

REPORT on MEETING between JOINT LIAISON
COMMITTEE and DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
held at Chesser House, EDINBURGH, at
2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 20th OCTOBER,
1976.

PRESENT:- Department - Messrs. Todd (Chairman), and Dr. Hardie.
S.P.T.A. - Messrs. Barr, Robertson, J. Henderson, A.J. Allan,
Lindsay, and T. McClung.
N.A.S.P.M. - Messrs. Fell, Sherriff, Aves, Smith and R. Beeson.

Mr. R. David Hunter, the Secretary S.P.T.A., and Mr. Blackmore were
in attendance.

- (1) Lower Grade. Mr. Sherriff asked the Department if they considered
that there will be sufficient seed produced in Scotland in two or
three years' time when the ban on the sale of uncertified seed is
introduced. He also referred to the increase in virus diseases in
Scottish seed as a result of the increased population of aphids in
Scotland. He suggested that the Scottish Certification Scheme should
include another Grade of seed to catch stocks which do not quite achieve
the existing Grades.

Mr. Todd, for the Department, informed the meeting that negotiations
were gradually progressing with a view to the introduction of a Common
Market Potato Regulation. The Department were preparing new U.K. Seed
Regulations for introduction in 1977. These Regulations would include
provision for the new arrangements to be introduced gradually over a period
of time. It was anticipated by the Department that the 1977 crop could be
sold uncertified but that it was likely that the ban on the sale of
uncertified seed would apply to the 1978 crop. As much warning as possible
would be given to the Trade of the introduction of the ban on the sale of
uncertified seed. Mr. Todd added that the availability of certified seed
stocks in Scotland was unclear. Husbandry had improved in recent years.
He felt that a lot of the present virus problems would be sorted out when
the weather pattern reverted to normal. Mr. Todd expressed concern that
there was not more certified seed production in England.

Mr./

Mr. Todd stated that the Department were endeavouring to safeguard the special interests of the High Grade Seed Producing Region. It was a Common Market Regulation that the import barrier cannot keep out seed of a higher quality than that being allowed to be planted in the region. In other words, the High Grade Seed Region would have to accept seed imports of a standard of the existing A.A.1 Grade. If a lower grade were to be introduced, then the barrier would require to be lowered further.

Dr. Hardie expressed disappointment at the limited amount of roguing being carried out by Scottish seed potato growers. He reckoned that the quality of Scottish seed could be improved appreciably by more roguing.

Mr. Todd expressed concern that the introduction of a "catch" grade would encourage a lowering of the standards of husbandry in Scotland.

Mr. Barr suggested that F.S.1 is in fact no better than F.S.2, 3 or 4. Dr. Hardie explained that the numbering of foundation stocks was designed to control tuber disease rather than virus health. Mr. Beeson expressed the opinion that for Scotch Seed to compete against European imported seed in England, it must be seen to be a superior product. Dr. Hardie stated that already U.K. seed had shown up very badly indeed in test plots grown at Brussels this year. He added that in negotiations with the Common Market, the Department had already announced the grades included in the Scottish Certification Scheme. He considered that it would be tactically very bad to go back to the Common Market to add a further lower grade. Dr. Hardie stated that the aphid count in Scotland had dropped dramatically since the beginning of July, 1976 and was now down to almost nil. He considered that Scottish growers must persevere with the existing grades for a further period in the hope that the weather pattern would revert to normal and virus health would again be adequately controlled. He stated that in a case of an emergency a catch grade could be considered as a temporary expedient. Mr. Todd rejected Mr. Barr's suggestion that Report crops should be brought within the labelling scheme. Dr. Hardie expressed the/

the opinion that the overwintering of aphids in stores and chitting houses in Scotland was not a serious source of infection.

Mr. Sherriff suggested that "clean" areas should be created in Scotland in which only certified seed may be used for growing potatoes. Dr. Hardie considered this to be a good idea but suggested that it would be impossible to "Police".

- (2) Retail Trade. Mr. Sherriff enquired how it will be possible to increase the availability of certified seed of the variety Sutton Foremost. Dr. Hardie suggested that this is a matter which should be taken up with the V.T.S.C. growers.
- (3) 1977 Scottish Inspectorate Visit. It was agreed that the Department's Inspectors would again visit England during 1977 during the growing season.
- (4) A.D.A.S. Mr. Fell referred to the tests now being carried out by A.D.A.S., to check the health of tubers. Dr. Hardie stated that this service was intended only for "once grown". He added that agreement had been obtained from A.D.A.S., that it would not be applied to Scottish seed. Mr. Todd explained that the test was extremely imprecise. For it to be effective, there required to be a considerable amount of disease in the stock. The use of the test for higher grades of seed was impracticable.
- (5) Register. It was anticipated that the Register would be issued towards the end of October, 1976.
- (6) Complaints. Mr. Sherriff referred to a complaint which he had pursued regarding the very poor quality of a particular consignment of Scottish seed. Mr. Todd for the Department confirmed that the Department had followed up the complaint and every indication pointed to there having been an admixture. It appeared that the problem arose after the seed had left the farm on which it had been produced.
- (7) C.I.P.C. Mr. Todd stated that the investigations of the Department into the C.I.P.C. contamination of seed in 1975 had proved to be inconclusive. Mr. Sherriff stated that the publicity which the C.I.P.C. contamination/

contamination had received had minimised the risk of a repetition in the future. He added, however, that there was trouble being experienced this year with Fusarex being improperly applied to stocks of seed potatoes.

- (8) Croft. Dr. Hardie informed the meeting that the Department were awaiting instructions from N.S.D.O. with regard to the distribution of the stocks of croft presently in the hands of the Department. Mr. Barr expressed the great concern in the Trade regarding the manner in which N.S.D.O. was distributing stocks of new state bred varieties. He added that the Trade were seeking a meeting with Mr. Greenwood of N.S.D.O.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.