

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held at the Station Hotel, Perth at 12.30p.m.
on Thursday, 26th OCTOBER, 1978.

PRESENT: Messrs. J. H. Barr, D. H. Lindsay, J.G.H. Fenton, G. Brass, J. Cook, J. P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J. Fordyce, J. Henderson, J.R. McArthur, D. Maxwell, J. O. Robertson, J. M. Waddell and A.D. Williamson 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. A. J. Allan, B. Fulton, J. George, W. Gordon, T. McClung, J. Wardlaw and R. D. Hunter (Secretary)

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council held at Perth on 14th September, 1978 (copies of which had been pre-circulated to each Member of Council) was taken as read. Mr. Lindsay pointed out that he had not attended the Joint Consultative Meeting in London on 4th September, 1978. The Minute was amended to correct this error and being otherwise formally approved was then signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING: (a) Meeting with British Rail - Mr. Barr reported briefly on the Meeting with Messrs. R. Harries and R. G. Johnson which had taken place earlier today. There had been a very full discussion of the 1978 Bonus Incentive Scheme. Our representatives had accepted that British Rail could not negotiate amendments to a scheme primarily proposed to N.A.S.P.M., but Mr. Johnson agreed to have early discussions with each of our Association's substantial users of rail facilities to overcome anomalies created by the Scheme. The problems of pilferage, claims and split loads had also been usefully discussed and British Rail had undertaken to review these matters to see if improvements could be made.

(b) Scottish Plant Breeding Station - Mr. Blackmore reported that Cr. Macer had written to say that he would be proposing new dates (for an early 1979 Association visit to Pentlandfield) for consideration by the end of this year.

(c) Conditions sub-Committee - Mr. Blackmore explained that the sub-committee's first Meeting would be reported later in today's Agenda.

(d) Association Trip 1979 - Mr. Blackmore reported that no further developments had taken place.

(e) Riddle Sizes - Mr. Blackmore explained that a repeat of the earlier item on this subject would be included in the next News Letter to Members. Mr. Barr explained that DAFS had made clear to the Joint Liaison Committee that 57mm. labels could not be issued. After brief discussion Council agreed the matter should not be mentioned in the next News Letter.

(f) P.A.Y.E. on Casual Wages - Mr. Blackmore explained he will be replying to a further letter from the Member concerned and he would report the outcome in due course.

(g) Association Membership - Mr. Blackmore next reported that Anderson-McKay (Produce) Ltd. and Mr. Ian Glen had both advised that their applications for P.M.B. Merchant's licences had been granted on 23rd October, 1978. He also mentioned the former wished to participate in the Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors arrangements for 1978. Council confirmed that both applicants be invited to become Association Members.

So far as the P.M.B. Ware Merchants' licence application by Messrs. R. & K. Drysdale (Innerwick) was concerned, Council members believed this/

this had been refused on 18th September, 1978. Mr. Robertson pointed out that holding a P.M.B. licence was not a pre-requisite for Association membership. Council decided this firm should not be invited to apply for Association membership meantime, but to re-consider the matter if the granting of a licence is officially notified by the Board.

Mr. Blackmore also reported notification that Messrs. A. & J. Dow and Son (Kilsyth) are interested in becoming members of the Association. After a short discussion the Secretariat was instructed to invite this firm to make formal application.

(h) Curling Match - Mr. Blackmore reported having been asked to clarify some confusion by confirming that the first leg of the Annual Curling Match will take place in Perth on Wednesday, 8th November, 1978.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE :

Mr. Fenton next reported on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee which he and Mr. Doig (vice Mr. Barr vice Mr. Lindsay) had attended in Edinburgh on 12th October, 1978. Predominantly devoted to statistical information and mainly of historical interest, it had emerged that Mr. Leven (of the P.M.B.) had been disappointed with the response to the Board's offer to contract for 10% of each registered producer's crop. Although some 80% of larger (more than 50 acres) producers had responded, only 6000 of the 30,000 producers had participated.

There had been prolonged discussion of the distribution of actual contracts, especially regarding the allocation of those relating to late season (Mr. Doig explained he had been much impressed with the detailed criteria evolved to these ends) and indications of the initiation of the stockfeed programme (since announced) had also been apparent.

