

REPORT on MEETING of JOINT LIAISON
COMMITTEE held within the Offices of
the Potato Marketing Board at 8 Manor
Place, EDINBURGH, at 10.30 a.m. on
WEDNESDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1976.

PRESENT:- N.A.S.P.M. - Messrs. Fell, Sherriff, Aves, Smith and R. Beeson.
S.P.T.A. - Messrs. Barr, Robertson, J. Henderson, A.J. Allan,
Lindsay and T. McClung.

Mr. Hunter, the Secretary of S.P.T.A., accompanied by Mr. Blackmore,
were in attendance.

Mr. Ian Barr was in the Chair.

- (1) Plant Royalty Bureau. Mr. Aves reported on the meeting with Plant Royalty Bureau on 12th October, 1976. Mr. Hunter was instructed to ascertain whether or not a Mr. Donald Birks had been appointed by the Government to report on the activities of the Plant Royalty Bureau and, in particular, whether his terms of reference included potatoes. Mr. Hunter stated that he thought it was likely that Mr. Birks was the independent Chairman who was to be appointed in connection with the talks between the Farmers' Union and Plant Royalty Bureau regarding cereals.

There was full discussion regarding the manner in which State bred varieties, (e.g. Maris Bard) were being exploited by N.S.D.O. both at home and abroad. Mr. Hunter was instructed to make arrangements for an early meeting between representatives of the Trade (S.P.T.A., N.A.S.P.M., and Northern Ireland Seed Marketing Board) and Mr. Greenwood of N.S.D.O. in order to ascertain the policy being adopted by N.S.D.O. It was hoped that such a meeting could be arranged during November in order that a report could be available for the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee. It was considered that it would be sufficient for each organisation to be represented by two, possibly three, representatives at the meeting.

- (2) Lower Grade. Mr. Barr opened the discussion by presenting his argument for the introduction of a Lower Grade of Scottish Seed Potatoes which would be available for planting outwith Scotland. The representatives of the N.A.S.P.M. were in general agreement with the principals of the argument.

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Mr. Sherriff expressed concern that during the current loading season Scottish uncertified seed which was not derived from a crop entered for certification may be delivered to England. He considered that such uncertified seed created a very bad impression regarding Scottish Seed in general. The introduction of a "catch" grade would tend to introduce some control over this type of trade. Mr. Barr stated that the cost and risk of production of Scottish Seed is so great that steps must be taken to ensure that there is a market for seed which has just failed to achieve the existing certification standards. The quality of that seed is very often superior to that of the English C.C. grade and the Dutch "B" grade. The situation, of course, will become all the more serious when the E.E.C. Regulation banning the marketing of uncertified seed comes into operation. It was agreed to take this matter up with the Department of Agriculture at the afternoon meeting.

- (3) Scottish Inspectorate Visit 1976. It was agreed to raise this matter at the afternoon meeting with the Department of Agriculture.
- (4) Date of Next Meeting. It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee in the Farmers' Club, London, on Monday, 6th December. Delegates would meet for lunch in the Farmers' Club at 12 - 12.30. Mr. Trehair would make the arrangements for the meeting.
- (5) E.E.C. Potato Regulation. Mr. Robertson stated that it was rumoured that a second draft of the Regulation had now been issued but that the Trade in the U.K. had not yet been given a sight of it. Mr. Smith reported that the Potato Trades Consortium were to have a meeting with Mrs. Attridge of the Ministry of Agriculture in the near future when a report on the up to date position with regard to the preparation of a Regulation would be made known. Mr. Smith added that he had already been informed by Mrs. Attridge that the Regulation was unlikely to be in operation before 1st January, 1978. It is possible, however, that as from 1st January, 1978 there may be free trade within the Common Market in both seed and ware potatoes, the only/

only restriction being in respect of health and price. He added that he understood that the Potato Marketing Board had obtained Governmental agreement that Support will be available for the 1977 crop. There is, however, a doubt regarding Support for subsequent crops.

- (6) Burning Down. Mr. Sherriff informed the meeting that the English Trade were of the opinion that the Scottish Certification Scheme should contain provision for compulsory burning down by a date or dates to be determined by the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Barr stated that the Scottish Trade would resist the introduction of compulsory burning down dates. Such a Regulation would make seed more expensive to grow with the result that the price of seed would rise. He also forecast that it would result in a considerable reduction in the quantity of Scotch seed produced. Mr. Aves stated that in Northern Ireland compulsory burning down only applied to the highest grade. Mr. Barr conceded that there may be a case for compulsory burning down for V.T.S.C. stock. Mr. R. Beeson expressed the opinion that compulsory aphidicide spraying could be an alternative. The Scottish representatives stated that although there were some doubts with regard to the effectiveness of spraying, it was now being carried out fairly extensively by most of the specialist growers of seed potatoes in Scotland. Messrs. Fell and Sherriff explained that in 1976 there had been some very bad crops in England planted with Scottish seed. Mr. Barr expressed the opinion that the real cause of the trouble was not a breaking down in the V.T.S.C. stock but rather cross infection from adjoining crops of seed and ware potatoes. Mr. Sherriff informed the meeting that A.D.A.S. had introduced a new scheme for testing the health of seed potatoes. The scheme was intended for English "Once grown". He knew, however, that English farmers were submitting their newly purchased Scotch seed for testing. He wondered what the effect would be if such a test indicated a high incidence of, for example, Leaf Roll or severe virus infection in a consignment of Scotch seed. Mr. Beeson suggested that the quality of Scottish Inspectors had decreased in recent years. The Scottish representat-
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atives did not agree. With a view to minimising the incidence of cross infection from other infected stocks, it was agreed that it was worth considering the introduction of a scheme in selected areas whereby only certified seed may be planted even for a ware crop. It was appreciated, however, that this would prove almost impossible to "police".

- (7) European Union. Mr. Smith, on behalf of the British Potato Trades Consortium, thanked Mr. Hunter and Mr. Blackmore for their work in making the arrangements for the 1976 Annual General Meeting of the European Union.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.