

The voluminous Report written all through with lucidity and often with insight makes one sit up and ask if the Government which set it up have apparently got more than it had asked for. In places it reads more like the Report of an Industrial Commission, occasionally that of an Economic Commission. No doubt economic problems are closely interwoven and it is difficult to cut them into tidy shapes without damaging their basic unity. Yet is this not more or less true about all departments of thought? The scope of the Tariff Question is limited. Though one is tempted to jump over its ring fence, sustained thinking must respect the fence and overcome the temptation. Perhaps one may appreciate the puzzled mood

of the Fiscal Commissioner if one keeps in mind that its 'frame of reference' was not clear. The Planning Commission is sitting. It has yet to size the issues and decide upon the future course of our economic policy. Until the framework of our national economy becomes clear, the specific fiscal issues are bound to be out of focus. The air of diffuseness that spreads over the Report is perhaps due to this trouble. That is not to say the Commission has not done its job well. If anything it has done it too well! For quite a time to come it will provide a good deal of food for discussion in official and non-official quarters. If such were done, that by itself would be a great service rendered to the country.

They are being encouraged by subsidies and grants, provision of technical staff and preferential treatment in the supply of agricultural requisites and in taxes and assessments. During 1948-49 there were 40,000 acres under co-operative farming.

Multi-purpose societies have been started in various parts. In Uttar Pradesh such societies increased from 6,692 in 1945-46 to 18,000 in 1947-48.

The State has begun to associate in an increasing extent co-operative societies with the work of economic development. It is widely realised that co-operatives offer the best means for passing on to the common man the benefits from experiments and research in improvements in production.

## Co-operation Still Primarily Agricultural

### PROGRESS IN 1947-48

THE co-operative movement in India once again given a fresh lease of life during the last war, is undergoing a change both in its composition and in the pace of its growth. The largest number of societies is still agricultural. Non-credit co-operatives have tended to grow in number.

The available figures show that as compared with 1946-47 the number of societies, their membership and working capital in 1947-48 increased about 3.9 per cent., 19.6 per cent, and 7.4 per cent, respectively. The total population benefiting by the movement in 1947-48 rose to about 16 per cent, as against 6.2 per cent, in 1938-39 and 10.6 per cent, in 1945-46. The movement seems to have greater public support in South India, which accounts for three-fifths of the entire membership. Coorg tops the list. There every village has a co-operative society and the movement covers almost every phase of economic life. But Cutch, Bilaspur and Tripura have so far no co-operative movement.

Credit societies constitute about 74 per cent, of the total number with a working capital of 60 crores. Co-operative finance was organised in most states. In 1947-48, 14 provincial co-operative banks were

functioning with a total capital of Rs. 25 crores. There were 5 central land mortgage banks and 271 primary mortgage banks and societies. The membership of the primary banks has risen considerably from 76,196 in 1938-39 to 146,664 in 1947-48.

There has been considerable progress in a number of co-operative spheres including marketing and various forms of consumers' co-operatives. Many multi-purpose societies have come into existence. Marketing co-operatives have increased largely in UP and Bombay. The number in UP rose from 1,094 in 1938-39 to 2,705 in 1947-48. Consumers' co-operatives increased enormously mostly in Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Bombay and Assam. Agricultural production societies also have progressed, though still at the initial stage. Their objects include consolidation of holdings, irrigation, land improvements and land colonisation and better farming. At the end of 1947-48 there were in the Indian Union about 2,032 societies for consolidation of holdings with a membership of 233,000.

Many co-operative farming societies also have come into existence. At the end of 1947-48 there were 200 such societies existing in India.

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