CONDITIONS
SUB-
COMMITTEE :

Mr. Williamson next reported on the first meeting of the Conditions sub-Committee held in Perth on 12th October, 1978. A very careful clause-by-clause consideration of the present Conditions had taken place. It had been agreed that, although no amendment should be sought, two areas of concern had been identified namely (a) the period of complaints for latent diseases and (b) the limitation of liability.

He explained that the Unfair Contract Terms Act now places the onus of proof of reasonability upon the party imposing any condition. In this connection the sub-Committee had felt the insertion of an "advice" leaflet with all consignment notes and invoices would strengthen the reasonability of periods for complaints. Limitation of liability was felt to be endangered because, in the event of a fundamental breach of contract the whole contract (and not just individual conditions) became void. This situation was felt to be inevitable when admixtures occurred. The sub-Committee now awaited proposals expected from N.A.S.P.M.

Council discussed these matters at some length, during which Mr. Barr explained that the Joint Liaison Committee Meeting on 18th October, 1978 had learned that N.A.S.P.M. proposals (which they hoped could become effective by 1st July, 1979) were expected to be available for consideration early next month.

JOINT
LIAISON
COMMITTEE :

Mr. Barr continued by reporting on discussion of other matters by the Joint Liaison Committee in Edinburgh on 18th October, 1978. In reply to N.A.S.P.M. on the incidence of Blackleg disease on 1977 Stocks, DAFS had stated that research into the disease is continuing, without any funding delays, not one single crop having failed the 1977 Inspection for this fault.

There had been prolonged discussion of standardisation of various definitions of mechanical damage in tubers, Mr. Lindsay explaining to/

to Council that this matter had been magnified out of all proportion to the original simple error of omission from which it had sprung. On revision of Conditions of Sale (as reported above) Mr. Barr added that N.A.S.P.M. now seemed distinctly cool on tuber-indexing. The meeting had also received a report on a meeting between N.A.S.P.M. and M.A.F.F. during which it seemed that, although not part of its Inspection Scheme, the Ministry will investigate complaints of size and/or disease (cross-checking with DAFS if necessary) and can within 14 days thereafter place a standstill order on any faulty consignment. Both NASPM and DAFS were awaiting their copies of the Report of the MAFF meeting, DAFS being puzzled by apparent duplication of the P.M.B. Inspection Service.

Council discussed this last matter at length. A suggestion to form an investigatory sub-Committee (or alternatively to pass the matter to the Conditions sub-Committee) was not adopted, it being agreed that all members of Council will study the Seed Potato Regulations 1978 most carefully in readiness for further discussion at Council's next meeting. It was also agreed the Secretary be asked to carry out a detailed comparison of the old Regulations with the new 1978 Regulations to highlight all omissions and insertions. The Secretariat was also instructed to write to D.A.F.S. expressing Council's grave concern in this matter and its conflict with our Association's recommended Conditions of Sale.

Continuing his report, Mr. Barr next explained that sealing of bulk and boxed consignments had been discussed at great length. Council's own discussion of this subject led to the Secretariat being instructed to write to D.A.F.S. with Council's agreed proposals. The letter should also ask confirmation of arrangements for resealing of bags after a buyer's commercial inspection of a representative sample of his purchase.

During Council's discussion Mr. Cook described a difficulty he had met over transportation of a boxed crop for dressing. Council agreed an apparent ambiguity in the Regulations should not be left for interpretation by individual Inspectors. The Chairman asked to be advised of all difficulties arising from the 1978 Regulations so that these could be taken up with DAFS.

In conclusion, Mr. Barr reported NASPM had again raised the subject of "burning off" with DAFS and it had been agreed the matter will be looked at again to try to reach an acceptable arrangement.

SEED
POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Lindsay next reported on the meeting he had attended in London on 24th October, 1978. During a short discussion of the proposed Promotion Association, Mr. John Arbuckle had spoken highly of Mr. Gordon Lyall but Mr. Lindsay had made clear that "marketing" activities could not involve trading without alienating all merchant support.

