

Co-operatives to be revived

A MAJOR campaign is to be launched by the Government to give a new lease of life to Bahrain's co-operative societies, which have been hard hit by heavy losses.

The plan includes the amalgamation of different societies in each region and helping them run their businesses profitably.

A meeting of the country's 13 co-operative societies' board members was held at the Manama Social Centre yesterday, to discuss with the Government the problems they faced.

Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala, who chaired the meeting, said urgent measures have to be taken to save the country's co-operative movement.

"We presented a report to the Cabinet in September last year on the co-operative sector," he

By SOMAN BABY

said.

"The Government has been supporting the co-operative movement by helping the societies to increase their resources.

"A total of BD1.15 million was spent by the Government towards the construction of buildings for six consumer co-operative societies."

Mr Al Sho'ala said the Government had also recommended that the Bahrain National Oil Company (Banoco) give preference to co-operative societies in the management of new petrol stations.

He said the co-operative movement, established in Bahrain almost 25 years ago, should be re-structured to meet the present-day needs and chal-



■MEETING ... Mr Al Sho'ala chairs the meeting of co-operative societies, also attended by Mr Shehabi, left and director of social development at the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry Faiza Zayani.

lenges.

Assistant Under-Secretary for Social Affairs Sadiq Shehabi said the majority of the consumer co-operative societies had lost almost half of their capital.

"According to the co-operative law, a society, which loses half of its capital should be liquidated," he said.

"However, the Government

is trying to give them a new lease of life through structural re-organisation.

"Our idea is to help different societies in each region to amalgamate and form joint societies. The societies can then be divided according to municipality regions.

"Currently, there are different societies in areas like Muharraq and Budaiya.

Mr Shehabi said the meeting had an indepth discussion on all aspects of the problem and the minister gave detailed replies to the queries from the leaders of Bahrain's co-operative movement.

"All suggestions will now be studied in detail before presenting a final report to the Cabinet," he said.