

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held in the Station Hotel, PERTH at
2 p.m. on Thursday, 2nd OCTOBER, 1980.

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

The President, Mr. D. Hendry Lindsay, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, B. Fulton, W. Gordon, J. Henderson, T. McClung, and G. Smillie.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 21st August, 1980 (copies of which had been sent to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was formally approved and the Chairman signed it to this effect.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Membership - Mr. Blackmore reported that in response to formal invitation Mr. Hugh Munro, Upper Warroch, Kinross had now made written application for Association Membership and that a written application had also now been submitted by David Fraser (Potatoes) Ltd., Perth in reply to the invitation sent to him on 5th October, 1979. Council instructed both applications be accepted with effect from 1st November, 1980.

Mr. Blackmore also reported receipt of notifications of two applications for P.M.B ware Merchants Licences, by Peter C. Grewar (Potatoes) Ltd., Meigle and by Mr. Wm. M. Hosie, Turriff respectively. Council instructed that, subject to Mr. J.P. Deuchar's approval in respect of the latter, both applicants be invited to apply for Association Membership.

(b) Revised Conditions of Sale - Mr. Blackmore next reported that despite having further increased the printing order from 12,500 to 23,500 copies, continuing receipt of orders from Members exceeded this total yet again. His concern to avoid financing stock against possible further orders from Members was compounded by worsening printing delays.

The Chairnam explained he had learned that N.A.S.P.M had expressed criticism of the S.P.T.A copyright and non-submission of the final draft of the S.P.T.A Conditions to N.A.S.P.M's Legal Committee. Mr. Hunter explained his Reports on joint meetings with that Committee do not mention such a point. Council's discussion of these points authorised the Association's representatives to discuss them during the forthcoming Joint Liaison Committee meeting.

In reply, the Secretary stated that revision of the Association's recommended Conditions of Purchase had not progressed but would now receive priority attention.

(c) Exports Steering Committee - Mr. McArthur reported that it had not been possible to hold a second meeting of the Exports Steering Committee before today's Council Meeting as had been intended. He pointed out that the complexity of the whole subject under the Committee's consideration was heightened by recent proposals by the N.S.D.O, on which he enlarged. These had led on to suggestions for still further schemes which would all require a great deal of very careful thought in many quarters. In his own view the essential will, without which any scheme cannot work, is currently lacking and, regretfully, he felt bound to caution against optimism.

(d)/

(d) Annual Elections to Council - Mr. Hunter reported that by the closing date on 30th September eight candidates (including all five of the retiring Council Members who had offered themselves for re-election) had been nominated for the six vacancies to be filled. No candidate had been nominated from the Inverness/Ross and Cromarty district in opposition to Mr. W. Gordon who was thus re-elected to Council, leaving seven candidates to contest the remaining five vacancies. Subject to Council's approval, a News Letter enclosing a Ballot Paper would be sent to each Association Member tomorrow. Council formally approved these arrangements and confirmed that the Ballot should close before Council's next meeting.

(e) Freightliners - Mr. Blackmore reported that although a prior engagement had prevented Mr. Cox accepting Council's invitation to be present today, he had indicated that he could attend a similar meeting during the last week of October. Council agreed that its next meeting would be held in the Station Hotel, Perth on Thursday, 30th October, 1980 and the Secretariat was instructed to invite Mr. Cox to meet Council there at 11.30 a.m. that day and to stay on for lunch, Council's meeting proper for normal business commencing at 2 p.m.

(f) A.A.1 Grade - second field inspections - Mr. McArthur sought Council's views on the question of second inspections of A.A.1 crops in the light of this year's experience. From general discussions it emerged that Council would be prepared to accept second inspections of these crops in future years provided the "trigger level" of 0.25% blackleg at first inspection (as this year) is raised to 0.5% and that first inspections are carried out earlier in future, to facilitate additional roguing before crops attain full height. It was agreed to seek the support of the Seed Trade Committee for this view and also to ask D.A.F.S for prior notification of its proposals to the Joint Consultative Panel, to permit Council to discuss them and to instruct its representatives.

NATIONAL
SEED
DEVELOPMENT
ORGANISATION

Council considered Mr. Barr's pre-circulated Report on the meeting of the N.S.D.O Liaison Committee which he had attended with Mr. Allen in London on 27th August, 1980. The Report briefly outlined N.S.D.O proposals for development of its varieties in overseas markets and warned that the proposals would appear to require very considerable financial commitment to secure exclusive monopolistic advantages. The Report feared such commitment would come from quarters motivated by other than the best interests of the U.K potato industry. The N.S.D.O asked for Papers on each Merchant Organisation's proposals to be submitted by the third week of October, 1980.

