

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION in the Wheel Inn
Motor Hotel, SCONE at 2 p.m. on
Thursday, 26th MAY, 1988.

PRESENT:

Messrs. W.P. Balfour, A.W. Bayne, G.S. Brass, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, P. Miller, J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson and A.S. Whitehead, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The President, Mr. G.S. Brass, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary reported apologies for absence received from Messrs. J.H. Barr, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, J.G.H. Fenton, I. Melrose, P. Moffat and J.M. Swinton.

MINUTES:

The Minute of Meeting of Council in Scone on 4th March, 1988 (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. Hunter confirmed receipt of resignations from N.B. Auckland Ltd. and Matthew H. Calderwood Ltd. (as announced at Council's Special Meeting on 31st March, 1988). He reported further resignations since received from D. Corrigall Ltd. and Scottish Farm Produce (Potatoes) Ltd., and the appointment of a Liquidator for Pickerton Potatoes (Angus) Ltd. on 31st March, 1988. These changes together reduced the total Membership Roll to 99 Members. Following discussion, Council instructed invitations be sent to Messrs. E.W. and H.M. Corrigall to consider the benefits of Association membership (Conditions of Sale, etc.) for continuing trading as individuals.

Mr. Hunter also read out and gave his views on a letter received from Mr. Barr explaining structural changes in W. & A. Graham (Glasgow) Ltd. and formation of W. & A. Graham (Arbroath) Ltd. Council agreed this be treated simply as a change of Membership name. He further reported receipt of the required two nominations recommending G.M. Thomson (Produce) Ltd., St. Andrews, for Association Membership. After consideration, Council accepted these recommendations and admitted this Company to Association Membership, thereby restoring the total Roll to 100 Members.

As instructed at Council's Special Meeting on 31st March, 1988 Mr. Blackmore confirmed having conveyed Council's views to the P.M.B. in respect of the Merchant Licence Applications by Messrs. John Lascelles (Seeds) and David Lawson (Thrums) 1987 Ltd. Council further decided that the President should establish direct contact with the Chairman of the Board's Licensing Committee.

Reporting on Subscriptions received, Mr. Blackmore explained that Notices had been sent to 105 Members on 25th January, 1988. Without resignations or tonnage bracket changes, it was estimated their Subscriptions would total £10,135. In the event, six Memberships had ceased (as reported) and twentyone (fourteen upward and seven downward) tonnage bracket changes had occurred among the 95 Subscriptions totalling £9,410 received to date, leaving four Subscriptions still unpaid and now four months overdue, despite several reminders having been sent to each of the named Members concerned. Council instructed each of them be notified to make payment within seven days, formal Suspension of Membership Notices being sent immediately thereafter to any who failed to respond.

Mr./

Mr. Hunter reported that an interim draft Account had been prepared, showing a broadly "within budget estimates" position, in readiness for the usual mid-year review by the Chairman's Committee. Council agreed the Chairman's Committee should meet for this purpose at 11.30 a.m. on Thursday, 7th July, 1988 in the Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, Scone prior to the next meeting of Council there at 2 p.m. on that date.

(b) S.S.P.D.C. Minutes - This Item was deferred until later in today's Agenda.

(c) "Special Authority" - Mr. Hunter read out his letter conveying Council's suggestions to the P.M.B. as instructed and a reply from the Board's Registration Officer. In a brief discussion Council felt this matter should not be pursued further.

(d) Clarification re Desiree Exports - Mr. Hunter reported briefly on a telephone call he had received in reply to his written enquiry. Council discussed this matter further on an 'exchange of information' basis but without any firm conclusions.

(e) Box Sealing - This Item was deferred until later in today's Agenda.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Mr. Hunter reported that he had now received one copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council in Edinburgh on 15th January, 1988 and two copies of the Minutes of that Council's meeting in Dundee on 23rd February, 1988. A copy of the Minutes of the meeting in Edinburgh on 5th April, 1988 had not come to hand (Mr. Brass would check if this had been sent to him) and the Minutes of the most recent meeting in Edinburgh on 17th May, 1988 may not be ready yet. Council was pleased that Mr. Brass' approach to Mr. Stobo had been effective but felt that despatch of a copy of each Minute in turn direct to the Secretary should still be arranged.

Reporting on that most recent meeting, Mr. McArthur explained Mr. Bethel proposed the setting up of a computer database to provide swift and accurate response to export enquiries he receives from time to time. All input to the database would be on a voluntary basis and a prime objective would be to ensure total impartiality in any response. Council's views on this proposal had been requested.

In the ensuing full and lively discussion, support for the proposal was somewhat mixed. It was agreed some safeguards would be required and the type of information required and the format of the questionnaire should be carefully vetted. The Chairman's proposal to refer these matters to a small sub-Committee was seconded by Mr. McKenzie and, with Mr. McArthur as Convenor, Messrs. Lindsay and Whitehead were duly appointed.

