

MINUTE of MEETING of the PRESS SUB-COMMITTEE  
of the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held  
at 8, Kinnoull Street, Perth at 2p.m. on  
FRIDAY, 16th JUNE, 1978

PRESENT: Messrs. D. H. Lindsay, J.G.H. Fenton, J. R. McArthur and J. Waddell, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

Mr. D. H. Lindsay occupied the Chair.

APOLOGY: The Secretary intimated an apology on behalf of Mr. J. H. Barr.

Welcoming the sub-Committee Members to this first Meeting, Mr. Lindsay felt that today's deliberations should be devoted to defining policy and objectives, followed by possible ways and means of achieving them. In general discussion it was readily agreed that the sub-Committee should strive to build a good public image for the Association and its members, both in Scotland and in the English Markets. A Press capability was thus seen to require a strong educational element as well as an ability to respond quickly to any adverse criticism that may arise.

Mr. Fenton explained his knowledge of the capability enjoyed by one of his machinery suppliers and Mr. Waddell described the promotional initiative which his company had mounted recently, both members tabling printed examples of these efforts. Mr. Fenton believed that Mr. David Watson, of Agripres Publicity Ltd., Essex, might be prepared to act for the S.P.T.A. on a "retainer fee" basis. Further discussion recognised possible problems in respect of marrying up necessary expertise in journalistic and potato industry fields, essential editorial/revisionary facility and the widely different time scale applicable to "educational" and "response" material. It was also suggested that the appointment of an Association Press Officer could be an advantage. In all these respects the sub-Committee felt a pressing need for information and advice from press/publicity sources. It was unanimously agreed that, since Mr. David Watson's function seemed best suited to provide such further information and advice, as well as to act for the Association, arrangements be made for the sub-Committee to meet him for discussions at the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh at 12 noon on Tuesday next, 20th June, 1978.

The sub Committee also agreed unanimously to institute positive action next month, to take advantage of what it considered to be the most advantageous period to launch its initiative. Based on a possible cost in the region of £1000 it was agreed Mr. Watson be asked to provide suggestions for an initial six months programme in time for presentation to an early meeting of Council. It was hoped that the programme could begin with a "pull-out" Supplement in a widely circulating agricultural publication, in which members paid advertisements would be coupled with free publicity and editorial matter.

In considering finance for this programme it was agreed to recommend to Council that a Press and Publicity Fund be set up. The funds should be provided by voluntary contributions of a standard sum (of perhaps £35 - £50 each) from interested members. It was envisaged that, judged on the results of the first six months "trial" programme, the arrangements could be renewed for a further term. Hopefully the results would encourage wider support and participation among all members to keep individual contributions under control.

Further discussions considered possible solutions to recognised problems. Mr Blackmore reported he had deferred investigating possible local press/publicity/promotional sources until after today's meeting. The sub-Committee agreed to avoid un-necessarily alerting these sources by further deferring local enquiries until the outcome of the meeting with Mr. Watson is known. It was reported that Mr. Kemp, a local reporter with wide agricultural knowledge, might shortly become available on a consultative basis and it was agreed to keep this point in mind.

Finally/

Finally The Secretariat was instructed to put arrangements in hand for as early a meeting of Council as can conveniently be called.

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

*John H. Barr*