

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of  
the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
held at the Station Hotel, PERTH at  
2p.m. on TUESDAY 18th OCTOBER, 1977.

PRESENT:

Messrs. J. O. Robertson, I. H. Barr, D. H. Lindsay, A. J. Allan, J. P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J. G. H. Fenton, J. Fordyce, J. George, J. Henderson, D. Maxwell, J. R. McArthur and J. Waddell with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore in attendance.  
Mr. J. O. Robertson, the President, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J. Aitken, T. McClung, P. McDougall and A. D. Williamson.

MINUTES:

The Secretary explained that in view of the special nature and restricted Agenda for today's meeting, the Minute of Meeting of Council held at Dunblane on 29th September, 1977 (and the matters arising therefrom) was being held over to be dealt with at the next meeting of Council to be held at Dunblane on 26th October, 1977.

SEED  
POTATO  
PROMOTION:

The Chairman explained that the Paper on the proposed aims of the new Association had now been duly circulated to all Council Members for study and he called for comment. The meeting fully discussed the many aspects of the Paper in depth, the consensus of opinion being that it deserved Association support in general, but that the implications of some sections required some reservations. In particular, it was pointed out that Association support in no way committed individual Association Members to participate voluntarily in the proposals (compulsory participation being impossible in the near term). It was also agreed that the Association should insist that its role and rights of trader representation on outside bodies must be safeguarded from surrender to, or usurpation by, the new organisation.

There was considerable discussion of the rate of contribution and the percentage participation to ensure viability, but Mr. Fenton pointed out that these worries belonged to the new organisation once it was set up. Mr. Barr voiced his wholehearted support for engagement of professional advertising/public relations expertise as a prime aim in the first instance, but reading from his prepared notes pointed out his reservations on other points. It was agreed that, suitably revised by the Secretary, these notes should form the basis of a more detailed reply to the Paper but that meantime the Secretary be authorised to convey the Association's qualified support to the N.F.U.S. Secretariat immediately.

SEED  
POTATO  
WORKING  
PARTY:

Mr. Barr next reported on the meeting of the Seed Potato Working Party held in Edinburgh on 5th October, 1977. In fact a ban on planting of uncertified seed in Scotland had been called for by Mr. Craib speaking for the V.T.S.C. Growers Association. The Association delegates had spoken in strong support and had enjoyed the backing of the P.M.B. delegates and the N.F.U.S., though the latter was necessarily somewhat qualified.

Despite such massive united approval, the Department remained implacably and adamantly opposed to the proposal, citing every conceivable (and even inconceivable) reason for their opposition, ranging from insurmountable administrative problems to lack of political weight, lack of statistical scientific evidence in support, economic considerations, and so on. Nonetheless, with such support, it was hoped the further meetings with the Department in prospect (with the Joint Liaison Committee/

Committee, a further meeting of the Working Party to discuss the new (Scottish) Seed Potato Regulations and the informal meeting with the whole of S.P.T.A. Council on 26th October) it may yet be possible to overcome the Department's resistance.

Mr. Barr continued his report by stating that the Association's "catch" grade proposals did not gain support from the P.M.B. and the N.F.U.S. remained silent. The proposal was rejected and indications were now that the matter is perhaps something of a lost cause.

SEED  
POTATO  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Lindsay explained he had asked for this item to be included in the Agenda to enable him to present the considered views of the Association at the next meeting of this Committee in London on 25th October. He felt encouraged by Council's unanimity on several points and felt that the Scottish seed industry was building up a good stock of telling information.

SEED  
REGULATIONS:

Council next discussed the draft proposed (Scottish) Seed Regulations which are to form the exclusive Agenda for a special additional meeting of the Seed Potato Working Party on 21st October, 1977. From the very careful discussions several points emerged for clarification, principal among which were total sealing of all bags, omission of certain diseases from parts of schedules, liability for daughter crop health and the operative date for discontinuation of 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " riddles sizes (32 x 57 mm.).

SCOTTISH  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Messrs. Robertson and Barr next reported on the Scottish Advisory Committee meeting which they had attended in Edinburgh on 13th October, 1977. The Market report had indicated reduced demand, due to increased garden supplies and farm gate sales, the potential overall indicated surplus being marginal at 200,000 tonnes. The average price had been reported at £30 per tonne, sacks included while, with only 20% in store, the buying programme was slack (only about 250 applications had been received). A Governmental review of the "buying-in" price (to minimise the cost of the guarantee price scheme) was also considered to be likely. Ware imports were also to be allowed from 1st January, 1978 and it had been reported that the proposed E.E.C. Potato Regulations had been rejected and returned to the Commission for reformulation.

ANY OTHER  
COMPETENT  
BUSINESS:

Mr. Barr reported receipt today of the revised N.S.D.O. Exporter Licence. On quick perusal this proposes an initial application fee of £100 and an annual renewal fee of £50, the Royalty rate being 5% of "ex store" sale price. He added he had learned that the N.S.D.O. /Matutano contract now appeared to include exclusively for Croft, Drayton, Javelin and Bard AND all future new N.S.D.O. varieties. After discussion it was resolved to write N.S.D.O. protesting in the very strongest possible terms and to copy the letter to Messrs. Michael Falcon and Barclay Forrest.

The Secretary next reported briefly that the annual Dinner/Dance arrangements were now under way / a substantial increase in the price of tickets seemed unavoidable) and notification of a revised date for the Second leg of the Curling Match had been received and would be circulated to all Association members shortly.

Mr. Blackmore also announced receipt of unsolicited applications for Association Membership from J. Logan Milne (Potatoes) Ltd., Brechin, Dalfarm Produce/

Dalfarm Produce Ltd. (Monifieth) and Morello International Ltd. After a short discussion it was agreed to invite all three firms to make formal application for membership.

He also announced provisional proposals obtained by telephone from Stita Farm Tours in respect of the proposed visit to Portugal. After a short discussion it was agreed that absence of cost estimates was inhibiting but that quotations ex London should be obtained, with a view to obtaining supportive participation from English colleagues.

Thereafter a vote of thanks to the Chair terminated the meeting.

James O. Bell