

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held in
the Station Hotel, PERTH at 11 a.m. on
Thursday, 15th JANUARY, 1981.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, J.C. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, J. Logan Milne, J.O. Robertson, G. Smillie 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: Mr. Blackmore intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. J.P. Deuchar, J. Fordyce, W. Gordon, D. Maxwell and R. Ramsay, and for late arrival on behalf of Messrs. B. Fulton and J. Henderson.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 21st November, 1980 (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 (a) Membership - Mr. Blackmore stated there were no matters to report.

ARISING:

(b) "Copyright, (c) Accounts and (d) Financial Estimates - All three matters were deferred until later in today's meeting.

(e) N.S.D.O. Working Party - Mr. Barr explained that arising from the last J.L.C. meeting Mr. Aves' now-circulated Paper refines earlier thoughts into actual proposals. He anticipated the next meeting of the N.S.D.O. Working Party (19.1.81) would refer the proposals (particularly in respect of the constitution of the proposed Committee) back for further refinement. In Council's discussion it was felt that without any statutory power the proposed Committee would be unable to control N.S.D.O.'s direction. With the whole industry opposed to creation of monopolies, the Committee at best could try to limit them.

Mr. Barr also reported that a further meeting with N.S.D.O. Consultative Committee is to take place in about a month's time which, he believed, will continue earlier efforts to "index link" Royalty Rates. Mr. Blackmore reported a telephone call from Mr. Gordon regarding proposals to with-hold currently-due Royalties. Council was unable to support these proposals and felt any "linking" of rates should be with resultant crop prices. There was also strong feeling that royalties should not be payable on stock disposed of for non-seed purposes. Council agreed Mr. Barr be instructed (a) to resist any increase in royalty rates (b) to press for waiving or deferral of currently-due royalty payments and (c) to draw N.S.D.O.'s attention to "the law of diminishing returns".

BRITISH
RAIL:

(f) British Rail - Council took note of the precirculated Report of its meeting with British Rail in Perth on 21st November, 1980. Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a letter from British Rail suggesting a further meeting and discussion of their Feasibility Study Report. Council felt the present business climate precluded application of the Report's findings within the foreseeable future. Coupled with immediate pressures of other Association Business it was agreed to decline another meeting.

(g) Foreign Visit 1981 - Following a brief discussion Council formally resolved not to arrange a foreign visit this year.

(h) Association Representatives - Mr. Hunter reminded Council that although its last meeting had appointed representatives to the various P.M.B. Committees, other appointments had still to be made. After due consideration Council agreed to re-appoint the existing external representatives/

representatives to the British Potato Trades Consortium (but substituting Mr. J.R. McArthur for Mr. J.H. Barr as alternative); the N.S.D.O. Consultative Committee and Working Party; the Seed Potato Consultative Panel; the Seed Trade Committee; the Joint Liaison Committee and to British Rail/Freightliners. The members of the Association's own internal (Public Relations and Entertainments) Committees were also re-appointed as was the Association's Nominee to the Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors. It was further agreed the Association's Exports Steering Committee be disbanded.

In respect that Messrs. G. Brass and J. George no longer served on Council and to take account of the need for more export-oriented experience it was agreed the "Conditions" sub-Committee would comprise Messrs. J.R. McArthur (Convenor), R. Ramsay and K.A. McKenzie together with the re-appointment of Messrs. J. Henderson and R. David Hunter.

It was further agreed the Association's Arbitration Panel would comprise all present Members of Council, with power to co-opt and that under that power Mr. J. George be invited to continue as a member of the Arbitration Panel.

SEED
TRADE
COMMITTEE:

Council took note of a Report of a meeting of the Seed Trade Committee in Perth on 25th November, 1980 (copies of which had been pre-circulated to each Member of Council.)

JOINT
LIAISON
COMMITTEE:

Council also noted a Report of a meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee in London on 4th December, 1980 (copies of which had been pre-circulated to each Member of Council). The N.S.D.O. content thereof having been dealt with already today, Mr. Hunter enlarged on the copyright of the revised Conditions of Sale. Foreclosure of discussion within the J.L.C. on the ground of non-competence had not obscured the fact that, while N.A.S.P.M. Council appeared prepared to cede joint authorship, a payment of £300 will not resolve the matter and demand for a payment of £500 is to be maintained.

