# "An Educational Institute of Untold Value"

## The Evolution of the Co-operative College of Canada, 1953–1957

Jodi Crewe

Occasional Paper Series

Centre for the Study of Co-operatives

University of Saskatchewan

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## Centre for the Study of Co-operatives

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# INTRODUCTION

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN POSTWAR WESTERN CANADA was in the midst of rapid expansion, with significant growth in the number of credit unions, agricultural marketing co-ops, and particularly retail co-ops. While this direction offered prosperity and growth, there were other implications that slowly began to take shape throughout the western provinces. Maintaining a successful business practice gradually took precedence over the preservation of co-operative ideology, and co-op leaders realized that although an economically successful co-operative retailing system was beginning to develop, a thorough understanding of co-op philosophy had diminished.

The type of co-op education that had blossomed in rural areas during the 1930s and 1940s was fuelled by a common purpose and a sense of collective action. This was manifested in educational conferences, study groups, newsletters, the Wheat Pool field representatives, and the dedication of individual leaders. Co-op education involved people teaching and working together to discuss and act on social and economic issues. It was essential to sustaining the movement.[1] By the 1950s, rural depopulation in Saskatchewan was fracturing communities that once fostered relationships to work towards a common goal. It became clear to many co-op leaders that co-operative education was needed to rejuvenate co-op values in the growing numbers of employees, elected officials, members, and especially in the younger generation, who held the greatest influence over the future of the movement.

In southern Manitoba, a progressive group of co-op farmers and educators first met in 1953 to develop a plan for an International Co-operative Institute. This idea was brought to Saskatchewan in 1955 through the creation of Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL), an interprovincial co-operative joining Manitoba and Saskatchewan consumers. FCL and the Co-operative Union of Saskatchewan were willing supporters. A co-op education centre would solve the need for employee and director training, while devoting a part of the curriculum to teaching co-op principles. To teach these principles effectively required a comprehensive un-

derstanding and application of adult-education methods. Thus the vision, the practical need, and the required practice were amalgamated to form a unique blend of co-operative education based at what became known as the Co-operative College in Saskatoon. From 1955 to 1987, the curriculum expanded to manager training, youth programmes, northern Aboriginal programmes, and courses for international students in developing countries. Partnerships were developed with universities, community groups, Women's Co-operative Guilds, and co-operative and nonprofit organizations across Canada and overseas.

# "An Educational Institute of Untold Value"

## The Vision for a Co-operative Education Centre in Canada

The idea of creating a co-operative educational centre in Canada began with Jake Siemens, a teacher, farmer, and co-op activist in southern Manitoba. Siemens, who was largely responsible for the creation of the Rhineland Agricultural Society in 1931, was a member of Manitoba Co-operative Wholesale (MCW) and an organizer of the Winkler Co-op Creamery and Altona Co-op Vegetable Oils.[2] Siemens travelled to folk schools in Denmark during 1948. Upon his return he proposed a co-op educational centre in Canada based on the folk-school models, which would provide instruction in co-op philosophy, be active in research, and have the ability to grant degrees.

Known for his idealism and passion for grassroots education, Jake Siemens convinced fellow co-operators in the area to support a co-op education centre. Siemens offered eighty acres of his own land as a site, and brought together an organization committee, chaired by J.A. Fehr, also a member of MCW. They succeeded in selling forty lifetime memberships at one hundred dollars apiece to other co-operators in southern Manitoba sympathetic to the cause.[3] After this initial limited success, board members of the first International Co-operative Institute (ICI) expressed optimism for their common vision by writing, "We who are members of ICI, small in number though we have been, have laid a modest foundation on which may be built an educational institute of untold value."[4]

In 1955, soon after these events in Altona, MCW and Saskatchewan Federated Co-operatives Limited amalgamated to form Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL). This marked the beginning of a new era of growth in the western co-operative retailing system, and the demand for employee and director training increased. In 1954, before the creation of FCL,

Saskatchewan Federated Co-operatives Limited unanimously adopted a resolution to spend $100,000 "to spread the history and theory of co-operation."[5] The new organization ensured Siemens could remain as the board secretary, and provided the opportunity to introduce FCL to the Co-op Institute idea.

Lewie Lloyd, president of the Co-operative Union of Saskatchewan (CUS), proposed the idea of moving the Co-op Institute to Saskatoon at an FCL board meeting in August of 1955, with the CUS as "the authority under which the institute operates."[6] The CUS had been operating co-operative youth schools in Saskatchewan as a means of introducing students to business principles and practices, and was often considered the conscience of the movement due to its role in promoting co-operative values through education. Lloyd perceived the need to maintain an understanding of co-operative philosophy not only for co-op employees, but also for youth and emerging co-ops. Harry Fowler, president of FCL, believed that an efficient and educated workforce could only be guided by the practice and understanding of co-operative principles. Thus, two of the larger co-operative organizations in western Canada began a partnership to develop co-op education throughout the prairies, administered, with their guidance, in Saskatoon.

## THE PUSH FOR CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION 1939–1955

The opening of the new Co-operative Institute (the "International" title was dropped) was more than timely for many within the co-op movement. As early as 1939, research had been conducted into issues related to local co-ops created in Saskatchewan within the previous fifteen to twenty-five years. At that time it was discovered that hundreds of local co-ops were closing, and the majority of these indicated that problems arose because of a lack of management skills.[7] During the booming years of the postwar era, co-operators from government departments, education, women's guilds, and business advocated for co-op education in the growing co-op sector.

The early Saskatchewan Co-op Wholesale Society published *The Co-operative Consumer*, beginning in 1939, to cover co-op events across the prairies, Canada, and overseas.[8] In 1955, FCL took over the publication and continued to promote co-op education and business. During the 1950s, articles were written describing successful European models of co-operative education. Peter Maaniche's "generation and a half" theory[9] encouraged people to examine the lifetime of a movement without education, which he believed to be a priority if the values of a movement or an organization were to be upheld. Without fostering co-operative principles in new generations, the movement would cease to progress as before or would

simply die out. European solutions to employee education were seen as a model for what could be applied at home.

