

MINUTE of MEETING of the EUROPEAN  
UNION CONFERENCE 1976 SUB-COMMITTEE  
of THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
held at Chesser House, EDINBURGH at  
4.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 8th OCTOBER, 1975.

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PRESENT: Mr. Douglas Smith on behalf of the British Potato Trades Consortium and Mr. R. Beeson, Messrs. J. Fordyce, J.O. Robertson, A.D. Williamson, and D.H. Lindsay. Mr. R. David Hunter, Secretary, S.P.T.A. was in attendance with Mr. D. Blackmore.

APOLOGIES. A full attendance of Sub-Committee Members required no apologies for absence to be recorded.

MINUTES. No formal Minute of earlier meetings had been completed from the notes made. A copy of the only acceptable booking estimate received, together with a draft timetable, draft costing plan and draft administrative timetable had previously been circulated to Mr. Smith and all Sub-Committee Members.

Mr. Hunter explained the efforts made to obtain provisional booking of accommodation. Of eight enquiries sent out and three inspections and consultations made, only the Royal Scot Hotel had sufficient suitable facilities. Unfortunately their earlier provisional booking of a wedding reception, now confirmed, precluded them from booking necessarily un-interrupted conference facilities. A subsequent approach to, inspection of and consultation with the Esso Motor Hotel resulted in the provisional booking estimate now circularised.

After consideration and discussion, the Sub-Committee instructed this provisional booking be confirmed and to be increased to 45 twin and 45 single bedrooms. It was agreed to defer consideration of the Banquet Menu meantime.

From his experience of European Union Conferences in earlier years, Mr. Smith confirmed the Conference should be tri-lingual (English, French and German) and offered several suggestions for consideration. Each delegate (but not their wives) should be presented with a (plastic) Conference Wallet containing, for example, his lapel badge, a ball point pen, hotel brochures and pictures, Tourist Board brochure and perhaps a specially compiled Conference brochure, all tri-lingual. A Conference Programme Booklet should also be devised, containing advertising space the revenue from which would cover printing costs. He suggested procurement of advertising (£50 per full page/



page and pro Eata) should be farmed out, as a matter of some urgency, to a professional advertising agency.

From consideration of the draft timetable Mr. Smith proposed inclusion of a Press luncheon on the Thursday. He agreed it might be possible to extend this to cover local radio and television reports of the Conference. Enquiry should also be made with a view to obtaining preferential rates for exclusive airline bookings, possibly one-half of the discount accruing to the Conference organisers.

It was agreed that airport reception and transport to hotel for delegates should be organised. It was agreed that a Conference Office situated near the hotel foyer should be arranged, staffed from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. After hotel registration on arrival, delegates would also report their arrival at the Conference Office and receive their personalised Conference wallet. If not already provided by the hotel, banking and currency exchange facilities should also be arranged for delegates.

Mr. Smith explained that Committee tea and coffee breaks should preferably be arranged outwith the Conference Room and that no such break would be necessary at the Annual General Meeting. He thought the Committee Meeting of about 40 people should be timed for 3.00 p.m. until 5.00 p.m. on Thursday (some late arrivals) and from 9.15 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. on Friday, while the Annual General Meeting of perhaps 60 or 70 people should be timed from 3.00 p.m. until 5.00 p.m. on Friday. Instant interpretation should be provided for Committees and Annual General Meeting only, and should not be provided at evening functions.

Past practice had been for the Annual General Meeting to be opened very briefly by a local dignitary in regalia who returned with his wife as guests to the evening Banquet. If a guest speaker is invited it should again be very brief (text pre-translated and printed for circulation to attendees) at the evening Banquet only, accompanied by his wife. Mr. Smith explained that speeches were usually kept to the minimum, the President of the Union usually thanking the guest speaker and then the host Association. For this reason he did not think it would be necessary to arrange for a Toastmaster from outwith the hotel.

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The Sub-Committee next considered the questions of a guest speaker and other official guests. It was resolved to invite Mr. George Thompson as guest speaker, whom failing, Lord Home, whom failing, the Earl of Mansfield. It was further resolved to restrict further official guests to four, one each (accompanied by his lady) from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and The Ministry of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, together with the Chairman of the Potato Marketing Board.

Turning to discussion of the evening functions it was decided to time the Thursday Reception/Cocktail Party from 6.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m. and the Friday event commencing with cocktails at 7.00 p.m. followed by the Banquet commencing at 8.00 p.m. It was agreed that the Banquet should be seated, with waiter service (and not buffet style). Mr. Smith reminded the Sub-Committee that each table should be set with a vase of flowers, that wine should be served with Dinner, coffee and liquers to follow Dinner. Dress will be informal (gentlemen in lounge suits) with a seating plan for the top table (guests and officials) only. Souvenirs (procured in a "sale or return" basis) were normally provided for both delegates and their wives at, or during, the Banquet. It was also agreed that dancing would commence coinciding with the end of the Banquet at about 9.30 p.m. and a cabaret would be arranged during a break in dancing some time between approximately 10.30 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. Dancing would end at 1.00 a.m., late licensing arrangements being made.

Mr. Smith suggested that the British Potato Trades Consortium would meet the cost of one of the cocktail functions, Mr. Hunter adding that it was hoped that the Scottish Tourist Board would sponsor the other. It was agreed that an early meeting should be arranged with the Tourist Board to discuss sponsorship, brochures, excursions (with interpreters) etc. and Mr. Robertson undertook to make the initial overtures to the Board on behalf of the S.P.T.A.

In discussion of the proposed excursion arrangements, Mr. Smith proposed that the ladies excursion of Friday should take place in the morning, not the afternoon. In his view one coach with one interpreter would be sufficient. The proposed arrangements for the Saturday excursion from/



from 9.30 a.m. until approximately 4.30 p.m. were discussed. Two coaches would be required, one with French, the other with German interpretation facility.

The Sub-Committee, deferring consideration of the draft costing plan meantime (pending availability of figures for many of the headings) next considered the draft administrative timetable. In reply to Mr. Hunter, Mr. Smith felt it would be unnecessary to have separate Conference notepaper printed. It was agreed that S.P.T.A. should make its own arrangements for interpretation of documents and that initial contact with constituent Associations of the Consortium and the European Union be effected through Mr. Rackley in the first instance. The urgent first essential was to provide widest possible circularisation of the dates of and the venue for the Conference and it was agreed this could incorporate a request for an indication of the likely demand for bookings. Mr. Smith stated he would probably be able to obtain some information in this latter respect after the appointment of the Union's Directeur at the end of November. Meantime S.P.T.A. would proceed through the listed arrangements and build up estimated costings for submission to the next meeting to be arranged between the Sub-Committee and Mr. Smith in Edinburgh about mid-January, 1976.