

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held
in the Station Hotel, PERTH, at 11 a.m.
on Thursday, 13th JANUARY, 1983.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, J. Logan Milne, P. Miller, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, R.G. Ramsay, J.O. Robertson and G. Smillie, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.G.H. Fenton, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES: The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. W. Gordon, D. Maxwell, W.E. Muirhead and J.R. McArthur.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 26th November, 1982 (a copy of which had been sent to each Member of Council) was taken as read. Supported by Mr. Henderson (who provided the Secretariat with Thompson & Morgan Ltd.'s brochure), Mr. Cook pointed out that at head (c) on page 5 of the Minute "Record Variety" should read "Desiree Variety". Subject to this correction the Minute was duly approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Conditions of (i) Purchase - The Secretary read the draft of his proposed amendment designed to accommodate N.F.U.S. objections to Clause 17 of the draft revision of the Conditions of Purchase of Seed Potatoes. Discussion revealed support for Mr. Barr's proposal to include "faults" in "defects" and agreement to avoid specificity on both counts when submitting this finalised amendment to N.F.U.S. for consideration.

(ii) Sale for Ware - The Secretary explained that pending finalisation of explanatory "Notes", circularisation of copies of these Conditions to the seven responding applicants had been delayed but would be effected within the next few days.

(iii) Sale of Seed (Export) - The Secretary explained the recent emphasis and success of "frost arrangements" had overshadowed opportunity to pursue further discussions with a representative body for exporters. This aim will be followed up at the earliest opportunity.

(b) Membership - Mr. Blackmore reported due enrollment of three new Association Members as instructed at Council's last meeting. The resultant total Roll of 123 Members had since been reduced, in respect of resignations received from Spalding Potatoes Ltd., J. & A. Henderson Ltd. and John P. Osbourne, Esq., to 120 Members. In discussion, Council accepted the point made in J. & A. Henderson Ltd.'s letter that the Association has become predominantly concerned with seed matters. Mr. McKenzie's proposal that Press Releases and News Letters must stress Ware matters received full support.

The Secretary read out a letter received from the P.M.B. in reply to the Association's request for fuller consideration of the qualifications of applicants for Merchants Licences. Council agreed to take no further action in this matter. He also reported receipt of notifications of applications for Merchants Licences by Messrs. George Anderson & Sons, Musselburgh (Ware) and Messrs. A. & H. Kydd, Broughty Ferry (Seed) and explained no reply had been received to the invitation to Association Membership extended to the latter in August, 1982 as instructed when a Ware Merchants Licence was granted to that firm. Council decided not to invite the former firm to apply for Association Membership but to send a reminder to the latter firm.

(c)/

(c) Early Crop Inspections - Following discussion of DAFS reply to the Association's letter, during which Council Members indicated their own 1982 experiences, it was agreed to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Seed Trade Committee.

(d) Nomenclature - The Secretary reported DAFS acknowledgement of the Association's acceptance of "Elite" only if FS classes are simultaneously renamed "Super Elite". After brief discussion Council agreed this matter be referred to the next meeting of the Seed Trade Committee.

(e) "Cabbage Seed" Appeal - The Secretary reported that a full copy of the Judgement in this Case, expected by post this morning, had not arrived.

(f) Food Labelling Regulations - The Secretary reported that a further meticulous consideration of these Regulations had not altered his view that the advice circularised to all Members does not require to be amended. Council agreed to leave the matter over pending accumulation of practical experience.

(g) Consortium/European Union - Following discussion of correspondence pre-circulated to Council Members it was agreed to go along with the proposed revised arrangements for U.K. membership of the European Union for one year in the first instance and thereafter to review whether to continue the proposed two year trial-period.

(h) Investment Changes - Mr. Blackmore reported that as agreed by the Finance Committee Stockbrokers' advice had been accepted and the recommended sale and purchase had been effected. In fact, between the date of proposals and actual changes, prices had moved in the Association's favour. Sale of £2570 7½% Treasury Stock 1985/88 had realised £2429.21 net, providing a tax-free Capital Gain of £237.59 over original cost. The proceeds including the Gain had been immediately re-invested in the purchase of £2630 9% Treasury Stock 1994 costing £2414.51. This change had increased the gross annual income of the Association by £37.54 in each full year and for an additional six year term.

(i) True Potato Seed - Mr. Blackmore also reported having been unable to obtain a copy of the reported advertisement. Mr. Henderson provided a copy of Thompson & Morgan Ltd.'s seed catalogue for forwarding to DAFS.

