

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in the Station Hotel, PERTH at 11 a.m.
on Friday, 17th JANUARY, 1986.

PRESENT: Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay, P. Miller, P. Moffat, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson, J.M. Swinton and A.S. Whitehead, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The President, Mr. K.A. McKenzie, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES: Mr. Hunter intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. W.T. Aitken, A.J. Allan, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J. Henderson, D. Maxwell and J. Logan Milne.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Scone on 26th November, 1985 (a copy of which had been sent to each Member of Council beforehand) was taken as read. Mr. Robertson pointed out that the second word on page 2 thereof ("Liaison") should read "Consultative". The Minute was amended accordingly and thereafter formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING: (a) Quota Sales - Mr. Hunter explained that in course of looking into the subject his attention had very recently been drawn to a published article giving a detailed reply from the Secretary of the Potato Marketing Board, from which he quoted briefly. In discussion, Mr. Robertson explained that loss of planning flexibility by a merchant-grower due to Quota Sales by farmers partly prompted his original enquiry. Mr. Hunter pointed out that rental by the year is not a tenanted occupancy under the Agricultural Acts. Mr. Barr questioned the legality of sales of Quota by public auction when the buyer may be debarred from having the Quota transferred into his own name. He recalled that merchant-grower Quota had been pursued unsuccessfully in the past but, being more valid in the light of Quota sales nowadays, he felt the matter should be raised again. Mr. McArthur felt that Quota should be allocated to the levy payer, not to a tenant/occupier. Council agreed the Secretariat liaise with Mr. Robertson to compose a letter to the PMB incorporating all the relevant points.

Mr. McKenzie reported that at a meeting on 14th January, 1986 it had been revealed that the PMB is to consider raising the ^{maximum} penalty for planting undeclared excess area to £2,000 AND doubling the levy for excess area from five to ten times the ordinary levy. He also pointed out that the tonnage taken up under the Direct Intervention Scheme equated with the tonnage produced from excess area planted with early crops.

(b) Arbitration Procedures - Mr. Hunter reported that a further meeting between the Association, the Insurance Brokers and the Insurers has been arranged to take place at the General Accident's offices at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 22nd January, 1986. Messrs. McKenzie and Barr had agreed to attend and it seemed likely that agreement could now be reached. In reply, Mr. Hunter reported a low participation by Members in the Insurance Scheme. Council felt that financial considerations, including high minimum cover and minimum premium level, probably explained this.

(c) PAYE/NIC - Mr. Hunter reported that Mr. McDougall had still to complete arrangements for a meeting with high-level officials of DHSS (festive season factors had delayed DHSS' response).

(d) Sutton Bridge - Mr. Brass reported that he and Mr. McKenzie will meet Mr. McDougall on 20th January, 1986 to seek professional guidance on the Management Accounts obtained from the PMB. Mr. Blackmore also reported a telephone call from Pooley's Secretary earlier this morning offering/

offering a meeting between Association representatives and Mr. Pooley, Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Clayton at Sutton Bridge in the afternoon of Thursday, 13th March, 1986 (the second of the two-day Open Programme there, being the first suitable occasion when these three gentlemen will be available together). Following discussion, Council agreed to accept this date and appointed Messrs. McKenzie, Brass, Moffat and Doig to represent the Association.

(e) Red diesel fuel - Reporting on an investigation involving a contractor's tractor and his own company's trailer at harvest (apparently invoking complex articulated-vehicle regulations), Mr. McArthur explained he had been able to produce the contractor's fully detailed invoices for the last three years. These showed only a very minimal loss of Duty could have occurred. He understood this case is now to be dropped, which he will confirm in due course.

(f) Export Development and Joint Consultative Committees - The Chairman explained the arrangements agreed on 1st November, 1985 and reported that at a subsequent meeting, the Potato Marketing Board had determined the composition of the (now combined) Joint Consultative Committee providing for only one representative each from SPTA and NASPM. With full support from NASPM, SPTA wrote the Board strongly rejecting this totally inadequate representation. Following a thoroughly unsatisfactory reply from the Secretary of the Board (Mr. Sprigge), in a conversation with Mr. Boley on 14th January, 1986 Mr. McKenzie had made it clear that without improved representation SPTA could not attend JCC meetings. Mr. Pooley undertook to arrange for SPTA to provide two representatives at each JCC meeting.

(g) Phytosanitary Certificates/C.I.P.C. - The Secretary explained this Item had been deferred from Council's last meeting and the Chairman invited Council's comments. It was accepted that if imports of Scottish Ware into Ireland required phytosanitary certification that C.I.P.C. had been applied, an equal case could be made for a reciprocal requirement for Irish Ware imported into Scotland. On the other hand, this trade was currently small and running smoothly and it was agreed to leave well alone.

