



DR HENRY KENNEDY
SECRETARY
IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION SOCIETY
1926-1963

**"AN 'ECONOMIC NATIONALIST' WHO DID ALL IN HIS POWER
TO PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF IRELAND."**

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FOREWORD

Dr Henry Kennedy was officially appointed Secretary of the then Irish Agricultural Organisation Society Ltd (now, the Irish Co-operative Organisation Society Ltd) in July of 1926. He replaced the first Secretary of the IAOS, Robert A Anderson, whom Professor James Kennelly describes as “the organising genius who made the entire enterprise work”. In common with the founders of any new radical movement, Horace Plunkett, Anderson and its other founders had been imbued with an ‘above the ordinary’ sense of idealism and commitment in promoting their co-operative vision of ‘the three Betters’; ‘Better Farming, Better Business and Better Living’. They also had the good fortune to be active in a period known as the ‘Irish Revival’ when Irish society seemed receptive to new and revolutionary ideas and movements in politics, sports, business, language and the arts.

Henry Kennedy succeeded Anderson in much more chastened times. Much of the idealism and enthusiasm associated with the Irish Revival and the 1916 Rising had dissipated in the new Irish Free State. It was replaced by a more pragmatic and conservative set of political ideals. In addition, the Catholic church was becoming increasingly influential in shaping the political and cultural landscape. Irish Free State civil servants took the lead from their political and spiritual masters in adopting a highly conservative approach to economic and social policy and to politics generally. The Irish co-operative movement was not insulated from this shift towards conservatism. The economic depredations of; the war of independence; the Civil War; the great recession; the economic war with Britain; and the general scarcity of resources during and after World War II all contributed to this innate conservatism among most, but not all, politicians, civil servants, civic leaders and clergy.

It is against this backdrop that Henry Kennedy’s leadership of the co-operative movement must be judged. Kennedy, like Plunkett was an ‘intellectual power house’ but in Kennedy’s case, his intellect had a strong scientific and mathematical bent, which commended itself to the exposition of scientific solutions to some of the most pressing



agricultural problems of his day, rather than any great promotion on his part of the higher ideals of co-operation.

In regard to the 'three betters' referred to above, Kennedy had a strong bias towards 'Better Farming' with little emphasis on co-operative education and training. His take on 'Better Business' was to focus successfully on the development of a small number of well-resourced dairy co-operatives, to the exclusion of many other co-operative ventures. In the context of the times he lived, it was, as M Ó Fathartaigh observed in his book 'Irish Agriculture Nationalised' "the astuteness of the newly appointed Henry Kennedy in preparing a memo for government and lobbying his brother in law, Patrick Hogan the then Minister for Agriculture, that triggered this radical and major restructuring of the Irish Dairy industry and in the assessment of Patrick Bolger 'saved the co-operative movement from disaster if not extinction'."

Perhaps the most fitting epitaph of Kennedy and one ascribed to favourably by Seamus O'Donohoe in this study of Henry Kennedy, is the epitaph given by one of his successors' as Secretary of the IAOS, James Moloney, who fittingly described Kennedy as;

"an 'economic nationalist' who did all in his power to promote the economic development of Ireland."

Dr Sean Brady
Chairman
Golden Jubilee Trust
August 2019

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INTRODUCTION

In 1926, Dr Henry Kennedy succeeded RA (Robert Andrew) Anderson, the pioneering first Secretary of the IAOS¹. Dr Henry Kennedy was to become the longest serving chief executive of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (IAOS), a position he held with great credit for 37 years. Henry Kennedy was born in 1888 and died just before his eightieth year on 5th February 1968.

Kennedy's contribution, to the Irish co-operative movement and to Irish agriculture and the economy in general was significant. He was Secretary of the IAOS during a period of relative economic stagnation for the Irish economy. His tenure as Secretary lasted until 1963 and coincided with the Great Depression, the Economic War with Britain and World War II. The only period of sustained economic growth which partially overlapped with his tenure, was from the mid-fifties onward, in particular the period of the First Programme for Economic Expansion, from 1959 to 1966. Kennedy also served on a number of government investigative commissions and was appointed a non-executive director of the Electricity Supply Board in 1927 and continued in this capacity to his death in 1968.