In the early 1950s, co-op education became part of the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development's agenda for native residents of northern Saskatchewan.[10] Community leadership training, co-op schools, and co-operative business development were adopted into the department's programme. It was hoped that developing local leadership and control through co-op business would break the typical barriers of resentment and distrust for non-native agendas. This sort of co-operative outreach was perceived as an agency for social change.[11]

The push for co-op education was well illustrated by Barney Arnason, deputy minister of Co-operation in 1956, and an avid co-op education organizer. He found the current problems impeding co-op education to be rapid technological advances and the trend towards urban living, and blamed part of the difficulties on the increase in the number of members who were unaware of co-op principles. Arnason believed that co-op education and research were required to solve the problems within the system.[12]

Alexander Laidlaw, secretary of the Co-operative Union of Canada (CUC), wrote a series of articles concerned with the lack of co-op education in Canada. Laidlaw observed two common threads in Canadian co-ops: neglect of co-op education and the acceptance of new members without their being aware of what membership meant. He posed the question: "What new organizational structures and educational techniques will be needed to ensure democratic control and participation by members?" and continually stressed the need for each co-operative to take more responsibility for education.[13]

The Saskatchewan Co-operative Women's Guild (SCWG), established in 1944, was another active member of the movement, promoting co-op education throughout the province. In addition to soliciting national and international speakers for their meetings, the guild provided regular articles for *The Co-operative Consumer* addressing issues in co-op education among members. One article written by the Saskatchewan Education Convenor, a Mrs. Wilson, states that "education in co-operation is the foundation which will maintain a co-operative in success and adversity."[14]

As the above examples have shown, there were many besides Jake Siemens who believed there was a growing need for members and employees to be educated in the philosophy and practices of co-ops. Even as co-operative membership increased throughout the province, knowledge and education about co-op values diminished. As the grassroots co-op education movements of the depression era dwindled, a renewal in local educational initiatives was perceived to be part of the solution, and it was hoped that the Co-operative Institute would provide that educational link.

## PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEF AND PRACTICAL NEED

When the CUS, along with Siemens, took the idea of the Co-op Institute to FCL, it was inevitably greeted with enthusiastic support. FCL granted the use of the meeting room in their Saskatoon home office for classroom space. Even more significant to ensuring the future of the institute was the allocation of FCL's Management Training Programme operating costs of $100,000 along with $6,000 from the CUS. This, combined with the initial $4,000 raised by Siemens and the ICI board, provided the financial springboard required for the institute to begin.[15]

It was not finances alone, however, that would ensure the success of such an endeavour. Purpose and direction were balanced between the need for a practical training centre that would also preserve the co-op philosophy. In these early years of the Co-op Institute, the CUS and FCL shared a mutual commitment to promote this idea. During the FCL board meeting in August of 1955, directors agreed with the expressed need to preserve their heritage. It was concluded that "...a co-op educational institution should include the teaching of co-op philosophy, whether the primary reason for taking the course was related to technical or commercial training, or in the leadership field."[16] This vision was the decisive impetus for the Co-op Institute to finally proceed. As Olaf (Ole) Turnbull, executive director from 1972 to 1982, later remarked, "The college was the result of a certain culture that was present at the time, where particular people were spokesmen, believers, and leaders. They believed [co-operatives] were another way for society to organize itself—not another way of selling cornflakes."[17]

# THE CO-OPERATIVE INSTITUTE
## 1955–1959

### THE DIRECTOR

THE CO-OP INSTITUTE'S FIRST PRIORITY WAS TO FIND a principal—a person with a firm grounding in co-operative philosophy combined with strong abilities in adult-education techniques. Hired for this position in 1955 was Harold Chapman, who had extensive experience with prairie co-operatives. Chapman had just completed three years with the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, a project commissioned by the CCF government to analyze the state of rural society in Saskatchewan. The work often included interviewing rural residents, organizing community meetings, and synthesizing responses and ideas for government and public use. Chapman worked with Bill Baker, a rural sociologist from the University of Saskatchewan, to develop practical methods of adult education that encouraged the participation of rural communities.[18]

Chapman had graduated from the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture in 1943, and after two years in the army began work for the Department of Co-operation, assisting with agricultural production co-operatives and the establishment of the Matador Co-operative Farm. In 1949, he was a staff member of the Human Relations Institute at Valley Centre in the Qu'appelle Valley. This institute had a history as a centre for community development in the province, as a location for the Farmer-Labour-Teacher workshops, and the CUS-directed co-op schools.[19] Chapman's knowledge of the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan through his early government extension work, as well as his work with the royal commission, equipped him admirably for the principalship of the new Co-op Institute.

It was an FCL classroom in Saskatoon that housed the first Co-op Institute class; the topic was lumber merchandizing, a short course that began in late November 1955. Retail co-op employees who attended included Bert Seib, manager of Lipton Co-op, Mel

Matchett, manager of Eatonia Co-op, Ed Redekop of Birsay Co-op, and Carl Rinholm, lumber and hardware manager of Craik Co-op. The five-day course included:

- the history and philosophy of co-op education;
- estimating and merchandizing;
- plywood buildings;
- the organization of FCL;
- credit administration;
- lumber and building supplies;
- human and public relations; and
- management and administration.

Instructors included a field engineer from Macmillan-Blodel and the manager from FCL's personnel division.[20] Chapman organized the class time to incorporate group discussion and participant feedback.

During the remainder of the season, courses were offered at the Co-op Institute in accounting, business management, co-op bookkeeping, and store management. These first courses illustrated the college's distinct approach: to blend co-op philosophy and technical information using adult-education techniques that stressed group work and interaction.

## CO-OPERATION AMONG CO-OPERATIVES

In 1956, the CUS sponsored a meeting to bring together representatives of co-op organizations interested in supporting the initiatives of the institute. The planning committee struck at the meeting solicited new members through pamphlets distributed to other co-op organizations across the prairies.[21] Committee members included: Mrs. H.L. [Dorothy] Fowler, president of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Women's Guild; Mrs. H. Robinson, member of the Manitoba Co-operative Women's Guild; J. Siemens, FCL associate secretary; R.L. Stutt, director of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's Country Organization Department; G.R. Bunn, president of the Saskatchewan Credit Union League; O.M. McCreary, manager of FCL's personnel division; L.L. Lloyd, president of the Co-operative Union of Saskatchewan; and Harold Chapman, new principal of the institute and ex officio member.[22]

These individuals established the purpose of the institute and other important operational guidelines. Those co-ops that could have representatives nominated to the board were

defined as "…any commercial co-operative acting as a sponsor [who] shall pay a grant of at least $1,000/year; each sponsor has the privilege of appointing a member to the board of management." The directors defined the purpose of the Co-op Institute: "To act as a training organization within the co-operative movement and to provide services as requested by other co-operatives in western Canada." These services were defined as:

- developing and conducting training programmes;
- providing consultation services regarding meetings, conferences, and member relations;
- gathering and compiling information required for training and consultation; and
- assembling information on correspondence courses for co-operative employees and officials.[23]

The foundation of the college was built on the partnerships among certain key individuals who were the "spokesmen, believers, and leaders." Lewie Lloyd, Harry and Dorothy Fowler, Barney Arnason, Forrest Scharf, Smokey Robson, and Howard Tyler were among those who shared the vision for a co-op educational centre that would provide the knowledge and skills needed to keep the movement strong. Thus the new educational centre was directly sponsored by the co-operative movement and was the result of co-operation among co-op organizations, which began to provide the framework for its educational activities.

