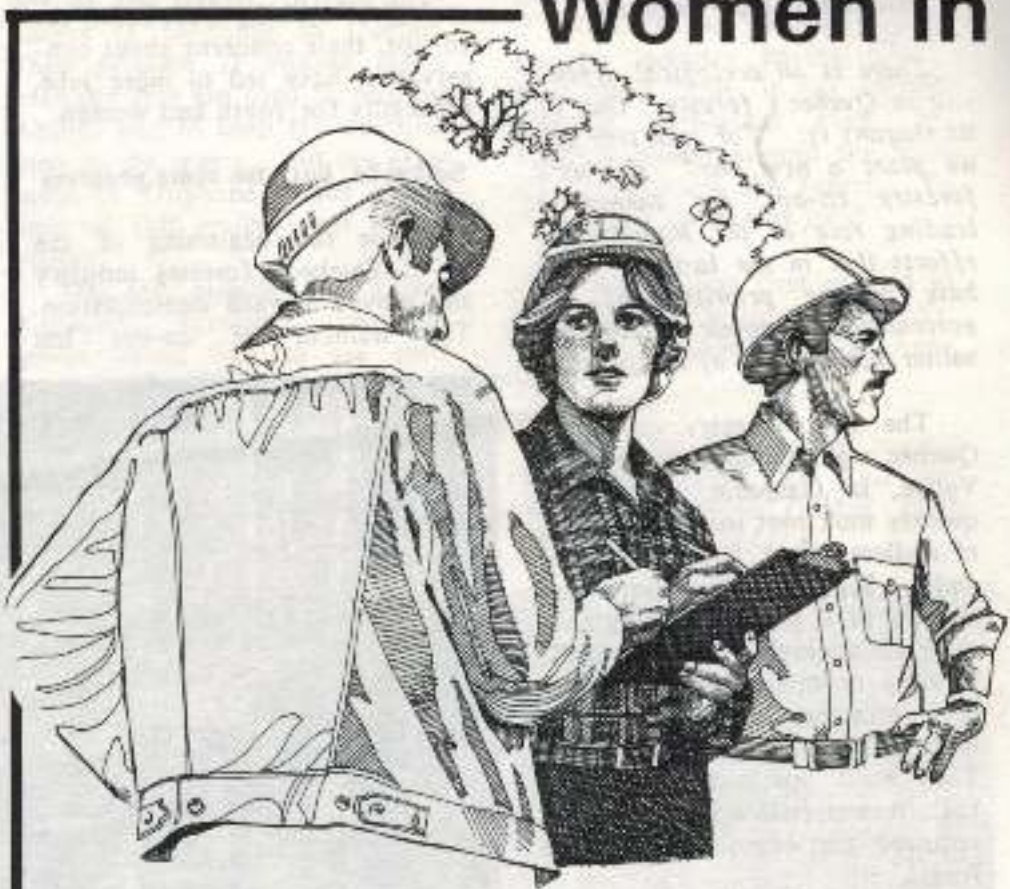
industry: exploitation, transformation (processing, eg. saw-mills), silviculture (reforestation/conservation) and the production of seedlings in nurseries or tunnels.

However, it was not until 1976 -- when the Payer-McNeil report made its recommendations on the place of co-ops in the forestry sector -- that these co-ops were able to see their role clearly.

For their part, the co-ops agreed to unite in a *bona fide* federation, even though they have traditionally shied away from superstructures. "In a forestry co-op, it is the workers who earn their salary and administer their own business. These worker-owners have always wanted to have, and with reason, input into all decisions that directly affected their jobs," says Bertin Côté, a former president of the federation.

Facing government's new approach toward forest management and restocking, the workers in 35 of 42 Quebec's active forestry co-ops have chosen a federation (made a legal entity in 1985) as their negotiating tool. These co-operatives contributed \$1,000 each while the Ministry of Industry and Commerce funded a start-up grant of \$80,000. From then on, mechanical saws and "tumberjacks" were no longer the sole equipment for the forestry worker -- the federation had become their new tool.

The federation reflects the aspirations of all generations of co-operators in the forestry sector. The older members are geared more toward exploitation and transformation activities, while the younger ones are more concerned with conservation and reforestation.



These days it's not hard to find women in the forest industry, and not just at a keyboard! Denise Julien is one of these. Among the lumberjacks of Lac-Sagaie, her story is a triumph resulting from the hard-won birth and successful operation of a forestry co-op in the Hautes-Laurentides.

At the end of a contract teaching history at a university, she decided to move to Lac-Sagaie, a small village between Mont-Laurier and Annonciation, in the back country of the Outaouais, Quebec. When, in 1977, Julien wanted to return to work, she was in for a shock, because in the area, particularly rich in forestry, the unemployment rate (including welfare

recipients) hovers around the 50 per cent mark. "When a woman tries to find employment, she might as well create 40 jobs," argues this young woman with unusual determination. With this in mind, Denise Julien began a small forestry co-op funded by the federal Canada Works program. There were no forestry co-ops in the region at the time.

The first task for the co-op was public relations. Fifteen lumberjacks from four neighbouring villages became convinced of a co-operative's viability. Negotiations lasted six months. At that time, forestry was still the domain of large companies, so when it obtained its charter in June, 1978, Hautes-Laurentides co-op had to carve

forestry

out a niche for itself.

"In certain areas, the forest had been ravaged. We decided that we had to save the trees," recounts Denise Julien. With the help of its president-founder, Raymond Desrosiers, the co-op obtained a cutting territory, a provincial government start-up grant and a line of credit of \$70,000. "During the first year of activity," says Julien, "we expected a deficit of \$30,000. We were very happy because it turned out to be only \$3,000."

At the beginning, one thought dominated: "The forest is a collective resource; it should be managed collectively." In its community, the co-op organized symposiums and publicized the urgency of managing the forest. Other priorities were security of employment and long-term regional development. Under a new manager, Yves Latour, the volume of work increased and the operation began to be well oiled for the future.

Parallel to its work in the forest, the young co-operative worked with the inter-municipal development council. Six sawmills and another forestry co-op have joined in the educational efforts. "We do not reforest a deciduous forest," notes Julien, "it is management that must be done." It is in this area that this co-operative found its niche.

Denise Julien also helped in the creation of the recently-founded Association d'intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides. Members of the

Association hope to optimize the transformation of forestry products -- currently, 75 per cent of ligneous matter is lost.

Over the years, the Hautes-Laurentides co-op has doubled its business and its members. On the horizon is the development of a factory to produce a new type of panelboard. The co-op is working with a technical-school laboratory at Saint-Jérôme.

Since 1983, the Hautes-Laurentides co-op has opened doors for other women, like Francine Florant and Diane Trottier, to work with men, machines and trucks in a non-traditional occupation. As well, the co-op is constructing a nursery (at a projected cost of \$800,000) that will create 40 jobs -- mostly for women. The life preserver of the Hautes-Laurentides Co-op is regional economic development, something Denise Julien has believed in since the beginning.

For three years now, this young co-op has paid out more than \$500,000 annually in salaries, and during the past year it has created 125 jobs. But above all, the experience and competence of its enterprising members are now unique in Quebec. Shaping the forest and carving for themselves a place in the world of work, they have taken up the challenge of integrated regional development. And Denise Julien has continued to believe in it and to see it become reality without ever coming out of the woods!■

Well managed co-ops

United to give themselves improved services, the forestry co-operatives have more influence. Moreover, their outlook is a healthy one. Their combined total business amounts to about \$106 million, and they have more than 3,800 workers who earned about \$31 million dollars last year. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the volume of wood cut by co-ops has continued to increase, up to its current share of 10 per cent of the total wood cut in Quebec. And, despite the economic crisis in the early 1980s, the increase in business is significant: 18 per cent in 1982, 12 per cent in 1983, and 19 per cent in 1984. In the same year, 1984, 17 co-ops realized a volume of business of more than \$1 million. The most impressive was the 235-member Nord-Ouest co-op with sales of more than \$10 million per year. And finally, this picture of the sector shows that the average forestry co-op has been in existence 17 years and has 75 members.

Partners and expectations

The growth of Quebec's forestry co-operatives has proceeded with the support of related government ministries. Benoît Tremblay, Quebec's associate deputy-minister of industry and commerce states that the government's "actions will be polarized around two axes -- promotion and co-ordination." With the new emphasis on reforestation, Tremblay believes there will be specialized resource groups which, like those already existing in other sectors of the forestry industry, will advise the forest management co-ops.

Advisor to the federal ministry of energy and resources, Claude Martel is also positive about the forestry co-ops. "Co-operatives are often the only employers in certain regions. In the Baie-des-Chaleurs, for example, there are six co-ops, one of which is involved only in reforestation. The challenge is volume. We will need 300 million plants in 1988 to regenerate the forest!"

In this context, the Serres de Guyenne in Abitibi reflects the good forest management practised by co-ops. The Guyenne nursery, in fact, is distinguished by being

one of the largest, private producers of seedlings in Quebec. They produce 11 million plants annually that are used to reforest Abitibi and to keep the sawmills busy in the region. But the great pride of Guyenne is the assurance of full employment in the village.

On the agenda for future discussion, forestry co-operatives would like to see their number of plants increase to 40 million per year. Moreover, they want to participate in the research and to collect useful information for their sector, while working with government

and universities.