The Chairman also read out a discussion paper which Mr. Barr had prepared. Council's subsequent very full discussion of these matters was clearly hampered by insufficient "nuts and bolts" details of N.S.D.O's proposals and in particular by complete absence of any indication of the type and extent of offer it would consider. It was agreed there was insufficient time to make what would probably be an abortive enquiry to remedy these inadequacies. There was misgiving that so short a time had been provided for the Trade to formulate its proposals, when the N.S.D.O's own proposals had clearly required a much longer period of full-time expertise to formulate. Those proposals were seen to resemble the Dutch system with the obvious difference that while the proposals cover all (N.S.D.O) varieties in a certain (overseas) country, the Dutch system covers certain varieties but in all countries.

At the most basic level it was felt that the Development Organisations very existence required it to undertake the penetration and development of overseas markets. From this premise it seemed a reversal of roles for the N.S.D.O to expect the Trade or any other source to finance that undertaking itself and shoulder all the risks - rather should N.S.D.O be offering to finance those interested in doing this work/

work on the Organisation's behalf. Discussion of whether Council was agreed that N.S.D.O itself should develop overseas markets for its own varieties was inconclusive, although it was felt that N.S.D.O was best equipped to do so. It was not clear how the Scottish Seed Potato industry could support N.S.D.O's own development of overseas markets. It was pointed out that very little of the total tonnage of seed potatoes exported from Scotland consisted of N.S.D.O varieties and also that some N.S.D.O varieties might conceivably never achieve acceptability anywhere abroad. It was also questioned whether N.S.D.O would be prepared to invite offers to develop individual, specified varieties in individual, specified countries and what conditions would be attached to such arrangements but, once again, the discussions were inconclusive for lack of information.

BRITISH
POTATO
TRADES
CONSORTIUM:

Mr. Lindsay reported on the meeting of the British Potato Trades Consortium which he had attended in London on 8th September, 1980. He explained that a poor attendance coupled with an un-equipped substitute for Mr. Rackley made for a rather unsatisfactory meeting.

Of particular Scottish interest he had noted that the Potatoes Futures Market still required to appoint more storekeepers, particularly in Scotland and that further educational seminars could be arranged as required. In Council's discussion it was agreed that the Association's next News Letter should include a reminder item that more Scottish stores are required. It was also suggested that Mr. Alan Harper be invited to address our Association's next Annual General Meeting in January, 1981.

Mr. Lindsay also reported that consideration had been given to a possible application by the Produce Processors Association for membership of the Consortium and each constituent Association had been asked to its views on whether this would strengthen the Consortium. In Council's following discussion Mr. Robertson explained the history of a previous similar application. It was pointed out that the Consortium had already widened its representation to include importers and that Processors represented about 20% of the potato market. On balance Council agreed the Consortium would be strengthened by admission of the Produce Processors Association.

JOINT
CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE:

Council considered Mr. Fenton's pre-circulated Report on the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee in London on 8th September 1980 which he and Mr. Lindsay had attended. Council's discussions centred on the 1980 crop supply position in general and the anticipated higher in-store wastage rate in particular. There was broad agreement that this could be true of the first and second early crops but it was perhaps a little too early yet to assess the maincrop while much of it still remained to be lifted.

OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Exchange of News Letters - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a letter from Mr. Harold Aves, Chairman of the North of Ireland Potato Marketing Association Ltd., suggesting mutual exchange of our respective Associations' News Letters subject, of course, to safeguards in respect of any Items that either Association may not wish to be repeated. After a short discussion Council agreed to adopt the suggestion.

(b) Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors - Mr. Blackmore reported that yesterday's Annual General Meeting of members of the Exhibitors Group had decided to participate in the Royal Smithfield Show again this year. Due to continued escalation of costs coupled with reduction in Group Memberships this decision necessitated agreement to encroach upon the Group's modest cash reserves to the extent of one half (£130). Recognising the critical nature of the Group's future prospects and believing it vital to the whole Scottish seed potato industry to retain the increasingly public relations oriented aspects of the Group's activities and facilities, the A.G.M also decided to initiate an intensive/

intensive campaign to recruit new Members. Since all new Members must first be Association Members, the A.G.M asked Council to give its support to this campaign.

In further explanation Mr. McKenzie stated that the Group was very concerned to bring these problems to the widest possible attention within the Trade and would welcome any and every suggestion which would increase Trade support for the public relations aspect. He pointed out that in the face of increased competition from many quarters, the Group's Stand at Smithfield provides the only specifically Scottish seed potato presence in an international setting in the U.K in each year.

Council's discussions resulted in agreement to give its support to recruitment and instructed inclusion of a suitable Item in the next News Letter to all Association Members. Apart from a suggestion regarding possible "sponsorship", discussion of support for the Group's public relations aspect was inconclusive.

(c) Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee - The Chairman reminded Council that the first meeting of this new P.M.B Committee had been arranged to take place on Monday, 13th October and he sought Council's views and points to be raised at that Meeting. Mr. Fenton pointed out that the E.E.C stipulates what it will import, yet the U.K does not. He instanced that the P.M.B Ware Standard in the U.K specified a minimum 40 mm. riddle, yet imports of E.E.C stocks dressed to a minimum 35 mm. riddle are allowed into the U.K. Council agreed this point should be raised.

The Meeting then closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

D. Newby Rainsby