In reply to Mr. McKenzie, Mr. McArthur explained that the S.S.P.D.C. council had felt that S.P.T.A.'s request for the S.D.A. to be asked to carry out a feasibility study on a Scottish Potato Authority was premature, but he undertook to raise the matter again at the next S.S.P.D.C. meeting. The Chairman added that he had recently been given to understand that the Ministry's Report on its review of the future of the P.M.B. after 1990 (which had been expected at Easter) is not now expected until August to October, 1988.

PROPOSED
SEED SUPPORT
SCHEME:

The Chairman confirmed that at its meeting on 24th May, 1988 and by 29 Votes to 1, the P.M.B. had finally approved the proposed Seed Support Scheme for introduction in the current 1988/89 Season. He emphasised this will not affect a grower's ability to dispose of his Ware under pre-Season Contract and/or D.I.S. Mr. McArthur voiced Council's unqualified appreciation of the Working Party's tenacity and extremely hard work in overcoming the enormous difficulties of bringing the proposals to successful fruition and he paid tribute to the very demanding part that Messrs. Brass and McKenzie had borne in this matter. Speaking for both, Mr. Brass thanked Council for these views. He explained that Mr. McLaren (N.F.U.S.) had retired from Chairmanship and Mr. McKenzie also now wished to retire from the Working Party. With unanimous support, the Chairman proposed Mr. McArthur should replace Mr. McKenzie and Mr. McArthur accepted this appointment. In reply to the Secretariat both Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Brass declined reimbursement of their additional travelling and telephone expenses on Working Party business.

ENTERTAIN-
MENTS
COMMITTEE:

Speaking briefly in addition to the pre-circularised Report on the meeting of the Entertainments Committee in Perth on 11th March, 1988, Mr. Miller commented on the Golf Outing at Kinross on 23rd May, 1988; announced that application was being made to hold the next Outing at Rosemount again on Thursday, 18th May, 1989; the possibility of a "trip" is under review and that the requisite provisional bookings for the next Dinner Dance (on Friday, 20th January, 1989) had been made.

WARE
POTATO
IMPORTS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Mr. Lindsay pointed out that it was more than two months since he had represented the Association at the meeting of the Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee in London on 15th March, 1988 and his brief report was therefore of minor historical significance. At that time, the expected U.K. crop surplus had been 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes and producer prices in Belgium and Holland were reported to be down to £22 per tonne. During Council's discussion it was thought that the U.K. DIS Scheme had already taken up about 80,000 to 90,000 tonnes.

SPECIAL
MEETINGS
OF COUNCIL:

Council noted the pre-circularised Minutes of Special Meetings of Council held in Scone on 23rd and 31st March, 1988 to discuss the future of the P.M.B. beyond 1990 but, on the Chairman's information that the Ministry's Report is no longer imminent, Council agreed to defer discussion of this topic.

SCOTTISH
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Reporting jointly on the meeting of the Scottish Advisory Committee which they had attended in Edinburgh on 24th March, 1988 Messrs. Brass and McArthur explained the main topic of discussion had been the proposed Seed Support Scheme, which had now been overtaken by events, the remainder of the Agenda being relatively less important routine matters.

SEED
POTATO
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE:

Mr. McKenzie reported that the above remarks applied equally to the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in London on 29th March, 1988. Much of the discussion had tediously re-rehearsed the early burning down argument.

SEED
POTATO
CONSULTATIVE
PANEL:

The Chairman reported the the further meeting of the Seed Potato Consultative Panel in Edinburgh, called for 23rd May, 1988 did not, in fact, take place. In reply to Mr. Lindsay he explained D.A.F.S. position on box sealing and its open-ness to suggestions. He also explained that the further Panel meeting had planned to take up the re-negotiation of grading standards and to investigate the possibility, feasibility and practicality of burning down only if the English N.F.U. gave its unqualified support to the proposed Seed Scheme. Since such support was not given, negotiations with D.A.F.S. could start fresh, unfettered by those conditional assurances offered to the English N.F.U.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) Appointment of a Deputy Vice President - The Secretary explained this matter had been deferred in November, 1987 for a mid-1988 review. Council's discussion covered possible nominations and it was left until the next meeting to give one of these further time for consideration.

(b) Review of variety testing and Certification systems - Mr. McArthur reported having studied the 236 page Report received. Such parts of it as refer to potatoes are very similar to the ideas discussed during the afternoon of the Consultative Panel meeting. In his view the "privatisation slant" should be encouraged. Council agreed Messrs. Brass and McArthur should attend D.A.F.S.' offered explanatory/discussion meeting in Edinburgh on 24th June, 1988 (the Secretariat to write to D.A.F.S. in formal acceptance), thereafter reporting back to the next meeting of Council.

(c) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to meet again in the Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, Scone at 12.30 p.m. for 2 p.m. on Thursday, 7th July, 1988 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

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

J.S. Brass.