

MINUTE of MEETING of the JOINT LIAISON
COMMITTEE held at the Offices of the
Potato Marketing Board at 8, Manor
Place, Edinburgh, at 10.30 a.m. on
Thursday, 2nd September, 1971.

PRESENT: N.A.S.P.M. Messrs. E. S. Sherriff, R. J. Beeson, D. H. Smith, M. S.
Strickland and R. S. F. Payn.
S.P.T.A. Messrs. A. D. Williamson, J. Fordyce, G. Luke, I. Barr and
T. McClung.
Mr. R. D. Hunter, the Secretary of S.P.T.A. was in attendance.

The Chairman was Mr. A. D. Williamson.

The meeting referred to the Report on the meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee held in London on 7th December, 1970. Arising out of that Report Mr. Sherriff stated that his Association had not yet been able to make any further progress towards the abolition of H Grade in England owing to the illness of Mr. Anderson of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. He added that a meeting had been arranged with Mr. Anderson's successor Mr. Rider.

COMMON MARKET Mr. Fordyce reported that the future of the United Kingdom Potato Trade had been discussed at a meeting of the Potato Trades Consortium held in London on Wednesday, 25th August, 1971. At that meeting it had been arranged that the Association members of the Consortium would let the Secretary of the Consortium have details of any matters concerning the Common Market which the respective Associations wished raised with the Ministry of Agriculture at a meeting to be held during October. Mr. Smith stated that he understood that the existing members of the Common Market were in the course of compiling a list of Potato varieties for growing in the Common Market. He considered that the United Kingdom should ensure that all the existing commercial varieties in the United Kingdom should be included in the list. He was particularly concerned regarding our own non immune varieties (e.g. King Edward). It was agreed to raise this matter at the afternoon meeting with the Department of Agriculture.

CONDITIONS OF SALE

(a) Riddle Sizes

Mr. Strickland referred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries interpretation of "dressing to size by riddle" which is as follows:-

"When our Inspectors are checking declarations of size and dressing made under the Seed Potato Regulations any tubers which both (a) with manipulation but without pressure being applied pass through the gauge of the upper riddle size quoted; and
(b) /

(b) in any position can be retained on the gauge of the size of the lower riddle size quoted, are accepted as being correctly described in respect of size and dressing".

The meeting accepted that the Ministry's definition was less ambiguous and preferable to the definitions contained in the Conditions of Sale adopted by the N.A.S.P.M. and S.P.T.A. It was arranged that Mr. Hunter would draft a suggested clause for inclusion in revised Conditions of Sale. In the meantime the N.A.S.P.M. representatives agreed to recommend to their Council that their members should be advised to delete forthwith from their Conditions of Sale the words making reference to "the riddle being applied in the customary manner".

(b) Arbitration Procedure

It was agreed that the N.A.S.P.M. would not raise any objections to S.P.T.A.'s Conditions of Sale being altered to specify Arbitration Procedure for arbitrations involving N.A.S.P.M. and S.P.T.A. members. The procedure would legislate for each party to the dispute nominating an Arbiter within a specified period. Failing such nomination the parent Association of the defaulting party would be empowered to nominate the Arbiter on the application of the other party to the dispute. The two Arbiters would appoint an Oversman or umpire before entering upon the Reference. It was agreed that Mr. Hunter would send the draft of a proposed clause to the N.A.S.P.M. for their consideration.

(c) Interest

Mr. Hunter stated that when the S.P.T.A. issued their revised Conditions of Sale they were proposing to alter Clause 2 in respect of "Payment" to provide for interest at the rate of 1p per £ per calendar month instead of 2d as at present.

(d) Rejection and Claims

Mr. Sherriff stated that his Association were under pressure from the N.F.U. of England and Wales to extend the period for lodging complaints in respect of latent diseases from ten days to fourteen days. Mr. Payn stated that the chief argument in favour of the extension of the period was that the Plant Health Authorities were empowered to examine consignments and, if necessary, condemn them up to within fourteen days after delivery. Mr. Sherriff added that the N.A.S.P.M. were to discuss this further at a meeting shortly to be held with the N.F.U. of England and Wales/

Wales and could be considered further at the December meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee. In the meantime, Mr. Williamson undertook that S.P.T.A. would give the matter further consideration.

(e) European Conditions of Sale

Mr. Strickland stated that N.A.S.P.M. were obtaining a copy of the European Conditions of Sale. His Association are of the opinion that consideration must be given to bringing the United Kingdom Conditions of Sale into line with those applied by the present members of the Common Market.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

(a) Mr. Hunter referred to the meeting held annually in June between N.A.S.P.M. and British Railways at which British Railways announced their potato rates for the forthcoming season. Mr. Hunter stated that S.P.T.A. considered that as these rates also affected the Scottish Merchants, S.P.T.A. should be represented at that meeting. The N.A.S.P.M. representatives undertook to recommend to their Council that S.P.T.A. be invited to send a representative to attend the annual meeting with British Railways in future years. It was considered that the presence of a representative of S.P.T.A. would strengthen the bargaining position of the Potato Trade in their negotiations with British Railways.

(b) Chafing Damage

The N.A.S.P.M. representatives stated that they were still concerned regarding the extent of chafing experienced in seed potatoes conveyed by rail transport. It had been observed that potatoes loaded at particular stations (e.g. Forfar) were more prone to chafing than potatoes loaded at other stations. The N.A.S.P.M. had raised this at the June meeting with British Railways who had undertaken to ensure that the staff at all loading stations in Scotland were reminded of the correct method of loading railway vans.

POLYPROPYLENE

Mr. Hunter stated that at the annual meeting between S.P.T.A. and British Railways held in July British Railways had indicated that they had not yet carried out tests to ascertain the suitability of polypropylene for containers for potatoes on rail transport. Until these tests had been carried out they would not be prepared to accept potatoes on the rail other than at "owner's risk".

MECHANICAL DAMAGE

Mr. Smith stated that there was a need for a precise definition of mechanical damage/

damage. He referred to the definition applied in Ireland. After considerable discussion it was clear that no progress had been made towards arriving at an acceptable definition. It was agreed to raise this matter for further discussion with the Department of Agriculture at the afternoon meeting.

SCOTTISH LABELLING SCHEME

Mr. Smith stated that it was the general opinion in England that the Department of Agriculture's official labelling scheme had resulted in an improvement of the image of Scottish seed potatoes.

P.M.B. INSPECTION SERVICE

The N.A.S.P.M. members referred to statistics issued by the Potato Marketing Board of the Inspection of Certified Seed during the 1970/71 season. These statistics were discussed. It was agreed that both S.P.T.A. and N.A.S.P.M. would find out from the P.M.B. the reason for so many inspections being carried out some considerable time after delivery of the seed.

FREIGHT LINERS

Mr. Payn stated that he was of the opinion that Scottish Merchants would experience an increase in requests for consignments to be despatched to England by Freight Liners. He enquired if it was anticipated that there would be difficulty in loading Freight Liners in Scotland. It was agreed that Freight Liners were unsuited for consignments derived from dressing on farms but that they should be suitable for use in respect of consignments derived from central dressing stations provided (a) the doors to the dressing station were of sufficient height to allow the container to be taken into the building, and (b) the difficulties of end loading could be overcome.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee should be held in London on the afternoon of Monday, 6th December, 1971 following a luncheon to be arranged by the N.A.S.P.M.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.