With all the partners in the forestry industry having proved their good faith, it has become possible, important even, for them to gather around the same table to discuss the future. To count trees....and also jobs!

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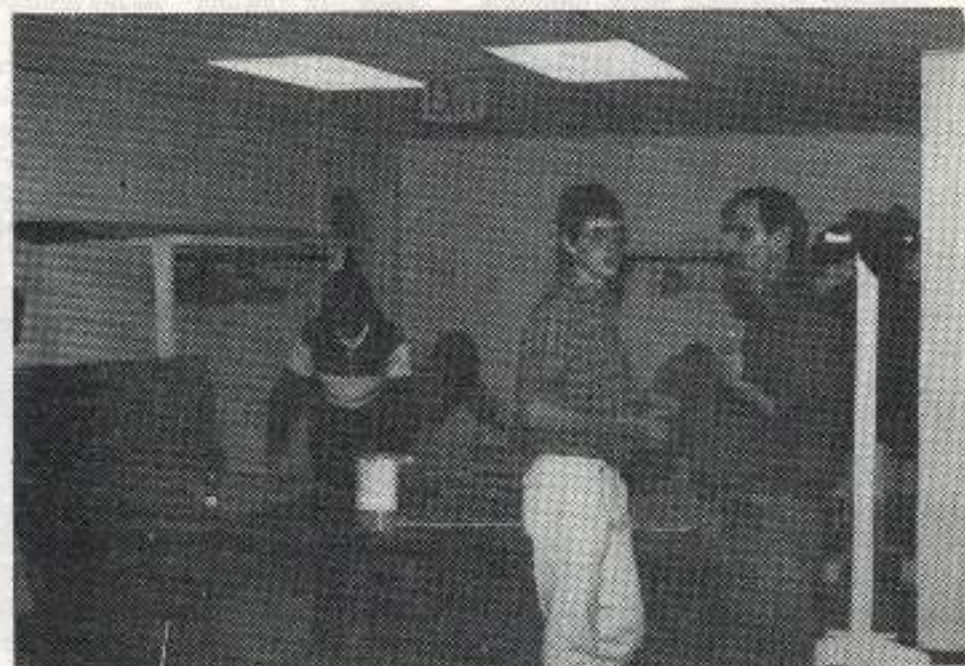
Believe it or not: a worker co-operative in Junior Achievement

Lars Apland

At first glance a worker co-operative in the Canadian Junior Achievement program may seem unusual. But with the support of the Saskatchewan Region of the Co-operative College of Canada and advice from the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development and the local co-operative sector, a group of high school students in Yorkton, Saskatchewan participated in Junior Achievement (J.A.) as a worker co-operative producing bulletin boards. This was the first time in J.A.'s 16 years in the province that a group organized as a co-operative took part in the program. While J.A. is geared to providing youth with practical experience in virtually all phases of small-business operations and, hence, to preparing them for life and work in private enterprise, the Co-operative College's project sought to utilize J.A.'s educational framework and adapt it to the co-operative sector and co-operative values.

Selecting students

In mid-November of 1985, presentations were made to grade 10 and 11 students at the Regional and Sacred Heart high schools in Yorkton to gauge interest for the project. Of the 133 students initially contacted, invitations to participate were sent to 77 students. Finally, 18 students, representing a range of economic and social backgrounds, became the core group for the co-operative. The resource group which initiated the project and advised the participants during the co-operative's 20 weeks of operation included: Alfred Labas (Management Advisor, Depart-



Alf Labas (right), Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development, advises members of the Junior Achievement worker co-op.

ment of Co-operation and Co-operative Development); David Polachek (Director, Yorkton Co-operative Association and Manager of Finance and Control, Yorkton Credit Union); Brian Deutscher (Manager of Personnel and Marketing, Yorkton Credit Union); and William Tait (District Representative, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool). The co-operative sector provided initial funding for the program while the Yorkton Credit Union provided, at a nominal charge, space in its basement.

According to David Polachek, the co-operative sector had three objectives in initiating the project. First, the project was to fill a general obligation toward co-operative education and toward providing practical co-operative business experience to participants. Secondly, it was to fulfill a social commitment to the community by supporting and employing local youth. Thirdly,

the project was to provide an opportunity to introduce youth to the co-operative sector and to familiarize them with the co-operative alternative.

It was necessary for the project's resource group to revise some of J.A.'s source materials and training manuals with a view toward incorporating and emphasizing co-operative philosophy and principles. In some aspects, however, the J.A. program almost unwittingly complemented co-operative organization. Because it is oriented to low-budget, small-scale enterprises, J.A. restricts the number of shares and, hence, corporate votes to one per person. Indeed, in this sense, it may well be that J.A. projects provide participants with a distorted view of the world of private business. This restriction on the ownership of shares, having no parallel in the private sector, ensures the democratic control of the Junior Achievement co-operative. Dur-

ing its operation, the co-operative acquired 101 shareholding members (mainly family and friends) with each share having a value of \$2.00 and providing "the purchasing member with the right to equal participation and control".

Students chose product

With some guidance and suggestions from the resource group, several options were discussed before the students decided that production of bulletin boards would be most feasible given their limited assets, equipment and production space. The students also conducted a market survey and researched the product's profitability before making the final decision.

While the decision to produce bulletin boards alienated some students, Brian Deutscher noted: "The fact that they had some input kept some of the kids interested who might otherwise have quit the project." Indeed, the students adapted well to democratic decision-making. They were not hesitant to hold accountable their six fellow working members on the board of directors (dismissing a director who had not been attending meetings), nor to single out and confront non-performers. With an emphasis on democratic control, the students felt they had all contributed to the operation and, accordingly, "success belonged to all of them".

The co-operative produced a quality product, with material from local suppliers, and sold 145 bulletin boards to members' families, co-operative sector sponsors, small businesses and others. Net sales were \$1645 -- more than enough to break even.

The J.A. co-operative was a definite success with the best attendance and the fourth highest sales in Junior Achievement's Southern Saskatchewan Region.

The project in Yorkton can also be considered successful, given the co-operative sector's initial objectives. Students were introduced to "co-operative business methodology" and gained first-hand business experience in a co-operative setting. The president of the student co-operative, Jason Litowitz, whose interest in business prompted him to join the program, was enthusiastic about his introduction to small business and his exposure to co-operation. However, with the prospect of a traditional private-enterprise section being added to the J.A. program in Yorkton next fall, Jason says that he may pursue that route having "already experienced the co-operative" alternative.

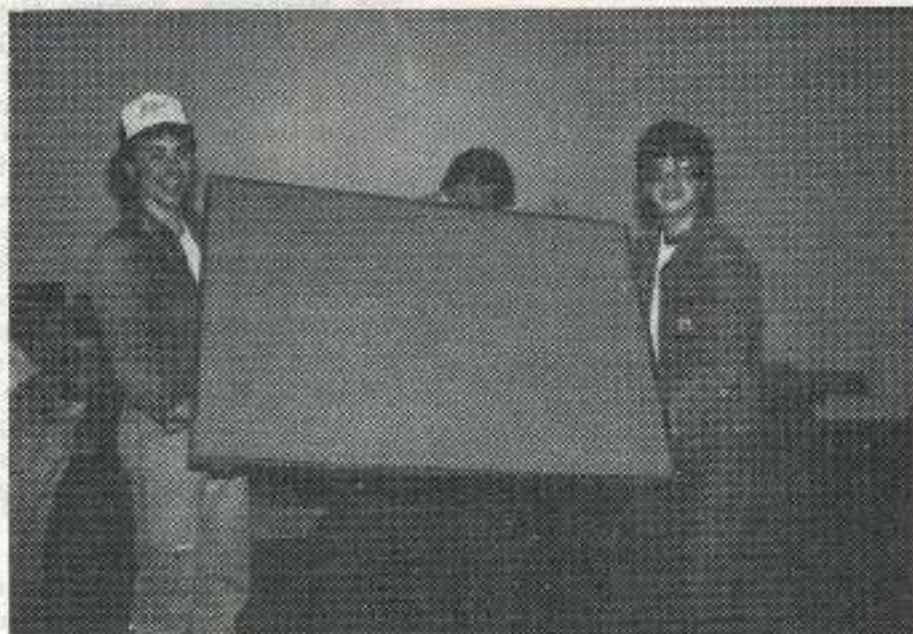
Students, many of whom had no previous familiarity with co-operatives, were introduced to, and developed a working knowledge and understanding of, the principles of co-operation. The experience led some of the stu-

dents to join other co-operatives, and most indicated that they would "continue to deal with co-ops to fill their service needs".

Sixty per cent of the co-operative's members expressed an interest in participating in the program again. This seems likely since these students are from grades 10 and 11 and David Polachek and the other resource people are anxious and enthusiastic about continuing the program next fall.

Despite the difficulties in adapting the J.A. program to co-operative ventures, the success of the Yorkton Junior Achievement Bulletin Board Co-operative is a clear indication of the value of such educational programs to the community, to the co-operative sector and to the development of youth. It would be worthwhile for the co-operative sector to ensure that a program of this type is refined and continued in the years ahead.

