

MINUTES of a MEETING of COUNCIL of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION in
the Wheel Inn Motor Hotel, SCONE at 2
p.m. on Thursday, 24th NOVEMBER, 1988.

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.P. Deuchar, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, P. Miller, T. McClung and J.O. Robertson, with D. Blackmore (Assistant Secretary) in attendance.

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

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. J.E. Cook, J.G.H. Fenton, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.M. Swinton, A.S. Whitehead and R. David Hunter (Secretary).

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Meeting of Council in Scone on 27th October, 1988 (previously copied to each member of Council) were taken as read. The Chairman pointed out that the yield increase of 3 tonnes per hectare in his report therein on the Scottish advisory Committee meeting was in respect of second earlies only. Mr. Blackmore undertook to amend the Minutes accordingly, which were then formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) Membership - Mr. Blackmore read out a letter received from George Ogilvie (Montrose) Ltd. enclosing that Company's 1988 Subscription, apologising for late settlement and requesting the suspension of that Company's Membership (on 6th June, 1988) be rescinded. Following discussion, Council agreed that Company be restored to Membership of the Association, thereby increasing the total Roll to 102 Members.

Mr. Blackmore also reported receipt of formal nominations for Association membership of Caithness Potatoes Ltd., Perth and Grampian Growers Ltd., Montrose. After due consideration Council agreed to enrol both Companies with effect from 1st November, 1988 further increasing the total Roll to 104 Members. Anticipated nominations expected to arise from another enquiry (from Orkney Seed Potato Growers Ltd.) not having come to hand, Council deferred this enquiry until its next meeting.

In respect of PMB notifications of applications for Merchant Licences by Croy Potatoes Ltd., Nairn (Seed & Ware); Ronald Wilkinson, Esq., Lauder (Ware); Cullen Allan Ltd., Glamis (Ware) and Cullen Allan Scotland Ltd., Glamis (Seed & Ware), Council agreed to raise no objections but, following discussion of an earlier application to which Council had intimated its non-support and which had since been granted, the Secretariat was instructed to ask for the Licensing Committee's reasons and/or comments.

(b) Deputy Vice President and Council Vacancies - Introducing re-consideration of this matter deferred from the last Meeting the Chairman reported two further invitations to fill the Office Bearer vacancy had been declined. The Chairman agreed he and the Vice President would continue their efforts to fill this vacancy as a matter of urgency.

While/

While having power to co-opt to fill the two vacancies on Council, the ensuing prolonged discussion addressed the underlying problems. Various remedies suggested included a "recruiting drive" among younger specialist staff within the Membership, possible simplification of the election procedure, overcoming any "closed shop" and/or "seed only" image of service on Council, possible complete re-structuring of Council and the burden of external representation and any necessary changes this might entail in the Association's Constitution and Rules.

Rather than appoint a sub-Committee, Council agreed the matter be placed on the Agenda for full open discussion at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting of Association Members.

(c) Reviews - Testing and R. & D. - Mr. Blackmore reported details of information obtained from DAFS regarding the composition and function of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB). While this appeared to confirm a greater emphasis on cereals and grasses rather than potatoes (although the latter is served by a distinctive Committee, to which Mr. Douglas Hall has been appointed), it did not clarify the degree of overlap (if any) with the National Listing arrangements or whether some commercial interest enjoyed undue influence. After discussion Council instructed the Secretariat to seek more information on these aspects from Douglas Hall (or Simon Kerr, in Cambridge).

(d) Sponsorship - This matter was again deferred, the Secretariat being instructed to obtain details of the forthcoming 1989 Scientific Conference in Edinburgh.

(e) J.L.C. re extension of time limits for complaints - Mr. Blackmore reported Mr. Hunter's professional view on NASPM's request as conflicting with the Conditions of Sale intention to encourage the earliest possible examination of consignments after delivery, and that the fourteen-day limit for "standstill Orders" in the Seed Regulations operated outwith a commercial contract responsibility for a buyer to inspect his purchase promptly. It was agreed the SPTA view had been clearly stated to NASPM, both on an earlier occasion and again at the recent 1988 meeting, so that further response was not necessary.

In the following discussion Council deplored NASPM's further unilateral decision (despite the Joint Liaison facility) to amend its version of the jointly revised Conditions of Sale, thus widening the scope for possible Legal dispute in future.

(f) Annual Account 1988 and Budget Estimates 1989 - Mr. Blackmore tabled copies of the finalised 1988 Account (which on the Auditor's suggestion now incorporated a sundry Debtor provision for 1989 Corporation Tax repayment), duly submitted to the Auditor and which had received telephoned approval this morning. Council welcomed this change and instructed engrossment of the Account for formal docquetting and circularisation to all Members as soon as possible.

