

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
The SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held at the Hydro Hotel, DUNBLANE at
2.30p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 26th OCTOBER, 1977

PRESENT: Messrs. J. O. Robertson, I. H. Barr, D. H. Lindsay, R. Doig, J. G. H. Fenton, B. Fulton, J. George, W. Gordon, J. R. McArthur, T. McClung, D. Maxwell, J. M. Waddell and A. D. Williamson, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore in attendance.

The President, Mr. J. O. Robertson, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: The Secretary intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J. Aitken, J. Fordyce, J. Henderson, P. McDougall and J. Wardlaw.

MINUTES: The Secretary explained that a photocopier breakdown had prevented pre-circulation of copies of the Agenda for today's meeting together with copies of the Minutes of Meetings of Council held at Dunblane on 29th September, 1977 and at Perth on 18th October, 1977. These papers were accordingly tabled today and each Member next read his copies. The Minutes were then formally approved and were duly signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING: (a) Membership and Subscriptions. The Secretary reported that payments had still not been received from C.W.S. and Ross Seed Potatoes though word had been promised by both Members. Council made no decision in the matter.

(b) Election Results. Following the close of the postal ballot on 21st October, 1977 the Secretary reported that, in addition to Mr. W. Gordon being returned unopposed, Messrs. J. Fordyce, J. George and J. Henderson had all been re-elected and Messrs. G. Brass [J. E. England and Sons (Wellington) Ltd.] and J. Cook [W. Beeson (London and Dunbar) Ltd.] had been elected as new Members of Council.

(c) Association Visit 1978. The Secretary reported that the costed itinerary of a visit to Portugal had unfortunately still not come to hand from Stita Tours. Mr. Blackmore explained his further telephone call and Stita's difficulty regarding homeward flight timetables. Following discussion, the Secretary was instructed to circularise the Itinerary to all Association members immediately it is received.

(d) Draft Seed Regulation. Mr. Barr explained that the Minuted reference to sealing of bags (18th October meeting) arose from a misunderstanding which would be clarified when he reported under Item 5 of today's Agenda.

(e) Metrication. Mr. Robertson reported receipt of a copy of a draft Order on metrication of pre-packs of potatoes. Representations are asked for by 25th November, 1977 and it is hoped the Order will receive Parliamentary approval in time to come into force on 1st January, 1978. From that date all prepacks will be required to be marked in both metric and imperial units of measurement and those made up in the prescribed metric range must be marked with the words "Metric pack". The Order does not set a date for termination of pre-packing in imperial quantities. There will be no requirement to mark net/^{weight} on pre-packs exceeding 20Kg. and not sold by retail or to a retailer.

JOINT
LIAISON
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Barr next reported on the meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee in Edinburgh on 19th October, 1977 when the discussions had ranged over the/

the elimination of the planting of uncertified seed in Scotland (NASPM delegates views coinciding with those of SPTA), burning down, greenhouse growing of VTSC, seed potato legislation, royalties (NASPM supported SPTA protest re any additions to NSDO/Matutano agreement) and Conditions of Sale. In this last matter it had been agreed to maintain close contact and possibly to set up a joint sub-committee when necessary with a view to standardisation of any revisions.

In respect of the Committee's afternoon meeting with the Department Mr. Barr explained this had been taken up entirely with elimination of planting of uncertified seed in Scotland. NASPM delegates were appalled by the official rejection of their proposals (repeating the history of the Seed Potato Working Party meeting and Council's own discussions with Department representatives earlier today).

SEED
POTATO
WORKING
PARTY:

Mr. Barr next reported on the further Working Party Meeting in Edinburgh on 21st October, 1977 arranged with the sale purpose of considering the new draft Seed Potato Regulations. From detailed item-by-item discussion several points were clarified. Doubts about the definition of "damage" (also voiced by NASPM delegates at the Joint Liaison Committee meeting) had been quieted by assurance that no change from existing Regulations had occurred. Labelling / sealing requirements had presented special problems for boxed loads, bulk loads and "chitted-in-tray" consignments which the Department would have to overcome. So far as bags were concerned, machine stitched through the label would be straightforward, but hand stitching or tying methods could require separate sealing.

Use of credit
In exceptional (i.e. export letters of credit) circumstances the Department would entertain applications to despatch FS Stocks under AA labels. The Regulations will also require all sizes over 35mm. to be in 5mm. steps (though without specifically implementing a minimum 20mm. gap between top and bottom sizes) but below 35mm. odd sizes could continue to be used.