Lars Apland is currently a researcher with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Diefenbaker Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W0; (306)966-8503. ■



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

Worker co-operatives share limelight at first ministers' conference

Albert Chambers

The second federal-provincial conference on co-operatives held April 11, 1986 in Ottawa, devoted considerable time to worker co-operatives. Other items discussed included the response to the National Task Force on Co-operative Development, international trade initiatives and the Québec co-operative investment plan.

A paper presented by the Manitoba government was the focus of worker co-operative discussions. It emphasized the importance of worker co-operatives "as an alternate form of business enterprise that can play a vital role in economic regeneration and recovery". Manitoba recommended, and after a very positive discussion the conference agreed, that a joint initiative be taken to encourage the development of worker co-operatives. In the time-worn but still trustworthy fashion of governments and of co-operatives, it was

agreed that a committee, co-ordinated by the federal government, the Co-operative Union of Canada and le Conseil canadien de la coopération, with provincial government participation, should be struck. While the mandate of the committee for its six-month project is still to be finalized, it is expected that it will review the following:

- access by worker co-operatives to existing government programs and their suitability;

- consideration of new programs, services or support structures required by worker co-operatives; and

- suitable capital structures for, access to financing by, and the impact of tax policy on worker co-operatives.

The emphasis throughout the joint committee's work will be on the appropriate mix of programs and services, whether delivered by government or within the co-operative sector, required for the establishment and develop-

ment of worker co-operatives as viable business enterprises. This joint committee is a concrete expression of the openness and the goodwill that characterises the relationship of the co-operative sector with both levels of government.

With Charles Mayer (the federal minister responsible for co-operatives) in the chair, the conference was attended by five provincial ministers: Monte Kwinter (Ontario), Roger Bacon (Nova Scotia), David Clark (New Brunswick), Elwood Veitch (British Columbia) and Robert Aylward (Newfoundland). Québec was represented by Paul Philibert, parliamentary secretary to the minister. The governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta sent either the deputy minister or a senior official.

The Co-operative Union of Canada's delegation was led by Ray Siemens and included Jean MacGillivray, John Nicholson, Baldur Johnson and Laird Hunter. The Conseil canadien de la coopération was represented by its president, Henri-Paul Trudel, along with Richard Quesnel, Richard Newberry and Yvan Forest.

All participants had a positive appraisal of the conference. Mr. Mayer supported a regular, not less frequent than annual conference -- a view that may reflect his expectation that the response to the National Task Force on Co-operative Development will be both positive and continuing. Thus, it can be expected that early in 1987 a third conference will be held.

Albert Chambers is director of government affairs for the Co-operative Union of Canada, 237 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, Canada K2P 1R2; (613) 238-6711. ■



The CUC delegation at the second federal-provincial conference on co-operatives in Ottawa.

Manitoba takes the lead at

Following is Manitoba's presentation at the first ministers' meeting on April 11. Worker Co-ops is reprinting it with the permission of Ron Bailey, Co-ordinator of the Manitoba Department of Co-operative Development.

Employment or worker co-operatives, while relatively new to Canada, have existed in many of the industrialized countries of Europe for almost 100 years. They cover a broad range of industrial activity and range in size from very small to large, employing thousands of workers. Most notable examples of these may be found in Britain, France, Italy and Spain.

While smaller in number, there is a slow but steady growth of employment co-operatives in Canada, particularly in jurisdictions which, through a variety of programs and support mechanisms, have enhanced their legitimacy and assisted in their development. The largest concentration of employment co-operatives, over 200, is in Québec, with smaller numbers in some other provinces.

In October, 1985, the government of Manitoba announced the Employment Co-operative Program which provides financial and developmental support to employment co-operatives. As a result, during the first five months, eight new employment co-operatives have been incorporated, and 12 others are in the development stage.

The resurgence of interest in employment co-operatives is, in a large part, a response to many factors such as unemployment, concentration of economic power in multi-national companies, for-

eign ownership, unstable branch economies, productivity and trade competition, to name but a few. It is within this turbulent and highly competitive economic climate that employment co-operatives are being seen as an alternate form of business enterprise that can play a vital role in economic regeneration and recovery. Accordingly, more and more governments are beginning to include the co-operative option in the strategy and planning of their economies by providing various supports and incentives to promote their development.

While definitions vary, in Canada the definition adopted by the representatives of the federal and provincial governments describes the employment co-operative as:

A business enterprise which is owned and controlled by its members, the majority of whom are workers in the business. It is organized and operated on the basis of the internationally-accepted co-operative principles, most notable of which in this instance would be democratic control (one member - one vote) and equitable distribution of profits to workers.

It is also these principles which distinguish employment co-operatives from the many profit-sharing and employee stock ownership plans that exist today. Unlike these plans, the ownership and control of the employment co-operative remains with the workers, and the benefits of operating a successful business enterprise, the profits, are allocated equitably to the workers proportionate to their contribution to that success and not on the basis of shares held.

The benefits of an employment co-operative

While by definition, one of the primary purposes of an employment co-operative is to provide employment to its members, its structure and operation result in many other social and economic benefits to both the workers and the community. Some of these are:

Security of employment - Employees are owners and are more likely to maintain employment whenever possible.

Economic stability for communities - Because employment co-operatives are usually located in the same community where its workers live, their business decisions reflect the social and economic needs and values of the community. With a failure rate considerably lower than other corporate business, they provide a stable economic environment.

Improved Productivity - A major concern of many industrialized countries is productivity. Because workers are also the owners and have a risk investment, productivity in employment co-operatives is considerably higher, making them more competitive in the business environment of our times.

Quality of work life - Because workers are also the owners, they themselves decide on their working environment. This contributes to the improved quality of work life, human resource and skills development, and participation in management decisions.

Reduced Risk Exposure - Profits of the co-operatives are distributed according to the

first ministers' meeting

wishes of the employees, usually on a basis of salary or hours worked or some combination thereof. The profits stay in the community, are often reinvested to expand or start another business and to improve the wages and benefits of the employees.

The Canadian scene

Outside of Québec, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, most other provincial jurisdictions, including the government of Canada, do not have specific programs that promote the establishment of employment co-operatives or that recognize them as an economic option in the various economic development or job creation programs. This results in low public awareness.

Additionally, existing tax legislation does not provide for an equitable treatment of co-operatives relative to that of other common corporate entities, and this situation may have the tendency to act as a deterrent. For example, under existing tax legislation, employment co-operatives would not be treated like other small business corporations in all respects. Flow-through of tax-deductible losses to employee-owners are not allowed as in the case of partnerships, and co-operatives are not necessarily treated as "Canadian-controlled private corporations" for tax purposes.

Many of the federal and provincial business-development assistance programs do not specify co-operatives as an option or an eligible entity, and the necessity to determine eligibility creates difficulty of access for co-operatives. A strong case

could be made for setting up a specific employment co-operative program with its own funding, perhaps cost-shared between the provinces and Canada, which would facilitate accessibility and reduce costs and duplication of efforts. There are, however, many encouraging signs. There is a great deal of interest, both nationally and provincially, in this form of job creation and broad-base ownership of business enterprise.

The report of the National Task Force on Co-operative Development has identified employment co-operatives as one of its main priorities. A number of resource groups which specialize in developing employment co-operatives already exist and more are likely to emerge as the concept gathers momentum.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The resurgence of interest in, and the growth of, employment co-operatives is not confined to Europe alone. This form of enterprise is gaining momentum in the U.S., which has an economic and political system very similar to ours. To recognize the potential contribution employment co-operatives can make to our national and provincial efforts towards job creation and economic stability, a number of initiatives must be undertaken by various levels of governments and the co-operative system. It is therefore recommended that this meeting conclude by:

1. An agreement by all parties to establish appropriate federal/provincial committees to

review existing government programs and policies to ensure that employment co-operatives have access to appropriate support systems or, alternatively, to design new programs that would provide for a more efficient support.

Consideration should also be given to developing specific policies and programs that encourage employment co-operatives to become established and recognized as a form of truly Canadian-owned business enterprise.

2. More specifically, it is recommended that federal and provincial governments enter into discussions with the co-operative sector to:

- a) develop and implement appropriate support services and resource groups;

- b) develop federal/provincial cost-sharing agreements to assist and encourage development of employment co-operatives. This direction should better utilize the limited resources and promote efficiencies in program delivery;

- c) appoint a federal/provincial/co-operative sector committee to study the present tax system and propose changes that would be conducive to the development of, and investment in, what is truly a Canadian-owned and controlled economic enterprise;

- d) establish specific time-frames for the committees to report, perhaps within six months, so that consideration of further necessary action may be taken.

For information write R.B. (Dick) Chenier, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Co-operative Development, 800 - 215 Garry Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3P3; (204) 945-5796. ■



England

Robert Briscoe

ICOM

You might expect the national conference of Britain's **Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM)** to be a bit out of the ordinary. On February 15, 1986, ICOM lived up to expectations by putting together a conference which was skilfully designed to help delegates get actively involved in learning from each other. At the annual general meeting, which concluded the day's events, the ICOM executive presented its annual report, *Helping Co-ops to Work*.

ICOM is a federal organization representing common ownership co-ops (equity capital is held in common) and individuals interested in the common-ownership concept. ICOM provides legal advice, registration services, publications and training to co-operators throughout the U.K. Through a subsidiary, it also offers financial assistance.

