

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held
at the Station Hotel, PERTH, at 12.30p.m.
on FRIDAY, 12th MAY, 1978.

PRESENT:

Messrs. J. H. Barr, D. H. Lindsay, J. G. H. Fenton, G. Brass, R. Doig, J. Fordyce, B. Fulton, W. Gordon, J. Henderson, D. Maxwell, J. R. McArthur, T. McClung, J. O. Robertson and J. Waddell, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J. H. Barr, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES:

Mr. Blackmore intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J. Cook, J. Wardlaw, A. D. Williamson and R. D. Hunter (Secretary).

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council held at Perth on 11th April, 1978 (copies of which had already been sent to all Members of Council) was taken as read and, being formally approved, was duly signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Membership and Subscriptions. Mr. Blackmore reported having sent individual reminder letters to those members whose subscriptions were unpaid at the date of Council's last meeting. Ten of these subscriptions had now been paid and an eleventh was believed to be in course of post. He also read a letter of resignation received from McGugan Bros. Ltd., of Arbroath and explained this reduced the total membership to 118 of which (despite a further letter to each, which he read out) six members were now almost four months in arrear with payment of their Subscription as follows:- (1) James Black (Potatoes) Ltd., Greenock (2) John Bryden, Esq., Inchture (3) Messrs. John A. Buchan, Perth (4) Buchan Potato Growers Ltd., Fraserburgh (5) Edzell Potato Co. Ltd., Brechin and (6) Thomas Knox, Esq., Brora.

From discussion it appeared likely that Nos. 3 and 5 above would not renew their membership. Council agreed that all six members be suspended from the mailing list until their subscriptions are paid.

Mr. Blackmore next reported receipt of a further formal application for membership in reply to the five invitations authorised on 10th March. This application, from the Firm of T. B. Milne, Dundee was formally approved, increasing total Association Membership to 119.

Mr. Blackmore further reported a P.M.B. advice that Agriseeds Ltd. (a fully owned subsidiary of L. Barbour (Holdings) Ltd., Spitalfields, London and to be trading from 17, Erskine Street, Montrose) have applied for a Seed Merchants licence and Council found no reason to oppose this application. Finally he reported receipt of the latest amendments to the P.M.B. Licensed Merchants List which included the issue of both Ware and Seed Licences to Dalfarm Produce Ltd., Monifieth and D. Corrigall Ltd., Dunning. He explained the first of these had already been accepted into Association membership and Council had agreed to re-consider the latter, once licences had been granted. Council thereupon agreed D. Corrigall Ltd. be invited into Association Membership.

(b) Royalty Rates. The Chairman reported, on correspondence with the National Seed Development Organisation and the Northern Ireland Seed Potato Marketing Board, ^{following} announcements of increases in Royalty Rates for Season 1979. It was felt that this matter should be left in abeyance pending receipt of further awaited replies.

PROPOSED
SCOTTISH
SEED POTATO
PRODUCERS
ASSOCIATION:

Mr. Fenton next reported on the Working Party meeting which he and Mr. Doig had attended in Edinburgh on 25th April, 1978. The Working Party had learned that out of an unspecified number of enquiries sent out, six hundred replies had been received to its recruitment campaign (which did not provide for non-supportive replies), representing 7,000 hectares of the total of 17,000 hectares certified in 1977. These replies included 34 from S.P.T.A. members which represented/

represented approximately 1,500 hectares, although it was admitted that crop identification difficulties had been encountered. Mr. Fenton had indicated that this result was in line with that of the SPTA's own questionnaire which had shown that a majority of SPTA members was not in favour of the proposals.

The Chairman (Mr. B. Forrest) had pointed out that the indicated level of support from SPTA Members did not justify the SPTA having 50% control on the governing body of the proposed Association. Mr. Fenton suggested that the adoption of "Producer", in preference to "Promotion", in the name of the proposed Association had, perhaps, inhibited stronger support.

During further discussions (from which Mr. Sandilands had been called away) the Working Party decided not to abandon the scheme altogether, or to "put it into mothballs" meantime, but to continue its efforts to bring the new Association into being. It was agreed to revert to use of "Promotion" in the name, the working Party to comprise a Chairman, four farmers and three merchants (the latter, though not determined, would probably be by private invitation). Mr. Fenton also reported that in respect of the proposed secondment of Mr. Gordon Lyall to be Chief Executive of the proposed new Association, Mr. Rettie (S.A.O.S.) had thought a feasibility study "grant-in-aid" of, say, £5,000 could be procured.

It had been agreed that the Working Party would proceed promptly to draft a Constitution for the proposed new Association and that the Minutes of the Meeting be completed as quickly as possible to lead to the SPTA's requested meeting with the N.F.U.S.

Mr. Barr next explained that the N.F.U.S. had not responded to our month-old request for a meeting with them. In discussion, Council agreed that although it now seemed unlikely our Association would be further consulted, our request for a meeting should not be pressed. Mr. Fenton felt nevertheless that the "Promotion" aspect must be a good one and Mr. Waddell asked whether our Association should now initiate a "promotion only" effort of its own. Mr. McArthur pointed out that the SPTA clearly needs a strong publicity /press capability and suggested this be put on an employed professional basis. Following general agreement in discussion, Council agreed to appoint a Press sub Committee under the chairmanship of the President as an ex officio member of it. Messrs. J. R. McArthur, J. Waddell, J.G.H. Fenton and D. H. Lindsay were formally proposed and seconded in turn, it being agreed their first meeting be convened as soon as mutually agreed possible.

OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Ministry/P.M.B. marketing activities

Mr. Barr reported that SPTA had sent a telegram to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food urging release of stocks contracted to the P.M.B. In the event, an unpublicised price criterion in the subsequent release scheme, coupled with Ministry responsibility for actual release decisions, led to greater confusion than ever. Subsequent delegation of release decisions to the P.M.B. with a lowering of price criteria levels, though easing supplies had not solved all the problems. Council's discussion indicated that the price level is still too high at a time when much quality deterioration is now apparent.

Council agreed that trade confidence had been seriously eroded by these events. It had been clear that political motives had ruled throughout, there being support for the view that these events should be regarded as an experimental run for the proposed new P.M.B./N.F.U. marketing support/insurance scheme. It was agreed not to write the Ministry further in the matter.

(b) Association Investments

In consideration of a previously circularised Stockbrokers' review and recommendations, Mr. Blackmore explained this was a normal annual event. Essentially, the recommended change based on re-investment of/

of a tax free capital gain to increase annual income. In this instance the changes were comparatively modest and, if made now, would forego a half year's interest due on 15th July. On the other hand to wait until 8th June to assure receipt of that interest could mean that price changes in the meantime would make the recommendation less attractive.

Council agreed the Secretariat should review the matter with the Stockbrokers after 8th June and to proceed with the scheme if then at least as attractive.

(c) Conditions of Sale and Conditions of Purchase

Mr. Blackmore reported that further communication from N.A.S.P.M. was still awaited and Council agreed to defer appointment of its own sub-Committee to review Conditions until the results of the N.A.S.P.M. deliberations are to hand.

(d) Date of next Meeting

It was agreed that provisional arrangements be made for the next meeting of Council to be held at the Station Hotel, Perth at 12.30p.m. on Friday, 28th July, 1978 and Mr. Blackmore was instructed accordingly.

The Meeting then terminated with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.