

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
in the City Mills Hotel, PERTH at  
2 p.m, on Thursday, 24th OCTOBER, 1985

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, B. Fulton, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, P. Moffat, J.R. McArthur and K.A. McKenzie, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

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

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. A.J. Allan, J. Henderson, I. Melrose, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne, T. McClung, J.O. Robertson, G. Smillie and J.M. Swinton.

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 5th September, 1985 (a copy of which had been sent to each Member of Council beforehand) was taken as read. It was pointed out that a remark was attributed to Mr. Moffat at the foot of page 3 thereof (A.O.C.B. (f)) although he had not been present at the meeting. Mr. Blackmore regretted this error and undertook to refer to his notes for clarification. Mr. Blackmore also explained the matter of "Quota Sales" had been deferred but not discussed later. In Mr. Robertson's absence today, it was agreed the matter be deferred for inclusion in the Agenda for the next Meeting of Council. The Minute was otherwise formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS  
ARISING:

(a) Membership - Mr. Hunter tabled letters received from Messrs. Gordon Henderson & Co. and Milne, Laing (Potatoes) Ltd, nominating Messrs. Viewfield Potatoes, Kirriemuir, for Association Membership. After due consideration Council agreed these nominations be accepted with effect from 1st November, 1985.

Mr. Hunter also reported receipt of a PMB notification that Paul & Weir Ltd., Kirkintilloch have applied for Merchant Licences. Council deferred consideration until this application has been granted.

Mr. McKenzie sought Council's view on the position of an Association Member whose PMB Merchant's Licence has been revoked for refusing to permit inspection of records. Council agreed to take no action pending further developments.

(b) Arbitration Procedures - Mr. Hunter reported on a meeting he had had with General Accident and Stewart Wrightson representatives on 2nd October, 1985 (to which, he apologised, he had overlooked to arrange for Messrs. Barr and McKenzie be present as instructed). He had felt sure the meeting had clarified the position, but a draft policy clause since to hand for consideration indicates the insurers are still on the wrong tack. Council agreed Messrs. Barr, McKenzie and Hunter arrange a further meeting with the insurers to resolve the matter. In reply to Mr. Brass, Mr. Hunter's view was that the policy cover is still secure. In Mr. Cook's view, it was clear that Stewart Wrightson do not understand the difference between "merchant only" and "grower-merchant" trading.

(c) PAYE/NIC on casual harvest wages - Mr. Hunter explained that during discussion of this matter during Council's last meeting, the possible need to obtain an Opinion from Counsel had been mentioned but not decided. A further meeting had been held with Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn, Q.C., M.P., a Report on which had since been copied to each Member of Council. Prior to that meeting an anticipatory start had been made to draft a Memorial to Counsel. Following that meeting that draft had been finalised and submitted for Mr. Fairbairn's Opinion, regrettably without/

without realising that Council's formal instruction to do so had not been obtained.

Council's following discussion of this situation noted that perhaps overtaking events had precipitated it. It was agreed that instructions ought to have been obtained beforehand and with some reluctance Council ratified the step taken. In respect of Mr. Fairbairn's Opinion (received only yesterday, copies of which had been tabled before the start of today's meeting) first reactions were largely that it was favourably helpful to Members. The Secretariat was instructed to send a copy of the Memorial and the Opinion to each Member of Council immediately. It was also agreed the next News Letter include an item reporting that some progress is being made and again inviting Members to continue to report any difficulties to the Secretariat.

In reply to Mr. Hunter, Council decided he should obtain the views of Messrs. Arthur Young's Mr. McDougall on the best course forward from Mr. Fairbairn's Opinion and to report back to the next Meeting of Council.

(d) Meetings charges - Mr. Blackmore reported having obtained quotations from the Isle of Skye Hotel and the Wheel Inn as instructed. The former quoted Room Hire £20 and meals @ £4.50 per head, which worked out virtually the same as the City Mills (£6 per head, including room hire). The Wheel Inn quoted Room Hire £10 and meals @ £3.10 each, almost 40% cheaper than the City Mills. Following discussion, Council agreed to hold its next meeting at the Wheel Inn, Scone on Thursday, 21st November and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

(e) Sutton Bridge - Mr. Blackmore also reported receipt of Mr. Robin Pooley's reply letter enclosing three years management accounts as requested. After brief discussion Mr. Brass was given charge of these accounts for analysis purposes by the Association's representatives on the Scottish Advisory Committee and to report back to the next meeting of Council.

With his knowledge of the PMB Commercial Committee Mr. McKenzie deplored the Board's increasing practice of consultation after a "fait accompli". Council agreed that through its representatives on the Scottish Advisory Committee, the Association should continue to resist any increase in commercial activity at Sutton Bridge.

(f) Phytosanitary Certificates - In reply to the Chair and following deferral of this matter by the last meeting of Council for further thought, those present at today's meeting had nothing further to add.

(g) Elections to Council - Mr. Blackmore reported that as a result of this year's postal ballot of Association Members, Messrs. J.G.H. Fenton, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne and J.O. Robertson had been re-elected to Council and, in place of Messrs. B. Fulton and G. Smillie (who had not offered themselves for re-election) Messrs. W.T. Aitken (Tayside Potato Producers Ltd., Dundee) and A.S. Whitehead (Stokes Bomford Ltd., Cupar) had been elected to Council. All six are to serve for three years to 31st October, 1988. In reply, he stated 50.9% of Ballot Papers had been returned and he regretted having omitted to announce attendance records as instructed.