Between 1976 and 1984, ICOM handled the registration of over 900 new co-ops and, in the first eight months of 1985, registered another 157. ICOM fosters the development of new co-ops by working closely with Britain's network of local co-op development agencies. To help larger, longer-established co-ops, ICOM has set up a pilot training program, financed jointly by the European Social Fund and the recently-closed Greater London Enterprise Board. The pilot program is offering tailor-made training to a handful of London co-ops engaged in enterprises as diverse as a pregnancy advisory service and

clinic, a bakery and printing and sign-writing shops.

For its national conference and AGM, ICOM took over a community college in Leicester and staged a full day of practical workshops and exhibits. Delegates could choose from workshops on collective management, marketing, women's co-ops, new technology applications and the structure of ICOM.

For more details about ICOM and its publications write to ICOM, 7/8 Corn Exchange, Leeds, England LS1 7B9; Phone (0532) 461737/8.■

Robin Hood and Rochdale

If you are a history nut and you'd like a connoisseur's look at the roots of the co-operative and labour movements, **Mills and Moors Tours** might be just what you're looking for.

Mills and Moors is a worker co-op which specializes in organizing tours of the industrial archeology of northern England. It caters to groups of history buffs, and it will tailor-make a tour to fit your own particular tastes and interests.

Mills and Moors can take you in the footsteps of the Luddites to mill towns in the Pennines and the superb weavers' village of Heptonstall on a hill overlooking the Calder Valley. You can visit the original Toad Lane co-op store in Rochdale, the 19th-century model-factory village of Saltaire and explore the haunts of Robin Hood.

For more information contact Chris Green, Mills and Moors Tours, Knott Hall, Charlestown, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, England HX7 9PE; Phone (0422) 845390.■

Greenland

Robert Briscoe

Since the late 1970s, Greenland -- one of the last colonies on earth -- has been undergoing a quiet revolution. In 1979, the colonial power, Denmark, began transferring control of Greenland's institutions to a home-rule government.

Greenland's economy is dominated by public enterprises, formerly controlled directly by the Danish government. These state enterprises (mainly concerned with imports, exports, distribution, transportation and manufacturing) are also being transferred to Greenland's new administration.

What is most interesting about this transfer is the home-rule government's declared intention to increase popular participation in the operation of public concerns. New organizational forms are being created, structures which have much in common with Yugoslavia's *self-managed communities of interest*. Greenland's manufacturing concerns will be under the direction of *production committees* representing the unions, local municipal councils, and suppliers (hunters and fishermen). Retail stores will be controlled by *shop committees* which will include consumer representatives.

As well as these new home-rule enterprises, Greenland has a substantial co-operative movement, with strong consumer co-ops, and scattered producer co-ops (mainly engaged in salting or drying the catches of fishermen and hunters). One or two worker co-ops are also starting up, though the Greenland model of self-management gives minority

Around the World

representation at board level to local and national trade unions.

The home-rule enterprises and Greenland's co-op movement are described in a pamphlet, *Future Prospects for Self-Management in Greenland*, by Gorm Winther, published by the Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University Centre, Aalborg, Denmark (January, 1986).

Winther and his associates are involved in a major study of economic development in Greenland, and they want to establish links with Canada's Arctic co-ops. Anyone interested in exchanging ideas with co-operators in Greenland should write to Gorm Winther at the above address.

For information, contact Robert Briscoe, Little Clifton Cottage, 17a South Town Dartmouth, Devon, England TQ6913X.■

SCOTLAND

The Scottish Co-operatives Development Committee (SCDC) is on the verge of initiating a revolving loan fund for worker co-operatives. Although details are sketchy, the SCDC News reports that: "Investment to the loan fund will probably be in the form of redeemable debentures which will be secured on the venture capital company's investments in co-operative businesses."

It is envisaged that the venture capital company will use a variety of investment instruments including normal loans, preferred shares, and in the case of capital-intensive companies, the purchase of assets on behalf of the co-operative that would be subsequently leased back.

According to the SCDC News, "the investment structure must be commercial, but the real benefits will be in structuring the finance to meet the individual needs of the co-operative."

Although the SCDC will establish the venture capital company, the venture capital operation will be "autonomous".■

Women in Co-Ops Network

Women's Network

Taking their lead from the ICOM Women's Link-up, women from Scottish co-ops have decided to organize a network to exchange ideas, information and skills and to act as a discussion forum for issues that are of particular interest to women in co-operatives.

For information write to Lydia, c/o Green City Wholefoods, 23 Fleming Street, Glasgow, Scotland, G31 1PH; Phone (041) 554-7633. And for more information about Scottish co-operatives, subscribe to the SCDC News, Templeton Business Centre, Templeton Street, Glasgow, Scotland G40 1DA.■



Tanzania

Skip McCarthy

Currently, the government of Tanzania is re-establishing its co-operative unions which had been disbanded in 1975. Industrial co-operatives -- which had previously been neglected in a country well numbered with agricultural, consumer, handicraft, housing, savings and credit co-operatives -- are now receiving special attention.

Many industrial co-operatives have found it difficult to become established or to expand due to limited access to capital. This is primarily the result of government regulations for loan disbursements by financial institutions. Many industrial co-ops cannot meet these stringent conditions, so a revolving fund has been established to address the problems of securing mortgages, mortgage insurance and covering the costs of feasibility studies and audited accounts.

With more than 6,000 members in approximately 200 fully-incorporated industrial co-operatives, the Co-operative Union of Tanzania (CUT), has formally enfranchised industrial co-operatives into a separate department. This department is charged with helping industrial co-ops become more efficient and profitable through improved organization, trade skills and management systems.

Industrial co-operatives now represent only five per cent of Tanzania's 10,000 registered co-operative societies and are numerically weaker than consumer co-ops. Because rural development has been a higher priority for Tanzanian policy makers, the urban-oriented in-

Around the World

dustrial co-operatives have found themselves at such a disadvantage that they are also forming their own umbrella organization outside of the CUT called TICO -- the Tanzanian Industrial Co-operative Organization.

Robert Savane, head of the Department of Industrial Co-operatives with CUT, is focusing on the training requirements of the membership through technical seminars and scholarships to the Co-operative College in Moshi. He says that there is a great need to improve management and bookkeeping skills in co-ops.

However, the greatest impediment to the further development of the industrial co-ops remains financial, because equipment and spare parts require foreign exchange, which is extremely scarce. These technical and financial problems may continue to undermine the growth of small industrial co-ops. Preferred treatment is still given to the larger national industries.

Product lines are diverse and the potential for trade between co-operatives is promising. Goods and services produced by the co-ops include building materials, metal products, shoes, soap, plus carpentry, construction and mining services.

The problems for industrial co-operative development cannot be divorced from those difficulties being experienced in the national economy as a whole. In fact, the dilemma of the industrial co-ops might be viewed as a microcosm of the Tanzanian economic system. The potential for the industrial co-ops to resolve, in part, the national economic problems should not be overestimated. However, as self-reliant organizations, industrial

co-operatives are an important element of the national strategy.

Skip McCarthy, currently researching Tanzania's co-operatives, can be reached at 19 - 190 Booth St., Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7J4. ■

UNITED STATES

Organized labour encourages employee ownership

With the increased concern about shutdowns of potentially viable plants, U.S. organized labour is viewing employee ownership as a useful mechanism to protect the jobs of their members. AFL-CIO president, **Lane Kirkland**, is quoted as stating that union leaders are debating "the possibility of playing the

corporate raiders' own game and acquiring ownership of some facilities".

Of the large American unions, the United Steelworkers, in particular, is looking at ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Plans) as an integral part of contract negotiations. According to the *National Center for Employee Ownership News Bulletin*, the norm for upcoming contract negotiations will be "wage concessions which would be returned in the form of cash if profits reach certain target levels or convertible stock if they do not".

At present, nine U.S. steel companies have employee ownership plans, either partial or total, and three others -- Dusquesne in Pennsylvania, Geneva in Utah and Gadsen in Alabama -- are contemplating employee buyouts as a way to avoid potential shutdowns.

OUR TIMES

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Around the World

The highly controversial buy-out, Weirton Steel, has become the most profitable steel company in the United States. Weirton announced recently that it has distributed \$20 million in profits to its 8,400 employees (\$2,400 per worker) and, in addition, has invested \$136 million in capital improvements over the last two years.

In anticipation of the increased use of ESOPs to protect steel industry jobs, the United Steelworkers has adopted a policy of insisting that ESOPs should carry full voting rights and should not be used as a substitute for defined, guaranteed benefits, such as pension plans.■

Businesses for unemployed

Unemployed workers in some Appalachian Ohio counties are being helped to start their own businesses by the Worker-Owned Network (WON), a support group begun by teachers, social workers and the unemployed. According

to *Workplace Democracy*, eight former welfare recipients own and operate a business that provides in-home service to senior citizens. Six other unemployed workers are starting their own Mexican restaurant.■

North Carolina worker ownership

Changing Shifts, the newsletter of North Carolina's Center for Community Self-Help, describes the impressive growth of worker ownership in that part of the United States. After assisting the development of an array of small worker co-operatives, "the Center has begun to convert larger businesses to worker-ownership", e.g., a family-owned hosiery mill with 150 employees.

Several years ago, financing was a major barrier to worker ownership in North Carolina. But this is no longer the case. The Self-Help Credit Union, with deposits of \$3.3 million, is currently providing 50 loans totalling more than \$600,000 for community economic develop-

ment.

