



The Consortium discussed whether it was worthwhile being a Member of the European Union. It is costing the Consortium £1,250 annual contribution. Douglas Smith felt it was worthwhile to keep going until E.E.C. regulations were decided. The decision was therefore deferred to a later date.

7. Bob Scorer.

Reported on a recent meeting with N.F.U. for their views on grading standards. Riddle sizes were discussed and the N.F.U. would support a minimum riddle of 45mm for future buying programmes. This suggestion was strongly opposed by Henry Lindsay and G. Fenton who said that we must keep a 40mm minimum for the guarantee and any future buying programme. The Consortium members agreed with our view.

Bob Scorer also reported on the Consortium meeting with the N.A.F.F. on 12th January, 1981. The Consortium expressed a wish that the Trade should be free to select as required their own size bands of dressing between 25mm and 90mm. Miss Thomson of the N.A.F.F. thought that there would be no problem here.

Miss Thomson asked the Consortium members their opinion on (a) new potatoes being classed with fruit and vegetables or (b) separately from ware potatoes.

The Consortium replied that they always disagreed with (a) but even separating new and ware potatoes (because of the difficulty of always defining what was a new potato) they could see no problem with (b). They would and always have done, prefer that new and ware potatoes be classed under one heading.

Miss Thomson asked the Members to discuss these proposed standards also with the Scottish Potato Trade Assen. which was not represented at the meeting, and report back in due course.

Imports inspection standards.

The Consortium Members again expressed their dissatisfaction at the difference between the importing standards and those of the P.M.B. Miss Thomson accepted that the difference was undesirable. It would require that primarily legislation through Parliament would be necessary to bring about a change. The Minister had been consulted but it had been agreed at Ministerial level that such action could not be justified. If and when the regime came into being it would be more difficult. Would the Trade like to consider devising a regime, in advance, which would harmonize the standards? She again asked if it was possible for the Importer to police the Imports. It was explained to her that this was not practical. She said that the P.M.B. had offered to adjudicate in any disputes over imports.

She informed the meeting that she had visited Spain and Egypt and had discussed with the authorities their future potato exports. She was told of the Egyptian losses last year but they had assured her of their desire to improve on the quality in future.

Both Greek and Spanish authorities have assured her that they hope to maintain the tonnage of exports to the U.K. and had no intention of swamping our markets or to reduce prices by subsidies. The Ministry would keep a watch over this. The Egyptian tonnage might be reduced to 80,000 tonnes.

(It was pointed out by Bob Scorer that the new Egyptian Board for the imports of Egyptian potatoes to the U.K. was a private concern and did not represent all exporters in Egypt).

P.M.B. Merchant Potato Licence.

Miss Thomson was asked her opinion whether licences would be necessary under a Regime. As far as the Ministry was concerned, merchants were only licenced in order to collect from them Statistics and Trading Returns. She would visualise a marketing body being formed to regulate the marketing and to supply a registered code number (for identification on packages) but this would be up to the trade to decide. A full discussion/

/discussion to be held with trade at a later date.

Crop report future prospects.

The Consortium advised the Ministry that they felt there would be a larger surplus at the end of the season than stated by the P.M.B.

8. Election of Consortium Chairman and Vice.

Tom Login was elected Chairman for two years and Harold Aves Vice Chairman.

9. P.M.B. Ware standards for 1981 Crop.

Consortium felt there should not be two sizes i.e. 40mm x 80mm or 45mm x 85mm. There should be one size or the other. Consortium members wanted a minimum riddle of 25mm and the maximum of 90mm with trade options within a 30mm banding.

10. Seed Situation.

Henry Lindsay reported a drop of approx. 30% on seed loadings from Scotland at the end of December, 1980 and forward orders thin on the ground.

Harold Aves, for Northern Ireland, said that exports had done well and growers were pleased with prices! Home business was very poor.

Mr. Rackley retires as Consortium Secretary in March, 1981, and it was felt that the National Federation should still be the Secretaries office and one or two members of their organisation were suggested as Secretary.

End.

G.Fenton.

5.2.81