His many achievements have been somewhat masked by the passage of time. Looking back now, fifty years from his death in 1968, any objective assessment of Henry Kennedy's work would place him in the first rank of patriotic nationalist's. Here was a man with a great sense of pride in Ireland and its people. He was intent on improving the lot of Irish farmers.

To quote the Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) centenary publication 'Fruits of the Century';

“Politically, Kennedy was and remained all his life a Redmondite home ruler. One of his friends once said of him that ‘the National Movement past him by’. When Kennedy heard this, he accepted it as a tremendous compliment. He was an establishment figure and many of his contemporaries went on to play a very active part in the affairs of the country.”

Mícheál O'Fathartaigh in his book, 'Irish Agriculture Nationalised' quotes Jim Maloney, a successor of Kennedy's, as describing Kennedy as; “an ‘economic nationalist’ who did all in his power to promote the economic development of Ireland.”

EARLY YEARS

Kennedy often described himself as a 'mountainy man' who grew up in the shadow of Keepers Hill. He was born in the village of Toor in the parish of Newport, North Tipperary in 1888 to John Kennedy, a farmer and his wife, Julia (nee Ryan). He was one of a family of eight children. A summary of Martin Ryan's description of the Kennedy Family in his booklet "A Mountainy Man ...who made a difference" describes Henry's family as follows; Kennedy was married to Nellie Hogan who was a sister of Patrick Hogan the first Minister for Agriculture in the Cumann Na nGaedheal government. They had five children one of whom, Jack died at a young age. Maurice (RIP) became lecturer and later registrar at UCD. Henry qualified in engineering at UCD and worked most of his life in the UK. Helen Studied law (RIP). Iseult was a solicitor and lives in Rathgar. His first wife Nellie died in June 1935.

Later in life, Henry married Dublin woman, Rita Lawlor. As a young student in the Jesuit Crescent College in Limerick, his teachers recognised that he had great potential as a mathematician. They suggested to his father that a transfer to Saint Colemans college in Fermoy would help him to develop his mathematical talent. From there, he moved to University College Dublin and received an MA and DSc in mathematical science.

He was appointed a lecturer in mathematics in Maynooth and after a few years secured a similar post in UCD. He was succeeded in Maynooth by Eamon De Valera, who went on to become leader of Fianna Fáil. Though, of differing political views, their common interest in mathematics and the fact that both in later life suffered from serious eyesight problems, created a strong bond between them. It is also reasonable to surmise that it was the independent minded intellectual rigour that Henry brought to any task that caused De Valera, during his tenure as Taoiseach, to appoint Henry to a number of government policy review bodies and commissions, notwithstanding Henry's close ties with the opposition Cumann Na nGael party.

THE IRISH WHITECROSS SOCIETY

Following the wholesale burning and destruction of property during the 'Black and Tan' war in 1920, including attacks on the Kennedy family home and on creameries in the immediate hinterland of his home, a nationwide organisation for the relief of distress was formed under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Lawrence O'Neill. The Irish Whitecross Society was representative of practically every section of political and religious belief. Dr Henry Kennedy, on secondment from UCD, was appointed Director of Organisation. The work of the Whitecross was carried out extremely efficiently, due in no small measure to the ability of Dr Henry Kennedy. The fact that many co-operative creameries were the subject of retaliatory destruction by the Black and Tans meant that Kennedy's restorative work with the Whitecross acquainted him with the creamery industry in Ireland.

SECRETARY OF THE IAOS

It was in large measure a recognition of his excellent administrative skills and academic ability that Henry Kennedy was appointed secretary of the IAOS in 1926. The background to this appointment is commented on in the diaries of Sir Horace Plunkett, the

founder and first President of the IAOS. On Tuesday, 6th July 1926, Plunkett wrote in his diaries;

“Long conference over selection of candidates for Secretaryship. Reduced 80 applicants to 5 (Riddall², Kennedy, brother-in-law of Hogan, Nugent Harris & two unknowns). The C’tee on 14th will have to select”.

And so, the Committee duly did, appointing Dr Henry Kennedy to the position of Secretary (CEO) of the IAOS on 14th July 1926.