Council also considered each item in the tabled Budget Estimates for 1989. During discussion and as part of costs containment controls, the Secretariat was instructed to ascertain the extent to which the Market Prices Bulletin is essential to those Members who receive it and also to ensure that non-urgent News Letters, etc. are posted by second class mail in future. Council also agreed to fix the Secretary's Salary at £7,500 for the year to 31st October, 1988 and to recommend to the Annual General Meeting of Members that Annual Membership/

Membership Subscriptions for that same year be based on unchanged tonnage brackets as usual as follows:-

| | | |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| 0 - 2,000 tonnes | £ 70.00 | |
| 2,001 - 6,000 tonnes | £100.00 | |
| 6,001 - 10,000 tonnes | £130.00 | all plus V.A.T. |
| 10,001 - 14,000 tonnes | £160.00 | |
| 14,001 - 18,000 tonnes | £185.00 | |
| over 18,000 tonnes | £210.00 | |

(g) DAFS letter re Conditions of Sale - Mr. Blackmore read out a letter received from DAFS requesting deletion of all reference to uncertified seed from the Association's Conditions of Sale, together with Mr. Hunter's initial reply thereto. Following discussion, Council agreed the content of the reply and confirmed that a revision of the Conditions of Sale at this time is not contemplated.

APPOINT-
MENT OF
REPRES-
ENTATIVES:

In respect that no changes have taken place in the Office Bearers or Members of Council since Council's meeting in Scone on 20th November, 1987 the representational appointments made at that meeting should remain in force without alteration.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Conveying a verbal report by Mr. McArthur on the Scottish Seed Potato Council's extended meeting in Crieff on 22nd/23rd November, 1988 to discuss the PMB post-1990 the Chairman briefly summarised the outcome as favouring a Free Market unless radical changes can be achieved under Option 3 of the government's consultative Paper.

B.P.T.C.:

The Chairman gave a brief verbal report on the meeting of the British Potato Trades Consortium which he and Mr. McArthur had attended in London on 7th November, 1988. There had been prolonged discussion of the (then) uniformly poor current market and the lack of PMB comment thereon, and an even lengthier discussion of the PMB post-1990. Surprisingly, there seemed to have been but little thought given to this subject by most of the other constituent organisations and SPTA views found a fairly general support, which the Consortium Chairman (Mr. Whittle) carried through to the subsequent (afternoon) meeting of the

J.C.C.:

Joint Consultative Committee, where once again it was encouraging to find a surprising degree of support for many of the SPTA's ideas. Council agreed this would be helpful in finalisation of SPTA's response to the government's consultative Paper.

W.P.I.A.C.:

Mr. Lindsay spoke briefly on the meeting of the Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee which he had attended in London on 8th November, 1988. Regrettably, the Board staff had not provided their usual standard of preparedness and there had been instances of lack of tact towards continental visitors. Very little new information emerged from the usual country-by-country reports. Since he reported on the situation in Scotland, while Mr. David Sinclair remained silent on this topic, the waste of his own time and expenses attending convinced Mr. Lindsay even more strongly that abolition of this Committee should be prime target for cost-cutting.

PMB POST-
1990
REVIEW:

The Chairman referred to the "bare bones" headings agreed and listed in the Minutes of Council's last meeting and invited any additions thereto or further comment thereon.

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In thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion, including views of those who had attended the P.M.B.'s Open Meeting in Perth on Monday, 21st November, 1988 it was agreed that disposal of Sutton Bridge would be fiercely resisted by the Board's acting Chief Executive (Mr. Sprigge). Council agreed to oppose the Board's proposed Market Management Committee and to continue to press for a multi-representative fully authoritative Management Board. Several other points were re-discussed (split of funds between administration and market support, specifying actual percentages, including market inspectorate for abolition and control of imports) without any changes being decided.

In conclusion the Chairman proposed the Office Bearers and Secretariat together prepare the Association's Response Paper for submission to DAFS as soon as possible. Council adopted this proposal and agreed the Paper need not be pre-copied to Council Members before submission to DAFS but, thereafter, copies should be sent to the PMB, to each Scottish Member of the PMB's Board, to the Consortium and to the NFUS.

A.O.C.B.: (a) Dinner/Dance - In reply to Mr. Miller, Mr. Blackmore reported on ticket applications received to date. He was instructed to arrange for a meeting of the Entertainments Committee to be held in the Secretary's Office at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 2nd December, 1988.

(b) Date of next meeting - Council confirmed its next meeting will take place immediately after the A.G.M. in Scone on Thursday, 19th January, 1989. It was also agreed the Council meeting be open to all members attending the A.G.M.

The meeting thereupon concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

J S Brass