## DEVELOPING A CO-OPERATIVE CURRICULUM

New members to the Co-op Institute also increased the attendance records. Courses were introduced in management training and co-op insurance leadership, and for credit union employees and co-op directors. New staff were hired as the curriculum began to take shape, and Harold Chapman's adult-education techniques instilled innovative practices into its framework.

Training programmes for employees and elected officials were felt to be important elements in efficient co-op enterprise. Equally important was a training component for co-op managers. Consequently, in its second year, the institute introduced a management training programme, which was offered as a short course in urban centres. Topics covered included management administration, accounting, human relations, finance, merchandising, credit unions and co-ops, advertising, co-op education and public relations, and "the co-operative in a changing rural community."[24] When the course was offered in Winnipeg in 1957, a vari-

ety of speakers from the local FCL branch helped provide instruction in co-op management theory. Workshops gave students an opportunity to tackle relevant issues relating to their own co-op such as networking, co-ops in the community, public relations in the local co-op, accounts receivable, and the manager's report to the board. The classroom also provided an opportunity for participants to practice public speaking.[25]

In June of 1957, twenty-four branch managers and employees from co-op life, fire, and casualty insurance companies across Canada attended a Co-op Insurance Leadership course in Fort Qu'appelle. Their instructors were experts in their field in the co-op sector. Barney Arnason discussed the economic basis for the co-operative movement; O.M. McCreary, human relations and study groups; Harry Fowler, consumer co-operatives; R.L. Stutt, marketing co-operatives; A.C. MacLean spoke on credit unions; B. Johnson, on the co-operative credit society; and Harold Chapman answered the question, what is a co-operative?[26]

New instructors were recruited as the number and variety of courses increased. In April of 1957, Phil Rothery was hired as the institute's first educational assistant. He had been the District 7 field representative for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, previously finishing his master's degree in agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan.[27] In 1959, the permanent staff expanded to three with the addition of Jake Fehr, whose invaluable experience with the early stages of the ICI in Manitoba was an obvious asset to the Co-op Institute.[28] Before he joined the staff, Fehr, who had a BSc in agriculture from the University of Manitoba, was the educational director of the Federation of Southern Manitoba Co-operatives.[29] With Anne Ewanchyna filling the vital position of secretary, the institute's administration finally began to take shape.

In those early years, operations continued to evolve in a number of areas. As membership at the institute increased, the board organized committees to assist with course planning. A sponsorship programme was introduced to cover student fees. Between 1955 and 1957, the location of the classroom moved from FCL's home office on Avenue D to the fourth floor of the Grain Building, and then in 1959, to a classroom and administration area on the second floor of the Avenue Building.

Despite the fluctuations in surroundings, the institute continued to offer courses in lumber, insurance, and co-op management training. By the end of the 1958–59 season, more than 550 students had attended the institute, although the majority were still from FCL. While co-op theory was included in these courses, the content ultimately reflected more emphasis on the practical training of business employees. It would be a recurrent challenge throughout the history of the college to maintain this pioneering approach to adult-education while integrating theory, history, and philosophy alongside the technical information.

# THE WESTERN CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE 1959–1972

## LEGAL INDEPENDENCE

ALTHOUGH THE CO-OPERATIVE INSTITUTE'S STATUS AS A successful training centre was growing, some college members were concerned that courses did not offer enough theoretical co-op content.[30] Was co-op history, education, and philosophy being compromised, and if so, how could the institute secure a balance between technical and philosophical training? This question would continue to be recycled among college staff and administrators alike. Financial (and physical) independence was an option they felt could move them towards this goal, and consequently, the last planning meeting of the decade began with an agreement for fundamental changes. The institute would incorporate as the Western Co-operative College, a move that administrators expected would ensure a greater recognition of the programme by the co-op community at large.

These developments also led to the formation of a board of trustees, comprised of elected officials from each of the member organizations. Chosen for these positions were Lewis Lloyd, president of the CUS; Howard Tyler, assistant director of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's Country Organization Department; E.F. Scharf, editor of *The Co-operative Consumer;* E.T. Mowbrey, of the Alberta Co-operative Wholesale Association; J.J. Peters, from FCL in Manitoba; O.M. McCreary, from FCL in Saskatoon; A.H. Charbonneau, of the Credit Union League; and Harold Chapman, who acted as secretary.[31]

The composition of the board reflected the desire to structure the college as a multi-stakeholder organization, widely based and responsible to the western co-operative movement. This revised structure, combined with the move to a large, designated facility in a new location, opened the curriculum to many new developments and finally granted the college a sense of permanence.

## A PERMANENT LOCATION

The Western Co-operative College (WCC) charted a new course for expansion that would begin with the establishment of a permanent location. This launched the search for land and the beginning of a large fundraising campaign.

When searching for a new location, it seemed logical to directors and staff alike to approach the University of Saskatchewan. Affiliation with the university would lend a strong sense of legitimacy to the Co-op College, a recognition of the value of the courses being offered, and the possibility for academic expansion. In 1959, Harold Chapman and Forrest Scharf met with members of the university administration. They discussed a proposal that envisioned the college's courses as part of a two-year diploma programme, funded by both institutions, and providing students with the opportunity to attend both co-op and university classes. The university, however, felt that before any affiliation could occur, the institute had to meet the same academic standards that applied to university instructors and courses. Thus, the institute was forced to opt out of further negotiations, a disappointing end to a possibility for academic freedom.[32] This lack of flexibility on the part of the university—an institution historically dedicated to serving the people of the province—resulted in a significant lost opportunity for college personnel. Staff and directors then began to "do some scrambling," which prompted a push to acquire more financial independence.[33] The search continued for land close to the university and eventually a site in Sutherland was chosen for the college's new location.

The process of scrutinizing residential plans began. After reviewing many bids, Gordon Arnott was chosen as architect for the new building. In 1960, Chapman took Arnott's plans to a conference of the International Association for Educators in Residence,[34] where they were critiqued by international adult educators. At Chapman's behest, Arnott flew to Ottawa and joined him at the conference, where he received valuable design suggestions for the building. The revised plans ultimately incorporated leading-edge, adult-education thinking.[35]

The new building was a remarkable reflection of the influence of the adult educators. The innovative design created space in the classrooms that assisted adult-education styles of teaching, whose purpose was to foster healthy classroom dynamics through group discussion and interaction. Acoustic tiles and visual aids were incorporated into the three classrooms, while the furniture was chosen to enhance small-group discussion. Student quarters were specifically designed to encourage co-operative living. Particular details of the residence in-

cluded sleeping quarters placed as pods around a main lounge. In effect, the building was laid out so that residents could hardly avoid social interaction with one another, reinforcing the theory that "much adult learning took place outside the classroom when the learners discussed the practical application of what they had been told or were studying."[36]

