

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION in the
Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, SCONE at 1.30 p.m.
on Thursday, 22nd OCTOBER, 1987

PRESENT: Messrs. G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, P. Miller, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie and J.O. Robertson, 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.

PROPOSED
SEED
SUPPORT
SCHEME:

The Chairman reported on progress of the proposals during three further meetings of the Seed Trade Working Party. After the first meeting, (with the PMB Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive) in Edinburgh on 23rd September, Mr. John Bethel (SSPDC) and Mrs. Judith Armstrong (NFUS) met Messrs. John Taylor and Robin Pooley (PMB) in London to finalise amendments and re-draft the proposals. These were agreed by the Working Party at its own meeting in Edinburgh on 5th October prior to submission to all Scottish Board Members of the PMB for a further meeting in Edinburgh on 19th October. Some further amendments were made before unanimous support was secured and later endorsed by the Scottish Advisory Committee. Subject to approval by today's meetings of Council and of NFUS' Potatoes Committee, the finalised proposals are to be released to the Press at a Conference in Edinburgh tomorrow, to co-incide with circularisation to all Board Members in readiness for their meeting in London on 27th October. There is a clear understanding that if the proposals are not now accepted, to allow for implementation in 1988 Season, steps will be taken to devise a separate Scottish Scheme independent of the PMB.

The several amendments to the Proposals already pre-circulated to each Member of Council were first noted, before careful examination and discussion began. In replies to numerous questions the Chairman and Mr. Brass explained that to counter Treasury objections to "open-endedness" the proposals had been restricted to 'Elite' class and above, (in which context Council agreed the word "certified" should be changed to "classified" throughout the proposals) although it was felt this made the proposals less attractive to English growers without whose support the proposals would fail. It was also explained that support levels and trigger prices will continue to be negotiated by NFU and MAFF but that the Working Party will continuously monitor the Scheme's operation. "Dual Option" and varietal variation were discussed and triggering was explained to be when the average price of any three of a basket of ten (most popular by acreage) varieties (e.g. 1987 Season - Bard, Cara, Crown, Dell, Desiree, Estima, Piper, Record, Squire and Wilja) fell below a pre-set level. Any variety, whether of the ten or not, could then be taken up, without waiting for the end of the Season.

The Chairman and Mr. Brass urged Council to endorse the proposals as amended for submission to the PMB. Council Members paid tribute to the sustained efforts, involving some twentyfive meetings over a two year period, to reach the present stage. While certain aspects were felt capable of strengthening, the proposals were recognised as a balanced package for many separate interests. Mr. McArthur moved and Mr. Cook seconded that the proposals be endorsed for submission. The motion was carried unanimously and the Chairman thanked Council for this support, the decision being immediately telephoned to the other constituent Members of the Working Party.

APOLOGIES: Proceeding to usual business the Secretary intimated apologies for absence received from Messrs. J.H. Barr, J.M. Swinton and A.S. Whitehead.

MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council in Scone on 3rd September, 1987 (previously copied to each Member of Council) was taken as read. It was duly/

duly approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Quota Sales - The Chairman reported on discussions during a visit to his Office by the Secretary of the PMB (Mr. Sprigge) and read out a letter subsequently received from him. In essence, there is no way a non-landholder will be able to hold Quota.

(b) Membership - The Secretary referred to the Licence Applications reported to Council's last meeting and reported on invitations sent. Council instructed Messrs. A. Gallacher & Sons, Girvan be invited to consider seeking nomination for Association membership when granted a Licence.

Council also authorised admission of Fletcherfield Potatoes, Kirriemuir and Messrs. John Reid, Forfar into Membership of the Association, thereby increasing the total Roll to 102 Members.

(c) Office Bearers' Workload - This Item was deferred until Council's next meeting.

(d) Elections to Council - As reported by News Letter, only five candidates were nominated for the six vacancies on Council created by rotational retirements. The five nominated candidates had been returned unopposed, therefore, and for the second successive year a postal ballot of the whole Membership had not been necessary. Thus Messrs. W.P. Balfour and A. Bayne, Jnr. will join Council and a vacancy has been created. After brief discussion Council decided this vacancy remain unfilled meantime.

(e) S.S.P.D.C. - This Item was deferred until later in today's meeting.

(f) Joint Liaison Committee - The Secretary reported that Mr. J.H. Barr will be unable to attend the meetings with NASPM in Edinburgh on 28th October and Mr. Lindsay also reported he will be unable to attend. After brief discussion Messrs. J.R. McArthur and J.O. Robertson agreed to attend in their stead.

