ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
(September 1, 1945 to September 1, 1946)

Submitted by
MILO K. SWANTON, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

This report of the activities of your Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Co-operative, covering the fiscal year September 1, 1945 to September 1, 1946, coincides with the first full year of peace after World War II. The slogan adopted by your Council for the past year was "Co-operation the Way to Agricultural Reconversion." That slogan has been more than a watchword. It has been a guide which has molded and directed the Council's program of activities for the year.

Although agriculture made preparations to meet the test of postwar change, reconversion nationally has been slowed by the indecision of federal programs and by a spirit of acquisition and distrust among economic groups. Artificial controls have stifled production and distribution so badly needed to halt the dangers of inflation.

During this critical period of change from war to peace, there is danger of surrender by our agricultural co-operatives to other forms of business. The threat of the N. T. E. A. from without is exceeded by a threatened decline in co-operative membership morale and loyalty from within. During this critical year your Council of Agriculture Co-operative has worked diligently to strengthen co-operatives from within while also devoting its energies in meeting the attack against co-operatives from without.

In meeting the attack of the N. T. E. A. we have acted on the belief that it is important for co-operatives to get their own houses in order. Likewise, we have proceeded on the theory that it's better to meet non-co-operative groups with a friendly explanation of co-operative facts rather than to wage a campaign of animosities. We believe more good can be gained by conference than by battle. We have made a special effort to interpret to non-co-operative and to non-agricultural groups the problems of farmers and the objectives of farm organizations and farmer co-operatives.

COUNCIL PERSONNEL

Death of Laura M. Swanton. On April 27, 1946, the Council sustained a major loss in the death of a most loyal, capable and understanding servant, Mrs. Laura M. Swanton. In February 1937 she helped establish the Council's full time office for the first time. She worked diligently on behalf of the Council for more than 9 years as assistant to the Executive Secretary. Her background of farm life, her experiences as rural teacher, juvenile court consultant, secretary to the President of the River Falls State Teachers College and to the
Dean of University Extension, coupled with her sound judgment and practical vision provided unusual qualifications for those 9 years of service to the Council. She represented the Council with the Joint Committee on Education. Her knowledge of education and her accurate and frank appraisal of people and programs gave her abilities beyond the routine of an office and the duties of a Secretary.

Publicity Man Employed Part Time. From September 1945 to June 1946, Robert Hosokawa, a graduate student in journalism, was employed part time to improve press coverage and to help expand agricultural information. The results of his work were most gratifying. He established friendly press and radio relations through his well prepared releases to the daily, weekly and farm papers. His work helped much to improve understanding among non-agricultural people concerning the programs and problems of agriculture. We did not attempt to deluge the press with a mass of material. A clipping service check shows an unusually high response by the press to the news items and releases given to them by the Council.

David A. Hamilton - Assistant Executive Secretary. In August, David A. Hamilton was employed to start October 1, as Assistant Executive Secretary. Mr. Hamilton, born and raised on a Wisconsin farm, attended a rural school, Westfield high school, and graduated in agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. For 4 years he was a teacher of Vocational Agriculture before spending 4½ years in the army where he won 5 combat stars and reached the rank of Major.

JOINT CONFERENCES WITH BUSINESS, LABOR, INDUSTRIAL AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

Believing it is far better to meet in friendly man-to-man conference than to stay apart in suspicion and strife, your Executive Committee provided for conferences between the Council's leadership in various areas and representatives of business, industry, labor and the professions. In late winter and early spring of 1946 these Joint Conferences were held in 12 cities. While the success of these meetings varied from place to place, the results in better understanding of the co-operative movement and in a more friendly appreciation of farm problems were beyond expectation.

CO-OPERATIVE CLINICS

In December 1945 because of Council of Agriculture leadership, Wisconsin was the only state in the nation favored with 2 co-operative clinics held under the auspices of the American Institute of Co-operation. These clinics brought America's foremost co-operative authorities including Dr. Raymond W. Miller, Washington, President of the American Institute of Cooperation; Walter L. Bradley, Buffalo, N. Y. Chairman, Committee on Co-operatives, American Institute of Accountants; Kelsey E. Gardner, Washington, Principal Economist, Co-operative Research and Service Division, Farm Credit Administration; and H. M. Knipfel, Secretary, St. Paul Bank for Co-operatives. These co-operative clinics were widely attended by attorneys, co-operative accountants, co-operative managers and members throughout southern, eastern and northeastern Wisconsin. These clinics gave authoritative basic information concerning public relations, membership relations, income tax regulations and legal problems of co-operatives.
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF COOPERATION

As a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Institute of Cooperation, I have worked closely with that organization in connection with the Institute's program of co-operative education, co-operative information and co-operative service. Our Council office has served as headquarters for the Institute's State Committee, set up to solicit support for the American Institute of Cooperation. At the invitation of the American Institute of Cooperation, I prepared a section of THE COOPERATIVE YEAR BOOK entitled "War Time Problems of State Co-operative Councils," which has been published by the Institute.

During the last week of August 1946, David Hamilton and I attended the annual meeting of the American Institute of Cooperation at Purdue University where I took part on a program dealing with rural and co-operative education.

