

REPORT on OPEN MEETING of WARE
DIVISION of SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION held in Mount Vernon
Hotel, Glasgow, at 7.30 p.m. on
WEDNESDAY, 6th NOVEMBER, 1974.

PRESENT: Messrs. J. Robertson, M.K. Mathie, Calderwood, A. Adair,
W.W. Law, G. Henderson, P. Miller, P. McDougall, B. Fulton, A. Henderson,
I.P. Fulton, N. Law, D. MacFarlane, P. Brogan, Atkinson, S. Brown
and 8 others, along with Mr. R. David Hunter, the Secretary.

Mr. J. Robertson, the Convener of the Ware Division was in the Chair.

ROAD HAULAGE WAGES. There was a free discussion regarding the increase in wages of road haulage drivers negotiated by them with the Scottish Group of Assenting Hauliers. It was accepted that lorry drivers employed in the potato trade will be expecting an increase in wages. The amount of that increase, however, would depend entirely upon the particular circumstances of each merchant's business. It was resolved that no recommendation should be issued to Association members.

PROFIT MARGINS. There then followed a full discussion on the effects of increased costs on profit margins of potato merchants. It was agreed that merchants must seek ways of increasing their gross profit. The Secretary was instructed to send out a circular to Ware Division members advising them of the necessity of keeping a close look at their profit margins.

MARKET CIRCULARS. It was agreed that the addition to the Department's weekly Fruit Market Prices to arrive at the Association's quoted "Shopping Price" should forthwith be increased from 15p to 20p to allow for increased haulage charges.

PAPER BAGS. Mr. Calderwood suggested that the Association should request the P.M.B. to quote "Bags inclusive" prices in their Press Report. Mr. Robertson read to the meeting a letter dated 14th October from the Potato Marketing Board stating that although they were not willing to alter their method of quoting in the meantime, they are keeping the matter under constant review. It was agreed that the Association should keep pressure on the Board to have "Bags inclusive" prices quoted.

PRE-PACKS/

PRE-PACKS. A member of the Association stated that he had been informed by a Mr. J. Shand the Paisley representative of the Department of Trade and Industry that in the near future merchants will require to state on Pre-packs the country of origin of imported potatoes. The Secretary explained that in 1972 the Association had made application for an exemption in respect of potatoes from the provisions of The Trade/ Regulations. Although an acknowledgment of the application for exemption had been received, no further contact had been made with the Association. It was agreed that the Secretary would take the matter up again with the Department of Trade and Industry.

METRICATION. Mr. Robertson stated that at a recent meeting of the British Potato Trades Consortium, Produce Packers had presented a Paper with their suggestions for pre-packs under the new legislation. It was the consensus of opinion of the Ware Division Meeting that pre-packs should have a minimum weight of half a kilo and that the weights should be permitted by half kilo intervals up to a maximum of ten kilos. It was further recommended that the trade will require a period of at least one year in which to transfer from Imperial to Metric weights. The Secretary was instructed to send out a circular to Association members informing them of the up to date position with regard to metrication and confirming that as soon as any definite information with regard to pre-packs was available it would be issued to members.

SUPPLY POSITION. Mr. James Robertson reported that he had attended earlier in the week a meeting of the J.C.C. of the P.M.B. At the date of that meeting in England and Wales only 55% of the potato crop had been lifted. Check weighings had indicated that it was a big crop but a fair percentage of tubers would be oversized. Quite a lot of water logging was being experienced. However, greening was the main trouble. There was also the possibility of frosting. Subject to lifting conditions, it appeared possible that supplies were almost in balance with a tendency towards a small surplus.

EXPORTS/

EXPORTS. Mr. Robertson stated that at the British Potato Trades Consortium Meeting it had been stated that at the present time there was no proposal for the Ministry of Agriculture to impose a ban on the export of ware potatoes. He added that indications disclosed that there was not the same potential this year for exports as there was in 1973.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.