

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the SCOTTISH
POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION held in the STATION
HOTEL, PERTH at 2.00 p.m. on THURSDAY, 30th
JUNE, 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, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie and J.O. Robertson, 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 at the meeting.

APOLOGIES: The Secretary intimated apologies for absence received from Messrs. D. Maxwell, W.E. Muirhead and T. McClung and on behalf of Mr. G. Smillie.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 5th May, 1983 (each Member of Council having received a copy of it beforehand) was taken as read. It was duly approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING:

- (a) Product Liability Insurance - The Secretary reported having established contact with Bain Dawes PLC, a firm of Insurance Brokers in N.E. England. Their Mr. Walker appeared to have a good knowledge of agricultural matters and, having been provided with details of membership analysis and estimated tonnages and values, had indicated that a "blanket" cover scheme could be devised. It had been made clear to him that not all eligible members would necessarily participate. It seemed the risk cover would have to be arranged in London and a quotation (which may take some little time to obtain) will follow in due course.
- (b) Membership and Subscriptions - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of a telephoned application for Association Membership from D. Corrigall Ltd., Dunning. He explained this company had not responded to an invitation extended to them in May, 1978. In the light that this company is already a member of N.A.S.P.M. Council approved acceptance of this application with effect from 1st July, 1983.

He also reported receipt of notification that Messrs. Thomson Potatoes, North Berwick have applied to the P.M.B. for a Seed Merchant's Licence. Council instructed this matter be resubmitted for its reconsideration, once formal notification that this application has been successful has been received.

The Secretary reported having written, as instructed, to the member in breach of the "tonnage-bracket" arrangements. Although that member had not yet replied this may be due to a regretted delay in communicating Council's views to him. It was agreed to continue this matter until Council's next meeting to provide the Secretary with further time to secure that member's considered reply.

- (c) Copyright of Conditions of Sale - The Secretary explained (and Mr. Blackmore read out) the prepared draft of a letter to be sent to former members and to non-members, regarding the continued use or non-authorized use respectively, of the Association's copyright Conditions of Sale. During its discussion, Council agreed this should first be sent immediately, in suitable form to former members (who had resigned since August/

August, 1980) in the first instance. In respect of the latter category, it was also agreed to publicise (by Press Release, announcement in N.F.U.S. publications and in the next Association News Letter) Council's intention to uphold the copyright, prior to sending individual letters in suitable form to reported offenders of that copyright.

- (d) True Potato Seed - Mr. Blackmore reported that D.A.F.S.' promised reply had still not come to hand. He undertook to circularise this to all members of Council as soon as it arrived. Following his recent visit to New Zealand, Mr. Henderson (who had originally initiated this enquiry) provided Council with a very interesting summary of his experiences there which, it was agreed, should be drawn to the attention of the Development Council.
- (e) Average Prices "Blueprint" - Mr. Blackmore also reported that despite further correspondence and enquiries, a copy "blueprint" has still not been received. He was hopeful that the latest promise two days ago will be kept and a copy of whatever arrives will be sent to each member of Council immediately.
- (f) Nomenclature - Mr. Hunter explained that D.A.F.S.' promised reply in this matter will be combined with reply (d) above and he will circularise it at that same time.
- (g) S.S.P.D.C. Minutes - Mr. Hunter also reported that no reply to his letter requesting copies had been received. Mr. Barr explained Mr. Bethel had contacted him recently in the matter and it was likely a favourable reply will come to hand shortly.

In reply to the Chair, Mr. Barr also explained the S.S.P.D.C. had now agreed in principle to join Solanex, but terms were still being finalised. Northern Ireland was still "sitting on the fence" in this matter. He outlined his understanding of the secondment of Mr. Alex. Sinclair to the Development Council and Mr. Cook explained arrangements for S.S.P.D.C. exhibitions participation by caravan which Mr. Bethel felt could be of interest to S.P.T.A. members. Council agreed Mr. Hunter should liaise with Mr. Bethel in this respect.