A fundraising committee was quickly established, chaired by George Munro of Sherwood Co-op, and Jake Fehr was hired to work for six months on the project. The drive for funding for the new building was publicized frequently in *The Co-operative Consumer,* with articles by recognized co-operative leaders encouraging support for the college. Included was Premier T.C. Douglas, who wrote, "I know of nothing which will do more to inculcate the co-operative philosophy in the rising generation than the construction of the Co-operative College."[37]

Funds came from many member co-ops, but much of the credit for the successful campaign was given to the Saskatchewan Women's Co-operative Guild (SWCG). Ann Poth, guild member and public relations officer for Saskatoon Co-op, acted as a liaison between the college and the guild.[38] The SWCG also wrote articles in *The Co-operative Consumer* promoting the success of the college and reaffirming their "moral support in their continuing programme of education, the very life blood of co-operation."[39]

This was an optimistic time for everyone involved with the college. Encouragement came from many directions as co-operatives echoed their faith in the new endeavour. The committee, with guild support, had raised a total of $400,000, but the construction costs were estimated at $600,000. As a result, the final plans were revised by a twenty-foot reduction in building length and the elimination of a basement. Despite this minor adjustment, the college acquired its own specially designed building, largely due to widespread goodwill and a grassroots fundraising campaign within the co-op movement.

## EXPANDING THE CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The curriculum at the Western Co-op College continued to provide practical training for directors, management, and employees of retail co-ops. The Women's Co-operative Guilds remained active on the curriculum committees and with course development, and the teaching practices still firmly reflected adult-education principles. While these aspects were familiar, the following decade introduced significant changes to the curriculum.

One of the early projects initiated by the WCC was the first Co-op–Labour seminar,

27–28 March 1961. Held at the Co-op College, this seminar was the result of a collaboration between the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Co-operative Union of Saskatchewan, with twelve representatives of the co-op movement and twelve from organized labour attending. It was the first time in the history of the province that these two groups had come together. The purpose of the meeting was to review the history, aims, development, and organization of both movements, and from this undertaking, the participants hoped to gain better mutual understanding and develop a plan for future action working towards common goals.[40]

Another branch of instruction was provided to the Women's Co-operative Guilds, at first in Saskatchewan, and later across the country. The guilds provided a link "between co-operatives and community" and promoted education for their members and for co-ops in general.[41] They worked closely with college staff to develop leadership courses for their members, and they continued to be represented on the college board. The courses focussed on the history of the co-op movement, guild leadership, and community development.[42] These guild leaders would then communicate the values of the co-op movement in their communities, thereby encouraging others to do the same. In 1962, nineteen women from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Nova Scotia assembled to learn about co-ops and adult-education principles, and specifically, to develop a study guide for use in future guild programming.[43] It was through this sort of personal development that the guilds and their members worked in conjunction with the college to promote their objectives and sustain the growth and spirit of co-operation.

In 1961, the college introduced a course to help secondary school teachers learn more about co-operative history and practice. Course topics included the history, philosophy, principles, and objectives of the co-op movement; co-op organizational structure and types; legal incorporation/marketing; and how to use co-op education resources.[44] The goal was to encourage teachers to develop classes on co-operatives as part of the social studies curriculum. Twelve teachers attended the first course; by the following year, enrolment had increased to thirty-one.[45] This also provided another source of revenue and support for the college programme, while strengthening a vital link to the non–co-op community.

In the late 1960s, the college assumed the co-ordination of the co-operative youth education programmes throughout Saskatchewan and the West. WCC hired a co-ordinator to facilitate youth camps, college courses, field trips, and other activities that involved young adults in co-operative education. The co-ordinator worked closely with government groups, university extension, and other organizations interested in or providing similar youth activities. The students were sponsored by a variety of co-op organizations.[46] In later years, the college assembled youth co-ordinators from the US and Canada, created a youth advisory committee to develop the programmes, conducted workshops between adults and youth, and hosted youth leadership conferences.[47]

## THE ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

The approach to adult learning at the college reflected a set of principles developed by Harold Chapman during his years with the royal commission and through his experience in the classroom. These guidelines, defined as follows, remained an integral part of WCC's educational practices.

1. Problems need to be considered important to those expected to solve them.
2. Start where people are—not where we think they are or would like to be.
3. A person cannot transfer his/her knowledge and skills to another—the other must go through a learning process.
4. Significant learning takes place when facts and information are integrated into the experience of the learner.
5. A person feels more responsible for what s/he helps to create.[48]

As early as 1957–58, adult-education courses were created to assist wheat pool field representatives in their practical work. The courses were also attended by guild directors and delegates, the directors of the central co-ops, and eventually by the managers. Pere Stensland from The Centre for Community Studies, University of Saskatchewan, assisted with the development of the Adult Learning course, and Harold Baker from the University Extension Division helped create the course that came to be known as Programme Planning.

Aside from the work of the Coady Institute in Nova Scotia, the Adult Education Series was an educational innovation in Canada. In the community-oriented environment at the college, university instructors would come to experiment with new developments in their field. The involvement of university educators at the college created a situation where the programme became "a kind of laboratory for those just starting to teach" adult education.[49]

From 1960 onwards, the Adult Education Series began with a course in co-operative information, followed by an introduction to adult learning. Students could then take a week-long course in adult learning, another in communication, followed by a week of human relations training at the institute in Fort Qu'Appelle. Students received a certificate for each course, with a final certificate given to those who completed the series of six.

In 1963, the university used the same people who had worked in the Co-op College to offer adult-education courses through the Extension Division. Although these courses were

the direct result of the college programme, the university programme required standard academic-level entries. These parallel programmes only exemplified the unique opportunity provided to adult students at the college. WCC courses enabled them to continue working, while at the same time directly incorporating the training into their own employment.

## CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION IN THE NORTH

In the early 1960s, the college was approached by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to look at ways of initiating courses for Inuit, Dene, and Cree residents interested in co-op development. The focus for these courses varied from elements of management and bookkeeping, to courses on co-operative methods and community leadership. The college was one of the first organizations working with communities in the Arctic to develop locally operated forms of co-op business. College instructor Dan Beveridge spent ten weeks in the Mackenzie District facilitating co-operative and community leadership courses in the North. Typically this work would include the encouragement of public meetings, group discussions, field trips, and audio-visual study. Almost all the courses were conducted with interpreters in a region extending from the Mackenzie Delta to Resolute Bay (Qausuittuq), to Cape Dorset (Kinngait), and Baker Lake (Qamani'tuaq).[50]

While this extension work reached remote Arctic regions, many Inuit and native co-operators journeyed to Saskatoon to study these methods at the college. Often the students were chosen by their local handicraft, retail, or fisheries co-op board, with sponsorship available through the federal government.[51] Students invariably gained more from these courses at the college due to the availability of different instructors and the proximity to practical examples. The Co-op College was a pioneer in developing this sort of self-learning package for northern aboriginal people in Canada.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In 1963, twenty-five representatives from the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa travelled to Canada to begin a six-month study of the Canadian co-op movement. Their purpose was to examine Canadian co-operative models and apply them to the development of their own programmes. Half their time in Canada was spent in Saskatoon at WCC, while the remaining three months were spent in Nova Scotia with the Extension Division of St. Francis Xavier University. The students were able to take advantage of the residential facilities, often sharing living and learning space with Inuit and native students visiting from the