Mr. Blackmore also explained the circumstances of Mr. Melrose not offering himself for re-election after his one year co-option to Council. Council agreed this co-option should not be extended and instructed the Secretariat to write Messrs. Melrose and Smillie to convey Council's thanks and appreciation for their services to the Association. The Chairman's expression of thanks to Mr. Fulton for his long and valued service on Council was warmly and unanimously supported.

(h) Tractor Fuel - Council again discussed the statutory problems arising from use of red or white diesel fuel. In summary, the Chairman felt that while it was agreed the situation is ridiculous, most Members are aware/

aware of the requirements and of various procedures for avoiding breaches of these regulations.

S.S.P.D.C.: The Chairman explained that following disclosures to the Press, the Development Council had decided (some two or three meetings ago) to discontinue the issue of précis of Minutes of its meetings. Instead, SPTA Members of SSPDC are to report relevant items from SSPDC Minutes to SPTA Council.

The following discussion also included the current PMB/SSPDC "War", the "Export Strategy" and DAFS request that SSPDC try to form a representative "Exporters Committee". The main difficulty, as Mr. Barr pointed out, is that a considerable part of exports from Scotland is not carried out by Scottish (SSPDC levy-paying) exporters. Council also noted Mr. Bethel's latest Memorandum (12th October, 1985) without taking further action.

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Mr. Deuchar explained that his Report on the meeting of the PMB's Export Development Committee which he had attended in London on 7th October, 1985 which he had posted to the Secretariat for distribution to Council had regrettably not arrived in time.

He explained the information provided at the meeting had been historical. Considerable time had been devoted to the transfer of this Committee's functions to the Joint Consultative Committee. Although almost "fait accompli" (Mr. McArthur pointed out the opening sentence in the PMB's explanatory Paper stated the decision has been made), the Export Development Committee had left it to its Members to report back before the next JCC meeting.

In Council's discussion Mr. McKenzie pointed out that exports cannot be integrated with the Scottish Advisory Committee. Council agreed it would be better to integrate exports with the Seed Potato Advisory Committee. It was decided to write the PMB expressing SPTA concern and to propose that export matters become the responsibility of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee.

JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE: Mr. Hunter reported on the meeting of the Joint (NASPM/SPTA) Liaison Committee held in Edinburgh in the morning 16th October, 1985 and the meeting of that Committee with DAFS that afternoon. Regrettably, due to crisis harvesting conditions, only Messrs. J.E. Cook and G. Brass had been able to represent SPTA at the morning meeting and only Mr. Brass at the afternoon meeting.

Council was concerned to learn that MAFF has authorised entry of English crops grown from Dutch 'A' seed for CC certification without consultation with DAFS and contrary to EEC Marketing Directive. Council agreed to give fullest support to DAFS representations to MAFF in this respect.

Ensuing discussion turned to SPTA's recent Press statement which was agreed to have been helpful in holding prices and stopping Scots from underselling themselves. In respect of the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Committee, it was agreed Mr. Cook would telephone Mr. Sheriff to propose this be held in Earls Court at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 3rd December, 1985.

SCOTTISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Mr. McKenzie regretted that he had been prevented by harvesting conditions from attending to represent SPTA at the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee in Edinburgh on 17th October, 1985. Council agreed the Secretariat should copy the PMB's Report on this meeting to all Council Members as soon as it comes to hand.

SEED POTATO ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Mr. McArthur reported on the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in Edinburgh on 17th October, 1985. It had been reported that 18,839 hectares of seed potato crops have been classified in Scotland in 1985 compared with 20,377 hectares in 1984. Mr. Davie had not presented any analysis statistics but it was accepted that/

that tonnages of seed of most varieties will be less than last year. Export prospects are unexciting and note was taken of an amendment in respect of rhizomania to Plant Health Orders, The Board's expenditure on Blackleg research and visits to French trials had also been discussed.

DRAFT  
ANNUAL  
ACCOUNT:

Council referred consideration of the Association's draft Annual Account to the Finance Committee which, it was arranged, would meet for this purpose on 31st October, 1985.

A.O.C.B:

(a) Conditions of Purchase - Mr. Blackmore reported an enquiry from an English merchant regarding his use of SPTA copyright Conditions of Purchase, perhaps on a "licensed user" basis, Council took the view that use of the Conditions be confined to Association Members only. During this discussion the Secretary undertook to write a non-member regarding unauthorised use of the Association's Conditions of Sale, Mr. Barr also felt the Association's copyright should be drawn to the attention of the printers.

(b) "Force majeure" - Mr. Blackmore also reported a Member's request for issue of guidance notes in situations where crop out-turn due to climatic conditions is less than forward sales made from that crop. Council accepted Mr. Hunter's view that guidance notes would be too complex to cover numerous possible variants of such a situation but he would be happy to advise on any particular problem put to him by any Member.

(c) Date of A.G.M. - Mr. Hunter sought Council's views on the date of and a Speaker for the Association's Annual General Meeting. It was agreed that (as last year) the AGM should be held immediately preceding the Association's Annual Dinner and Dance (which latter event was remitted for attention at an early meeting of the Entertainments Committee) and the question of a Speaker be deferred for a decision by the next meeting of Council.

(d) Phytosanitary Certificates re Eire )  
(e) C.I.P.C. use in England ) Mr. McKenzie sought Council Members' view on pursuance of these topics. Following discussion and amid some feeling not to pursue, it was arranged that Mr. Doig would contact Mr. Pooley direct in the first instance and to report back to the next meeting of Council.

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