Mr. Barr also indicated Mr. Bethel's wish to obtain statistical-only information on the estimated annual tonnage traded by the total S.P.T.A. membership. During discussion not all members of Council supported such disclosure (it was pointed out that seed figures could not be separated out) and it was decided the Secretariat should submit totals of members in each tonnage-bracket to Office-bearers only in the first instance.

Council also congratulated Mr. Doig on his appointment to serve on the Development Council. In further reply to the Chair Mr. Barr and Mr. Cook explained the possible background to a (false) report that S.S.P.D.C. had asked for a membership fee of £500 from an English Association. Following further discussion Mr. Barr also reported that the Development Council is preparing crop-boards and car-stickers publicity material to be available soon.

- (h) P.M.B. Committees - Mr. Hunter reported having written to the P.M.B. as instructed, and in their reply, Mr. Doig's nomination to replace Mr. Ramsay as the Association's alternative representative on the Export Development Committee has been accepted.

REVISION OF CONDITIONS OF PURCHASE/

REVISION OF CONDITIONS OF PURCHASE - Mr. Hunter explained he had not been permitted to meet N.F.U.S.' legal advisers to press for adoption of Condition 17 as proposed. An alternative meeting with N.F.U.S.' Potatoes Committee confirmed they clearly understood the reasons for the proposal but, having rejected it to ensure security of the 3 days and 10 days complaints periods, no mandate to negotiate amendment of the proposal existed.

It had been stated, however, that consideration would be given to a similar Condition restricted to "admixture" claims only. A subsequent meeting of the S.P.T.A.'s "Conditions" sub-Committee had agreed that provision for claims arising from non-declaration of chemical treatment should also be included. Fresh proposals, in both forms, had been sent to N.F.U.S. for urgent consideration. In reply now to hand the "admixtures only" form has been approved, it being pointed out that non-declaration of chemical treatment was already covered by legislation.

After very full consideration during prolonged discussion of the many aspects of this matter, Council agreed (with reluctance by some members) to adopt the "admixtures only" form of Condition 17 for incorporation into the revised Conditions of Purchase, to clear the way for immediate introduction for copyright use by Association members only. It was further agreed the Secretary should consider inclusion of a short, non-controversial requirement that adherence to the Seed Potato Regulations forms part of the Conditions of Purchase.

P.A.Y.E. and N.H.I. on CASUAL WAGES - Council gave careful consideration to the Secretariat's pre-circulated Notes. It was felt these Notes could not be issued to all Association members for guidance, as previously instructed. Council members also felt, however, that they should not be exclusively privy to information that might help another member avoid problems with the authorities. The Secretary confirmed that he would continue to provide assistance in response to enquiries from members and Council agreed a suitably worded "low-key" item should be included in the next Association News Letter.

BRITISH POTATO TRADES CONSORTIUM - Mr. Fenton reported that the Consortium meeting which he and Mr. McArthur had attended in London on the morning of 13th June, 1983 had been principally devoted to discussion of the P.M.B.'s recent Scheme for low-priced sales to potato processors. In reply to a letter from the National Federation, Messrs. Geoffrey Grantham and Robin Pooley are to meet Trade representatives in London on 13th July, 1983 when it is hoped that hard documented evidence of interference with normal trading will be presented and trade participation in the operation of such a Scheme in future will be discussed. The Consortium Secretary had circularised all constituent trade organisations asking for all available evidence to be submitted to him.

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - Mr. Fenton explained that the immediately above matter had also taken up the major part of the meeting of the J.C.C. which he and Mr. McArthur had also attended in London on the afternoon of 13th June, 1983. He pointed out to Council that the Trade had not been consulted prior to announcement of the Scheme (on the morning after the previous meeting of the J.C.C.). The Scheme was considered to be a major change of marketing policy, in which case the P.M.B. is required to consult the Trade (in terms of the Potato Marketing Scheme). He also stressed that discussion to ensure trade participation in future was most important.

During Council's discussion, Mr. Fulton reported having first drawn attention to this matter during the Ware Imports Advisory Committee Meeting in London on 13th April, 1983. He was informed Scotland was involved in only 1,000 tonnes of this trade. Mr. Cook reported that the Scottish Advisory Committee Meeting on 27th June, 1983 had been informed that 8,000 tonnes of this trade had been Scottish. While he could produce documented evidence of interference with normal trade he was not inclined/

inclined to do so because (in his own view) such evidence will backfire on the Merchants.

