

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held in the Station Hotel, PERTH at
2 p.m. on Thursday, 10th MAY, 1984.

PRESENT: Messrs. G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, J.G.H. Fenton, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, P. Miller, P. Moffat, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson and G. Smillie, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.E. Cook, took the Chair and welcomed Mr. Miller's return to business following his recent illness.

APOLOGIES: The Chairman intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, R. Doig, B. Fulton, W.E. Muirhead and R. David Hunter (Secretary). Mr. Blackmore added that Messrs. J.P. Deuchar and J. Logan Milne had indicated their probable late arrival.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 9th March, 1984 (of which each Member of Council had received a copy beforehand) was taken as read. It was formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS

ARISING:

(a) Membership and Subscriptions - Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of notification on 19th March, 1984 that S. & M. Galbraith (Potatoes) Ltd. had ceased trading. This had reduced the total Membership Roll to 111, of whom 11 subscriptions (totalling £690 in 1982/83) remained unpaid. He pointed out that Subscription Notices were issued on 17th January last two reminders had been sent to each of them and the Association's accounting year was now more than half over. In reply he read out a list of those Members. It was agreed individual Council Members would approach each of them and the Membership of any Member whose subscription was unpaid by 31st May, 1984 would be suspended.

Mr. Blackmore also reported receipt of the following written Nominations for Association Membership:-

A.H.S. Potatoes Ltd., Ladybank (per Messrs. Wm. Fraser and Wm. Law & Son (Potatoes) Ltd.)
Ian Fraser, Esq., Forfar (per Pattullo Barr & Co. Ltd. and Gilbert McClung Ltd.)
Scott Country Potatoes, Cockburnspath (per Wm. Law & Son (Potatoes) Ltd. and Gilbert McClung Ltd.)
Council agreed to accept all three Nominations with immediate effect.

Notices of applications for PMB Merchant Licences, by Esk Frozen Foods Ltd., Montrose (Ware); Thos. Rowe (Farmers) Ltd, Lauder (Seed and Ware) and Sinclair McGill Scotland Ltd., Ayr (Seed) had also come to hand. The Secretariat noted to inform Council of the result of these applications in due course.

(b) Conditions of Purchase - Mr. Blackmore reminded Council that Northern Ireland's request to adapt SPTA Copyright Conditions of Purchase had been deferred pending whether NASPM might also be interested. NASPM circularised its Members, received only a single support reply and therefore declined SPTA's enquiry. Council agreed Northern Ireland's request should now be re-opened.

(c) Product Liability Insurance - Mr. Blackmore explained that Mr. Hunter had been unable to complete his comparative appraisal of the two quotations received. Mr. Cook reported briefly in respect of NASPM's enquiries to this same end. Council agreed this matter should be deferred until its next meeting.

(d) Entertainments Committee - (i) Golf Outing. Messrs. Miller and Blackmore reported briefly on details of the Association's annual Golf Outing/

Outing on 15th May. Mr. Blackmore stated Perth Ice Rink had invited a booking for the second leg of the annual Curling Match. Council agreed to ask for a booking for Friday, 8th March, 1985. Mr. McClung agreed to arrange a booking for the first leg to be held in Edinburgh.

(e) V.T.S.C. Growers - Mr. Blackmore sought clarification for a further, more specific reply to DAFS. Council confirmed SPTA support for formulation of a DAFS/VTSC disciplinary code. It was pointed out that with inadequate policing of the Scheme at present and with continuing financial restraints upon DAFS, increasing the number of VTSC growers would worsen the position. The Chairman also raised the matter of DAFS letter of 12th April to John Hay regarding labelling problems. Council's full discussion indicated support for an extension of the expiry date of labels to two months and for a tighter timetable for their issue. It was felt this latter point could resolve itself in course of DAFS' current local offices re-organisation.

(f) Chemicals Forum - Council's re-discussion of this matter disclosed the unanimous view that the Forum being set up by DAFS was not what the industry had indicated it wanted, the main objection being that a "once-every-year" reporting back system in which chemical matters had been relegated to secondary importance just will not do. It was felt that the essential aim must be to produce an advisory booklet in laymans terms as quickly as possible. The Chairman explained that SSPDC and the Agricultural Colleges had already started to do this but were now "sitting on it" until DAFS' Forum has been set up. Council decided against writing to DAFS again meantime, but to write to each constituent member body of the Seed Trade Committee seeking support for further pressure.

