

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
in the City Mills Hotel, PERTH at 2 p.m. on  
Friday, 28th JUNE, 1985.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.J. Allan, J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, J. Henderson, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur and J.O. Robertson, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.E. Cook, took the Chair and welcomed those present.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of apologies for absence from Messrs G.S. Brass, J.P. Deuchar, B. Fulton, T. McClung, K. McKenzie, G. Smillie J.M. Swinton and R. David Hunter (Secretary).

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 10th May, 1985 (previously copied to each Member of Council) 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reported that George Ramsay & Sons Ltd., having paid their 1985 Subscription, had ceased trading on 31st May, 1985 and withdrawn from Membership and that the proprietor of Messrs. W. & G. Meikle is reported to be retiring from business. Council authorised removal of these names from the Membership Roll, thus now reduced to 112 Members.

He also reported that Mr. Fulton had contacted John Craig, (Hamilton) to learn he wished to continue in Membership, non payment of his subscription being an oversight. A further reminder posted to him on 20th June had elicited no response. Council instructed discontinuation of circularisations to this Member, to be restored only on receipt of his subscription within seven days of final notice.

In conclusion he reported the content of a telephone call from Mr. Sarwar, of A. & S. Potatoes (now granted a PMB Merchant's Licence) and a report from Mr. Lindsay regarding Messrs. Taylor & Fraser, Elgin. Council asked that a check be made that the latter has been granted a P.M.B. Merchant's Licence.

(b) Arbitrations Notes - Mr. Blackmore explained that despite two reminders a formal response to copies of the Notes forwarded to Stewart Wrightson and the Insurers had not been received. Council agreed this matter be pressed.

(c) P.A.Y.E. and N.I.C. on casual wages - A further letter received from Mr. McDougall (of Arthur Young) and copied to each Member of Council was discussed. It was also reported that the meeting arranged with Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn, Q.C., M.P., having failed by his non-attendance, had since been re-arranged for 2nd July.

Council members felt the letter increased rather than reduced the already confused problem. In one view, it seemed DHSS had revised its interpretation of its agreement with the NFU, which Mr. McDougall appears to accept although NFU might not agree. It was generally agreed that simplification of Mr. McDougall's advice for circularisation to all Association Members would not be an easy task and that this could not proceed until the meeting with Mr. Fairbairn has taken place.

In summary, the Chairman's view was that clarification of specific individual points should precede Association action.

(d) Annual Golf Outing - Mr. Miller reported briefly on the event held on 14th May, 1985. In view of attendances possibly having been depleted by /



by later planting this Season, a later booking for 1986 has already been requested. Council recorded a vote of thanks to Mr. Miller and the Entertainments Committee for their successful efforts.

Mr. Blackmore reported Mr. McKenzie's telephoned view that sponsorships should be sought, to contain the costs of future outings. In remitting this suggestion to the Entertainments Committee, Council's views were not supportive.

(e) Seed Trade Committee - Mr. Blackmore reported arrangements for a further meeting had still to be finalised. Council instructed efforts be directed to a date before the end of July, 1985 the Agenda for the meeting being finalised nearer that time.

(f) European Union Congress - It having proved impossible to arrange attendance of an Association delegate at the 1985 Congress, held in Brighton, the Chairman reported briefly on the views garnered at a subsequent meeting of the Consortium. It was felt to have been a socially successful event. Disquiet had arisen from the German ban on imported varieties which have not been cooking-tested. Extensions of complaints periods, from 3 weeks to 4 weeks for dry rot and from 3 weeks to 8 weeks for gangrene, in the revised Rucip Rules were believed would have negligible effect on U.K. trade.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Copies of a precis of the Minute of Meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council on 10th April, 1985 and of a Paper entitled "A Strategy for Expanding the Exports of Seed Potatoes" had been previously sent to each Member of SPTA Council; and were taken as read. Mr. Doig explained the latter had been prepared by Mr. Bethel following a failed "summit" meeting (which Mr. Doig had attended and on which he reported briefly). He also explained a subsequent SSPDC meeting considered the Paper and wider support for the proposals is now being sought.

Mr. Barr's view, that it must make sense to co-ordinate all available funds from various sources, to prevail on the P.M.B. to join in and to channel all efforts in the best direction, was widely accepted by Council Members. Mr. McArthur, however, expressed the view that the Paper represented an attempt to do something bureaucratically, with funds levied from the industry, which was essentially a commercial merchant function. This view was less well supported, it being pointed out that there is enough trade representation on the SSPDC to ensure that all efforts are pointed in the right direction. Particular mention was made of the educative proposals for overseas importing markets and the desirability of retaining the "Scottish" identity (it being generally agreed this conflicted with Northern Ireland participation).

