

The full text of Resolution XVII, Co-operative Movements, reads:—

WHEREAS:

1. The co-operative movement has been of very great importance in many countries, both to urban and rural populations, especially in agricultural districts where farming is based on small units and in urban areas of low-income families;
2. The proper functioning of co-operative societies may facilitate adjustments of agricultural production and distribution, as members have confidence in the recommendations and guidance of their own co-operative organizations, which they know operate in the interest of their members and of society in general;
3. The democratic control and educational programs, which are features of the co-operative movement, can play a vital part in the training of good democratic citizens, and assist in inducing a sound conception of economic matters.

The United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture recommends:—

1. That, in order to make it possible for people to help themselves in lowering costs of production and costs of distribution and marketing:
 - (a) All countries study the possibilities of the further establishment of producer and consumer co-operative societies in order to render necessary production, marketing, purchasing, finance, and other services;
 - (b) Each nation examine its laws, regulations, and institutions to determine if legal or institutional obstacles to co-operative development exist, in order to make desirable adjustments;
 - (c) Full information as to the present development of co-operatives in different countries be made available through the permanent organization.

Fortunately Canada, when called upon, is in a position to provide the permanent organization of the Conference with fairly complete information on the development of co-operatives in this country. Every province in Canada has legislation providing for the organization and establishment of producer and consumer societies and has an office of the Government administering the legislation and giving guidance to new and existing co-operatives. The Economics Division of the Department of Agriculture has been entrusted with bringing together all available information on co-operative development in Canada and preparing an annual summary.

Subsection 1.—Trends in the Field of Co-operation in 1942

Co-operative Business Associations.—According to reports received in the year 1942, a record in co-operative activity has been established in Canada. For the first time in the past eleven years, reported membership has exceeded 500,000 and total business has passed the \$250,000,000 mark. Reserves and surplus which reached a high point of \$46,000,000 and an improved working capital position indicate that expansion of co-operatives has been accompanied by a strengthening of their whole financial structure.

In order to increase effectiveness, sales agencies have been formed on a regional basis or on a Dominion-wide commodity basis, as the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers, Limited, and the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association. Wholesale societies are operating in most of the provinces, consolidating the buying power of the local associations and augmenting the benefits to be obtained from quantity buying. The United Farmers of Ontario, Limited, and the Co-opérative Fédérée de Québec combine the functions of sales agency and wholesale buying agency for their affiliated local associations.

In Canada early expansion of co-operative activity took place most rapidly and to the greatest degree in the marketing of farm products. Presumably this field offered the greatest opportunity to the farmer to effect savings and to provide needed services. However, in recent years, with the establishment of co-operative wholesales in nearly every province, the purchasing of farm supplies and household needs on a co-operative plan has shown a marked increase.

In 1942, for the first time since the annual summary has been published (1932) the business of urban retail co-operative stores is included under sales of supplies. This accounts, in part, for the large increase in this item over 1941.