

REPORT on MEETING between SCOTTISH
POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION and NATIONAL
JOINT COUNCIL of BRITISH POTATO and
VEGETABLE MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATIONS held
at Spa Hotel, Ripon, Yorkshire, at
2 p.m. on TUESDAY, 7th MARCH, 1972.

PRESENT:-

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL. Messrs. Fossitt, Scorer, Smith and Crosby.

S.P.T.A. Messrs. A. D. Williamson, J. Fordyce, J. Robertson and R.D. Hunter.

Mr. Fossitt was in the Chair.

As S.P.T.A. had made the request for the meeting it was left to Mr. A.D. Williamson to open the meeting. In his opening remarks, Mr. Williamson expressed the opinion that there were three main subjects which the meeting should consider, namely:-

1. The reduction in the National Potato Acreage.
2. The policy to be adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture in the forthcoming Common Market negotiations so far as effecting potatoes, and
3. Application for membership of the European Union by the Potato Trades Consortium.

Mr. Fossitt suggested that there was one other topic which should also be discussed namely,

4. The improvement in quality of presentation of Ware Potatoes.

1. NATIONAL ACREAGE. It was agreed that there must be a reduction in the National Acreage of potatoes for 1973. In general S.P.T.A. favoured an acreage of 490,000 while Joint Council members believed the figure should be 500,000 acres. It was agreed that the Joint Council should make a direct approach to the Ministry suggesting an acreage of 500,000 acres and that S.P.T.A. should make a direct approach to the Department of Agriculture and to the Ministry suggesting 490,000 acres. The foregoing was, however, subject to ratification by the respective Associations.

2. COMMON MARKET POLICY. It was agreed that as the Ministry representatives were new to the job the trade must take the initiative by informing the Ministry of the policy which the Trade wished to be adopted in the Common Market negotiations. It was agreed that within the Common Market there will eventually be "Free Trade" but that the Ministry must safeguard the Trade

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by ensuring that sufficient time is given for the transfer from the present system to "Free Trade".

3. EUROPEAN UNION. Mr. Smith stated that the N.A.S.P.M. and the Joint Council had both decided to support an application for membership of the European Union by the Potato Trades Consortium but only for a trial period of one year. Mr. Williamson informed the meeting that although S.P.T.A. was still requiring further information regarding the European Union he felt sure that S.P.T.A. would be willing to support the application for a one year trial period. With a view to reducing the cost to the individual Associations of membership of the Union consideration was given to the offering of membership of the Potato Trades Consortium to the Produce Packers and the Food Manufacturers. It was agreed that membership could be extended to the Produce Packers but not to the Food Manufacturers. Mr. Hunter suggested that if the Consortium became members of the European Union a tighter Constitution for the Consortium would require to be adopted. It was also agreed that at the next meeting of the Consortium steps should be taken to ensure better communications between Members and the Secretariat of the Consortium. It was also agreed that the provision in the Constitution of the Consortium that its Chairman should be from each Member Association annually, would be implemented in future years.

4. QUALITY OF PRESENTATION. It was agreed that the quality of presentation of ware potatoes must be improved particularly to meet European competition. It was considered that the new Grading Standards proposed by the Potato Marketing Board would be an improvement. The Joint Council stated that they had considered the Potato Marketing Board's proposals in detail and were of the opinion that the Grades should be described as follows:-

- (a) Minimum Grade instead of a Standard Grade.
- (b) Standard Grade instead of Table Grade.

Otherwise the proposals were acceptable to the Joint Council. The Secretary stated that the Ware Division of S.P.T.A. has still to consider the proposals in detail but, in the meantime, they were of the opinion that Ware Potatoes destined/

destined for sale by retail should always be in new bags but that all other sales (e.g. to processors and pre-packers) should be permitted to be in second-hand bags.

GENERAL. It was agreed that the meeting had been very well worth while and that an effort should be made to have a similar meeting at least on two occasions each year.