In summary, it was agreed to draft a reply to Mr. Bethel (to be approved, before despatch, by Council's SSPDC representatives) indicating majority SPTA Council support for the Paper's proposals but without Northern Ireland involvement.

BRITISH  
POTATO  
TRADES  
CONSORTIUM:

Mr. Cook's Report on the Consortium meeting in London on 10th June, 1985 which had already been copied to each Member of Council, was taken as read. Commenting briefly upon it, Mr. Cook referred to the problems of continuity in the stock-feed programme in England. In view of the PMB's announced withdrawal from Futures Market Inspections next year, Council agreed Trade comment would be inappropriate.

JOINT  
CONSULTATIVE  
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Cook's further (and also pre-copied) Report on the J.C.C. meeting in London on 10th June, 1985 was also taken as read and was noted. Explaining the meeting (Chaired by Mr. David Sinclair) had been a largely historical and quiet one, Mr. Cook stated that carry-over stocks figures have been revised downwards. He added that the Dornay contract/



contract decision (made without Consortium approval) had avoided Dornay buying Dutch supplies. Council's discussion led on to stock-feed sales outwith the Trade. Mr. Cook also explained that the PMB is looking into ~~its~~ specimen seed costs calculations again. Council made no comment on the (pre-copied) PMB Report on its Chairman's visit to Spain and agreed to write the Board asking for available figures on the number of stores in England known to use CIPC.

SEED  
POTATO  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE:

Reporting on the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in Edinburgh on 25th June, 1985 Mr. McArthur explained the statistical information presented had been widely disseminated beforehand. The reduction in rail traffic had been remarked upon. There had been a long discussion of Royalties matters, following the 1983 Act extending rights on several varieties by five years (e.g. the rights on Piper do not now expire until 1992). Representations are to be made to N.S.D.O. that this had been done without consultation with the industry.

Mr. McArthur had criticised the substitution of potato pizzas for the usual baked potatoes at the P.M.B. Stand at the Royal Highland Show. This had been a disastrous decision which, when compared with the Milk Marketing Board Stand for example, had put the P.M.B. Stand in a very poor light. Council agreed this matter should be pressed at all future P.M.B. meetings.

A.O.C.B:

(1) City Mills Hotel charges - Mr. Blackmore explained that when confirming his booking (at the usual £4.00 per lunch plus £10 Room Hire) for today's meeting, the Hotel Manager's letter had stated the charge would be £6.50 per head inclusive of Room Hire. After explaining this had not given Council the opportunity to approve such a change, the Manager had agreed to charge today's meeting at our usual rate, on the understanding that Council's agreement to a charge of £6.00 per head inclusive for future meetings would be sought.

After a brief discussion, in which Council's view was that the proposed charge is too high, Mr. Blackmore was instructed to obtain alternative venue quotations before trying to negotiate a lower proposal with the City Mills Hotel.

(2) Phytosanitary Certificates - Mr. Blackmore reported that in a telephone call to Mr. Hunter early today, Mr. McKenzie had explained discussions had taken place at NASPM's Annual Luncheon regarding future issue of phytosanitary certificates, following the Bennett case Judgement. Mr. McKenzie had asked that Council's view on DAFS' likely reaction and on a possible SPTA enquiry approach to DAFS should be sought.

Council's discussion fully understood the problem and (with export enquiries already in train) recognised the need for early clarification. It was agreed a written enquiry should be drafted for Office Bearers' approval before being sent to Mr. Keith McIntosh (DAFS) in the first instance. At the same time a congratulatory letter to Mr. Gordon Lyall on his appointment to Mr. David Todd's former post should be drafted and similarly approved before posting.

(3) Sales of "Quota" - Mr. Robertson voiced objection to now permitted sales of P.M.B. Quota, pointing out that such sales are being made by farmers who have no investment in the industry. His view that Quota should belong to the actual levy payer, land-owner or tenant alike, was fully supported by fellow Council Members and reportedly had sympathy in the PMB and of Mr. Craig Davie as well but, in view of the result of past efforts, it was generally agreed change would be unlikely now.

(4) Transport Operator Licences - Mr. Doig explained a recent prosecution (which failed by proceeding against the wrong party) highlighted what he believed is a little-known statutory requirement. Use of a contractor for tractor-haulage of a grower's potatoes on the public/

public highway (e.g. from field to store) is illegal. Such haulage requires to be done by an operators-licence holder. The only legal way is for the grower to use his own owned and licensed tractor. After brief discussion Council instructed Mr. Blackmore to verify this matter.

(5) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to hold its next meeting (subject to satisfactory costs negotiations) in the City Mills Hotel, Perth on Thursday, 5th September, 1985.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Blackmore", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.