

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in the Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, SCONE
at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 7th MAY, 1987

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.P. Deuchar, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson 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:

Explaining that bringing today's meeting forward a week had caused it to co-incide with a Development Council meeting, Mr. Hunter intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. W.T. Aitken, J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, P. Miller, I. Melrose, P. Moffat, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung and J.M. Swinton.

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council in Perth on 6th March, 1987 (previously copied to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was duly approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Quota Sales - Mr. Robertson reported that his draft letter was felt to need enlargement to draw attention to the unnecessarily complex Quota renting procedures and he would put this in hand. Subject to this change the draft letter was approved for despatch to the P.M.B. The view was also expressed that the Board was now well aware of and concerned about the problems created by the free sale of Quota unconnected to its land.

(b) Membership and Subscriptions - Mr. Hunter reported that since Council's last meeting, Charles & Co. (Leith) Ltd. have resigned from Membership of the Association, reducing the total Membership Roll to 103 Members.

Mr. Blackmore also reported receipt of 47 further annual membership subscriptions, totalling £4,290, during that same time, bringing total 1987 subscriptions to date from 98 Members to £9,190. This now includes two resignations, one enrollment and twelve inter-tonnage brackets changes, together increasing receipts by £125. Projected total subscriptions of £9,520 receivable for 1987 is £246 more than the previous year.

On the other hand, after two reminders and an individual letter to each, five subscriptions are still unpaid and are three months overdue, just over half way through the Association's accounting year. After disclosure of the names of these five Members as required, individual Council Members undertook to take this matter up direct with those concerned.

Mr. Hunter next reported receipt of notification of grant of P.M.B. Ware Merchant Licences to Howe Gardens, Auchterless; A.G. Norrie & Sons, Turriff; Taypack, Errol; The Firm of Ivan Wood & Sons, Ballingry and a Seed Merchant Licence to John Reid, Forfar. Council instructed each of these Licensees be invited to seek Nomination for Association Membership.

In conclusion, Mr. Blackmore reported a Member's telephoned enquiry regarding improper use of P.M.B. Merchant Licence numbers. Following discussion, Council felt it should not act in this matter.

(c) Annual Golf Outing - It was agreed to report on this matter later in today's meeting.

(d) Health & Safety at Work - Mr. Hunter confirmed that with N.F.U.S. approval, a copy of their Guidance Notes had been sent to each S.P.T.A. Member.

(e)/

(e) Seed Trade Committee/Working Party - The Chairman reported that outline proposals had been submitted to the P.M.B. It is now believed that the Board's Chairman and Vice Chairman (Messrs. Arnold Hitchcock and David Sinclair respectively) favour the proposals and M.A.F.F. has no objections. The Working Party has agreed details will be released to the Press at the Producers' Meeting in Inverness on 14th May. In reply to Mr. Lindsay, the Chairman explained that although originally hoped for implementation for the current Season, it now seemed more likely that securing necessary endorsement will delay implementation until next (1988) Season.

(f) Minutes of S.S.P.D.C. Meetings - Mr. Blackmore reported that in response to S.P.T.A. Council's request, Mr. Bethel is to obtain his own Council's instructions. Council felt that Mr. Bethel's suggestion that S.P.T.A. and N.F.U.S. might reciprocate was less appropriate and decided to await N.F.U.S. response.

(g) P.M.B. Excess Levy changes - The Chairman reported that in reply to his telephoned enquiry on the rate of levy to be charged on excess early crop plantings before the effective date for increased levy rate, the Board's Chief Executive (Mr. Pooley) had stated that only a very small excess acreage had been involved and had been ignored.

Mr. Maxwell referred to reported intentions to plant second crops in parts of England and enquired if this would incur excess acreage levy. Mr. McKenzie undertook to telephone Mr. Pooley for clarification on this point.

S.S.P.D.C.
"CHARTER":

The Chairman explained that since Council's last meeting, the Paper entitled "A Charter for the Development and Multiplication of new varieties in Scotland", prepared by Mr. Bethel (and pre-copied to each Member of Council) had been discussed at a meeting in England on 13th April preceding the Spring Planting Demonstration there. The meeting clearly regarded the problem (of the production and sale, as small ware, of unclassified seed of controlled varieties) as an exclusively Scottish one, to be solved by D.A.F.S. From Council's very full discussion of the subject it became apparent that the Charter should be regarded as a non-starter and abandoned. In Mr. Robertson's closing view the problem stemmed entirely from the excessive charges being made by the second-tier exploiters.