In conclusion, Mr. Fenton reported that the P.P.M.A. had declared itself against the use of "catch weight" sales, but its reasons for doing so had not been made clear.

SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Mr. McKenzie reported on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee in North Berwick on 27th June, 1983 which he had attended with Mr. Cook. He first remarked on his overall impressions that Mr. Pooley had taken little part and that N.F.U.S.' congratulations on the Board's efforts in Scotland had been very overdone. Mr. Cook added that he had felt aware of disfavour towards the Trade at recent P.M.B. meetings.

Mr. McKenzie explained the meeting had noted historical Market Reports, received a comprehensive survey on the "Great Brits" Scheme (which will be extended into the Granada T.V. area this season), considered the new crop tonnages, prices, yields and rates of movement to markets (for all of which he gave detailed figures) and received reports on the Board's Schemes. In round figures, 160,000 tonnes had been sold for stockfeed of which some 68,000 tonnes (42/43%) had come from Scotland and 47,000 tonnes (8,000 tonnes from Scotland) had been sold to processors. In respect of the 1983/84 crop it was understood the target area had been planted.

In conclusion, Mr. Cook observed that with less emphasis on historical matters and more attention to future matters this Committee's meetings could become both useful and worthwhile. In reply to Council Messrs. Cook and McKenzie explained that apart from the total area no detailed figures had been given for the area entered for inspections in Scotland, but approximate percentage increases and decreases for certain Varieties were given. Council agreed the Secretariat should ask D.A.F.S. to explain this and the non-telephoned prior notice departures from the agreed procedure/timetable for release of such information.

ENTERTAINMENTS COMMITTEE - Mr. Miller reported on the meeting of the Association's Entertainments Committee held earlier to-day. The Committee proposed that the two people involved in a regrettable incident at Rosemount following the Golf Outing there should be excluded from participation in the 1984 Event. Council adopted the proposal unanimously and following brief discussion it was agreed the President and the Secretary should decide how best to ensure the decision is implemented.

Mr. Miller also announced that bookings have been confirmed for the annual Curling Match, the first leg to be played in the Murrayfield Rink on Tuesday, 13th December, 1983 and the second leg in the Perth Rink on Friday, 9th March, 1984. Mr. Blackmore undertook to circularise this information to all Association Members.

In respect of the proposed Foreign Study Tour to Portugal in 1984 Mr. Miller explained initial costings were felt to be too expensive to attract the necessary support and Stita Farm Tours is to be asked to look into the Committee's further proposals to try to reduce the initial costs.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- (a) "Blanking of Crops" - Mr. Fulton reported there was considerable concern among seed growers, particularly in the Lothians area, at the extent of "blanking" in crops due to rotted seed this year. It was felt an approach should be made to the P.M.B. for relief from levy in this respect and that D.A.F.S. should also be asked to use maximum discretion at inspection time.

During Council's discussion it was agreed this problem existed throughout the growing area, tending to be less severe as one went northwards. Mr. Barr pointed out that the P.M.B. would agree/

agree to waive the levy provided the blank area is clearly delineated and "grubbed out". Council felt this could not solve the problem where blank patches were spread throughout a crop. It was also suggested D.A.F.S. might agree to issue a Report on a reduced area basis and it was felt confirmation should also be sought that it is the grower, not the inspector, who decides when a crop is ready for its first inspection. It was agreed the Secretariat should write to the P.M.B. and D.A.F.S. for clarification, notwithstanding that other organisations were reported to have done so already.

- (b) Plain Bag Marking - Mr. Barr explained he had been called to account by the P.M.B. for having packed potatoes of his own growing into plain (non-branded) bags marked with his Merchants Number, instead of his Producers Number. In his view this had considerable implications for all merchant-growers and he intended to write to the P.M.B. further in the matter.
- (c) Date of next meeting - After a short discussion Council agreed to meet again in the Station Hotel, Perth, at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 8th September, 1983 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual arrangements accordingly.

The Meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