North. Harold Chapman attests to the rare opportunity for Inuit and overseas students to meet face to face and share classroom and living space. This unique congregation of students would often host evening cultural events, performing music and dance from regions as diverse as Jakarta and Tuktoyuktuk.[52]

Jack Collier was the director of these "Overseas Courses," which offered a combination of regular college programming and educational field trips. The latter would include visits to co-op centrals across the province and attendance at conferences such as the CUC annual congress and the National Conference on Co-operative Education held in Saskatoon in 1965.[53]

G. Francis Xavier, a student in 1970, wrote a personal evaluation of the teaching techniques used at the college. In an article for the Co-operative Training College in Bangalore, Xavier emphasized the use of class participation combined with an informal structure, discussion sheets, audio-visual aids, and the practical information gained from field trips. He noted the emphasis placed on the relevancy of the course content to the students, and felt the courses valuable to his own situation. This was particularly evident from the content of student mini-theses and their thirty-minute presentations on topics applicable to their own countries.[54]

The federal Department of External Aid in 1967 sponsored Chapman as an advisor in co-op education and training in Guyana. A new Co-operative College had opened the previous year in a region from which over twenty co-operators had attended WCC courses in Saskatoon. The group felt that Chapman's experience with curriculum and administration would help in establishing their programme.[55]

In 1968, the college programme director, Ole Turnbull, was sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to evaluate co-operative training programmes in Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, India, Israel, Sweden, and Britain over the course of five weeks. During this trip, Turnbull also explained the Western Co-operative College as a model for education and training.[56]

Networking with CIDA and international co-ops and governments launched the beginning of partnerships that stimulated developing co-ops around the globe. These partnerships also provided the financing WCC needed to pursue economic independence, particularly as the support of some of the larger co-op organizations in western Canada declined.[57]

At the end of the 1960s, the WCC courses were organized into seven programmes: short courses, consultation services, adult-educator training, extension training, the international student programme, courses for Inuit communities and leaders, and courses for native residents. Consequently, the staff of three in 1957 had increased to an instructional team of fifteen that included Phil Rothery, Bill Hlushko, Jake Fehr, Jack Collier, and Ole Turnbull.[58]

The staff worked in conjunction with community groups, the Extension Division at the university, and university educators borrowed for course development and instruction. Course fees continued to be provided by the member organizations, with the exception of student bursaries available to youth, teachers, community leaders, and the general public.

By 1969 the college had introduced co-op education to regions beyond previous geographical and physical boundaries—to northern native co-operators, international communities, and those from the non–co-op sector. This shift in curriculum increased the opportunity for college educators to introduce co-op theory in the classrooms. While this trend boosted attendance records and increased the profile of the college in foreign communities, diverging their focus away from the needs of western Canadian co-operatives would have far-reaching implications for the years ahead.

## DIVIDED INTERESTS

As familiarity with the concept of adult education was expanding, so was the number of community educational centres in urban areas of the province. This created two rather conflicting situations. An increased appreciation and understanding for adult education, though encouraging, was tempered by increased competition for funding sources. New adult-education centres began to appear. Faced with decreasing financial support, college directors and staff struggled to maintain reliable sources for tuition and grants, while attempting to clarify the role of the college to member organizations, to the general public, and finally, to themselves.

In 1966, WCC trustees hired Harold Baker from the university Extension Division to conduct a detailed survey about how the Co-op College was organized. The procedure for gathering the information progressed through three specific steps:

1. Meetings were held with staff to identify problem areas.
2. A list of questions was given to member organizations, board members, and staff to prioritize in order of importance.
3. The questionnaire results were discussed in team interviews with selected staff and member organizations.

Less than fifty percent of member organizations responded to the questionnaire, and only five of the eight directors. Notably, all thirteen staff participated. The report illustrated different priorities for staff, board, and member organizations, and pointed to widely divergent ideas regarding purpose and direction.

While this report outlined the results of the survey, the authors decided to write a second

report, for the board alone, to address additional findings from the study. This second document revealed the internal issues between staff and directors. The role of the college was usually defined between two extremes: a philosophical institute and a practical training centre. Staff members emphasized the struggle to remain accountable to various members, sponsors, and co-op organizations, and concluded that this greatly influenced the type of curriculum offered. This, coupled with an insufficient grant system (concerning which all parties were in agreement), may have been the reason why "morale was described as lousy" among those delivering the programmes. It was concluded by all that financing was a pressing issue, and that a more integrated approach was required in determining the course of the college's future.[59]

## THE STAFF DISPUTE

Financing problems, coupled with diverging philosophical visions, soon contributed to a climate of dissatisfaction among instructors. In the spring of 1968, the board fired the college registrar, Bill Hope, and eight staff members tried to reinstate him, forming an Instructional Staff Association that continued to push the board to agree to their demands. On 13 May 1968, with tensions mounting between board and staff, these eight instructors were locked out of the college. [60]

Although Hope was fired because of "insufficient job performance," this did not account for the more fundamental underlying issues.[61] Recent years had seen a lack of co-op–trained instructors, which led to a shift in hiring patterns. The college struggled to maintain staff with a strong grounding in the co-op movement, but other educators were often introduced.

It took another three months for a formal agreement to be reached, with delays coming from both sides. The board refused to meet with the staff, and the staff association threatened to apply for union certification. When talks finally resumed, an agreement was eventually reached. The eight staff members were compensated with seventy percent of their pay but were barred against union certification. Hope received ninety days pay, but ultimately was not given back his position as college registrar.

The strike affected co-operators across the system, academic co-op supporters, and the public at large. A Committee for Justice, comprised of academics and others within the co-op movement, was formed to continue inquiries into the strike and its implications, and invited both sides to discuss the dispute. Although the board was not in attendance, those present debated some of the more prominent issues. Co-op labour relations were argued to be inadequate, causing some participants to suggest a boycott of WCC member organizations.[62]

On 2 November 1968, the committee held a Teach-In, inviting all those involved in the dispute to come together in an open forum. This led to a critical assessment of the co-operative movement by the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, academics, and labour groups from across the province.

The programming process developed at the college was an extensive collaborative approach involving instructors and member organizations. It was these relationships between the college and its supporters that were most damaged by the dispute. Some co-op leaders withdrew their support when evidence suggested that the college was unable to maintain its co-operative approach; the college was also criticized for having "union people teaching our managers how to manage."[63]

These developments exacerbated a more widespread and serious trend. As the larger co-op organizations made alternate choices about member training, the problem of financial support had an even greater influence on the direction of the college. As organizations such as the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and FCL hired instructors to perform their own training, there was less room for the college to maintain economically viable programmes.