And the Self-Help Ventures Fund, a non-profit subsidiary of the Center for Community Self-Help, is providing higher-risk lending to worker-owned businesses. A low-interest investment from the Ford Foundation in 1986 will add \$1.5 million to the Venture Fund's capital base.

Substantial financing for worker ownership in North Carolina also has come from women's religious orders. In addition to deposits in the Self-Help Credit Union, one group of Catholic sisters -- the Adrian Dominicans -- invests directly in nine worker-owned companies.

For more information contact **Thad Day Moore**, Program/Finance Manager, Center for Community Self-Help, P.O. Box 3259, 413 East Chapel Hill St., Durham, North Carolina 27705; (919) 683-3016. The Center is currently soliciting memberships (\$15 U.S.) which include its quarterly newsletter, and it is encouraging other donations (tax deductible).■

Across the Nation



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dana Weber

B.C. Cafeteria Workers' Co-op

The B.C. Cafeteria Workers' Co-op has, until recently, been one of the province's best-kept secrets. It was formed last fall in response to a crisis precipitated by the provincial government.

For years, at least three Victoria-area cafeterias serving provincial government workers had been run by a non-profit society, which occupied their premises rent-free. But all that changed under government "restraint" policies of the '80s when B.C. Buildings Corporation, the province's property management arm, hit the cafeterias with rents totalling \$11,000 per month.

When the society wanted out of the business and contracts to run the cafeterias were put out to private tender, workers' job security and their union certification were threatened. The B.C. Government Employees Union and the cafeteria workers quickly incorporated a worker co-op to bid on two of the three cafeterias. The bid was successful, and the unionized co-op's 16

Across the Nation

workers carried on the business under their own direction.

Each worker-member agreed to leave his or her severance pay in a pool for the co-op's use for at least one year. Members own a nominally valued share with voting rights attached, and they are entitled to a share of profits based on hours worked. The BCGEU is also entitled to a share of the profits, but this share is donated to the community in a manner determined by the co-op's board, which includes one union representative.

The co-op's two cafeterias are open for breakfast and lunch and at last report each was grossing about \$1,000 per day.

Information supplied by Melanie Conn of WomenSkills.■

ALBERTA

George Melnyk

New Resource Group

On March 31, 1986, the Co-operative Living and Working Group held its inaugural meeting at the Arusha Centre in Calgary. This group is meeting monthly to discuss and to develop various kinds of co-operatives in the city. Two projects already under active discussion and development are a worker-owned natural foods bakery and a "green dollar" services and goods exchange. For more information call Philip Cox at (403) 270-3200.

George Melnyk can be contacted at P.O. Box 3683, Stn. B., Calgary, Alberta T2M 4M4; (403) 270-7210.■

SASKATCHEWAN

Lars Apland

New publications

The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives has recently added two new publications to its Occasional Paper Series:

Co-operatives and Their Employees: Towards a Harmonious Relationship by Christopher S. Axworthy, Director, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and Professor of Law. Individuals \$6.00; institutions \$10.00;

Co-operatives and Social Democracy: Elements of the Norwegian Case by Finn Aage Ekelund, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto. Individuals \$5.00; institutions \$10.00.

Forthcoming is *Encouraging Democracy in Consumer and Producer Co-operatives* by Stuart Bailey.

Publications may be obtained by writing to the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Diefenbaker Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W0; (306) 966-8503.■

MANITOBA

Doug Davison

New co-op

Gaia Reforestation Co-op has been incorporated in Manitoba under the province's Employment Co-operative Program.

Conceived by three people (one university student and two unemployed), Gaia had initially hoped to be in a position to create up to 10 jobs when fully operational.

To this point Gaia has successfully bid on one reforestation contract which was tendered by the province's Forestry Branch. This contract calls for Gaia to undertake tree planting north of Winnipeg in the Interlake region (near the town of Riverton). This job is expected to be finished by July 11, 1986. Beyond the Riverton job, Gaia is now in the process of actively pursuing other tenders and, on that basis, is getting ready for the fall season. As it is, Gaia has exceeded its earlier job targets and already has 12 to 15 workers on the Riverton job.

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Manitoba's Employment Co-op Program has assisted Gaia with a \$5,000 guarantee for a performance bond.

Gaia Reforestation Co-op can be contacted through Bruce Livingston, 112 Essex Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba; (204) 235-1843.

Doug Davison, Worker Co-ops' Manitoba editor, is now located at 200 - 651 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0W3.■

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ONTARIO

Ethan Phillips

Worker Ownership Development Foundation

The Foundation is actively seeking new members. For participating members, the annual membership fee is \$40 for individuals and \$125 for institutions, while an associate membership is \$25 for individuals and \$100 for institutions.

Sales continue to be good for the Foundation's two *Starting a Worker Co-op* publications. For those who haven't yet obtained their copies, the detailed 300-page handbook sells for \$50 while the introductory booklet sells for \$7.50.

The Foundation's educational program is expanding rapidly. In addition to the second phase of a series of courses for the York Board of Education, the Foundation has sent speakers to a number of workshops and conferences.

The Foundation is also sponsoring a conference on

Grindstone Island September 7 - 10. The conference will be covering a range of alternative enterprises including worker co-ops. For more information, contact the Foundation or the Grindstone Island office at (416) 923-4215.

On the political front, the Foundation is continuing to participate in a co-op sector push for amendments to Ontario's *Co-operative Act*. If successful, the new worker co-op amendments would be the most advanced in Canada.

The Foundation is also continuing to meet with all parties interested in a financial-assistance program for worker co-ops in the province. Given the increased interest in worker ownership issues in Ontario, the next six months may see a breakthrough on the provincial scene.

Big Carrot expands

Exciting things are happening at one of Toronto's best known worker co-ops -- the Big Carrot.

A major expansion is planned in a multi-store facility in which the Big Carrot will be a part-owner. More details should be available for the next issue.

Sudbury co-operative community

Another exciting development is an attempt at establishing an integrated co-operative community on the site of a former provincial penitentiary outside Sudbury. Co-operative Work Consulting was hired by The Sudbury Citizen's Movement to do a feasibility study, and the report has been forwarded to the provincial cabinet which will be deciding upon the future use of the site. A decision is expected soon.

For more information, contact Ethan Phillips, director, Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 357 College St., Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S5; (416) 928-9568.■

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Worker owned co-operative

Across the Nation

QUÉBEC

Claude Carbonneau

(Note: an English translation follows the French notes.)

A.C.E. à Québec en 1987

Le Conseil de la coopération du Québec a accepté d'assumer l'organisation du colloque 1987 de The Association of Co-operative Educators. Cet événement se déroulera à Québec en juin 1987. Cette association nord-américaine regroupe des gens qui travaillent à la formation et à l'éducation au sein des mouvements coopératifs canadien et américain. Cette année, le congrès de A.C.E. se tient à Madison, au Wisconsin. Le thème du colloque est *Frontiers in Co-operative Education: Programming for Excellence*.

Coopératives de travailleurs: les interventions de la S.D.C.

Avec la fin de l'année financière, au 31 mars 1986, les aides financières de la Société de développement des coopératives s'étaient adressés à des coopératives de travailleurs dans la proportion de 45 pour cent des cas. Sur le plan financier, cela a représenté 35 pour cent des sommes autorisées.

Les retraités au service des jeunes

La Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins de Québec a décidé d'appuyer le projet de mise sur pied d'une banque de ressources techniques pour venir en aide aux jeunes et aux travailleurs sans emploi.

Conçu par monsieur Adrien Rioux, ancien sous-ministre

associé aux coopératives, ce projet vise à identifier des personnes retraitées qui pourraient mettre gratuitement leur expérience du monde des affaires au service des jeunes. Cette banque de conseillers bénévoles s'adresserait à toutes les formes juridiques d'entreprises. On peut cependant s'attendre à ce que les coopératives de travailleurs y trouvent une place de choix dans ce programme parrainée par le Mouvement Desjardins.

L'expérience pilote menée par monsieur Rioux pourrait certainement servir d'exemple à d'autres régions du Québec et du Canada.

Coupures budgétaires, les programmes coop sont maintenus

Comme l'ensemble du gouvernement, les organismes voués au développement des coopératives ont été affectés par les coupures budgétaires décrétées par le gouvernement du Québec. Ces coupures entraîneront certains réaménagements internes tant à la Société de développement des coopératives qu'à la Direction des coopératives. Cependant, elles n'affecteront pas directement les programmes d'aide aux coopératives. Les budgets de fonctionnement des groupes-conseils et des coopératives de développement régional ont donc été reconduits pour une autre année.

Meilleurs outils pour les groupes-conseils

La Direction des coopératives travaille actuellement à perfectionner les outils d'intervention des groupes-conseils. Sous peu, tous les groupes-conseils du Québec auront des instruments

uniformes pour monter leurs dossiers et aider les coopératives à mener à bien leurs projets. Ces instruments faciliteront une meilleure coordination entre tous les groupes-conseils de même que les autres intervenants sur le terrain.