As we shall see from later quotes from Plunkett’s diary, his assessment of Kennedy evolves from one of initially seeing Kennedy as being “A rough diamond but a man of immense energy & I should say mental capacity.” to one of concern that Dr Kennedy was ‘materialising’ the co-operative movement. Pat Bolger (The Irish Co-operative Movement – Its History and Development), commented;

There were hopes of a great revival when Henry Kennedy was appointed Secretary in July 1926. The Movement took on new life and hope. The IAOS was re organised; it’s amended rules provided for a committee of 14, including president and vice president, with 10 of the 12 members elected by district, compared to the former committee of 24, largely elected by Provence. This give control of the IAOS more directly to the societies which were supporting it.

STAGNANT ECONOMY

However, the first twenty years of Henry Kennedy’s tenure as IAOS Secretary was not an auspicious period for co-operatives, for Irish agriculture or for the economy in general. At that time of his appointment in 1926 and for the following 30 years Irish agriculture staggered from one crisis to another, with the effects of crisis such as the 1929 Wall Street crash and subsequently, the ‘economic war’ with Britain over the payment of annuities, reverberating until just before the second world war. During World War II, or the ‘Emergency’ as it was known in Ireland, a general scarcity of resources meant that the scope for development of Irish agriculture and consequently the scope for development within the co-operative movement was severely limited. In many instances for both farmers and co-operatives, survival was an achievement in itself.

A MEMORANDUM OF ‘GREAT ABILITY’

Kennedy was the chief catalyst in stimulating the Department of Agriculture into a creamery rationalisation programme shortly after his appointment to the IAOS. As Horace Plunkett noted favourably in his diary on Thursday, 25th Nov 1926;

“A very important letter from Kennedy, the new Sec’y of the I.A.O.S. enclosing a Memorandum of great ability upon the dairying industry. He wants the Free State

Govt to lend the I.A.O.S. a huge sum to enable them to buy out Lovell & Christmas.”

Micheál Ó Flathartha in his book 'Irish Agriculture Nationalised' noted that;

“In a memorandum to the executive Council of the Cumann Na nGael government in November 1926 Kennedy proposed that the State buy out all of the proprietary creameries in the Irish State to be followed by a complete co-operative re-organisation of the Irish Dairy industry. The memorandum had been prompted by an offer from the Condensed Milk Company (CMC) based in Limerick and owned by the British multinational Lovell and Christmas, to sell the business to the IAOS.”

This 'memorandum of great ability' was to result in the establishment in 1926 of the Free State Government first semi-state body; The Dairy Disposal Company. An institution that was to have a profound impact on the structure and evolution of the dairy industry in Ireland for well-nigh on five decades. It was also an institution that interacted both positively and negatively with Henry Kennedy, the IAOS and dairy co-operatives in general, during its lifetime.

Kennedy played a central role in what led to the creation of the Dairy Disposal Company. The establishment of the Dairy Disposal Company in turn resulted in the resolution of the deadly competitive struggle between co-operative and proprietary creameries, which in the 1920's had hollowed out the balance sheets of co-operative and proprietary creameries alike.

Micheál O'Fathartaigh having observed that the offer from the CMC was in effect an indirect approach to the Government as the company must have been aware that the IAOS lacked the necessary capital also noted;

“The Minister for Agriculture Patrick Hogan recognised that the (Kennedy) memorandum represented an opportunity to re-organise the Irish dairy production system and he quickly drafted his own program for achieving this. On the 5th of January 1927 Hogan presented his program for the reorganisation of the Irish dairy production system to the Executive Council of the Cumann Na nGael government. “

Hogan's³ successful argument to the Executive Council was that with the buyout of the proprietary creameries the failings in the organisation and structure of the dairy industry could be addressed. His proposal entailed the setting up of a state-controlled company, whose role would be to purchase proprietary owned creameries and also some of the weaker creamery co-operatives that were ailing. The new company would then rationalise these creameries, closing down some of them and grouping the rest into geographic groups. The plan was that these rationalised and re-organised creameries would then be purchased by the more viable co-operative creameries, with the assistance of long-term loans from the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) secured by an intended compulsory share subscription on the part of all milk suppliers⁴.