# THE CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE OF CANADA 1973–1987

## REGIONAL PLANNING

IN 1973, THE WESTERN CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE RE-INCORPORATED as the Co-operative College of Canada (CCC), a move that administrators hoped would more clearly reflect its national membership. Better partnerships with the regional member organizations could also help to re-establish financial security. The new structure facilitated specialized courses for members in each region and gave them more flexibility in choosing or providing instructors. This adaptation of the curriculum structure meant the college would focus more on correspondence training and developing regional programmes. Administrators hoped that this would reduce the financial burden on the Saskatoon office and perhaps allow for more development and distribution of community-based work and co-op theory classes.

Under the new structure there still remained many of the core programmes for which the college was widely known: director training, management skills development, retail and credit union employee business training, correspondence courses, and adult education. The transition from in-house to extension training, however, was clearly evident. All courses were now organized under "Residential"—those provided at the college—and "Extension"—those provided in other provinces. This meant that instructors were travelling away from the college more often, and that fewer students were actually coming to the college to attend courses and stay in the residence. Programmes that had previously brought aboriginal and international students together in Saskatoon, for example, were replaced by one instructor going to a community to deliver the course. Beveridge and others continued to give instruction in the Arctic, but students were no longer sponsored to come to Saskatoon.

The International Student Programme, as it was known, continued only through the work of a few college delegates. The last time international students participated in college

courses was in 1972 at a training programme at Memorial University in St. John's, where Harold Chapman provided instruction in adult learning and co-op management. These developments, coupled with the withdrawal of federal financing, led to the eventual termination of these programmes. The Adult Education Series was also affected and continued with only two of the core courses (Adult Learning and Programme Planning).

In 1972, Ole Turnbull became the college's executive director, a position that redefined the role of the principal to accommodate more administrative responsibilities. Chapman took a position as member relations director with FCL in 1973, but continued a strong relationship with the college as part of the "special appointment personnel," along with Dan Sydiaha from the University of Saskatchewan and John G. (Jack) Craig from York.[64]

The college began to promote custom-designed programmes, distinct from scheduled listings, along with multimedia packages, which increased consulting services and training co-ordination of the staff. With the new structure, the college's library, which often received requests for information from co-op members and the public, was further developed as a resource centre for co-op material from across Canada. Additions to its four-to-six-thousand-book holdings were circulated via the membership, with contributions to the collection coming from across the country and from publications and research by college staff.[65]

At the beginning of the new curriculum, it was evident that while optimism for the college's future was strong, it still appeared to be tempered by financial uncertainty. Rooms at the college continued to be rented to the non–co-op sector as a means of covering some of the maintenance costs. As the nonactive member co-ops stopped sending people to the college for training, more instructors were forced to take the courses with them and promote the curriculum abroad. It was through this outreach and extension work that the college continued to introduce first-time partnerships and pioneer new activities.

## The Conference on Co-operative Thought and Practice

The changing physical and internal structure of the college, coupled with reflection on the changing nature of the co-op system, provided the impetus for a conference on co-operative thought and practice. In May of 1977, the Co-op College of Canada assembled academics, employees, elected officials, and others within the Canadian and American co-operative movement, who came together in Saskatoon to examine the state of co-ops in their generation. Bruce Gunn, conference moderator, called it "a thinker's conference, designed to

get us thinking and talking about macro issues."[66] The conference theme was "Co-operative Thought and Practice: Economic Efficiency and Democratic Control." Participants came from thirty different co-ops in Canada and the United States. Eight speakers gave presentations on topics ranging from "Co-operatives in the Canadian Environment" to "Co-operatives and the Future: How Can We Move beyond Conventional Economics and Politics?"[67]

The conference was designed to "provide a framework that would be stimulating and supportive enough for each participant to struggle openly with his or her thoughts and feelings about the major issues." At the opening session, college chair D. Thomas stated, "This is a new venture for the college. Most of our conferences to date have focussed on the solution of current problems. This conference will look at much broader questions and issues. Hopefully it will give Canadian co-operatives a focus on our future." He also added, "You could be setting up tomorrow's confrontation, but if that's to give us a better co-operative movement, so be it."[68]

In a talk prepared by Ole Turnbull entitled "Practical Models for Democratic Controls," the Co-op College was presented as a model for democratic control in other co-op organizations. As Turnbull explained:

> The college…acquires authority by agreements. These agreements are informal coalitions that rise from needs of member organizations. It is a more dynamic relationship and more subject to change than the traditional education system.… The college sees itself as part of what it describes as a Co-operative Education System. It is activated by the staff…linking with their equivalents in member organizations in planning groups. The planning style is participatory, with low hierarchical structure, and is democratic in that it lacks the authority to be autocratic.[69]

The presentation reflected a sense of optimism for the college, fuelled by a belief in a process that had the potential for conflict resolution. Stimulated by the conference discussions, the college publications committee of Norm Bromberger, Jack Craig, Jake Schroeder, Jack Trevena, and Turnbull prepared a report that would serve as resource material for groups and individuals to use for further study.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The Co-operative College of Canada was becoming a national organization and "a centre for research and development for the co-operative movement in Canada."[70] Its work included instructional books, occasional papers, films, and structured research that produced studies, surveys, and graduate work for college staff and university students. The

following decade at the college produced a wealth of publications and research, which continued to reflect the co-op movement's growing interest in self-examination as it faced an uncertain future. A few notable examples are detailed below.

In 1975, Lou E. Gossen, an instructor at CCC, wrote *An Introduction to Co-operatives.* In his foreword, Harold Chapman explained that the book was intended for anyone involved with or interested in co-operatives and co-operation. The book contained information derived from the introductory correspondence course, and as a readable narrative combined with graphics, the text was easily adaptable for instruction.[71]

Also in 1975, the college published Eric Rasmussen's *Financial Management in Co-operative Enterprises.* Rasmussen was the controller and an instructor in financial matters at CCC for twenty-two years. This book was the first of its kind, thoroughly tackling the specific procedures for the financial management of a co-operative business. Topics addressed in the book included co-operative features and objectives, co-operative taxation, operations planning, and the analysis of financial statements. Previous to this publication, there was nothing available in written form. Considered indispensable to co-operators, the book sold across Canada, the United States, India, and Europe, and by 1984 had undergone six printings.[72]

In 1986, Rasmussen also participated in the publication of a book initiated by Chapman and others called *The Contemporary Director: A Handbook for Elected Officials of Co-operatives, Credit Unions, and Other Organizations.* This book thoroughly explained the purpose and function of co-op boards for directors in the system. It was used in hundreds of training sessions by instructors across Canada as a means of clarifying the role of directors and empowering them to participate in their respective duties.[73] Even non–co-op organizations made wide use of the book because there was so little else on the subject.