Mr. Barr explained he had pressed hard for an extension of the 10 day period for provision of documentation to the consignee but, though this did not seem to win the Department's support they had agreed to reconsider the need to include the growers Certification Scheme number in that documentation. It had also been explained that although tuber rots tolerances had been reduced to meet the E.E.C. Directive requirements, the greater (than U.K.) scab tolerance thereunder had also been adopted. Similarly, the Directive does not specify tolerances for skinspot and scurf, so that U.K. tolerances for these diseases are omitted from the Regulation.

The Department had been sympathetic in discussion of renaming of the Scottish grades and to highlight the difference between "basic" and "certified" categories. There had also been extensive discussion following from use of the phrase "daughter crop" in the Regulation.

SEED
POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

In his report on the meeting of this Committee in London on 25th October, 1977 Mr. Lindsay first explained the Scottish representation had been severely reduced by the absence of Messrs. Galloway and Craib and Dr. Hardie.

From discussion of royalty matters (including NSDO indications of a further increase in rates next year) the Board is to write to the Minister of Agriculture to acquaint him of the situation and to point up the/

up the analogy with cereals royalties.

The meeting had received the Seed Certification statistics, followed by a Report on Scottish Seed supply prospects, in the summary of which it was shown that, over a 30 x 60mm. riddle, 70,000 tonnes more seed is anticipated this season than was available in 1976/77 (or 63,000 tonnes over 32 x 57mm. riddle) for movement to England and Wales. Against total U.K. plantings of 199,000 hectares in 1977, the target for 1978 plantings is to be 177,000 hectares. It was estimated this would reduce U.K. Seed production by about 80,000 tonnes which could be expected to be accompanied by an increased demand for Scotch Seed in 1979/80. Currently, however, it is estimated that English demand is for 220,000 tonnes of Scotch Seed against estimated supplies of 255,000 tonnes.

Mr. Lindsay read details by variety of tonnages estimated available and it was agreed that the Secretary prepare and circulate copies of the Summary statement to all Council Members. In continuation of his report Mr. Lindsay gave first figures for this season's Seed movements to England and Wales and explained that, strongly supported by Mr. Sherriff, Mr. McFarlane's proposal that the P.M.B. write to the Secretary of the Department (Mr. Smith) protesting at Mr. Todd's response to proposals from the trade was adopted. He also reported that the Board had noted the position and implications of extension of the NSDO/Matutano Agreement and finally that the Committee's Visit in 1978 would be to Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, Mr. Lindsay explained he had learned informally that the average U.K. ware price that morning was £34 per tonne, bags-in, on-farm, and for the whole season so far was £39 per tonne (i.e. £7.50 per tonne under the guarantee scheme price). It had been felt privately that imports of Dutch ware from 1st January next will not be allowed (in order to limit the cost of the Guarantee Scheme) and the Board had no evidence of processors having contracted for Dutch supplies for Spring delivery. The Board's Home Counties representative (Mr. Hitchcock) had been unable to understand the totally different attitudes of the Dutch N.A.K. Board and the Scottish Department. In Council's discussion of this latter point, Mr. Lindsay explained that the N.A.K. Board was composed of 15 members from producers, merchants, buyers and 3 independent (scientific) members, while Mr. Gordon compared this with the overwhelming bureaucratic domination of the Department now so tragically evident and which he so very strongly deplored.

ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTS:

Copies of a first provisional draft of the Association's Accounts for the year having been tabled for each Council member, Mr. Blackmore next gave a brief item-by-item explanation. During the following discussion the Chairman explained that a small informal sub-committee had considered the Secretarial arrangements and costs and had agreed that revision was desirable. On a proposal from Mr. Barr and seconded by Mr. McArthur, Council resolved to increase the Secretary's salary for the year to 31st October, 1977 by £200 (to £2,200) and to reserve sums of £150 and £100 to meet the Association's share of Consortium expenses and to meet Council members' outstanding travelling expenses respectively. In further implementation of the sub-committee's recommendations (and to formalise arrangements that had obtained over many months past) the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Lindsay, proposed that Mr. D. Blackmore be appointed Assistant Secretary of the Association (in terms of Rule 8(b) of the Association's Constitution and Rules). Council formally agreed to adopt the proposal and Mr. Blackmore thanked Council for its thus expressed confidence in him.

ANY OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Date of next meeting. Following a short discussion it was agreed to hold the next meeting of Council in Perth at 12.30p.m. on Wednesday, 23rd November, 1977 and the Secretary was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

The meeting then concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.