The Cumann na nGael Executive Council agreed in principle to the purchase of the Condensed Milk Company from Lovell and Christmas and the establishment of the state controlled Dairy Disposal Company (DDC) as the corporate entity to carry out this purchase. The CMC was the first and, far and away, the biggest of the proprietary creameries to be purchased by the DDC. It was the astuteness of the newly appointed Henry Kennedy in preparing a memo for government and lobbying his brother in law, Patrick Hogan the then Minister for Agriculture that triggered this radical and major restructuring of the Irish dairy industry and in the assessment of Patrick Bolger 'saved the co-operative movement from disaster if not extinction'.

THE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CORPORATION

In tandem with using the Dairy Disposal Company to assist in the restructuring of the Irish Dairy Industry, Patrick Hogan recognised that farmers and the agricultural industry needed a source of long-term capital. It was Henry Kennedy's constant emphasis on the farmers and the agricultural industries lack of capital which led to the formation of the Agricultural Credit Corporation under the provisions of the 1927 Agricultural Credit Act⁵. Bolger also credits Kennedy for succeeding in getting the government favourably disposed towards the expansion of the creamery industry into areas like the midlands which were not served. A number of new co-operative creameries were established between 1927 and 1929 - largely financed by loans from the ACC.

CO-OPERATIVE LEGISLATION & THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF SHARES

Hogan also considered it vital to address the perceived deficiencies of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1893 by the introduction of a Co-operative Act that would be more in tune with best co-operative business practice and with the needs of its members. One central idea in this proposed new Act was that all milk supplier members of a creamery co-operative would be compulsorily obliged to purchase shares in that co-operative. The thinking being that this would both strengthen the equity base of each co-operative and also provide added security to the ACC in providing long term credit to the co-operatives. Compulsory purchasing of shareholding was a point of view that Kennedy supported. Plunkett, now in his seventies, living in England from the early twenties following the burning of his house in Foxrock by anti-treatyite elements, had considerable reservations in regard to this policy of compulsory shareholding. These reservations are evidenced by the following entries in his diary on 10th and 23rd October 1928 respectively;

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- 4 In the period up to 1931 the DDC purchased 170 proprietary creameries. 79 of these were closed, 44 were transferred to co-operative ownership and the remaining 47 were held by the DDC. The Company also took over 17 co-operative creameries of which they closed four and retained 13. They also built four new creameries. The Creamery Act of 1928 introduced a system of licensing, empowering the Minister for Agriculture to control the establishment of new creameries, thereby preventing the future erection of new creameries in unsuitable locations. The reorganisation proved a life saver for the co-operatives. The Minister also succeeded in having the Agricultural Credit Corporation established but failed in his objective to legislate for a new Co-operative Act that would include provision for compulsory share subscription.
- 5 Robert Barton, a County Wicklow landowner, Council Member of the IAOS Treaty signatory and Minister for Agriculture in the second Dáil was the first Chairman of the ACC.

“.... I had to say I should resign the Presidency if compulsory Co-operation is advocated by the I.A.O.S.”

“I wrote a long letter to Kennedy telling him what I thought of his action in trying to bulldoze the Committee into coming out (as a body) on such a highly controversial political issue.”

The compulsory issuance of shares would provide the newly incorporated Agricultural Credit Corporation with the security required to provide credit for the poorer co-operative societies, which had acquisitions of former proprietary creameries or milk supplies lined up.

The third re-structuring priority of a modernised Co-operative Act, advocated by Kennedy and supported by Hogan, was alas never implemented. Patrick Hogan died in a car accident in July 1936. The proposed complete overhaul of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act is still an aspiration one hundred and twenty six years after its first adoption into legislation.