FCL and the Government of Manitoba Co-operative Curriculum Project jointly sponsored a historical/pictorial outline of prairie co-operation and its origins, including a detailed outline of co-op history in Britain and the political and social history of Canada. *Prairie Co-operation: A Diary* was written by Jack Trevena and published by CCC in 1976.[74] This was followed by two biographies of co-op leaders. Terry Phalen's *Co-operative Leadership: Harry L. Fowler* (1977) and Stefan Haley's *Tested by Fire: The Life and Work of W.H. McEwen* (1980) described the history of two great leaders in the Canadian co-op movement, one from the prairies, the other from the Maritimes.[75]

## THE CO-OPERATIVE CURRICULUM PROJECT

In 1976, the Government of Manitoba began a project to assemble information on co-operatives that could be introduced into the public school curriculum.[76] Although the project was never fully integrated in Manitoba, the curriculum committee, along with programme directors at the college, saw this as an opportunity to develop material for schools in every province. The Co-op College negotiated for the publication rights and began to alter the content to lend it a more national relevance.[77] Revised by 1983, *Co-operative Outlooks* was distributed to every college member. The focus of the prepared material was "the reasoned and intelligent investigation of the role of co-operatives and co-operation in satisfying human needs, and of the conditions that foster co-operative behavior in groups." Divided into four sections, the contents also supplemented classroom activities. The units were:

1. Social Studies—The History of Co-ops in Canada
2. Human Behaviour—The Individual and Society
3. Business Education—The Business of Co-ops
4. Case Studies on Co-operation and Co-operatives

Each section was designed as an independent study unit accompanied by techniques to stimulate discussion. Outlines were provided for questions, co-operative games, related audio-visual resources, and "socio-dramas."[78] The project was a completely new direction for the college, and a pioneering programme for public educational content. The co-op games and activities represented an entirely different pedagogy from that practised in the contemporary school system, emphasizing co-op learning over competition and exclusion.

The publications committee also produced *Co-operation and Community Life,* using the same resource materials but specifically targeting the seven-to-fourteen age group.[79] Many of those from the *Co-operative Outlooks* project were involved with this endeavour as well: Skip Kutz, Margret Asmuss, and others. The manual explained co-op education principles and was organized into five sections to tackle issues in community development or co-operation.

1. Learning to Live Together
2. The Spirit of Co-operation
3. My Community's History
4. Community Life
5. Working with Others

*Co-operation and Community Life* was first introduced into the Alberta school curriculum through the Rural Education and Development Association (REDA). It continued to be distributed nationally and internationally via the college's elaborate networking system, where established regional offices promoted it to education boards, classrooms, and teachers. Members of the publications committee also conducted workshops for teachers on how to incorporate the materials into the classroom. Because the programme was operating on a shoestring budget, it employed relatively inexperienced staff—often summer and part-time students—and from this circumstance, new staff gained valuable work experience, which shaped the direction of their careers and academic choices and opportunities.[80]

## THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS PROJECT

In May 1978, co-op leaders met in Regina to discuss their history, present situation, and future. A resolution passed by the Canadian Co-operative Credit Society and the Co-operative Union of Canada called for a steering committee to "review the needs of credit unions and co-operatives in looking to the future." Thus began the Co-operative Future Directions (CFD) Project, which committed itself to making the information it assembled available to the general public through a series of publications. The CFD research committee was based in Ottawa, received input from co-ops across Canada, and worked in conjunction with the Co-op College, which was responsible for management, accounting, the publication of research papers, and also for providing library resources. Committee staff conducted research while networking with co-op organizations on related projects, developing task forces to facilitate each step. The CFD Project was one of the few systematic attempts by the Canadian co-op movement to assess its own history, present challenges, and future, and the Co-operative College of Canada played a large role in supporting this self-analysis.

This research initiated the Co-operative Resource Materials Project and began the Working Papers Series that continued to be published by the college until the late 1980s. These papers, of which there are well over fifty, tackled co-op case studies, historical origins, international co-ops, and developments and predictions for the future of the movement.[81]

## CURRICULUM AND EXTENSION PROGRAMMES

The correspondence courses that had been developed at the college were based on written material assembled by Alexander Laidlaw, and were adapted over time into a manual covering co-operative history and principles.[82] The senior correspondence course,

"Organizational Dynamics of Co-operative Organizations," and the introductory course on the co-op movement, were partly based on earlier Co-operative Union of Saskatchewan programmes.[83] These courses were also core components of the Canadian Credit Union Institute (CCUI), which contracted the Co-op College to facilitate this accreditation programme for credit union employees. The project demonstrated how the financial co-op sector continued to support college programmes and to value co-op education where other support had diminished.[84]

The college youth programmes received a three-year extension in 1972 and continued to encourage youth leadership in communities through conferences and youth camps. The programme addressed theoretical topics on how groups function, responsibility, appreciation of others, and effective communication through small talk groups and panel discussions. It also enabled participants to learn how to live co-operatively and understand co-operative organization in general, essentially ideas that foster intentional communities.[85] In a survey conducted in 1978, more than 75 percent of respondents attested to the positive influence of the youth programmes on their present employment, particularly in their communication skills.[86]

The Co-op College often hired students and unemployed workers to assist with the youth programme and the resource centre. The fact that the college was frequently short-staffed gave these people the opportunity to take on greater responsibilities. Some were writing and conducting research for the Curriculum Project, and from this work experience were inspired to continue with academic studies or professional careers. Jack Craig is a particularly good example. A public relations officer for the Kindersley District Federation of Co-operatives, he decided to finish his secondary education and continued on to university while working as an instructor at the college from 1964–67. Today he is a retired faculty member from the Department of Sociology at York University and has written a text book on the nature of co-operation.[87]

In 1975, the Historical Research Project hired four university students to conduct and record interviews with members and leaders from Saskatchewan's co-op history—leaders from agricultural co-ops, credit unions, women's guilds, and consumer co-ops. The result was a "living library" catalogued at the college for co-op and public use.[88] This collection, the first of its kind to document the living history of Saskatchewan co-operation, became a vital component of a famous piece of Saskatchewan theatre. Actors from the production that would become *Paper Wheat* came to the college in 1976 to review some of the history and incorporate it into the play. The result was a theatrical success, with *Paper Wheat* playing more than two hundred performances across the country and being seen by over sixty-five thousand people.[89]

In the early 1980s, in response to labour strife in the movement, college staff were granted federal money to examine the issue of co-op labour relations. The Quality of Life Working Centre, based at the college, brought together various people from the co-op and the union movement across Canada to research socio-economic relations in co-operatives, production and job satisfaction, and methods that help to empower the worker. These ideas, now commonly recognizable components of human relations in the workplace, were innovations at that time. The project resulted in a three-day conference and the production of a video tape that sold across the country.[90]

The Co-operative College continued to play a significant role in both the co-op community and among the general public. The Canadian Credit Union Institute, Co-operative Youth Programmes, the Quality of Life Working Centre, and the living library are all examples of innovative approaches to research and education. As the role of the college changed and it became a base for extension resources and training, the core programmes (i.e., director training and adult education) were delivered to fewer co-ops and more to nonprofit organizations or through community colleges. The regional structure further embodied the image of "a college without walls,"[91] a notion that turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of what the college would truly become. With few residential students, the campus now saw little use. The facility was finally sold in 1985, and the administration office and resource library were transferred to a downtown location. In its final years as the Co-operative College of Canada, the new executive director, Gerald Schuler, envisioned more networking with community colleges and universities and an increase in the use of technological advances for networked learning.[92] The college functioned in this capacity to some extent, particularly by still providing one of the few links between established and emerging co-ops.