Quarantième anniversaire, le C.C.C. s'intéresse aux coopératives de travailleurs

Le quarantième congrès annuel du conseil canadien de la coopération se tiendra cette année au Château Frontenac de Québec, les 28, 29, 30 juin et 1^{er} juillet. Cette année, le C.C.C., qui regroupe des coopératives francophones de neuf des dix provinces canadiennes, a choisi de réfléchir sur la coopérative de travailleurs en tant qu'instrument de développement de la collectivité.

Parmi les conférenciers invités, on retrouve monsieur Aurèle Séguin, président de la Fédération québécoise des coopératives de travail, ainsi que monsieur Serge Brissaud, directeur de la mise en marché chez Célibec, coopérative de production de systèmes électroniques et informatiques du Québec.

Des publications intéressantes

La Société de développement des coopératives ainsi que la Direction des coopératives du ministère de l'industrie et du commerce ont publié une série de dépliants s'adressant à l'ensemble des coopératives mais plus précisément aux coopératives de travailleurs.

La documentation publiée par la Direction des coopératives précise certains aspects de la Loi sur les coopératives ainsi que divers points particuliers sus-

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ceptibles d'aider les coopérateurs dans leurs démarches juridiques. Quant à la Société de développement des coopératives, la documentation qu'elle présente vise à préciser les différents programmes d'aide financière qu'elle est en mesure d'offrir aux entreprises coopératives. Au cours de la prochaine année, elle envisage de publier de nouveaux dépliants qui présenteront plus spécifiquement certains aspects du financement des entreprises.

A.C.E. in Quebec in 1987

The Conseil de la coopération of Quebec will organize the 1987 symposium of the Association of Co-operative Educators, to be held in Quebec in June 1987. This North American association brings together those who work in the training and educational sectors of the Canadian and American co-operative movements.

This year, the A.C.E. conference will be held in Madison, Wisconsin. The theme of the colloquium is *Frontiers in Co-operative Education: Programming for Excellence*.

Putting retirees to work for youth

The Desjardins federation of caisses populaires of Quebec has started a pilot project that will help youth and unemployed workers create worker co-operatives.

Conceived by Adrien Rioux, former deputy minister of co-operatives, the project will identify retired people who could volunteer to teach business skills to youth. These volunteer-advisors will form a technical

resource bank and will assist the creation of new enterprises. We can expect that worker co-operatives will find a prime spot in the project. The pilot experiment could certainly serve as an example for the other regions of Quebec and Canada.

S.D.C. financial aid

At the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 1986, 45 per cent of the financial aid disbursed by the Société de développement des coopératives had been directed to worker co-ops. This amount is 10 per cent more than was originally budgeted.

Co-op programs are kept

Like the rest of the provincial government, the agencies devoted to the development of co-operatives were affected by the budget cuts decreed by the Quebec government. These cuts will lead to certain internal changes within the Société de développement des coopératives. However, they won't directly affect the programs which aid co-ops. The operating budgets of resource groups (*groupes-conseils*) and regional development co-operatives were renewed for another year.

Better tools for resource groups

The Direction des coopératives is attempting to perfect the working tools of resource groups. All the resource groups in Quebec will soon have uniform approaches to compiling records and to managing their projects. These instruments will facilitate better co-ordination between resource groups and other agencies in the field.

The C.C.C. gets involved with worker co-operatives

The 40th annual conference of the Conseil canadien de la coopération will be held this year at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City, June 28 through July 1st. This year, the C.C.C., which brings together francophone co-operatives from nine of the 10 Canadian provinces, has chosen to focus on the worker co-op as a development instrument.

Among the invited speakers are Aurele Seguin, president of the Quebec federation of worker co-ops, as well as Serge Brissaud, supervisor at Celibec, the production co-op of electronic and computer systems.

Noteworthy publications

Both the Société de développement des coopératives and the Direction des coopératives of the ministry of industry and commerce have published a series of pamphlets aimed at co-operatives in general, but specifically targeted at worker co-operatives. These pamphlets describe co-operative law and provide legal advice. They also describe financial aid programs for co-operatives. There are plans to publish more pamphlets which will highlight financing for co-operatives. ■

For more information, Claude Carbonneau can be contacted at the S.D.C., 430 Chemin Ste. Foy, Québec City, Québec G1S 2J5: (418) 687-9221.

Across the Nation

NEW BRUNSWICK

Grant MacDonald

Co-op history note

If this province is an example, the history of the co-operative movement in Canada is much longer than many people think. The Saint John *Morning News* of February 17, 1864, reports a lecture at the Mechanic's Institute on the subject of "co-operation". About that same time there were also reports of attempts to establish co-operative societies. The Carleton Co-operative Society was started in 1864 for "manufacturing and commercial purposes" and the Saint John Trades Co-operative Association was incorporated in 1867 to carry on a "general mercantile and manufacturing business on the principles of co-operation, cash dealings only and mutual participation in profits." A co-operative shoe factory was also started in Saint John in 1869 by 15 trade unionists, members of the Knights of the Order of St. Crispin. While these organizations probably did not last more than a few years, they indicate a very early interest in co-operatives, especially among craftspeople and other workers. (These references can be found in J.R. Rice, *A History of Organized Labour in Saint John, New Brunswick, 1813 - 1890*, M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1968.)

Grant MacDonald is an adult educator at Henson College, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3J5; (902) 424-2526. ■

NEWFOUNDLAND

Robert Thompson

New field worker with NFLC

On March 3, 1986, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives appointed Jim Winter as a worker/producer co-operative development officer. Jim replaces Lawrence Canning in this position, and comes to the Federation with a strong background in working with community groups and youth. He was previously employed with the Secretary of State and the Katimavik program.

Jim's duties will consist of promoting worker and producer co-operatives to the general public and directly assisting new co-operatives during their formative stage.

Worker co-operatives and the mentally handicapped

Worker co-operatives that integrate mentally-handicapped and non-handicapped people are

being used by the Association for Community Living (formerly the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded) as a strategy to provide meaningful work for people with mental handicaps.

Joe Cawthorpe of the Association says that its goal is to set up two viable worker co-operatives within the next 18 months in the communities of Stephenville and Marystown. Along with the obvious social benefits of non-handicapped people working side by side with the handicapped, Mr. Cawthorpe believes that these worker co-operatives will contribute to community development, job creation and the enfranchisement of a group of people who seldom have control over their workplace.

The participation of the Saskatchewan Association for the Mentally Retarded in the Churchill Park Greenhouse Co-op in Moose Jaw (*Worker Co-ops*, December, 1985) provides one example for the Newfoundland effort, but the Association realizes it is involved in a ground-breaking effort. Mr.

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Across the Nation

Cawthorpe emphasizes that viability and competitiveness are paramount concerns in setting up these worker co-operatives.

These co-operatives have the support of the provincial Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development and the Department of Social Services as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives.

Youth co-operative camp

The Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Advisory Council, in co-operation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives, will be holding a youth co-operative camp in mid-September. The camp will be aimed at people between the ages of 18 and 22 who are out of high school but have not decided on a career path. These youths should also display entrepreneurial characteristics or be willing to learn these types of skills.

The week-long camp will teach co-operative management skills, and will be built around the theme, *Newfoundland youth should stop being job seekers and become job creators*. A co-operative will be set up by the camp so that the participants can have hands-on experience. In particular, the entrepreneurial necessities of co-operation will be emphasized. If this camp is successful, the Youth Advisory Council hopes to sponsor a similar camp annually.

For more information, contact Robert Thompson, director of the planning and research division, Department of Career Development and Advanced Studies, P.O. Box 4750, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5T7; (709) 576-2734.■

NOVA SCOTIA

Grant MacDonald

Tenant services co-op

Network Victoria Co-operative was formed in April, 1985, to exchange information and emergency services among tenants of the Park Victoria, a 400-unit apartment building in Halifax's south end. The idea for the co-operative came from the province's Disabled Individuals Alliance (Dial) as an innovative way of integrating disabled tenants into a larger residential community. The co-op, currently with 65 members of all ages and abilities, offers to tenants a wide range of services including sewing, plant-sitting, grocery-buying and poetry-reading. Members may purchase services from each other or barter the exchanges. Non-member residents may buy services from the co-op at a special rate. The co-op produces and distributes a newsletter to all apartments in the building.

For more information, contact Sylvia Fahie, Network Victoria Co-operative Ltd., at 210, 1119 Tower Rd., Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4H5; (902) 425-7009.■

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

David Carrington

It is now likely that there will be a worker co-op potato chip factory and a worker co-op cable T.V. system in Prince County. These developments have been nurtured by the credit union in that area which has established a venture capital corporation and which employs a field worker under a Secretary of State grant. Leonce Bernard, former manager of the credit union, is now PEI's Minister of Industry. More details should be available for the next issue.

For more information, contact David Carrington, Caledonia Products Co-op Ltd., R.R. 1, Montague, P.E.I. COM 1R0.■

Correction

In *Worker Co-ops* (Spring, 1986), Albert Chambers should have been listed as author of the national section of "Across the Nation" and Robert Thompson should have been listed as author of the Newfoundland section. Our apologies to Chambers and Thompson for this oversight.■



MID ISLAND CONSUMER SERVICES CO-OPERATIVE

"BEST WISHES TO CANADA'S WORKER CO-OPS FROM THE MID-ISLAND CONSUMER SERVICES CO-OP, A SERVICE FEE CO-OPERATIVE THAT HAS PROVIDED OVER 235 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF MERCHANDISE TO ITS 11,000 MEMBERS SINCE INCORPORATION"

2517 BOWEN ROAD, NANAIMO, B.C. V9T 3L2

Why a Calgary store became a consumer rather than a worker co-op

George Melnyk

On April 12, 1986, Alderman Bob Hawkesworth cut the ribbon on Calgary's first and only natural foods co-op -- Earth Harvest.

