

MINUTE of MEETING of the COMMITTEE of the WARE POTATO DIVISION of the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held in the North British Hotel, GLASGOW, at 4 p.m. on THURSDAY, 7th FEBRUARY, 1974.

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PRESENT: Messrs. J. Robertson, T. McClung, P. McDougall, M.K. Mathie, J. Aitken, A.T. Henderson, I.P. Fulton, A.D. Williamson and J. Fordyce along with Mr. R. David Hunter, the Secretary.

APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of G. Dryden and D. Lawson.

MINUTES. The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee of the Ware Potato Division held on 11th October, 1973 and 10th January, 1974, copies of which had been previously circulated to the Committee members were taken as read and formally approved and were signed by Mr. James Robertson, the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING -

- (a) Weights and Measures. The Secretary confirmed that he had again written to the Department of Trade and Industry regarding the Association's application for exemption from the Regulation requiring the marking of pre-packed potatoes with the country of origin. As yet, no further word had been received from the Department.
- (b) Sliding Scale Subscriptions. It was agreed to discuss at the Annual General Meeting of the Division to be held later in the day, the advantages of introducing a Sliding Scale of Subscriptions for Association membership.

BRITISH POTATO TRADES CONSORTIUM. Mr. James Robertson reported on the meeting between representatives of the Consortium and representatives of the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales held in London on 21st January. At that meeting the following matters had been raised:-

- (a) The N.F.U. were seeking Conditions of Sale for ware potatoes to include a time limit for rejection. The Trade representatives hoped that this matter could remain in abeyance for some time yet.
- (b) Price Review - The Farmers' Union were seeking a guaranteed price of £22 for potatoes in the forthcoming Price Review. The Consortium representatives were unable to support the Farmers' Union in this matter for the reason that it would be contrary to a previously expressed attitude of the Consortium.

(c)/

- (c) It was agreed to press for an easier transfer of basic acreage to enable "professional" growers to increase their acreages.
- (d) Central Grading Stations - It was agreed to request the Ministry to introduce provisions for financial Grants to be made available to Potato Merchants to assist with the setting up of Central Grading Stations.

Mr. Robertson then reported on a meeting between representatives of the Consortium and the Ministry of Agriculture, also in London on 21st January.

At that meeting the following matters were discussed:-

- (a) The Trade suggested to the Ministry that there should be a reduction in the P.M.B. excess acreage contribution for potatoes.
- (b) The Ministry rejected the proposal that there should be a Grant available to Potato Merchants towards the cost of Central Grading Stations.
- (c) It was reported that a pre-crop soil test for Eelworm was to be introduced in England in 1974.
- (d) The estimated acreage of potatoes to be planted in 1974 was discussed.
- (e) It was announced that there was an increase in the current consumption of potatoes in the United Kingdom as compared with previous years.
- (f) It was reported that imports of potatoes were in line with those of previous years.

EXPORTS. The Secretary read to the meeting a letter which he had written on behalf of the Association to the Ministry of Agriculture expressing the Association's extreme dismay at the Government's recent introduction of a ban on the export of Ware potatoes. The Secretary added that copies of the letter had been sent to the Department of Agriculture, the P.M.B., The British Potato Trades Consortium and Members of Parliament in Scotland for the various farming constituencies. The Ware Division Committee approved of the action taken by the Secretary.

WARE STANDARDS. The meeting considered the Potato Marketing Board's proposal for amendments to the Ware Standards. The Committee were of the opinion that the proposal did not materially improve the Standards. Strong exception, however, /

however, was taken to the implication contained in the Paper issued by the Potato Marketing Board that a deterioration in Standards was due to merchants' failure to examine dressing of potatoes on farms. The Secretary was instructed to write to the Potato Marketing Board to point out that it was for the Potato Marketing Board to ensure that the Dressing Standards were being adhered to and that they should not endeavour to pass this burden over to Potato Merchants. In his letter to the Potato Marketing Board, the Secretary was instructed to state that the Association was agreeable to the proposed tolerance in the Ware Standard specification in the belief that the Scheme for the sale of Outgrades will be continued in future years.

METRICATION. The Secretary reported that metrication of weights and riddle sizes of potatoes was to be introduced from 16th May, 1976. It was agreed to seek the advice of the members of the Association at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting as to whether 2½ kilos and 5 kilos should be the recommended weights for pre-packs of potatoes.

It was recommended that the Potato Trades Consortium should at an early date have a discussion on the metrication of riddle sizes and weights of ware potatoes in order that recommendations may be issued to the Trade in advance of 1976.

STATE PENSION SCHEME. The Secretary confirmed that he was to prepare for issue to members of the Association, a circular letter to advise them of the provisions of the Social Securities Act, 1973.

P.M.B. CONTRIBUTIONS. It was considered that the failure of the Potato Marketing Board to consult their Joint Consultative Committee before announcing the reduction in the excess acreage contribution from £25 to £15 constituted a breach of the terms of the Scheme. The Secretary was instructed to lodge a formal complaint with the Potato Marketing Board.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.

