

MINUTE of MEETING of the PRESS sub-COMMITTEE
of the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held in the City Mills Hotel, PERTH at 12 noon
on Thursday, 1st FEBRUARY, 1979

PRESENT: Messrs. J. H. Barr, B. Fulton, D. H. Lindsay and J. R. McArthur, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.
The Convenor, Mr. D. H. Lindsay, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Blackmore intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J.G.H. Fenton and J. M. Waddell.

DISCUSSION: The Chairman explained that today's meeting was to receive his Report on a meeting with Mr. W.H. Kemp, to consider the result of the second circularisation to Press Fund contributors for renewal support and to formulate recommendations for submission to Council at its meeting later today.

Mr. Fulton first explained that his Company had resolved not to renew its contribution and he felt he ought, therefore, to resign from the sub-Committee. I was agreed unanimously that his resignation be declined as unwarranted and Mr. Fulton withdrew it.

In reply, Mr. Blackmore stated that one other contributor had written declining to renew. Of the remaining 31 contributors, 17 had paid renewals to date totalling £820. He felt that a few more could be in course of post and reported that in telephone conversations three contributors had felt that contributions should be on a "tonnage handled" basis.

The Chairman next tabled brief notes and reported on his discussions with Mr. Kemp, who had been pleased to be asked and was willing to act as Press Officer for our Association. While he operated primarily through the Scottish Press and the Farmers Weekly, he had access to U.K. coverage through the local agency of the national Press Association.

The Press pay him professional fees for published material based on information he receives and submits in his own name. If the Association required him to prepare a Press Release for submission in its own name then, in such circumstances, the Association would meet his professional fees. He aimed at short items and had had little interest in long articles. He appeared unenthusiastic to enter into an "annual salary" arrangement but indicated that a former similar situation had been on a monthly paid "retainer" basis of slightly more than £320 per annum.

Although verging on normal retiring age, Mr. Kemp had every intention of remaining an active journalist. The Chairman stressed that his Report should be regarded as purely objective but reminded the sub-Committee that Mr. Kemp has a very wide knowledge of and experience in agricultural matters generally and both knew and was well known throughout the farming community.

In following discussions the sub-Committee agreed that the indicated level of support from Contributors precluded renewal of the contract with Agripress, but that an alternative arrangement with Mr. Kemp was very attractive. It was accepted that this alternative would not provide as extensive a coverage as formerly but that sufficient contact had been established which, if directly cultivated, would reduce any coverage shortfall to an acceptable level.

It was also agreed that the alternative would reduce costs to a more realistic (and thus long-term sustainable) level. In turn, this also indicated that even those contributions renewed to date would allow a second trial period to be extended from six to twelve months, or possibly even a little longer.

It was accepted that long-term financial support, even at much reduced cost levels, could not continue to fall on a reducing number of voluntary contributions. At such levels and spread over the whole Association/

Association membership, it was foreseen to amount to an acceptably small inclusion in the tonnage-based subscription of every member. It was also pointed out that a reduction in professional fees would allow scope for consideration of the purchase of announcement advertising space if and when required.

In conclusion, the sub-Committee agreed to submit the following formal recommendations to this afternoon's Meeting of Council:

- (a) that no attempt be made to renew the contract with Agripress Publicity Ltd.
- (b) that the Press sub-Committee continue in being;
- (c) that the initiative to secure and retain the services of Mr. W. H. Kemp as the Association's Press Officer be pursued, and
- (d) that explanatory circularisation of Contributors and (subsequently) of all Association Members be instructed,

where-upon the Meeting was formally concluded.