OTHER CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

In addition to newspaper releases, articles for magazines and the contribution to the year book on co-operation, the Council office has given to our member organizations and co-operatives wide distribution of co-operative pamphlets and releases provided by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the Institute of Cooperation. Also our Council news letters have carried co-operative information directly to co-operative officers, directors and managers of the several hundred local co-operatives affiliated through their parent organizations in membership with the Council.

In November 1945, I accepted an invitation to take part in the Grange League Federation School of Cooperative Administration at Ithaca. On the same trip I attended the New York Co-operative Clinic at Syracuse. In January 1946, I spoke at the annual meeting of the Michigan Association of Farmer Co-operatives in Lansing.

The Council helped in shaping plans for Wisconsin's 9th Cooperative Week held February 18-23. As chairman of the Co-operative Week Committee I assisted in arrangements designed to set forth the purposes, history and possibilities of co-operation.

Numerous co-operative conferences with individuals and groups were held. During this year I spoke at 31 annual or special meetings of co-operatives.

WORK WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

United States Savings Bond Division. As a member of the Advisory Committee of the Savings Bond Division for Wisconsin, I assisted with the program to encourage financial reserves among farmers and their co-operatives.

Soil Conservation Services. During the year our Council has continued its interest in and support of the soil conservation services.

Production and Marketing Administration. We have responded to
the request of the Production and Marketing Administration to confer with them on the establishment of production goals and in the matter of suggesting land values within areas of the state for the federal tenant purchase program.

Farm Labor. Problems of deferments under Selective Service frequently came to the Council. Also we co-operated in programs to get emergency farm labor such as the use of prisoners of war and the importation of foreign labor to be used in food production and processing.

CO-OPERATION WITH STATE AGENCIES

State Industrial Commission. At the request of the State Industrial Commission to select a representative, I was appointed and I have served as a member of the Advisory Committee on minimum wage regulations, the establishment of a code for flammable materials, and to serve as a member of the Safety Education Committee.

Labor Relations Board. Two members of the Council, F. W. Huntzicker and I, who were previously appointed in accordance with state statutes, served as members of the State Advisory Board on employment relations.

College of Agriculture. We co-operated with the College at farm institutes, on 4H activities and with the Department of Agricultural Economics.

State Department of Agriculture. Our Council has worked closely with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, particularly its Division of Markets and its legal and accounting services.

State Department of Education. I have attended conferences and served as a member of a committee to recommend legislation for improved school attendance by rural youth and transportation aids.

Wisconsin Education Association. Our Council has provided consultants at conferences and speakers at meetings called by the Wisconsin Education Association. These contacts have related to rural and high school curriculae, teacher training and school attendance.

FEDERAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

Congressional Small Business Committee. The Council was represented a year ago at the Congressional hearing in Chicago which was conducted by the Congressional Small Business Men’s Committee. During the past year we have kept in close contact with this Congressional Committee which was preparing a report on the taxation of cooperatives. Our Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Co-operative, like other state councils in membership with the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, was ably represented in Washington by the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives concerning the co-operative taxation issue. This organized teamwork contributed much to bringing about the committee’s clear-cut report which refuted the claims of the N. T. E. A.
Bullwinkle Transportation Bill (HR 2536). At the direction of our Board of Directors and Executive Committee in September 1945, the Council, after considering the viewpoints of shippers, municipal traffic bureaus, the State Public Service Commission, the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the National Livestock Producers' Association and others, urged Wisconsin's congressmen and senators to support the bill with amendments designed to protect the public interest. The bill then would exempt railroads and other common carriers from the Sherman Anti-Trust Law to the extent of permitting conferences between carriers of the same class concerning rates, rules and regulations.

Social Security and Hospitalization Bill (S. 1050). On this complicated and controversial measure the Council took the following position with representatives in congress: 1. The multiple proposals should be considered separately, each on its own merit. 2. Recognize the need for federal aid to improve health standards through expanded hospital, medical and dental facilities and services. 3. Supported a survey to determine specific health needs. 4. Encourage prepaid medical, hospital, dental insurance plans on a voluntary basis. 5. Extend Old Age and Survivors Insurance to farmers and their employees.

Subsidies and OPA. By letter, wire and personal contacts the Council worked for the abolition of consumer subsidies. Without effective rationing except on sugar and due to inability to control black market operations, our Council worked in like manner for decontrol of dairy products, livestock and meats.

Case Labor Bill. Our Council maintained its position that unions should be ready to accept legislation providing for financial liability and making labor leaders responsible for their acts, as now applies to co-operatives, partnerships and corporations.

FEDERAL HEARINGS


Interstate Commerce Commission. On July 22, I attended the opening of the hearing in Chicago before the Interstate Commerce Commission and on July 31, I presented testimony before the Commission in opposition to the proposed 25% freight rate increase on agricultural products.

WISCONSIN CENTENNIAL

I was appointed as the representative of agriculture on the State Centennial Committee to serve as chairman of the Agricultural SubCommittee. Conferences and meetings of these committees have been held to develop a program for the state-wide observance of the 100th anniversary of Wisconsin's statehood in 1948.