KENNEDY - THE TECHNOCRAT

During his tenure with the IAOS, Kennedy applied his scientific mind to the technical and scientific problems of Irish agriculture. Kennedy perceived the co-operative strength depended on the dairy industry and that Ireland's real economic potential lay in her grassland. Thus, Kennedy saw the development of the dairy sector as the principle means of bolstering the whole co-operative movement. He identified the production of high-quality grass both in situ and in conserved form as silage as one of the major challenges. He constantly advocated proper liming and fertilisation of grassland and for many years his was a lone voice in this. He identified acid silage as offering the best method of conserving grass for winter feed. He had a close friendship with Professor Arrturi Virtanen of Helsinki University. Virtanen who had won the Nobel prize as a scientist, had developed an acid for silage and it was known by his initials A I V silage. Kennedy enthusiastically promoted it in Ireland.

His abiding interest because of his mathematical and scientific background was in the technical aspects of agriculture. In his period in the IAOS, he saw the co-operative societies as a means for propagating information about improved farming techniques. He encouraged some co-operatives to purchase farms and introduce the most up-to-date methods of conserving grass for cattle feeding. He encouraged pig production and again urged co-operatives to participate. Kennedy, in a submission to the Commission on Agriculture in 1939 stated;

“The extraordinary growth in production in two countries (New Zealand & Denmark) supplying the same markets, and operating under such different conditions of climate and technique as contrasted with the relative stagnation in this country, provide prima facie evidence that our agriculture has failed to develop a technique of production and organisation of productive methods suitable and adequate for the realisation of the possibilities of our soil and climate.”

AGRICULTURAL IRELAND

In 1941, Kennedy became editor of Agriculture Ireland, a monthly journal founded in 1941 and published by the IAOS. He remained editor until his retirement in 1963. Agricultural Ireland succeeded the Irish Homestead, which had ceased publication in 1923. From the outset the tone of the journal was technical with editorials and articles firmly focussed within the farm gate on;

"..utilising to the limit the instruments forged by scientists and the engineer..."

;"..... the conservation of grass for use in winter in the feeding of farm animals..... the fundamental problem of our agriculture, and until it is solved there can be no real progress in our farming conditions."(abstracts from Agricultural Ireland Editorials 1941).

Most of his editorials were 'technical', focussing on optimising the science of agriculture within the farm gate with a particular emphasis on the science behind the production and utilisation of grass. With the exception of periodic comments in editorials exhorting co-operatives to acquire demonstration farms and become involved in pioneering this new agricultural science, Kennedy, rarely proselytises on the ideology of co-operation, the need for greater co-operative leadership or on the benefits that would accrue to farmers though a greater commitment to co-operative forms of business organisation.

For years, some of the most distinguished agricultural scientist contributed to the journal. These included Professor EJ Sheehy and JB Ruane and Dr Tom Walsh. Agricultural Ireland found its way into many farm homes. Kennedy wrote that the AIV system of fodder conservation provides a solution of the winter-feeding problem. The decay of the dairy industry can be arrested only by drastic changes in the method of milk production. The co-operative societies have a great opportunity and a great responsibility. It is within their power to provide the organisation necessary to introduce the solution to winter feeding difficulties.

Dr John Hammond of Cambridge University had pioneered AI in 1942. He happened to be a close friend of Henry Kennedy and in 1943, Kennedy advised Ballyclough Co-operative to look to Hammond to establishing the AI service. The Ballyclough society have duly begun to operate an AI station from 1946. In the first year of its operation, it had inseminated 232 cows and four years later it serviced 5,207 cows.

Pasture establishment, grass seed quality, liming and enhanced used of fertilisers were all recurring editorial themes with much attention being paid to the writings of G.A Holmes, a New Zealand scientist and Agricultural Attaché to the New Zealand Embassy in the UK. Holmes in 1949 had produced a major report for the Department of Agriculture outlining the very poor state of fertility of Irish Grasslands. Kennedy wrote a detailed editorial on the 'Holmes Report' in the May 1949 edition of Agricultural Ireland including in it the now often repeated quotation;

“In some of the same counties and in all of the others which I visited, I saw hundreds of fields which are growing just as little as it is physically possible for the land to grow under an Irish sky”

Following the departure of his brother in law from office in 1932, Kennedy maintained relationships with the Department of Agriculture and the new Minister (James Ryan, FF Minister for Agriculture 1932 to 1947). Kennedy clearly had less influence in shaping government policy, which he regarded as paramount. With Anderson's death in 1942, now Kennedy exerted almost total influence, and economic and technical considerations superseded social concerns. By the late thirties, there had been a halving of the number of creameries to about 200 and some strong creameries and strong managers were emerging. Thanks to Kennedy's special attention, the most notable feature in co-operative growth in the thirties and mid-forties was the burgeoning turnover of the larger creameries – Mitchelstown, Ballyclough, Dungarvan, Killeshandra and Drinagh.

