

MINUTES of a MEETING of the
CHAIRMAN'S COMMITTEE of the
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in 25 South Methven Street, PERTH
at 2 p.m. on Friday, 1st
September, 1989.

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.H. Barr, G.S. Brass, J.G.H. Fenton, R. David Hunter, D.H. Lindsay and J.R. McArthur, 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, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson and J.M. Swinton.

"SMALL
WARE":

The Committee reconsidered the Association's position in respect of "small ware", referred back to it by the last meeting of Council. Very full discussion made clear that while attention had centred almost exclusively on a single variety, there was unanimous agreement that the matter was essentially (and in no way different from any other) breach of statutory Regulations. In Mr. Lindsay's view trading in "small ware" constitutes deliberate fraud. The Committee agreed unanimously that the Association cannot and will not support any Member who breaches Regulations.

In respect of the view that lack of publication of S.P.T.A.'s position could be mis-interpreted, the Committee remained unable to agree on an avenue for, or the timing of, publication. It was pointed out that Council Members in general and Office Bearers more particularly could be asked to comment at short notice and in public. The Secretariat was instructed, therefore, to draft a formal Statement of Association policy in this matter and to submit this for consideration and adoption at the next meeting of Council. It was also decided to defer any News Letter announcement until after that meeting.

ARBITRA-
TIONS:

The Committee considered Mr. Hunter's three pre-circulated draft proposals for giving effect to suggestions remitted by Council to improve Arbitration procedures.

Mr. Hunter explained the first of these proposals is intended for insertion into the Association's Constitution and Rules, as Rule 17a between Rules 17 and 18. Although providing Council with power to prescribe Arbitration Rules for settlement of disputes between Members, he felt Council would not wish to exercise this power meantime. The proposal also provides Council with power to prescribe that Members shall make payment of deposits to the Arbiters before reference is entered upon. Adoption of this proposal will require the approval of a majority of two-thirds of Members present and voting at an Association General Meeting. Following discussion, the Committee agreed this proposal be submitted to Council for approval, with a recommendation that in due course Council prescribe that a minimum deposit of £200 shall be payable by each party to a dispute between Members.

Mr. Hunter explained his second proposal, designed to extend the requirement for deposits to non-Members in dispute with a Member, envisaged insertion of a four-line extension into the final paragraph of the Conditions, both of Purchase and Sale. During the following discussion he expressed some reservation on the practicalities of this proposal and others in the Committee were clearly reluctant to reprint the Conditions for such a comparatively minor amendment. It was agreed, /

agreed, therefore, to defer this proposal until any other revisions of the Conditions are considered.

The third (very brief) proposal, recommending a minimum fee of £100 each for the Arbiters and/or Oversman, was agreed and remitted to Council for adoption and insertion into the Association's guidance notes on Arbitrations Procedure.

P.M.B.
PROPOSALS:

The Committee considered the pre-circulated Potato Marketing Board's proposals for amendments to the Potato Marketing Scheme to give effect to the Ministers' requirements. The Chairman explained he was seeking the Committee's views in readiness for meetings of the British Potato Trades Consortium and the Joint Consultative Committee in London next Monday (4th) and the Scottish Advisory and Seed Potato Advisory Committees in Edinburgh next Thursday (7th September).

In the light of a letter received from Mr. Whittle (and pre-circulated) and telephone discussions with Mr. Scorer (National Joint Council) and others, Mr. Brass had found a widespread view that was not impressed with the Board's proposals. The Committee Members shared this view, being unanimously critical of the Board's proposed choice and revisionary constitution of the Joint Consultative Committee (but remaining without decisionary power) as the vehicle for wider influence in market management decisions. Mr. McArthur pointed out that by excluding any specific seed or any specific Scottish representation to bring in one Consumer representative and to increase processors' representation, in fact narrowed representation instead of widening it, as directed by Ministers.

Mr. Brass gave details of alternative representation proposals which Mr. Scorer had devised for a "management body" instead of a J.C.C. The Committee's discussion could not resolve whether this was intended to be in addition to, or instead of, the Board. Mr. Lindsay's view was that the latter would be too revolutionary to be acceptable to the Board and Mr. Fenton suggested that if the former, it should be titled the Joint Controlling Committee. Mr. McArthur, on the other hand, felt that the time for such proposals (which should have been submitted during the original consultation process) had now passed. In his own view (and irrespective of its representational make up) the cardinal question remains what powers the reconstituted J.C.C. will have.

The Committee's unanimous and categoric view was that a perpetuation of the existing J.C.C. role (as a "talking shop" to receive the Board's own "fait accompli" decisions) is not acceptable. Mr. Hunter remarked that a procedure for appeals against rejection of J.C.C. recommendations could be considered. In the majority view, however, it was regarded as unlikely that the revised J.C.C. will be granted any decision making powers. It was agreed that account must be taken of the Consortium's morning discussions, with a view to pressing for the J.C.C. to be granted decision making powers, which failing, to present alternative proposals at the J.C.C. meeting in the afternoon on Monday next (4th), for enlarging the Board itself (where the decisions are made) to include appointed representation of the wider interests referred to by the Ministers. The Chairman thanked the Committee for these carefully considered views.

A.O.C.B.: (a)/

(a) Future of S.S.P.D.C. -

(b) Higher Voluntary Standards -

Mr. Blackmore tabled copies of two letters received from D.A.F.S. this morning. After brief consideration the Secretariat was instructed to send a copy of each letter to all other Members of Council for discussion at the next Council meeting on 14th September. In respect of the first letter, the Committee recommended that the requested extension of time be supported without any reference to a ballot of levy-payers being made at the present time.

The meeting was then concluded.