

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Further progress for I&P Bill

### ...but Tory threat emerges

The Industrial and Provident Societies Bill, the Private Members Bill sponsored by Co-op Party Chairman Gareth Thomas MP, was approved by a Standing Committee of MPs on Wednesday, enhancing the prospect of co-operative legislation reaching the statute book.

The continued progress of the Bill, which passed its Second Reading unopposed last month, is being hailed as a major success for the Co-operative Party's campaign to promote co-operative and mutual businesses.

National Secretary Peter Hunt said: "I am pleased that the Bill has so far received the support of MPs from all sides of the House. However, there is still a great deal of work to do to before it reaches the statute book. We are grateful for the assistance we have continued to receive from co-operators around the country. We are now calling for one more push to get MPs to support the Bill when it returns to the Chamber on 19<sup>th</sup> April".

However, the threat of sabotage by rogue Tories cannot be discounted. In Committee, Conservative members expressed a number of reservations concerning some of the proposals in the Bill – particularly regarding the use of Statutory Instrument to update the legislation governing Industrial and Provident Societies.

In Committee, Co-op Party Parliamentary Group Vice Chair Linda Gilroy exposed the double standards of the Conservative front bench, outlining the huge number of Statutory Instruments that had been implemented by Tory Treasury spokesman Christopher Chope when he was a Minister.

Gareth Thomas commented: "I am encouraged by progress so far. The next few weeks will be vital in seeking to ensure that the Bill is acceptable to all sides of the House. At least 60 supportive Members of Parliament need to be present on 19<sup>th</sup> April to ensure that it can progress to the Lords".

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