## Merger with the Co-operative Union of Canada

As early as 1975, college directors began discussing how to finalize the move to region-based operations under the Regionalization Programme, which would remove authority from the central office in Saskatoon and eliminate to some extent the considerable expense of bringing students to the college courses. The programme was gradually being implemented when suggestions were made to merge the Co-op College and the Co-operative Union of Canada (CUC). College enrolment had begun to decline rapidly and the financial deficit was increasing. It was hoped that the merger would have a beneficial impact on both organizations.[93] The Regionalization Programme was part of a five-year plan to be achieved

by 1985. Some staff were sceptical of the changes. In the beginning, the college was able to provide the resources for regional offices, but eventually they were unable to meet demands. "We were asked to do things we couldn't do;…we ran out of gas," comments Ole Turnbull, then research director for the college. And so continued the struggle to maintain programming under financial duress.[94]

The proposal for the formation of one national organization was outlined in a joint committee draft in March 1986. The internal structure was organized so that the regional boards would all contribute to the main organization. A foundation for research would be established, in the hopes of increasing the organization's educational role. Reducing the duplication of efforts and expenses was a valuable argument in favour of the merger.[95]

When the two organizations amalgamated to form the new Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) in 1987, what remained of the college's functions did not reflect a cohesive national programme. The college building had been shut down and sold. Responsibility for research, education, and extension now lay with the CCA regional and national offices alongside their duties of representation in lobbying, international development, and other services. Educational content continued to be supplied, with director training in the regions and an annual, national, educational session on co-operative principles and practices. The contract instructors for these sessions were hired through the national and regional offices, with no set curriculum. There was now no central physical facility, and what remained of an extensive collection of co-operative resource materials had been downsized to accommodate the shift to an office in Ottawa. Thus, while co-op education continued under the CCA, the amalgamation can be understood as the demise of the college idea: there was no longer a separate organization dedicated to research and the practice of adult education, to developing common learning for co-operators, nor to promoting co-op values among members, leaders, and employees.

# Conclusion

The co-op college was directly influenced by the shifting patterns in the co-op movement across Canada. Change began with the loss of certain individuals who were vocal leaders of their co-op organizations and who had ensured support for the college since its inception. New administrations, perhaps unaware of the history and potential of co-op education, withdrew support from the college, thereby decreasing the number of active members. In addition, the fact that college-trained graduates were employed in larger co-operatives helped these co-ops to develop their own programmes at the college's expense. In this sense, the college was a victim of its own success. The results of these changes contributed to financial uncertainty and a shift towards extension training, which eventually replaced the functions of a central physical location. Other changes that influenced the direction of the college were broadly reflected in the development of the co-op movement as a whole: the struggle to compete in a rapidly developing global economy; the continued growth of membership without necessarily understanding co-op values and practices; and the increase of other adult-education programmes across Canada. Despite the efforts of the college administration and its employees, it is clear that the changing nature of co-operation in Canada limited the scope of the college curriculum and its ability to impact its environment.

The initial creation of the Co-op Institute can be attributed to partnerships among individuals from predominant co-op organizations who understood the principles of co-operation and the need to spread this knowledge among new generations. Lewie Lloyd, Harry and Dorothy Fowler, and Barney Arnason were among those who kept the movement alive by inspiring others. They convinced their organizations of the value of co-op education, and in turn these co-ops sponsored employees, directors, and managers to attend college programmes. Peter Maaniche's "generation and a half" theory fuelled their belief in the necessity of co-op education to sustain the movement. When these individuals were eventually re-

placed, the theory unfolds: new managers and directors did not have the same grasp of co-op principles, ultimately placed less value on the education of employees (and members), and decided "by 1968 that they could conduct their own training programmes at a better price."[96] This context within which the college evolved has been described as "a history of narrowing limits," where decreasing support from the members was a symptom of the loss of knowledge and understanding for co-op philosophy in the movement itself.[97]

Jake Siemens believed that an educational institute had to be autonomous and financially independent of the co-operative movement. Yet the Co-op College began as an educational institution directly funded by the movement, a dependency that meant the college was susceptible to the actions of member organizations. This financial uncertainty at the college shifted the balance between the two founding purposes: the college discovered that more income was derived from technical training than from the exploration of co-op theory. This was one reason why it began its "open-market approach" for funding (i.e., CIDA, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and other federal grants).[98] The problem was directly related to financial dependence on member organizations. The fluctuation between two distinct approaches to co-op education pointed to the uncertainty within the co-op movement as to what form of education was preferred—and ultimately would be funded. Lacking strong affirmation for one particular approach, the college continued to struggle without a clear sense of purpose and with questionable solidarity with those in the larger co-op movement.

The Co-operative College of Canada began as a vision that inspired thirty-five years of instruction, research, publications, and conferences for people within and outside of the Canadian co-operative movement. It was established to accomplish two purposes: to provide a successful standard of co-op business training and to inculcate the history and philosophy of the co-operative movement into every course. The inherent problem lay in maintaining a balance between these two tasks while preserving, at the same time, institutional co-operative support for both. The balance was determined by the college's financial capacity, the dedicated work of employees, and the collaboration with its members. While cohesion among these factors was sometimes tenuous, the volume of research, publications, and outreach programmes from the Co-op College ultimately define the impact of its progress.

Concerns that were evident to those struggling to promote education within the co-op movement in 1955—the trend towards economic efficiency and the lack of member education—were the same concerns of leaders and educators in 1987, the year of the college's demise. Even today, the education of new co-op members about co-op principles and practice is far from adequate; and while trends in rural depopulation continue, the possibilities for local, grassroots education initiatives to overcome this problem are more challenging than ever. In 1960, Alexander Laidlaw observed, "The false impression is somehow given that

while business is practical, education is only theoretical,"[99] an assumption that is still commonly held today. The end of the college does not mean an end to the need for the functions it performed. Indeed, reviewing the college's history only raises questions about how such functions will be organized in the future.