

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
held in the Station Hotel, PERTH at  
1.40 p.m. on Monday, 5th MAY, 1980.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.J. Allan, G. Brass, J.G.H. Fenton, J. Fordyce, J. George, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, D. Maxwell, J.O. Robertson, G. Smillie and J.M. Waddell, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

The President, Mr. D. Hendry Lindsay, occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Blackmore intimated apologies on behalf of Messrs. J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, B. Fulton, W. Gordon and R. David Hunter (Secretary).

The Chairman explained today's meeting had been called urgently for the sole purpose of considering the present situation regarding the Scottish Seed Potato Association. The Minute of Council's last meeting and all other business was deferred until Council's next meeting (already arranged for Thursday, 29th May, 1980).

He explained he had received by letter and telephone the views of most of the Council Members who could not attend today's meeting. Coupled with the views, both published and private known to be held by many non-Council Members of the Association, it was abundantly clear that support for the Scottish Seed Potato Association within the membership of our own Association is in minority. In a democratically run Association the majority view must be upheld. He felt that criticism of lack of action to this end by the President and/or the Association was inescapable. It was true that information had not been adequately circularised to members which, of itself could lose the Association a lot of its members.

Mr. Lindsay also explained that the Association's Office Bearers had met and considered the expected reaction of our Association's membership to the manner of the SSPA "poll" of producers to support application for statutory powers to raise levies. It had been decided to send a circular letter to all members but to delay any press announcement, principally to avoid an un-necessary public slanging match by leaving the S.S.P.A. no time to issue counter announcements. This course did not receive 100% support, a body of opinion holding that further "sitting on the fence" would only serve to weaken our Association's position.

Mr. Lindsay then read the letters and reported his telephone conversations with absent Council Members before inviting Council's constructive discussions.

There was strong support for a Press Release pointing up the objections to the methods employed by the S.S.P.A. There was strong criticism of the methods adopted by the S.S.P.A. when its Council was formed in September, 1979 against which background a private Action of Interdict against the S.S.P.A. over its "intertia poll" at the present time had been considered. Mr. Blackmore reported his telephone call to Mr. Todd (D.A.F.S.) following the Secretary's professional views on the legality of the "poll" and D.A.F.S.' part in it. Mr. Lindsay also reported a telephone call in which Mr. Lyall stated it was intended to ignore former S.S.P.A. supporters who dropped out now (and not to count them as automatic "yes" votes, because they were basing on 1979 crop figures) and that indicated statutory levies of £7 and £10 per hectare would apply for the first two years only, increasing thereafter if only to keep pace with inflation.

Discussions also considered a fresh poll of Association members should be conducted to determine Council's precise strength of voice. In support, it was pointed out that Council's former decision that each member be free to take his own view remained unchanged despite the different situation that now obtained. The alternative view was that as/

as the democratically elected representatives of the whole Association membership, a majority of Council was fully qualified to speak for a majority of that membership.

Mr. McArthur then moved that Council compile and issue a Press Release and this motion was seconded by Mr. McClung. Discussion of the motion considered the effect of a Press Release, evinced support for the S.S.P.A.'s aims but pronounced objections to statutory powers being granted to them and also questioned whether the S.S.P.A.'s supporters know what the full extent of those powers will be. There being no counter-motion, on a call from the Chair, Mr. McArthur's motion was adopted.

Following further prolonged and meticulous discussion and consideration, the form and wording of a Press Release was agreed as follows:-

" Following a Council meeting of the Scottish Potato Trade Association (which represents growers and merchants of seed potatoes) their President, Mr. Hendry Lindsay, Perth, made a blistering attack on the methods used in the so-called "poll" of seed producers being conducted by the recently formed Scottish Seed Potato Association, currently seeking Statutory powers to raise levies from growers by means of a Ministerially appointed Development Council.

Mr. Lindsay said that it was the opinion of Council of the Scottish Potato Trade Association that the method of polling adopted by the SSPA was completely underhand. The letter from the S.S.P.A. Chairman about the poll, together with the voting paper, was included with a large number of documents from the Department of Agriculture and was mailed in a Department of Agriculture envelope. Council of the Scottish Potato Trade Association is convinced that many farmers and producers will not be aware that a letter from the Chairman of the S.S.P.A. with a voting paper, exists.

Secondly, and this is vitally important, in order to cast his vote in favour of Statutory powers for the S.S.P.A. a producer need not return his voting paper. His vote, according to the S.S.P.A. will count positively if he

- (1) Forgets to mail his vote in time
- (2) Throws the letter in the waste paper basket
- (3) Never reads it at all
- (4) Actually votes "FOR", intentionally, by not returning the voting paper.

How can any producer take part in a vote for Statutory powers by NOT RETURNING his voting paper? In Council's opinion this would lead to a completely distorted result, due to the un-democratic method of voting.

The Council of the Scottish Potato Trade Association firmly believes that if another organisation is granted Statutory powers to raise levies it would become another severe financial burden on the industry, which already pays substantial levies to other Statutory organisations.

Finally, Council of the Scottish Potato Trade Association urges all seed potato growers to reject the S.S.P.A. proposals for Statutory powers by returning their voting paper with a "NO" vote. "

Finally, Council agreed the Press Release be issued to the Association's Press Officer (Mr. William Kemp), tomorrow, to ensure its publication on Wednesday, 7th May, 1980 in the following Scottish Daily newspapers:-

The Scotsman  
The/

The Glasgow Herald

The Courier and Advertiser

The Press & Journal

and as soon as possible thereafter in the following weekly publication:-

The Scottish Farmer

The Farmers Weekly

The meeting then closed with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

*D. H. L. L. L.*