COMMISSIONS

Kennedy was a member of many commissions of enquiry particularly in relation to agriculture and transport. When these commissions published their report, Henry Kennedy often filed a minority report! Kennedy was a member of the Commission on Vocational Organisation, which was appointed by the government in January, 1939 and produced its report in 1943 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Browne of Galway. This report ended up on the shelf! Politicians saw its recommendations as a threat to their powers and refused to give it a hearing. In 1943, the Committee of Inquiry on Post Emergency Agricultural Policy got a somewhat better reception and many of its findings were undoubtedly repeated in the First Programme for Economic Expansion (1958-1963). Kennedy submitted a minority report.

INVOLVEMENT IN HIS LOCAL AREA

T Lee notes in his web article 'From Toor to Loran' that when Patrick Hogan was the Minister for Agriculture in 1923, the Irish Government under the land act of 1923 set about distributing land to farmers from the division of large estates that the Government started acquiring after the end of the civil war. It is said, Henry Kennedy, along with his brother John, was involved in the relocation by the Land Commission, of seven families, including John's family, in moving from the mountains of Keeper Hill, Toor, Newport to part of the then 2,000-acre Roe Estate in the lowlands of Loran, Couraguneen, Roscrea, a distance of about 40 miles. While the re-location initially generated some local resentment and accusations of 'land grabbing' it was ultimately highly successful with the re-located families, including some of the Kennedy clan intermarrying with local families in the area. About 160 local farmers, with the assistance of Henry Kennedy, subsequently established Loran Co-operative Creamery in 1928, which was a focal point of the community until its closure. It was demolished in 1997 as there was no need for small creameries anymore with farmers having milk collected at the farm. The store is still opened today for farm supplies and is owned by Centenary Thurles Co-operative Creamery Society Ltd.

KENNEDY & PLUNKETT

The co-operative career of Dr Henry Kennedy overlapped with that of Sir Horace

Plunkett. When Henry Kennedy was appointed Secretary of the IAOS in 1926 Plunkett was 72 years of age and Kennedy was 38. Both may have known each other earlier in that a number of Plunkett's fellow co-operative leaders on the IAOS Council were also serving members of the White Cross. Both men continued to play a public role well into their seventies.

In the period 1926 to 1932 Plunkett's Diaries contain a small number of cryptic but telling comments regarding his evolving views on Henry Kennedy.

On 18 October 1926 Plunkett noted positively in his diary;

"To town to meet Dr. Kennedy the new Sec'y of the I.A.O.S. at the Foundation. Good talk with him there,I was delighted with Dr. Kennedy's attitude to the movement and to the staff of the Plunkett House."

Three days later, on Thursday, 21st October 1926, he records the first inkling that he and Kennedy may have slightly different perspectives in regard to the future strategy for the co-operative movement.

"Had Dr. Kennedy to lunch with me at the St. James Club. A rough diamond but a man of immense energy & I should say mental capacity. He is rather too exclusively for Better Business to please me. But if he gets that he will have given the supporters of the threefold policy⁶ a foundation on which to build."

By May of 1928, with Kennedy not quite two years into the job of IAOS Secretary, Plunkett's earlier misgivings about Kennedy's alleged focussing exclusively on the material betterment of the Movement was being articulated in his diary;

Monday, 28th May 1928;

"Kennedy the new forceful Secretary of the I.A.O.S. has materialised the movement still further instead of spiritualising it. I shall have a hard job to get him to undo the mischief."

By October of that year, Plunkett was commenting adversely on an IAOS proposal to make 'sharing up' by milk suppliers compulsory as one part of the restructuring and re-organisation process now in train involving the IAOS and the Cumann Na nGael government in the guise of the Dairy Disposal Company.