(g) Proposed PMB changes - In a brief review at the present stage of the timetable, Council decided to adopt a "wait and see" policy and not to make any representation to Ministers.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Council noted the contents of pre-circulated précis of two Meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council held in Edinburgh on 19th March and 23rd April, 1984. There was brief comment on proposed Higher Voluntary standards (indicated lack of support) and on Solanex, disclosing close similarity of SPTA and SSPDC views.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

The pre-circulated (PMB) Report on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee held in Edinburgh on 22nd March, 1984 was taken as read. In discussion it was stated that the "Great Brits" budget was to be reviewed, it being felt that projected expenditure could not be justified (it was reported that the Scheme had cost the Board £80 per tonne during 1983-84). It was unofficially stated the Scheme would be expanded U.K.-wide in 1985 but no answer had been obtained on how this would be funded ("Food from Britain" Scheme might provide this). It was believed expansion is regarded in the South as a waste of time, although some Council Members felt that expansion would be to the advantage of Scotch "Tops" (especially Desiree).

SEED
POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

The (PMB) Report on the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee in London on 27th March, 1984 (and pre-circulated) was taken as read. Mr. McArthur, who had attended, enlarged briefly on several points and in reply reported that final statistics for Seed Exports and movements to England and Wales were not yet available.

W.P.I.A.C.:

The pre-circulated (PMB) Report of the Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee Meeting held in London on 28th March, 1984 was also taken as read. As the Association's representative at that meeting, Mr. Lindsay's view was that it had been an un-mitigated and disastrous waste of time. Not only had industrial action disrupted public transport to the extent that Belgium, Eire and Germany were not represented, the representatives of both Holland and France provided virtually no information whatsoever, so that statistical exchange was entirely/

entirely one way in favour of the U.K.'s competitors. Council's discussion agreed that once the Association's representatives had first ascertained the Consortium's views, the Association would write to the PMB Chairman (Mr. Hitchcock) recommending that this Committee be the prime target in the Board's cost-cutting Review.

EXPORT
DEVLPMNT
COMMITTEE:

Enlarging on the subject of Blackleg in the PMB's Report on the meeting of the Export Development Committee in London on 9th April, 1984 (which the Secretariat had copied to each Member of Council beforehand and which was taken as read) the Association's representative, Mr. Deuchar, reported that (as reported by ADAS about a month previously) disease in sugar beet in the east of England was believed to derive from imported Dutch seed. Council also discussed the apparent confusion in funding and duplication of effort in overseas trials. It was agreed this activity appeared to be totally disorganised and unco-ordinated and the Chairman offered to pursue enquiries to try to clarify the matter.

WHITTLE
POTATOES:

The President explained he had accepted Mr. Whittle's invitation and attended a meeting at Stoneleigh on 18th April, 1984 to consider Mr. Whittle's Paper on Small Sized Seed. Mr. Cook listed the other attendees and explained Mr. Whittle had looked for full support which he did not receive. Mr. Cook had explained he could not speak for SPTA without Council's prior consideration. The Paper had now been copied to all Council Members to assist formulation of an SPTA reply before Mr. Whittle made his proposals public at a Press Conference at NASPM's A.G.M. in Edinburgh during the Royal Highland Show.

During Council's discussions it was suggested that Mr. Whittle was acting as flag-bearer for Eric Allan's work. It was pointed out that the proposals were a contradiction of the ADAS "Blueprint" Scheme. It was felt that the "tuber count" proposals might be looked at more closely and, if merited, perhaps SPTA should encourage wider adoption. The view was also expressed that the premium price required for specially grown and graded small seed would place it beyond the customer's financial capacity. It was also suggested SPTA should issue a Press Release before Mr. Whittle "went public". Council agreed that Messrs. Cook, McKenzie and McArthur should jointly frame a letter in reply to Mr. Whittle.

A.O.C.B:

(1) Request from Stita Farm Tours - Mr. Blackmore reported a request for assistance from Stita to arrange a farm visit for a party of American visitors. Council suggested he contact Mr. John Hay in the matter.

(2) Anglian Produce - Mr. Blackmore sought Council's guidance for a reply to letters received from Anglian Produce Ltd. After a brief discussion it was agreed he should draft a reply for approval by Messrs. Deuchar and Fenton.

(3) NASPM A.G.M. - The Chairman reported an approach from Mr. Graham Burhouse to arrange a joint NASPM/SPTA activity on Thursday, June 21st, 1984. It was agreed Mr. Peter Miller would contact Mr. Burhouse direct in the matter.

(4) Date of next Meeting - Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Perth on Thursday, 28th June, 1984 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

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

