

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held  
at the Station Hotel, PERTH at 12.30p.m.  
on Thursday, 26th JULY, 1979

PRESENT:

Messrs. A. J. Allan, J.H. Barr, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, J. George, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, D. Maxwell, J.O. Robertson, J.M. Waddell and A.D. Williamson with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

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

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. G. Brass, J. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, J. Fordyce, B. Fulton, W. Gordon and T. McClung.

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council held in Perth on 7th June, 1979 (copies of which had been pre-circulated to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS  
ARISING:

(a) Membership and Subscriptions. - Mr. Blackmore reported he had still been unable to make contact with Messrs. Thomas Anderson and Sons, (Glasgow), the only member whose 1979 Subscription was still outstanding. He was advised to try to telephone this Member around 5p.m.

He also read a letter of application for Association Membership received from Peter Darlington Ltd. After a brief discussion it was agreed to accept this company into membership with effect from 1st August, 1979.

He also tabled a notification that Messrs. John C. McLean (Coupar Angus) had applied to the Potato Marketing Board for a Seed Merchant's Licence. No objection was raised to this application and it was agreed to invite this firm into Association Membership if and when the Licence application is granted.

Mr. Blackmore next requested Council's instructions in respect of the list of Board Licence holders who are not Association Members which was circulated to Council during its last Meeting. After a short discussion which clarified several aspects it was agreed each Council Member would mark his copy of the list (to indicate which licence holders he felt should be invited to join the Association) and return it to the Secretary as soon as possible. This would enable a shortened list to be prepared for submission to and discussion by Council at its next meeting.

(b) "Bodmin" Case - Mr. Blackmore next reported receipt of a letter from the Cornish Solicitors that a copy of the Judgement transcript could be expected very shortly.

(c) "Conditions" sub-Committee - Mr. Hunter reported on this morning's meeting to consider P.M.B. and (English) N.F.U.'s comments on NASPM's proposed revision of the Conditions of Sale. A joint meeting of NASPM/SPTA/N. Ireland and Eire delegates had been arranged to be held at the Excelsior Hotel, Manchester Airport on Wednesday, 1st August, 1979 at which he, with Messrs. G. Brass and A. D. Williamson would represent our Association.

(d) British Rail - Mr. Blackmore explained that it had not been possible to arrange to meet British Rail before today's meeting of Council as planned. Council felt it to be important to discuss freight rates beyond 31st December, 1978 and outstanding Bonus Scheme matters. It was agreed to ask British Rail to a meeting on the morning of the next Council Meeting and to invite all Council members to attend.

(e) Visit to Scottish Plant Breeding Station - Mr. Blackmore reported a meagre response to the open invitation extended to all members to participate in this visit between 1.30p.m. and 5.30p.m. on Tuesday, 14th August, 1979. Further "round the table" acceptances increased the total to 14 member firms, which indicated a total of about 18 people.



It was explained that a meeting between the Association's representatives to the former Seed Potato Working Party (Messrs. Barr, Doig, Fenton and Lindsay) and the Department had been arranged to take place at Chesser House at 10.30a.m. on that same date.

Mr. Blackmore also reported that it had proved impossible to arrange a prior joint meeting between representatives of the Association and NFUS. Council agreed this meeting be arranged to take place as soon as those representatives had returned from their respective holidays.

(f) Audit arrangements. The Secretary explained that the formal appointment of the Association's Auditor had nominated Mr. Robert Peacock personally and his recent death had therefore created a vacancy. Council's brief discussion took account of the Auditor's fees and alternative arrangements provided under the Association's Constitution and Rules. The Secretary was instructed to invite the late Mr. Peacock's partner, Mr. Craig, to accept the appointment.

(g) Potato Futures Market. Mr. Blackmore reported five Members had asked to be informed of developments. Council agreed each should receive a copy of the Minute and Confidential Report already copied to each Member of Council.

(h) Proposed Scotch Seed Potato Producers' Association - In a short discussion of further developments it was reported that press matter had indicated 51% support for the proposals, without specifying whether on an acreage or "head-count" basis. It was also explained that in mid-June it had been reported that Fife had been overwhelmingly in favour but Perth and Angus had shown only about 50% support. At that time it had been expected that a decision would be made by end-July and that appointment of four SPTA members to the interim governing body could not be guaranteed.

A proposal that the Association should now "come out into the open" was not supported but it was agreed to continue to keep a close watch on the matter. It was also pointed out that Mr. Lyall's period of secondment was already considerably extended and he was believed to be very unhappy about the considerable lack of support for the proposals.

BRITISH  
POTATO  
TRADES  
CONSORTIUM:

Mr. Barr reported on the meeting he and Mr. Lindsay had attended in London on 11th June, 1979. Following the nomination of Messrs. Harold Aves, Robert Beeson and himself, the new NSDO Liaison Committee had yet to hold its first meeting. Discussion of the lifting of the maincrop import ban had revealed that by the date of the meeting only 500 tonnes of Dutch potatoes had reached the U.K. The quality had been unsatisfactory and almost all of it had been taken up by processors.

Figures given for Irish crops entered for inspection were Earlies 1244 ha. and maincrop 6399ha., compared with 1978 certified figures of 1301ha. and 6941 ha. respectively. Noting these, Council pointed out that Dutch figures also became available during June while Scottish figures were still not available. Mr. Blackmore explained his telephoned enquiry to the Department had disclosed the delay to have been due to earlier computer-staff strike action but the statistics are expected to be sent out by 28th July, only four days later than last year.

