

REPORT of COUNCIL of the SCOTTISH POTATO
TRADE ASSOCIATION for the year to 31st
OCTOBER, 1980 to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF MEMBERS held in the Station Hotel, PERTH
at 2p.m. on Thursday, 15th JANUARY, 1981

(a) ACCOUNTS

As the Association's audited and pre-circulated Accounts to 31st October, 1980 show, Income from SUBSCRIPTIONS was £6,250.59. This sum was 28% greater than 1979 and was received from 120 full-year and 2 part-year Members (compared with 115 and 7 that previous year). The net result of a number of changes within the tonnage brackets was not significant.

There was a marginal increase of £10 in net INVESTMENT INCOME to £383.68. GROSS BANK INTEREST, however, increased by over £200 (almost 90%) to £434.64. While this reflects both the persistence of very high interest rates throughout the year and the increased total subscriptions received, prompt payment of those subscriptions by ^{the} vast majority of Members contributed considerably to this outstanding result, (It is worth note that this result is the equivalent of 17 more members in the first tonnage brackets). TOTAL INCOME, therefore, increased by £1,568 (28½%) over the previous year.

On the EXPENDITURE (left-hand) side of the Account, the Estimates proved to be over-ambitious. The first item, EXPENSES OF MEETINGS, not only reflects rises in costs and a greater number of meetings held, but also included a provision of £70 for 2 meetings held but not invoiced during the year. While the provision gave rise to the deficit of £66.04 as shown, it will be offset by an increased repayment of tax in the current year.

There was a more modest error in GENERAL EXPENSES, at the same time as increased circularisations, and marked increase in telephone charges in particular, prevented both of the next two headings from being contained within their budgeted limits.

TRAVELLING EXPENSES exceeded budget once again, on this occasion due to two unpredicted meetings in London. The first of these was a Consortium meeting that did not co-incide with a Meeting of the P.M.B.'s Joint Liaison Committee and the second was a special Meeting of the N.S.D.O. Consultative Committee. Each event cost the Association £100.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE increased by almost 31% to £7130.95 and the resultant deficit of £66.04 is carried into the left-hand side of the BALANCE SHEET, reducing the accumulated REVENUE SURPLUS to £358.61. This figure will be increased/

increased during the current year by a repayment tax for the year to 31.10.80, calculated to be £122.66, compared with £95.93 for the preceding year.

No changes were made in the Association's INVESTMENTS during the year. Reflecting continuing high interest rates, their Market Value was £208.79 less than their actual cost. Hopefully those interest rates will be reduced during the current year, to improve much more than just Market Value of the Association's Investments!

The CASH position of 31.10.80 merits two brief comments. First, V.A.T. financing was £431.40 compared with £338.99 at the same date in 1979 and second, the sum of £70 due to the Secretary is the "book entry" provision already referred to under Expenses of Meetings.

ANY QUESTIONS?

(b) MEMBERSHIP

As reported to last year's Annual General Meeting there were 122 Members of the Association at 1st November, 1979 which, by the date of the A.G.M., had been increased to 128. Four members resigned, three were suspended and four new Members were enjoined during the rest of the year, so that at the start of the Association's current financial year on 1st November, 1980 the Membership Roll stood at 125.

That figure is still true today but, with the recruiting campaign having lost its impetus and at a time of severe recessionary pressure, it becomes extremely problematic to venture a workable estimate of a figure for the end of the Association's current year.

(c) MEETINGS

Association representatives attended no less than 74 meetings and other events during the year to 31st October, 1980 compared with 67 during the preceding year. 25 of these were the Association's own meetings consisting of 11 Council, 4 "Conditions" sub Committee, 5 Entertainments Committee, 2 "Exhibitors", 1 Exports Steering Committee, 1 Open and 1 Annual General Meeting.

Externally, the Association was represented at 40 meetings of and with 14 other Organisations and bodies. Altogether this involved your Office Bearers and Council Members in a total of 319 attendance with their related travelling requirements. While this is an average of 16 attendances each, it disguises the fact that more than one third of the total was borne by your Office Bearers between them. Being additional to their own business and personal responsibilities/

responsibilities, such a strenuous, voluntary workload attending to interests on behalf of the whole Association Membership is deserving of the widest possible appreciation.

(d) CIRCULARS

Total circularisations to all Members during the year increased by 3 to 23, in addition to the regular despatch of Market Price Bulletins to almost 40 members each week. The increased number of meetings also added to the cost of circulating Notices, Minutes and Reports of those meetings, as well as making it more difficult to co-ordinate their despatch with News Letters, etc. Containment of these costs will not be helped by the introduction of increased postal charges later this month, but constant vigilance will be maintained. The need to have as close a contact as possible with and between all Members must remain a principal aim.

(e) ACTIVITIES

Beyond all doubt the principal non-routine matter to occupy the attention of your Council (and, perhaps, the whole membership of the Association) was the continuing efforts of the new Scottish Seed Potato Association. Following several meetings and prolonged discussions between that Association and our own, several events together precipitated a marked polarisation of views within the Scottish Seed potato industry mid-way through the year.

This led Council to decide to poll the views of all Association Members. Implementation of the overwhelming result required your Council and Office Bearers to spend a great deal of time and effort in rather unfamiliar activities. These matters are continuing to occupy the closest and most careful attention.

The year also saw fruition of nearly two years work by our "Conditions" sub-Committee together with our trade colleagues south of the border. The revised Conditions of Sale now in operation bear witness to the sub-Committee's efforts and it may also be of interest that almost 25,000 copies of the Conditions were ordered from the Association by its Members.

In concert with the practical interests within the Scottish potato industry (through the joint Seed Trade Committee, which your Association initiated and established in 1979) your Council has been closely engaged in formulating a package of proposals to improve to Seed Potato Inspection Scheme. Good relations between the constituent organisations of this small Committee are a valuable and gratifying feature, enabling the package to be presented with a single and unified voice/

voice to the Department a month ago. A further meeting with the Department in these matters is anticipated shortly.

More recently your Council and its Representatives have been occupied in formulating a national-level Trade response to initiatives to develop National Seed Development Organisation potato varieties overseas. Though only at an early stage as yet, the potential workload involved in expansion of this matter indicates considerable further demands on your Council and its Representatives.

In the final analysis, of course, the activities of your Council and Representatives in all matters on behalf of the whole Association Membership does depend on the continued support of all Members. In pursuit of the aims of your Association that support is vital. Your Council trusts sincerely that it will enjoy the confidence of Members in all its efforts.

(f) 1981 SUBSCRIPTIONS

In readiness for this item on today's Agenda, your Council has considered both the Audited Accounts now before you and the prepared and revised Estimates of the 1980/81 Income and Expenditure. Following its study, your Council recommends that today's Annual General Meeting of Members should (a) not make any changes to the existing tonnage and (b) authorise subscriptions in each of those six brackets to be increased to £35, £70, £90, £110, £130 and £160, plus V.A.T., respectively.