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION

The Council has worked in close harmony with the National Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation on issues involving the welfare of the dairy industry. As a director of the Federation, I have secured much information concerning federal policies affecting the
dairy industry and agriculture generally.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF FARMER COOPERATIVES

The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives is our affiliate organization on the national level. The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives has kept our state office supplied with valuable information through their regular publication "The Washington Situation." I attended the annual meeting of the National Council in Chicago, served as Secretary of the State Council Division of the National Council and as one of the directors on the national board representing the State Council Division. The National Council has been highly effective in combating anti-co-operative propaganda of the N.F.T.E.A. The influence of the National Council in Washington in behalf of farmer co-operatives is most significant.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

The American Country Life Association is an agency which is building an improved rural life in America. It has worked with and has received the support of the Council of Agriculture. In June 1946, I attended the annual meeting of the American Country Life Association at Michigan State College.

Veterans on-the-Job Training. I have met with groups of veterans and discussed with them the principles, programs and objectives of agricultural co-operatives and agricultural movements generally.

American Dairy Association of Wisconsin. Our Council has continued to serve as an advisory member of the Board of the American Dairy Association of Wisconsin. During the year we have had continued harmonious relations with the state office of the American Dairy Association with which we have joint ownership of a mimeograph machine and mutual use of the addressograph equipment.

Other Group Contacts. I met in conference and debate with groups of the C.I.O.-U.A.W. in West Allis. I took part in conferences (other than the Council's Joint Conferences) with women's groups, YWCA, Joint Committee on Education, Civic Clubs, business associations and the State Board of Health.

Meetings of Directors and Executive Committee. Since this was not a State Legislative year, meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors were less frequent than usual. Policies adopted and action taken by the Board and the Executive Committee during the year are included in this report.

1945 FARMERS' GET-TOGETHER CONFERENCE

The 17th Annual program and meeting of our Council took place in Madison at the Lorene Hotel, November 6 and 7, 1945. "Co-operation - The Way to Agricultural Reconversion" was the central theme. Attendance exceeded meeting facilities. In addition to G. F. Clarlin, Milo K. Swanton, Dean Ira L. Baldwin, Milton Button, John Brandt and Dan Hoan, a panel discussion on co-operative facts and principles and a talk by Prof. R. K. Proker on "Conflicting
Interests in Co-operatives were of keen interest. The annual Farm Family Luncheon and the evening banquet which featured Claude Ebling and Col. La Follette were enjoyable and inspirational. At the annual meeting of Council delegates on November 7, directors were nominated from the various member organizations and elected. All officers and executive committee members were re-elected and a constructive set of resolutions were adopted.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

TALKS AT VARIOUS MEETINGS. I gave a total of 45 talks at annual or special meetings of co-operatives and farm organizations.

RADIOS. Thirty-three radio programs were provided by the Council (rebroadcasts and network duplications not included) over Stations WHA and WIBA in Madison, WLBL in Stevens Point, WLS and WGN in Chicago and KSTP in Minneapolis.

CONFERENCES OF VARIOUS TYPES ATTENDED .................................. 41

FEDERAL HEARINGS (Federal Power Commission and Interstate Commerce Commission) ........ 2

DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS .................................. 6

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED ARTICLES ................................................ 6

PAMPHLETS AND REPORTS ............................................................... 7062

SPECIAL LETTERS ............................................................................. 6961

NEWS LETTERS .................................................................................. 12165

NEWS RELEASES .................................................................................. 4342

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Total Distance Traveled ......................................................... 18402

THE FUTURE

The Board of Directors has already given instructions to arrange another series of Joint Conferences with business, industrial, labor and professional people as a means of building better understanding for co-operatives and for the problems of agriculture.

Plans are developing to hold another outstanding, state-wide co-operative clinic through the assistance of the American Institute of Cooperation.

The Council will continue its efforts to counteract the N. T. E. A. program on the state and national levels by whatever means may be most effective. At the same time, we pledge our efforts to help strengthen Wisconsin co-operatives from within.
I strongly recommend a state-wide and several regional co-operative marketing and farm supply purchasing conferences for young people to be worked out in conjunction with existing educational agencies.

From reliable sources of information it is apparent that John L. Lewis is about to renew his ambitious program through his United Dairy Farmers District #50, which is designed to annihilate our dairy co-operatives. The Wisconsin Council of Agriculture Co-operative must again vigilantly meet that threat to the welfare of dairy farmers.

We will do our best to carry through on whatever basic principles and directions may be laid down for us in the form of resolutions adopted by the Council's delegate body and board of directors.

With the employment of a full-time Assistant Executive Secretary, we plan to make more contacts throughout the state with co-operative managers and directors.

The coming year includes another legislative session. As in the past we will issue our weekly legislative report of hearings to be held and significant action taken by either house. This report will include our analysis of all bills affecting co-operatives and agriculture.

This program for the future will be carried through as you direct and in so far as our finances will permit. We pledge our best efforts to continue our services in behalf of farmer co-operatives and agricultural welfare.

Respectfully submitted

Milo K. Swanton
Executive Secretary

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