

# CO-OPERATION.

## CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN CEYLON.

**N. WICKRAMARATNE,**

*Secretary, Board of Control, Co-operative Societies.*

The Report of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Ceylon, for the year 1924-25 contained an interesting record of work done by Co-operative Societies during the co-operative year beginning from May, 1924, to end of April, 1925. It also gives a short review of the work done by the movement as a whole during the last eleven years in Ceylon. The summary of general progress given in the report shows a steady increase of societies, members, paid up share capital and reserve fund.

In the year 1913-14 there were 37 societies, 1,820 members, Rs. 8,200/- paid up capital and Rs. 23/- reserve fund. In the tenth year under these heads the following figures are given, viz. :—208 societies, 23,322 members, Rs. 188,689/50 paid up share capital and Rs. 44,603/64 reserve fund. In the year under review the societies have increased to 257, members to 30,548, paid up share capital to Rs. 281,478/86 and the reserve fund to Rs. 65,161/99. This shows again an increase of 35 societies, 3,791 members, Rs. 42,871/84 paid up capital and Rs. 20,558/35 reserve fund over the previous report for 1923-24. The transactions in loans have also considerably increased. Loans given, recovered and outstanding at the end of the period under review, the report states, as Rs. 330,504/76, Rs. 272,705/50 and Rs. 484,604/94 respectively. While these figures show the numerical progress of the movement, the report states that, these alone do not show the real progress of the economic and social conditions of those who are members of these societies. The co-operative movement in many instances has shown, says the Registrar, how improvements can be effected in the social and economic conditions of the people. The following concrete instances have been given in the report as regards the solid work done by these societies in the direction of encouraging thrift and self-help.

### **RURAL SOCIETY No. 59, REGISTERED IN 1917-18.**

Figures for every fourth year —

Year	Paid-up Capital Rs. c	Deposits Rs. c	Loans Rs. c	Profits Rs. c	Reserve Fund Rs. c
1916-17	804 0	—	—	15 20	—
1920-21	2,721 0	5 0	916 67	281 15	589 87
1924-25	7,866 0	1,301 16	2,583 31	1,225 29	1,425 21

The average owned capital per member in 1916-17 was Rs. 12'79

The average owned capital per member in 1924-25 was Rs. 42'35

**URBAN SOCIETY No. 83, REGISTERED IN 1916-17.**

Year	Paid-up Capital		Deposits		Loans		Profits		Reserve Fund	
	Rs.	c	Rs.	c	Rs.	c	Rs.	c	Rs.	c
1917-18	2,017	0	—	—	—	—	183	57	—	—
1920-21	4,935	0	—	—	—	—	555	35	464	09
1924-25	18,360	0	9,916	46	—	—	4,738	73	1,956	67

The average owned capital per member in 1917-18 was Rs. 110'25

The average owned capital per member in 1924-25 was Rs. 117'69

These figures no doubt speak for themselves and will show what the movement is doing for the economical reconstruction of village and urban life among a deserving class of people. As is usual with India and other agricultural countries agriculture is given first consideration by the co-operative movement in Ceylon as it forms the most important vocation of the people. The supply of manures, seed paddy and the necessary capital have all contributed to the progress of agriculture of members. Agricultural competitions have been held in different parts of the country and members have readily taken part in these. The artisan and the small trader have also been helped by these societies for the furtherance of their vocations by the movement. The Registrar remarks that few in Ceylon, either within the Government or without, have recognised to the full the meaning of co-operative movement in the reconstruction of the peasants' agriculture, but he is glad to see a desire on the part of an increasing number of people to learn something about the movement and the effects of the societies' work in the villages.

The volume of business done by all societies has increased and the volume of business done by individual members also has increased. The total working capital of societies has increased from Rs. 8,202/- in 1904 to Rs. 619,358/62 in the year under review. This shows that the total working capital has increased over seventy-five times within a period of eleven years.

The Stores Societies have not been very successful in their work except the two pioneer societies started by officers of two Government Departments. These societies have met the requirements of their members and are doing useful work.

The Grain Bank started solely for dealing in paddy is doing good business while several other societies are doing this business on a small scale. The amount of profits earned by this Society should be an encouragement for others to start similar societies in other parts of the country. The cultivation of cotton which is a new industry in the Island has been helped by two societies and the report states that the area of cotton is gradually increasing. The classes for the training of honorary workers are being continued as these classes have proved to be popular and a useful factor in the advancement of the co-operative movement in the Island. Apart from the year's work summarised in this review the co-operative movement has been able to achieve other useful and beneficial results. The movement has been responsible for the establishment of Local Loans and Development Fund—a body to consider loans for agricultural and other purposes from Government. Prior to the establishment of this body there was no established body to give financial aid to agriculturists and artisans. With the co-operation of the Government Agents and other departments such as Postal, Medical, Education, Irrigation, etc., the movement has done some useful work to improve the postal facilities, sanitary requirements, educational facilities, and the repairing of irrigation work. The only unsatisfactory feature of the year is the amount shown in the report as overdue loans. The report deserves the careful perusal of every co-operator.