(j) "Great Brits" - The Chairman reported that Mr. Meredith (P.M.B.) wishes to meet active participants in the "Great Brits" Scheme in Perth at the end of the current month. Mr. Don McKenzie (Project Manager) would also be present and all aspects of the Scheme would be reviewed and discussed. Messrs. Barr, Fenton, Fulton and McKenzie expressed willingness to attend the meeting and it was felt Alston, Doig & Smith Ltd. may wish to be invited. During discussion it was felt that reported total supplies traded to date (4,000 tonnes, up from 600 tonnes in October, 1982) were overstated.

(k) Average Prices "Blueprint" - In reply to Mr. Cook, Mr. Blackmore apologised for having overlooked to obtain a copy of this document from the P.M.B. He undertook to correct this and circularise to Council as soon as possible.

JOINT
LIAISON
COMMITTEE:

The Chairman reported on the meeting of the Joint (NASPM/SPTA) Liaison Committee in London on 6th December, 1982 which he had attended in company with Messrs. Barr, Cook, Lindsay and McClung.

Discussion had included the revised Scottish Conditions of Purchase of Seed Potatoes (confirmed a copy be sent to NASPM once finalisation with NFUS is reached); NASPM draft Arbitration Rules (Mr. Hunter's consideration being awaited); revision of Seed Potato Regulations (agreed to seek growers number "as labelled" on invoices etc.); chemicals use (DAFS response being awaited) and details of Solanex Ltd. Licensees/

Licenses in Northern Ireland.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Cook reported on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee which he had attended with Mr. McKenzie in London on 8th December, 1982.

There had been prolonged discussion of the P.M.B. decision to release back supplies contracted for October-December delivery under the Price Insurance Scheme. Severe criticism had centred on the underlying doubts accorded to the Board's published "in balance" estimates for the 1982/83 crop season. The Board continued to maintain this view, with perhaps a marginal (100,000 tonnes) shortfall eventually. Both NFUS and SPTA had stressed the depressive effect of the "release back" on prices in Scotland and urged closer prior consultation and monthly delivery periods in future. This latter point was among others already being reviewed by the Board.

During Council's discussion doubts were expressed regarding the accuracy of the Board's published average weekly price to date (£64.17 per tonne bags included) at the same time as the current ware price in Scotland was around £59 per tonne, bags included.

A.O.C.B.

(a) PCN sampling for export - After brief discussion of a pre-circulated letter from DAFS proposing below-grader sampling for PCN in consignments for export, it was agreed a "fait-accompli" situation pre-cluded objections.

(b) 1983 Disease Warnings - In reply to a pre-circulated enquiry from ESCA Council agreed that mailing of warnings should be continued, in preference to media announcements.

(c) Sales by tuber-count - Discussion of a pre-circulated letter from Mr. Bethel (SSPDC) revealed that though not widespread this practice is already in use. It was felt it was up to individual companies whether to respond to any demand and that all sales should be based on each customer's weight per acre planting intentions. The matter was deferred for possible further wider discussion following today's A.G.M.

(d) SSPDC Press Release re Exports - In readiness for Mr. Bethel's address following today's A.G.M., the Chairman sought views on an appropriate response to the recent press article. It was felt Mr. Bethel will claim mis-reporting did not represent his views. It was also felt that an Export Merchant's Consortium will try to build a merchant's margin into contract prices. It was noted that foreign buyers want a centralised seller and it was felt that a centralised selling organisation must help the whole Scottish trade, the opportunity for creating such an organisation probably being better now than at any time past. Such an organisation would not be a monopoly but, while problems are known to exist and the need for improved arrangements is most apparent, individual exporters would not be prepared to surrender their market share or their identities.

(e) Trade representation at overseas shows - Mr. Blackmore reported a nil response to the P.M.B.'s invitation for the Paris Show. In brief discussion it was thought possible that the SSPDC might assume U.K. and overseas exhibiting from the P.M.B.

(f) Association Press Release - Council agreed the Public Relations Committee should compile and issue a Press Release following the A.G.M. later today.

(g) Resignation from Council - Mr. Ramsay handed the Chairman a letter explaining the reasons for his decision to resign from his membership of Council. Mr. Fenton expressed his regret at this step and with Council's support expressed appreciation and thanks to Mr. Ramsay for all his efforts and hard work during his service on Council.

(h) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to hold its next meeting in the Ice Rink, Perth at 12 Noon on Friday, 4th March, 1983 concluding for lunch there at 2 p.m. in readiness for the Curling Match at 3 p.m.

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