(g) Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors - In a brief Report the Secretary stated that arrangements for the Group's Stand at the 1987 Smithfield Show are well in hand, with 21 participating Members compared with 19 the previous year.

(h) Rhizomania - The Secretary confirmed having written to MAFF and read out a reply received from DAFS. Mr. McArthur also reported that Mr. Bethel (SSPDC) had also written to Mr. John Provan, M.E.P. on the subject, who is now believed to be preparing to raise the matter in the European Parliament.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Council considered a Paper prepared by Mr. Bethel proposing formation of a company, Seed Potato Inspections Ltd. (SPIL) to carry out seed tuber inspections on a commercial basis, which the Secretary had copied (together with a response letter from Mr. Gordon Lyall of DAFS) to each member of Council. In reply to the Chair, Mr. Fenton understood Mr. Bethel awaited SPTA's response.

The Chairman agreed Mr. Lyall's response was rather "nit-picking" and betrayed clear alarm at the proposals which was quite unjustified. DAFS had always resisted demands for 100% tuber inspections as impossible to achieve and had countered pressure by taking the view that quality control is the industry's own commercial responsibility. In discussion, some felt that the proposals would be improved by longer-term, more careful consideration. Doubts were also voiced on the take-up of Shares and while the concept behind the proposals was laudable the practicalities could/

could be problematical. The proposed Insurance Cover for SPIL Members, identical to the cover negotiated by SPTA for its own Members, was regarded as an attractive feature. It was also suggested NASPM's views on the proposals should be sought.

In summary, Council agreed that DAFS is doing an inadequate job of seed tuber inspections; Council supported the principle of increasing such inspections and further investigation of means to that end.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

The Chairman reported on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee which he had attended in Edinburgh on 15th October, 1987. It was stated that all outstanding levies in Scotland has now been paid, but unrecoverable levies may total between £66,000 and £100,000. The early Seed Trials at Turnberry are to be repeated in June, 1988 but there is to be no annual Dinner Dance that year. A European Potato Regime was reported still to be "miles away". In European crops, France was reported to be 1m. tonnes up on last year, Spain likely to be self-sufficient this year, Germany likely to be short and Sweden likely to require 200,000 tonnes of ware. Liftings in Scottish crops was believed to be 85% complete in Perthshire, 82% in Inverness-shire, 50-60% in the North-East, 81% in Angus, 45% in Fife and 60% in the Borders. The Committee had also given its support to the Seed Support Proposals.

SEED POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Speaking without his notes, Mr. Brass reported briefly on the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in Edinburgh also on 15th October, 1987. Reports given to the Scottish Advisory Committee (above) had been repeated. The Seed Support Proposals had been tabled but not discussed. There had been prolonged discussion of the "small ware" problem which concluded that the remedy lies with the Rights Holders, and a long Report had been given on a visit to Spain.

ENTERTAIN-
MENTS
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Miller enlarged briefly on a tabled Report on a meeting of the Entertainments Committee in Perth on 16th October, 1987. In respect of Official Guests for the Association's Annual Dinner-Dance in the refurbished Salutation Hotel, Perth on Friday, 15th January, 1988, Council suggested the Entertainments Committee consider extending invitations to the Presidents of NASPM and the National Joint Council at its next meeting in about two weeks time.

CHAIRMAN'S
COMMITTEE:

Reporting briefly on the meeting of the Chairman's Committee earlier today, the Secretary explained the Association's draft Annual Account (which was in line with Estimates) had been approved for finalisation and submission to Audit in the usual way.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) Annual General Meeting - The Chairman recommended that following the experience of the last A.G.M., a Guest Speaker for the next AGM should not be considered. An alternative suggestion, that an "in house" Questions and Answers evening meeting for Association Members on the Seed Support Proposals, the SPIL proposals and any other topics dealt with during the year would be better supported was considered. It was agreed to circularise this suggestion to the whole Membership for response.

(b) Telephone Ordering of Labels - Messrs. Maxwell and Miller reported having met difficulties over arrangements for ordering seed labels from DAFS' local offices. The Chairman undertook to raise this matter during the Joint Liaison Committee's meeting with DAFS in Edinburgh next week.

(c) Date of next meeting - Council confirmed it will meet again in the Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, Scone at 12.30 p.m. on Thursday, 19th November, 1987 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

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

