

REPORT on a SPECIAL MEETING of
COUNCIL of the SCOTTISH POTATO
TRADE ASSOCIATION in the Wheel
Inn Motor Hotel, SCONE at 2.30
p.m. on Tuesday, 18th OCTOBER,
1988.

PRESENT: Messrs. G.S. Brass, J.G.H. Fenton, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose,
J.R. McArthur, T. McClung, K.A. McKenzie, J.M. Swinton and A.S.
Whitehead, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore
(Assistant) in attendance.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence had been received from Messrs. J.H.
Barr, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, D.H. Lindsay, P. Miller, P.
Moffat and J.O. Robertson.

POTATO
MARKET
POLICY
REVIEW:

The President, Mr. G.S. Brass, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting, arranged to discuss the Association's response to the Agriculture Ministers' Consultative Paper on the management of the potato market in Great Britain after 1990, published on 6th September, 1988. A copy of this Paper had already been sent to each Member of Council and Mr. Blackmore also tabled copies of the second draft of the PMB's response and its relative suggested "Potato Industry Council" (P.I.C.) received on 14th October, 1988.

Discussion was very lively, wide-ranging, far-reaching and prolonged, all present expressing their many views on the numerous points raised and considered. From the three Options offered in the Ministers' Paper and on the basis of Council's two earlier Special Meetings at the end of March last, it was the majority view that the "free market" option would not best serve the interests of the industry and consumers alike. It was also agreed that planned production (to ensure stability and continuity of quality and supply at acceptable price to the consumer and profitable for the producer) would require some form of enforceable acreage control, the present basic area/quota system (despite its faults) having the advantage of familiarity.

It was unanimously agreed that continuation of the PMB as such was not sacred but some of its functions could be carried out much more economically by a new national body (for simplicity referred to herein as "the Authority"). Seen as an addition to (rather than a replacement for) the PMB, the Board's proposed P.I.C. was not favoured, although its constitution was accepted as a basis for the preferred "Authority". From this starting point it was decided to determine the "bare bones" of the Association's response to government via DAFS.

Composition of the "Authority" would be 50% producer and 50% consumer interests, with an independent (preferably not Government-appointed) Chairman. Ten producer representatives would be elected by producers, with ten consumer representatives being appointed by their interest-organisations as follows:-

2 processors' representatives
2 English merchants
1 Scottish Merchant
2 retailers representatives (1 independent + 1 multiple)
1 Fishfryers' representative
1 Consumers' representative
1 Co-operatives' representative

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In respect of funding, it was accepted as necessary that the Authority be accorded the power to levy producers. Distinctly separate funds for market support and administration was advocated. It was also envisaged that PMB funds, including the proceeds from the sales of properties (including Sutton Bridge), be made over to and be invested by the "Authority" in the market support fund, the Income therefrom being applied to the administration fund. STOPA-type and HGCA (per tonne)-type levies were considered without decision meantime.

Principal "Authority" functions to be Acreage control, quality control and such market support as may be required. Any R. & D. and Publicity expenditure to be decided on merit by the Authority to be sponsored/funded by the proposer(s) of such expenditure. Essentially policy making only, the Authority would employ its own strictly limited staff to execute its directives.

On the Chairman's proposal it was agreed these draft outline points be circularised to all Council Members for further consideration prior to continued discussion at Council's next meeting on 27th October, 1988 which meeting, it was decided, would be brought forward to start at 11 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. Blackmore reported receipt of notifications of applications for PMB Seed and Ware Merchants Licences by Gordon Gyle, Esq., Stracathro (already enrolled as an Association Member) and Robert J.S. Doig Ltd., Glenfarg. Council instructed a standard acknowledgement/reply to these notifications be sent.

He also reported receipt of two formal letters nominating Robert J.S. Doig Ltd. for membership of the Association. Council accepted these nominations with effect from this date, thereby increasing the total membership Roll to 101 Members.

The meeting was thereupon concluded.