Resuming his Report, Mr. Barr explained the Consortium had discussed Common Measures (no developments); Potato Futures Market (a further report is expected in the autumn); paper sacks (standard to be continued and an approach to be made to the PMB to increase the sack allowance); retail-level metrication (no progress); Euro-Union Congress Sutton Bridge and Market Stabilisation under Article 9 (no further information).

Discussion/



Discussion of finances included Euro-Union Congress decisions to levy supplementary contributions for 1979 and increased contributions for 1980. The Consortium accepted the former and the SPTA share, amounting to some £16, will be invoiced shortly. Council authorised payment of this item when received. Mr. Barr added that Mr. Sten Jorgensen (SAJYKA, Denmark) had been elected Vice-President of the European Union. Mr. Barr had written congratulating him and had received a very cordial reply.

The Congress Report included a country-by-country survey of 1979 plantings and crop prospects which Mr. Barr quoted to Council. Finally, in discussion of RUCIP changes, it had been reported that the Solicitor for Beesons was considered expert in this field and the Consortium recommended that any member experiencing RUCIP difficulties should consult him.

JOINT  
CONSULTATIVE  
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Lindsay reported on the meeting he and Mr. Barr had attended in London after the Consortium meeting on 11th June, 1979. Being now largely historically dated, he gave brief details of the (then) supply position. Prospects at that time estimated total plantings of some 176,000 ha. of which 40,000 ha. were earlies (13% down on 1978) and maincrop down 1% on 1978. There had been concern regarding the volume of U.K. imports and its effect on U.K. early growers and tonnage figures had been discussed.

A survey of 1978 Crop Dressing Standards had been considered (in which mechanical damage and greens had predominated); a PMB publicity campaign for U.K. earlies was announced; there had been no progress to report on either the EEC regime or the guarantee price announcement.

POTATO  
MARKETING  
BOARD:

Mr. Barr explained an additional completely informal meeting with the Board representatives had followed immediately after the above meeting. From discussion it was apparent that the U.K. government's desire to continue with some form of potato control is fairly confidently expected to bear fruit. It was not expected that an EEC regime will be introduced in 1979.

Mr. Lindsay reported that the discussion regarding what the government can do was very interesting. It was quite clear that future guaranteed price support arrangements will not be possible but some form of control is regarded as a prime target. Finally it was felt that higher freight costs will militate against cheap foreign imports.

SCOTTISH  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Lindsay next explained that the meeting of this Committee had been changed from a Peebles venue to the Royal Highland Show on 21st June, 1979. In the event it turned out to be an almost exact repeat of the Joint Consultative Committee Meeting already reported.

SEED  
POTATO  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Due to other pressures Mr. Lindsay had been unable to participate in the PMB visit to Bavaria, during which a meeting of this Committee had been held on 11th July, 1979. He had received a verbal report from Mr. Craig Davie, however, and was able to inform Council on the discussions that took place.

Prolonged for almost four hours, most of the meeting had been devoted to consideration of NASPM's proposed revised Conditions of Sale. In respect of a study of the development and reproduction of seed for overseas markets, a grant of £4,000 had been awarded to Dr. Allan of North Wales. The meeting considered seed movements, crops entered for 1979 inspections (thought to be about 600-700ha. more than in 1978), Scientific and Technical News Letters and confirmed the date of its next meeting (Tuesday, 23rd October, 1979 in London).

The subsequent tour/visit had been very energetic and biased towards VTSC interests. It was learned that all new breeding in Germany is privately owned (Council noted this conflicted with NSDO statements) but no details of the German inspection and certification scheme had been obtained.

ENTERTAINMENTS  
COMMITTEE:/



ENTERTAINMENTS

COMMITTEE:

The Secretary next reported briefly on a meeting of this Committee on 24th July, 1979. Concerned solely with the Dinner Dance arrangements, the venue date and Band for which had been finalised; details of the buffet-menu, invitation-programmes, disco, raffle, prices etc. would be finalised at the next meeting on 16th August, 1979. Thereafter a separate, fully-detailed announcement will be circularised to the whole Association Membership.

ANY OTHER  
COMPETENT  
BUSINESS:

(a) Association Investments - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a review from the Association's Stockbroker. While recommending a sale of shorter-dated stock to purchase longer-dated ones to improve annual income, the prices used had quickly become out-dated. It was agreed the Stockbrokers be asked to provide a fresh review immediately prior to Council's next meeting.

(b) Market Prices Bulletin - Mr. Blackmore also reported views obtained on the usefulness to members of the Bulletin service provided. Council agreed the situation was a difficult one and this was the least opportune time of year to assess the matter. A firm decision on whether to explain to each Member receiving the Bulletin that the service will be continued but, in view of increasing postal costs, asking each of them if its continuation to them personally is important, was deferred meantime.

(c) Inspection procedures for Veinal Necrosis - In reply to an enquiry from a Council Member there was a short discussion on downgrading on visual inspections. It was agreed that visually-suspected Veinal Necrosis required confirmatory laboratory tests before downgrading could occur. It was also pointed out that mild mosaic field tests ought to be carried out before samples are submitted for laboratory testing.

(d) Date of next meeting - After a short discussion it was agreed to hold the next meeting of Council in the Station Hotel, Perth at 12.30p.m. on Thursday, 13th September, 1979 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual necessary arrangements.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair the Meeting then terminated.

