

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
held in the City Mills Hotel, PERTH
at 11 a.m. on Friday, 18th JANUARY, 1985.

PRESENT: Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, I. Melrose, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne, P. Moffat, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson, G. Smillie and J.M. Swinton, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.E. Cook, took the Chair and extended a warm welcome to Mr. Melrose, attending his first meeting since his election to Council.

APOLOGIES: The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.P. Deuchar and D. Maxwell.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 23rd November, 1984 (previously copied to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was formally approved and was signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING: (a) Membership - The Secretary reported receipt of notification of an application for a PMB Merchant's Licence by Messrs. Glenfarg Potatoes. Council deferred a decision until notified this application has been granted.

(b) Notes for Arbiters - The Secretary explained considerable effort had been made towards revision of the Notes but he was not happy that they were yet in acceptable form. Council agreed that when ready, these should be considered by the President and the "Conditions" sub-Committee.

(c) Annual Dinner and Dance - The Secretary also reported finalised bookings of 103 Members and their Guests for this evening's Function and explained Raffle and Prizes arrangements. Council recorded appreciation and thanks to the Convenor and Members of the Entertainments Committee.

(d) Accounts and Estimates - In readiness for this afternoon's Annual General Meeting of Members Council considered the Association's audited 1984 Account and the 1985 Estimates (deferred from the last meeting). Council formally approved the Account and adopted the Finance Committee's recommendations that for the year to 31st October, 1985 (i) the Secretary's Salary be increased to £6,500 and (ii) 1984 tonnage brackets and Subscription Rates shall apply.

S.S.P.D.C.: Council considered a pre-circularised copy of a précis of a meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council held in Edinburgh on 20th December, 1984. Mr. Blackmore reported that in response to the recent Association News Letter Item, Mr. Bethel had received only one request for telexed/^{export}enquiries. It was agreed to repeat this Item in the next News Letter. After brief discussion of the Smithfield Show item, Council agreed to await the outcome of further Development Council discussion. In conclusion the Secretary read a letter to hand from DAFS enclosing a list of Members of the Development Council appointed for the next three years.

JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE: Council took note of the pre-circularised Report on the meeting of the Joint (NASPM/SPTA) Liaison Committee held in London on 5th December, 1984. In enlargement Mr. Barr explained NASPM Council is split on the proposed revision of the Conditions of Sale, both Mr. Lindsay and Mr. McClung being of the view that this topic will recur. Mr. McKenzie explained the same situation applied to the question of burning down and Council agreed DAFS should be asked to include this topic in the Agenda for the next Seed Potato Consultative Panel Meeting, to ensure that the "opposition's" view is placed on record. The Committee had agreed to continue its existing meetings bi-annually.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

The Secretary explained that despite its promise, the Potato Marketing Board had not provided Reports for pre-circularisation to Council in respect of the meetings of the Scottish Advisory, Joint Consultative and Seed Potato Advisory, Committees (on 5th, 13th and 14th December, 1984 respectively). To avoid this situation in future, the Chairman asked ALL Association's Representatives on ALL external Committees to submit a brief Précis Report on ALL meetings to the Secretariat for immediate circularisation to all Council Members. The Chairman stressed the obvious advantages of reducing the time spent on reporting at each meeting of Council.

During Mr. McKenzie's verbal Report on the Scottish Advisory Committee meeting he explained 1985 planting intentions had been stated to be 163,000 hectares. Council agreed the topic of "Great Brits" would be raised with Mr. Pooley following the A.G.M. this afternoon and, in reply to that DAFS, SPTA should jointly support the NFUS' views on the FEOGA Grants Scheme. Exports of seed potatoes from Scotland had reportedly reached 25,000 tonnes by the date of the Committee's meeting, Mr. Smillie adding they now exceeded 50,000 as at today's date. In response to the suggested increase in the minimum riddle size for ware to 50mm., (and supported by NFUS), SPTA had opposed 50mm., would reluctantly accept 45mm. but preferred to retain the present 40mm. riddle.

JOINT
CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE:
and
SEED POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Both Committees had met in London on the above dates, principally as part of the PMB's consultative procedure in connection with the suggested increase of the minimum ware riddle size. Mr. McKenzie explained SPTA had been the sole voice for retention of the present 40mm. minimum. It had been stated the Board will not move to a 50mm. riddle without the full support of the whole industry and, on good authority only yesterday, he had learned that a 50mm. riddle will not be re-discussed for this current season. The same source anticipated heavy pressure for a 45mm. minimum ware riddle for next season. In Council's subsequent discussion it was clear that various views precluded a unanimous response. It was agreed that Mr. Pooley be asked after this afternoon's meeting to confirm that the suggested 50mm. riddle will not be re-discussed for the current season.

In reply to Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Fulton stated that outgrades from "Great Brits" had been re-graded and sold as "peeler grade". The Chairman read out Mr. Pooley's letter of 7th December, 1984 in reply to SPTA on this topic.

SPTA/NFUS
MEETING:

The Secretary reported on the meeting held with NFUS in Edinburgh on 16th January, 1985 to discuss P.A.Y.E. and N.H.I.C. He first explained clearly that the Inland Revenue Auditors are not concerned with employers' difficulties obtaining and retaining casual harvest workers, but only that correct procedures are followed and all proper deductions are made. In this respect it appears that PAYE worries may be less serious than NHIC problems. NFUS had revealed the existence of an unwritten "understanding" with the Inland Revenue which created very serious communication problems, both on the official and industry sides. Further, by virtue of sensitivity, this understanding cannot be invoked by an employer under investigation, NFUS had offered to take up individual cases with the Inland Revenue, on being supplied with full information. The Secretary felt this to be a thoroughly unsatisfactory situation with no remedy at hand.

The Chairman felt that, with NFUS approval, a synopsis of an NFUS Paper could be sent to each Association Member asking anyone experiencing difficulty to contact the Secretary, who could then communicate the "understanding" verbally. The Secretary preferred not to have to "use" the NFUS and he explained he had contacted Mr. Miller, a tax consultant in Devon and Mr. McDougall of Messrs. Arthur Young McLelland Moores & Co. in Perth. Both are regarded as expert in this field and have indicated their willingness to assist, though this would obviously incur professional fees.

Council agreed Messrs. Doig, McKenzie and Smillie, with the Secretary, should arrange an exploratory discussion with Mr. McDougall and report back to Council.

ANY OTHER
COMPETENT
BUSINESS:

(a) Circularisation Enquiry - Mr. Blackmore reported an enquiry at Smithfield Show for circularisation of leaflets advertising bags, etc. to Members. Council granted approval, on payment of a suitable contribution towards circularisation costs.

(b) Independant Consultant - The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from Peter J. Shipton, Esq. offering his services as an independant consultant. Council agreed this offer be acknowledged and retained on file.

(c) A. & S. Potatoes - Mr. Fulton referred to previous discussions of this Company's ware potato trading activities and reported its current "undercutting" practices. In brief discussion it was pointed out the Company has now applied for a PMB Merchant's Licence, the outcome of which will be reported to Council in due course.

(d) Date of Next Meeting - Council agreed to meet again at 11 a.m. on Friday, 8th March, 1985 in the City Mills Hotel, Perth to be followed by lunch, prior to the Association Curling Match that afternoon. The Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

The meeting then concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

W. Doig