Trevor West in his book Plunkett: Co-operation and Politics, quotes from a booklet written by Plunkett in 1925

"A material bias was given to the movement, the old idealism and enthusiasm melted away; "the co-operative spirit, which insures the essential loyalty of members to their societies and which the deeper thinkers among us know was, even

from an economic point of view, of more vital importance in the practical work our organisers had to concentrate upon, was very insufficiently cultivated. That was the weak spot of the movement: by the restoration of the co-operative spirit can it alone be saved for the great work which lies before it."

This commentary was written by Plunkett before the appointment of Kennedy in 1926. West observed that it perhaps indicated that the seeds of his emerging disappointment with Kennedy were more a reflection of a more general and long-standing disappointment on Plunkett's part at what he perceived as a failure of the co-operative spirit to take sufficient root during his own tenure leading the movement.

A more general observation is to note that from the mid-twenties up until the fifties, there was a definite trend, both in the IAOS and in many co-operatives, of ceding much authority and leadership to the Manager. This was a trend that resulted from a certain deference on the part of Committee's to their more formally educated manager. The absence of formal leadership training for committee members, the increasing complexities of business and a not infrequent requirement that a committee member provide personal guarantees for society loans, reinforced an economic and technical mindset led by managers and not adequately counterbalanced by committees of management with a more ideological or social focus.

COMMERCIAL V IDEOLOGICAL FOCUS

The foregoing account of the seeming opposing priorities of Plunkett and Kennedy in regard to how co-operative business should develop and grow, is a classic and ongoing argument in the co-operative movement worldwide. Getting the balance right between how much of a co-operatives scarce resources should be committed to educating and training members in co-operative behaviours and values on the one hand and trying to ensure that the co-operative as a business stays strong and competitive on the other is a challenge faced by all co-operatives.

In regard to Plunkett's concerns that Kennedy's priorities for the Movement were too material and that by implication he was neglecting the proselytising and educational functions that Plunkett saw as central to fostering a sustainable co-operative spirit Bolger's view was that;

"Much of the failure may be attributed to Kennedy's diffidence and preoccupation with the technical improvement of the dairy sector. It was not that he was lacking in idealism- all the evidence and personal intimates is to the contrary. Yet, he rarely gave expression to the higher ideals either in private or public."

BUTTER MARKETING

Not all of Henry Kennedy's initiatives met with success. Not for the first time the IAOS in 1928 attempted to co-ordinate the marketing of butter through the establishment of Irish Associated Creameries (IAC). The IAC commenced in 1928 and 'disloyalty' coupled by a disastrous fall in export butter prices forced the organisation into liquidation at the end of 1930. Earlier efforts by RA Anderson, the founding Secretary of the IAOS to organise the

'Co-operative Agency Society' as a centralised marketing agency for co-operative butter also ended in failure. Anderson in his own autobiography 'With Horace Plunkett in Ireland' observes;

"The chief lesson which ought to have been learned by the failure of the Agency Society was that it is perfectly futile to attempt to centralise the sale of any produce so variable in quality as butter without first standardising it and providing a machinery that will maintain that standard."

And Anderson goes on, in a similar vein metaphorically ringing his hands at the difficulties in persuading Irish farmers to become imbued with the co-operative spirit!

"the blood of the huckster seems to be so much in us that we hate to surrender the sale of what we produce, even to a man whom we know is a better salesman than we ourselves."

CONCLUSION

Kennedy's strategy was to focus on the stronger dairy co-operatives in the hope that they in time would be strong enough to amalgamate and rationalise the smaller and weaker societies. His critics point to his failure to promote the co-operative ideal and to engage in co-operative education and training. Towards the end of a long and productive career the growing pattern of federal activity and the establishment through amalgamations of larger dairy co-operative business and the emergence of livestock marts will cause some to argue that his strategy was correct for its time. Others will continue to argue what might have been. He was a man of outstanding ability and vision who committed his life to the betterment of farming and rural society. While he may have represented a change from the ideological tradition which characterised Plunkett and many of the first-generation leaders of the co-operative movement, Kennedy was not any less an Irish patriot in the service of economic nationalism. His 'world view' was harder headed and more grounded in the practical.

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