The store had opened in less than two months from the date of the initial meeting. Earth Harvest is a consumer co-op with 440 members. It had sales of \$14,000 in its first two weeks of operation. This is an impressive beginning, but why would this consumer co-op be of interest to worker co-operators? For the simple reason that the worker co-op model was actively discussed in the initial stages. Why Earth Harvest did not become a worker co-op is worth investigating because this may hold valuable lessons for those organizing worker co-ops.

Earth Harvest was a long-established health food store owned as a sole proprietorship. Unfortunately, the owner declared bankruptcy. When the employees found out, they mobilized to keep the store open. Earth Harvest was seen by many as a valuable community asset in the Sunnyside-Hillhurst neighbourhood, and it had attracted loyal patrons.

Three options

Staff and supporters met to discuss options for the future. Everyone agreed that a co-operative structure would be best. But what kind? Three options were discussed -- a worker co-op, a combination of a worker and consumer co-op and a consumer co-op. In the beginning the

worker/consumer model seemed the most attractive because the group was composed of workers and consumers. But with subsequent meetings, attended by ever-increasing numbers of consumers, it was decided to incorporate as a consumer co-op.

There were several reasons for this. First, the workers did not have the capital to set up a worker co-op. Nor did they have access to funds to buy the business and start up again. But consumers who shopped at the store did have capital to loan the co-op.

Second, there was a genuine fear that a worker/consumer co-op would have difficulty incor-



porating under Alberta's co-operatives statute and that the time lost fighting that battle would affect the success of the co-op.

And finally, it was evident that local conditions favoured a consumer co-op. Calgary has North America's largest consumer co-op, Calgary Co-op, with 180,000 members. It has been operating for 30 years, and many Calgarians are accustomed to the workings of a consumer co-op.

Consumers had edge

The difficulties of financing and incorporating a worker co-op and familiarity with the consumer co-op model tipped the scales toward the consumer option. The co-op was able to raise \$35,000 in capital through a combination of member loans, sales of "food futures", membership fees, and donations -- all in a matter of two months.

Such quick action would not have been possible by the four or five employees working on their own. The energy generated by the project attracted dozens of volunteers and broadly-based community support, including free meeting space. Everyone felt that the store was a community project, and many individuals identified with it. Of special assistance was Bridgehead, the alternative trading organization for third world products, which moved its operations into the store basement to help with the rent.

One of the spin-offs from the Earth Harvest experience has been the development of an ongoing resource group of co-op activists, who have been spurred on by the launching of Earth Harvest co-op to consider the development of other co-ops in the area. The lessons they have learned from Earth Harvest will prove useful in the establishment of Calgary's first worker co-op -- something that is no longer just a distant dream.

George Melnyk can be contacted at P.O. Box 3683, Stn. B., Calgary, Alberta T2M 4M4; (403) 270-7210.■

Book Reviews



*NEW AGE
BUSINESS*

By
Greg MacLeod

New Age Business: Community Corporations that Work, Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Ave., P.O. Box 3505, Station C, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4G1. 1986, 82 pp., \$9.95.

Reviewed by Grant MacDonald

Greg MacLeod is a founding member of New Dawn Enterprises Ltd. in Sydney, Nova Scotia, one of Canada's most economically viable community development corporations (CDC). A CDC, as MacLeod explains it, is an "enabling" corporation established by local people for the purpose of creating new businesses that are commercially viable and that have some social purpose beyond job creation. He provides three case studies: New Dawn, J.A.L. (Quebec) and Mondragon (Spain) as examples of CDCs. These, he says, have certain characteristics in common which suggest that they "are part of a new and emerging model for doing business in the 21st century".

New Age Business is a short book and provides a good overview of community-based economic development. The author also provides some guidance on how to set up a CDC, including some sensible thoughts on the role of a board of directors and its relationship to staff. One might recommend this book to government policymakers or others not yet initiated into the alternative economic development

scene. While the case studies of New Dawn and Mondragon provide no new information or perspective, they are useful introductions to these enterprises.

Quebec CDC interesting

The J.A.L. case study will interest English-speaking Canadians because it brings to light an example of community-based development that heretofore has been written about mostly in French. MacLeod reveals the tumultuous history of struggle and resistance on the part of the people of several communities in southeastern Quebec and their attempt to tackle the problem of economic development. According to MacLeod, J.A.L. has had economic success in the forestry sector and, despite some failures, is still struggling to develop enterprises in other fields. Interestingly, much of the success of J.A.L. has been on the political front. By banding together for action, the people in the area have forced the provincial government to pay attention to their problems. I, for one, would like to hear more about J.A.L.

A middle-road approach

MacLeod clearly identifies himself with other "New Age" thinkers, those who reject both "capitalism" and "socialism" (the latter being synonymous with "communism" in their eyes). New Agers are attempting to find a new path to a more humanistic world, one which avoids political and economic centralization. A worthwhile goal, no doubt about it!

For MacLeod, the community development corporation is *the* way to achieve the "delicate integration of social concerns and business success". The author suggests that this is not just a

repackaging of the small-business school of good old free enterprise. Not all readers will be convinced.

MacLeod has lots to talk about when it comes to the economic side of community development, but little in the way of specifics about the social and cultural dimensions of New Age business. Perhaps these have yet to blossom. Possible political goals of community economic development such as democratic control and greater equality are virtually ignored.

Co-op structures not important

Although Mondragon is one of the cases described in the book, the author shows no special sympathy for co-operative enterprises or, for that matter, workers' control. "In a sense," he says, all "structures which combine social purpose with economic realities. . . may be called co-operatives." MacLeod says that "it is up to community enterprises to devise their own methods of employee participation." Apparently, the form of New Age enterprise does not matter. We are to assume, I guess, that social responsibility is an attitudinal problem.

A tune that is being played quite often these days is that government should not be involved in economic development (apart from providing funding, of course). While there is justification for being put off with the employment incentive schemes of the past (especially in the Atlantic provinces), at least government is accountable at the polls every few years. What does it mean to put development in the hands of the "community"? MacLeod does not take us very far down this road. He states only that "an authentic CDC must represent the community" and

that "leaders must be identified with local interest." What community? Whose interests?

New Age Business hums the nice melody of shared community interests and of a world where class and gender differences, if they exist at all, just disappear with the creation of a CDC. The book contains all the correct expressions to draw us in: *think*

globally but act locally; alternative economics; self-help; community service not profit; networking; holistic development.

There are some good ideas and valuable experiences in this book, but they need to be examined with a more critical perspective -- one based on historical experience and informed by theory. We need a much deeper

understanding of the role of alternative economic development in social change. *New Age Business* does not help us in this task.

Grant MacDonald is a community development outreach worker at Henson College of Public Affairs and Continuing Education, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3J5; (902) 424-2526. ■

**PROFIL
SOCIO-ÉCONOMIQUE
DES
COOPÉRATIVES
DE TRAVAIL
AU QUÉBEC**

par Benoît Lévesque, Alain Côté, Omer Chouinard, et Jean-Louis Russell, 1985, disponible au comité provincial des coopératives de travailleurs, 3424, Ontario Est, Montréal, Québec H1W 1P9, 180 p., \$7.00.

Si la création et le développement des coopératives vous préoccupent, la lecture du *Profil socio-économique des coopératives de travail au Québec* vous intéressera. Cette publication renferme, en effet, les résultats d'une enquête menée par le Département de sociologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal à l'été 1984.

Divisée en cinq chapitres, l'étude trace le portrait des coopératives de travail, fournit des renseignements sur le nombre et le type d'emplois qu'elles créent, rend compte de leurs principales difficultés et des objectifs qu'elles doivent se fixer. Les auteurs procèdent enfin à une analyse économique et financière de ces entreprises.

L'enquête identifie plusieurs facteurs qui expliqueraient le

petit nombre de coopératives de travail dans le secteur manufacturier. Il suffit de penser à la barrière que représente la capitalisation nécessaire pour s'introduire dans certaines branches. Ceci dit, un facteur a sans doute joué plus que d'autres. Il s'agit du fait que la coopérative a jusqu'à tout récemment signifié exclusivement association d'usagers à un point tel que la législation et même les instances chargées de son application étaient défavorable aux projets de coopératives de travailleurs. Dans cette conjoncture, la plupart des coopératives de travail ont été portées par la logique du développement communautaire et se sont développées surtout dans des secteurs d'activités liés au monde rural (forêt, pêche, agriculture) et plus récemment dans le domaine des services. Avec les changements apportés à la loi des coopératives en 1983 et 1984 et diverses mesures mises de l'avant tels le Régime d'investissement coopératif et les groupes conseil, la conjoncture est maintenant beaucoup plus favorable pour le développement de ces coopératives.