WARE POTATO
IMPORTS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Council considered Mr. Robertson's and the P.M.B.'s Reports on the meeting of the Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee held in London on 17th March, 1987 (a copy of each of which had already been sent to each Member of Council). In brief discussion, Mr. Robertson enlarged and commented on several points raised by Council.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

The P.M.B.'s Report on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee in Edinburgh on 19th March, 1987 (a copy of which had been sent to each Member of Council) was taken as read. Having attended in place of Mr. Moffat, Mr. McKenzie enlarged on several points, among which he reported having learned that an out of Court settlement in the case between the Board and Mr. Robertson in England had been reached (no details had been obtained). He also explained that this Association's letter regarding peeler grade had been supported by Mr. David Sinclair (Board Vice Chairman) but not by Mr. Pooley (Chief Executive) and had now been passed to the Board's Grading Standards Committee. This Association's letter re Reg. 1 Forms and proposed February closure of Quota Transfers was also receiving attention. In conclusion, Mr. McKenzie stated N.F.U.S. is maintaining its pressure to limit the complaints period for ware to within three days of leaving the farm.

SEED POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Brass tabled copies of the P.M.B.'s Report on the meeting of the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in London on 31st March, 1987 and added comment and explanations to Council Members' observations. It was agreed that Council's discussion of S.S.P.D.C. "Charter" (above) had already covered the problem of "small ware" sales of approved varieties.

S.S.P.D.C.:

In the earlier explained absence today of all Association representatives on the Development Council, no Report on that Council's meeting in Edinburgh on 9th April, 1987 (the Minutes of which meeting were known to have been classified confidential) was possible and this Item of the Agenda was therefore deferred.

NATIONAL
JOINT
COUNCIL:

The Chairman explained Mr. Brass had agreed to stand in for him at short notice to fulfil his earlier acceptance of an invitation to the National Joint Council Annual Luncheon in Scunthorpe on 29th April, 1987. This had also involved Mr. Brass in speaking on behalf of the Guests and the Chairman recorded his sincere thanks to Mr. Brass in these respects. Council formally approved the Chairman's proposal that Mr. Brass' travelling expenses on this occasion be reimbursed by the Association.

Mr. Brass reported that Mr. Arnold Hitchcock (P.M.B. Chairman) had been the principal Speaker at the luncheon (in place of a Mr. Meijer from Holland, who had called off only seven days before) and had been at pains to reassure his audience that the Board would scrupulously avoid any repetition of the problems of three years ago in any future trading between the Board and the Processors.

N.A.S.P.M.:

The Chairman also reported that Mr. McArthur, with Mr. Bethel (S.S.P.D.C.), had attended a meeting with N.A.S.P.M., also on 29th April, 1987 for general discussions on various topics. Council supported the Chairman's appreciation and thanks to Mr. McArthur for his trouble in this respect.

GOLF
OUTING:

Mr. Blackmore tabled copies of a Report on a meeting of the Entertainments Committee in Perth on 30th April, 1987. Supplementing this he reported that at the close of bookings on 5th May, a total of 42 golfers and 5 non-golfers bookings had been received. For hand-capping purposes the Entertainments Committee is to meet again on 14th May, 1987.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) Correspondence - (1) GAFTA draft Contracts - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of drafts of three proposed Contracts for sale of seed potatoes. Costs of copying these to Council Members was felt to be unworthwhile at this stage. A draft letter in reply was approved for despatch.

(2) Consortium re GATT - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of a letter seeking information on any importing country requirements acting as barriers to trade. An extremely short deadline allowed for reply had now passed. Council felt an Association reply could not now be sent.

(3) European Union Congress 1987 - Mr. Blackmore reported that there had been no response to the recent News Letter Item details.

(4) Agricultural Diagnostics Co. Ltd. - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of an enquiry for statistical information and/or a copy of the Association's Membership Roll. Council instructed that the latter request be declined but agreed a suitable Item could be inserted in the next News Letter.

(b) Amendment of Regulations - Referring to the recent News Letter announcement, Council re-discussed the introduction of generation control of Elite class. While accepting that the Association's firm resistance had not been successful, Council felt this change must inevitably lead to a widening of the area for illicit trading.

(c) Office Bearers - The Chairman reported with sincere regret that due to pressure of business, Mr. Peter Moffat had tendered his resignation from the Office of Deputy Vice President of the Association and this had been accepted. After a brief discussion Council remitted this as a matter of urgency to the Chairman's Committee, which is due to meet in any case for its usual mid-year Financial Review.

(d) Date of next meeting - Council confirmed it will meet again at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 2nd July, 1987 in the Wheel Inn, Scone and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual arrangements.

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

(Handwritten signature)