In reply to Mr. Hunter, Council Members had no reports of difficulties regarding other phytosanitary certificates. It was explained that current exports to Morocco were being inspected at the dockside by an Irishman on behalf of the Moroccans.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Reporting on recent Development Council activities, Council Members felt that the December News Letter put out by Mr. Bethel contained the views of Mr. Bethel rather than of the Development Council. Mr. Fenton reported that as from this year (and with the exception of the Royal Highland Show and two Shows in England) the PMB is withdrawing from all shows activities, including the Royal Smithfield Show. From the News Letter, Mr. McClung sought explanation of the proposed charge of £100 for a copy of the Feasibility Survey on Spain, carried out at the levypayers' expense and Mr. Lindsay sought the qualifications of its authoress. SPTA's representatives on the Development Council explained the Survey had been judged as useful only to non-potato interests and the proposed charge for copies was a means of recouping part of the cost of the Survey itself from those interests. Mr. Fenton also made brief reference to Mr. Bethel's Paper on "R. & D. and Advisory Charges".

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Council noted Mr. Brass' pre-circularised Report on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee in London on 3rd December, 1985. In reply to Mr. McArthur, Mr. Brass stated that only minimal and passing comment had been made on the reduced current season seed loadings, compared with the previous year. Council's discussion included continuation of Mr. George Laing's period of Office. It was thought possible he may resign and it was noted that Mr. John Hay's appointment as Mr. Laing's deputy already covered this eventuality. Council also discussed the abrupt cessation of the PMB buying under the Direct Intervention/

Intervention Scheme on which the Association had written a strong protest to the Board. Mr. McKenzie reported he and Mr. John McLaren (NFUS) had met Mr. Gordon Lyall (DAFS) to solicit his intervention to persuade the Ministry to intervene. In the event this had revealed that area tonnage limitations had been pre-set, in which respect the PMB had been less than honest. Mr. McKenzie also explained the mis-attributed Press report, on which the Association's written apology had been accepted by the Chairman of the Board to end the matter.

A.O.C.B.: (a) Proposed year-numbering of "Elite" Grade - Commenting on a letter received from Mr. Gordon Lyall (DAFS) and since copied to each Member of Council Mr. Barr urged that the proposal be most rigorously resisted. He pointed out the effect its adoption would have on different varieties and the potential it would give VTSC growers to dictate the whole growing programme in a few years time. He also asked why DAFS had suddenly changed its view on the question of Veinal Necrosis. Council confirmed its unanimous opposition to the proposal and the Chairman reported NFUS has meantime indicated its support for our opposition. Mr. McArthur stated that the current growing crops Inspection Scheme was already totally adequate to prevent disease spread. In Mr. Lindsay's view the proposal had been very rapidly advanced already and he sought Mr. Lyall's own views in the matter. The Chairman proposed this be pursued following Mr. Lyall's Address after the A.G.M. this afternoon.

(b) GKN Chap Ltd. - Mr. Barr reported and explained correspondence in which he was involved regarding alleged improper use of proprietary pallets by non-members of the proprietor's pool scheme. He felt this concerned a large part of the potato trade, particularly ware, and seemed likely to "blow up". Following discussion, Council agreed the Secretary be asked to consider the matter (Mr. Barr provided a copy of his correspondence) and to give his views on the legal position as soon as possible.

(c) Association Accounts - The Secretary explained that the Association's Constitution and Rules require that the Association's duly Audited Statement of Accounts for the preceding year shall be submitted to the A.G.M. For a number of unusual reasons submission of the Accounts to the Auditor has been extremely delayed on this occasion, preventing him from completing his work in time. Submission of unaudited Accounts to the A.G.M. later today, therefore, is a breach of the Constitution, for which the Secretariat offers profound apologies.

In these circumstances the proper course of action would be to defer adoption of the Account this afternoon to an Extraordinary General Meeting to be convened as soon as the Accounts have been signed by the Auditor. As a less costly alternative, the A.G.M. could approve the Account today conditional upon it being signed, without any alteration, by the Auditor and a copy of the duly signed Account being sent to each Member of the Association as soon as possible. Council agreed these alternatives should be offered to the A.G.M. for its decision.

(d) Date of next meeting - After brief discussion Council decided to hold its next meeting in the City Mills Hotel, Perth at 11 a.m. on Friday, 7th March, 1986 followed by lunch at 1.30 p.m. and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

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

W. Barr