Mr. Lindsay provided Council with copies of a Statement of Scotch Seed Supply prospects for the current Season, tabled at the Committee's meeting. He also gave the first figures for seed despatched to England and Wales. He explained Mr. Idris Davis (Pembroke)'s view that variety identification had been the death knell for "Home Guard" in Pembrokeshire probably to be supplanted by "Comet", but he would give no view on "Bard".

Reporting on Seed Potato Exports prospects, Mr. Alex. Sinclair had disclosed that 9000 tonnes of "King Edward" had already been exported from the U.K. (4000 tonnes of it from Scotland). Portugal required 30,000 tonnes and hopefully Algeria would also require "Desiree". The meeting had also received a Paper by Mr. J. L. Anderson (of the East of Scotland College) entitled "Potatoes in the mid 1980's" which based on economic technicalities rather than practical considerations.

The meeting had discusses tuber damage during which it was disclosed that P.M.B. Inspectors were being reminded to include mechanical/

mechanical damage in their reports, that doubtful latent disease complaints are to be sent for analysis and, Mr. McFarlane explained, P.M.B. Inspectors will liaise with NASPM before conducting complaints inspections.

Finally Mr. Lindsay reported the meeting had learned that DAFS could not see their way to the introduction of a compulsory "burning off" programme in Scotland nor could a tuber-indexing facility be provided. The meeting had also considered recent issues of "Scientific and Technical News Letters" which included many of the Press Releases issued by our Association.

PRESS
SUB-
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Fenton reported that the local visit arranged for four English journalists had duly taken place. There seemed to have been no immediately visible results and he invited Council members' comments on material published to date. Mr. Barr suggested thought be given to the future of the programme. It was agreed that to take account of Mr. Gordon Lyall's report on the proposed Promotion Association (due after April, 1979) renewal of our Association's Press Agency contract should be sought on a further six month's basis, funded again by voluntary contributions rather than levied subscriptions. However, Mr. Blackmore was instructed to prepare estimates of a levied subscription basis for Council's consideration at its next meeting.

ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTS:

Council next considered the provisional draft of the Association's Annual Accounts to 31st October, 1978 copies of which had been pre-circulated to each Council member. Mr. Blackmore explained the two most prominent factors had been a reduction in subscriptions (due to unestimated loss of ten former members and gain of two new members for part of the year) and a marked increase in the cost of (an increased number of) meetings.

He also pointed out that retentions in earlier years gave rise to misleading comparisons and explained he had used estimated costs for duplicating, postages and telephones. Subsequent accurate analysis now showed amendment of all three items to be required but the overall total of them remained unchanged. Minor adjustment of interest, surplus and cash balance would arise when the final transactions are actually completed on 31st October.

In discussion, Mr. Barr felt the indications were that subscriptions would have to be increased for 1978/79. Mr. Blackmore's very rough estimates showed this should be modest, if required at all. Council felt this would not be the case but agreed to await presentation of accurately formulated estimates for discussion at its next meeting. It was agreed no funds could be retained against 1978/79 expenditure and the Secretariat was instructed to finalise the Accounts on this basis before submitting them to Mr. Peacock for formal Audit in the usual way.

ANY
OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Election Results - Mr. Blackmore next reported that as a result of the postal ballot Messrs. A. J. Allan, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, D. Maxwell and T. McClung had been re-elected and that Mr. K.A. McKenzie had also been elected, to serve on Council. Council instructed these results be circulated to all Association members in the next News Letter.

(b) Rucip Seminar - In reply to the pre-circulated letter from the Consortium, Council confirmed that no SP.T.A. delegate would attend in Amsterdam on 22nd November, 1978 and further that the Association had no revision or amendment of the RUCIP Rules to propose. The Secretariat was instructed to advise the Consortium accordingly.

(c) P.M.B. Committees - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a letter asking for nominations of Association representatives to the four P.M.B. Committees. After brief discussion it was agreed that no changes/

changes from the existing representatives would be made, the Secretariat being instructed to advise the Board accordingly.

(d) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Perth at 10.30a.m. on Thursday, 30th November, 1978 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting was then closed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. H. Barr". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the text "With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting was then closed."