In discussion it was felt this demand reflected insufficient recognition of Mr. Hunter's professional contribution to the revision but Council was assured this was not the case. It was accepted that this matter must be resolved and the Office Bearers and the Secretary recommended that a payment of £500 in full be agreed and be paid out of Capital Funds. The recommendation was adopted without a vote, it being agreed the Secretary advise N.A.S.P.M. of this decision immediately and explain the payment will be made as soon as reasonably possible. It was further agreed that procedure be defined at the outset of any similar possible future occasion and that this encroachment on Capital be replaced whenever and however possible.

(i) Association Accounts - It was confirmed the Association's duly audited Accounts to 31st October, 1980 be submitted to the Annual General Meeting of Members with Council's recommendation that the Accounts be adopted.

(j) Financial Estimates - As instructed, revised Estimates had been prepared, submitted to and considered by the Association's Office Bearers. Mr. Hunter gave details of the various revisions (including those prompted by comments at Council's last meeting) which brought out a total cash requirement of £8,060.

Accepting assumptions regarding membership levels and between-bracket changes (but making no changes to the tonnage brackets themselves) the Office Bearers did not favour any "weighting" of increases, preferring an "across the board" increase of one third in subscriptions in each bracket. After "rounding", the rates recommended by the Office Bearers became £35, £70, £90, £110, £130 and £160 respectively.

In Council's discussions it was stated that recent discontinuation of the Market Prices Bulletin service to Members would lead to a number of resignations, particularly within the lowest tonnage bracket. Mr. Blackmore/

Blackmore reported his enquiries to obtain the required information from alternative sources and altered despatch timing this would cause. Council instructed the immediate restoration of the Bulletin service and authorised its despatch by first class mail each Wednesday.

After some further discussion Council agreed the proposed rates of subscription be submitted to the Annual General Meeting of Members with Council's recommendation that they be adopted.

SEED POTATO
CONSULTATIVE
PANEL:

Introducing the pre-circulated Report on the Meeting of the Seed Potato Consultative Panel, the Chairman stated D.A.F.S. intends to tighten eelworm testing arrangements, probably with exclusion of "part-fields only" tests, more sampling and restoration of digging two or three random plants at field inspections. D.A.F.S. is also now clearly in favour of compulsory burning down as a means of reducing Blackleg disease. Mr. Fenton added that Inspection Fees increases of the order of 25% were indicated.

In discussions it was felt compulsory burning down for Blackleg control will necessitate earlier, fully professional inspections. Mr. Barr foresaw eelworm testing changes will increase scheduling of land and accelerate the long-term trend of forcing growing out of better arable land into less productive areas. He felt the P.M.B. should be pressed for more flexibility of basic acreage but general discussion did not reach any decision in the matter.

ANY OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Meeting with Lord Mansfield - The Chairman reported on an informal meeting of Association Office Bearers with the Minister of State for Agriculture in Edinburgh on 19th December, 1980 regarding formation of a Development Council. In his Lordship's view, unless something is done (and soon) the Scottish Seed Potato Industry must inevitably decline. He favoured formation of a Development Council and made quite clear no Government funds will be made available for this purpose, finance requiring to be generated wholly within the industry.

(b) Scottish Seed Potato Association - The Chairman read a letter of 7th January, 1981 from S.S.P.A. requesting a joint meeting of Councils to exchange views on the best use of funds granted to that Association. During discussion it was suggested it could be used to finance a feasibility study on promotion, but it was learned this had already been proposed within S.S.P.A.'s own Council.

The Secretary suggested Council ought first to define the Association's own policy, both towards the S.S.P.A. and the proposed Development Council, in the light of developments that have occurred. It was agreed Council should meet again in early course for this purpose and it was decided this should be at 11 a.m. on Friday, 23rd January, 1981 in the Station Hotel, Perth. It was further agreed to meet Council of S.S.P.A. at 2.p.m. that day there and the Secretary was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

Under pressure of time the meeting was then closed.

D. M. Lindsay