Profil des coopératives de travail

Au moment de l'enquête, il existait au Québec environ 200 coopératives de travail qui fournissaient un emploi à un peu plus de 8 000 personnes. De ce nombre, environ un sur quatre

était à plein temps, un sur deux, saisonnier. Quatre coopératives de travail sur cinq se retrouvait à l'extérieur de la région de Montréal, mais cette région arrive maintenant en tête au niveau des projets de création de coopératives de travail.

Le niveau de la rémunération et les avantages sociaux offerts étaient nettement inférieurs à ce que reçoivent en moyenne les travailleurs salariés au Canada. Ce constat, selon les chercheurs, ne disqualifie pas la formule coopérative de travail mais exige des explications.

En premier lieu, la précarité du travail dans les coopératives peut être relativisée par la jeunesse des entreprises, leur taille, les secteurs où elles évoluent, parmi d'autres facteurs. En deuxième lieu, la réussite de certaines coopératives de travail comme l'imprimerie Harpell laisse bien voir que c'est moins la formule coopérative comme telle (i.e. le contrôle des travailleurs) qui est responsable de cette situation que le fait que ces entreprises se soient développées surtout dans des secteurs mous et à faible intensité capital.

Enfin, du côté des travailleurs de ces entreprises, il faudrait aussi poursuivre la recherche. Les chercheurs font l'hypothèse que, dans certains, cas, les travailleurs peuvent préférer un travail précaire à un emploi à temps plein dans la mesure où ce dernier serait monotone et n'of-

frirait que peu de participation. Chose certaine, si la création d'emploi est le premier objectif visé lors de la formation d'une coopérative de travail, l'enquête montre que ces coopératives se donnent également des objectifs de nouvelles formes d'organisation du travail (pour 57,4% des CT) et de changement social (42,6%). Tout cela laisse supposer que la relative popularité des coopératives de travail vient non seulement d'un blocage du marché de l'emploi mais aussi d'aspirations à travailler autrement, quitte à remettre en cause la société productiviste et la société de consommation.

Principales difficultés

Pour trois coopératives sur cinq, la principale difficulté concerne le financement. Cette difficulté est plus aigüe dans les régions périphériques et pour les entreprises les plus petites et les plus récentes.

Même si les circuits financiers ne sont pas nécessairement fermés aux coopératives de travail, il n'en demeure pas moins que la participation des institutions financières traditionnelles (les Caisses populaires en têtes) ne se fait généralement qu'au moment où ces coopératives sont prêtes à produire. Mais, avant de produire, de trouver son marché et de mettre au point un produit, il est très difficile, sinon impossible, d'obtenir du financement à travers le circuit traditionnel, ne serait-ce que parce que les promoteurs ne sont pas des entrepreneurs connus mais des travailleurs peu fortunés.

Les difficultés liées à l'éducation coopérative viennent en second lieu avec 55,5% des cas et la formation à la gestion en troisième lieu avec 50%. Viennent ensuite le manque de débouchés sur le marché avec 44,4% et le

manque de formation professionnelle avec 42,6%. La question de la participation et des contacts avec les autres coopératives ne figurent comme difficultés que dans des proportions respectives de 35% et 30% environ.

L'analyse des bilans des coopératives de travail confirme la très grande différenciation de ces entreprises.

Une entreprise sur deux a des contrats de sous-traitance avec

l'entreprise privée. De même, deux entreprises sur cinq ont des contrats de sous-traitance avec l'Etat. Il s'agit presque essentiellement des coopératives forestières qui ont des contrats d'aménagement de la forêt avec le Ministère de l'Energie et des Ressources (MER). Comparativement aux pays européens, on peut dire que l'Etat québécois et l'Etat canadien pourraient faire beaucoup plus à ce chapitre. ■

Films



Eight-part series

Business and Community Development is a video series about worker co-operatives and community development corporations (CDC) in Spain, North America and the United Kingdom. Written and presented by Professor Robert Briscoe, this eight-part series was produced in Sydney, Nova Scotia by CJCB-TV to accompany a credit course at the University College of Cape Breton.

The first three parts deal with Mondragon (history, structure, profit distribution, capital, secondary co-ops, the bank's entrepreneurial division and the education system). Part four describes four types of co-operatives and their basic principles. Parts five and six examine the use of worker co-operatives as a development tool in the U.K. and the Dartington experiment -- the development of a neglected rural area of southwest England. Part seven analyzes four CDCs in the U.S., and part eight discusses of how successful co-operatives reconcile efficient management with a concern for people.

The series, on 1/2-inch Beta or VHS, can be ordered from the University College of Cape Breton Press, P.O. Box 5300, Sydney, N.S. for \$240. Any three parts are \$90 and single parts are \$45. ■

Un nouveau video

Une nouvelle production audio-visuelle sur les coopératives de travail est maintenant disponible au Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Gouvernement du Québec.

La production de 28 minutes, *Entreprendre Autrement*, fut préparé par le Centre de gestion des coopératives suite à une commande de la Direction des coopératives, et doit servir d'outil de promotion auprès de la clientèle des organismes de promotion du développement, autres ministères, syndicats, etc.

La production est construite autour de la problématique "malaise/énergie", c'est-à-dire qu'elle montre que les coop de travail *ca marche* ici et dans le monde (France, Mondragon, USA, Italie, G-B, etc.), et que cette formule constitue *une* des façons de transformer le malaise (chômage ou insatisfaction au travail) en énergie (entrepreneurship collectif).

Entreprendre Autrement, en demi-pousse VHS ou 3/4 pouce commercial, peut être emprunté gratuitement du Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Direction des communications, A/S Denys Emond, 710 Place d'Youville, 9^e étage, Québec, Québec G1R 4Y4; tel (418) 643-3852. ■

Book Notes



Profil socio-économique des coopératives de travail au Québec, par Benoit Lévesque, Alain Côté, Omer Chouinard, Jean-Louis Russell, 1985, disponible au comité provincial des coopératives de travailleurs, 3424, Ontario Est, Montréal, Québec, H1W 1P9, 180 p., (\$5.50 plus \$1.50 pour port et manutention pour commande postale).

Cette étude, faite par quatre chercheurs du Département de sociologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, est divisée en cinq chapitres. Le premier est consacré aux objectifs de la recherche et à la méthodologie alors que le second trace le portrait de ces coopératives. Le troisième chapitre porte sur les emplois créés et sur l'organisation du travail. Le quatrième chapitre concerne les objectifs et les difficultés des coopératives, et le cinquième chapitre révèle que les problèmes de financement et de débouchés sont plus aigus en régions périphériques qu'ailleurs. ■

...

La place et le rôle des coopératives de production et de travail au Québec (situation à la fin de 1982), par Yves Paque, 1983, Université du Québec à Montréal, Centre de recherche en gestion, C.P. 8888, succ. A, Montréal, Québec, H3C 3P8, 95 p., biblio, annexes.

Ce rapport s'inscrit dans le prolongement d'une thèse de doctorat en administration qui portait sur le même sujet. Dans un texte de seulement 53 pages, ce rapport aborde trois questions. La première question touche au concept même: que peut-on entendre par coopérative de production au Québec, en 1982? La deuxième question est d'ordre descriptif: qui sont, actuelle-

ment, ces coopératives de production québécoises? La troisième question, enfin, est d'ordre explicatif: quelles sont les conditions d'émergence de ces coopératives de production? ■

...

New Age Business: Community Corporations that Work, by Greg MacLeod, 1986, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Ave., P.O. Box 3505, Station C, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4G1, 81 pp., (\$13.25 paperback).

Written in a personable style by the founding chairman of New Dawn Enterprises in Cape Breton, this very readable book includes case studies of New Dawn, J.A.L. (in Quebec) and Mondragon and two chapters on the concept and structure of community development corporations and how to start them. Teunis Haalboom, Chief Executive Officer of The Co-operators, recommends the book as being "of particular interest to those readers of the co-operative movement who are struggling to find improved forms of co-operative organization." ■

...

Manitoba Employee Ownership Handbook, November, 1985, available from the Manitoba Department of Business Development and Tourism, 155 Carlton Street, Winnipeg R3C 3H8, 77 pp. plus 161 pp. of appendices.

This handbook is intended as a guide to employees and employers on how to convert to some form of employee ownership or employee participation through stock ownership. Co-operatives are briefly detailed in the handbook, but are not its focus. Some of the materials are

reproduced from the U.S. National Centre for Employee Ownership, but others, such as the chapter on the "Role of the Union", were written by consultants in Manitoba, in a sophisticated but clear style. ■

...

Employee Ownership in America: The Equity Solution, by Corey Rosen, Katherin J. Klein, and Karen M. Young, 1985, Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books (D.C. Heath and Company), biblio., appendices (\$19.95 US).

Corey Rosen is the Executive Director of the National Center for Employee Ownership, which he co-founded along with Karen Young. Katherine Klein, a professor of psychology, acted as a consultant on the research for this book. The authors review the operation and application of employee ownership plans. Using the results of over 50 intensive case studies, they analyze the factors that affect implementation of a successful plan. Not surprisingly to proponents of worker co-ops, the amount of stock that the employees actually own emerges as the most important element in the success of employee ownership, but other factors, such as employee participation, can have a crucial impact on overall company performance. ■

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Industrial Co-operative Association Publications. A new list of publications on the theory and practice of worker co-operatives and democratic employee-ownership structures is available free of charge from The Worker Ownership Development Foundation, 357 College St., Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S5; (416) 928-9568. ■

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