

MINUTES of a MEETING of the COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in Glenhurst Hotel, SCONE at 2 p.m. on
Thursday, 24th MAY, 1990

PRESENT:

Messrs. A.W. Bayne, R. Doig, A.C. Galbraith, J.B. Hollywood, J.M. Marshall, D. Maxwell, K.A. McKenzie, P. Miller, D.Y. Stewart and A.S. Whitehead, with R.D. Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The Vice President, R. Doig, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. G.S. Brass, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, D.H. Lindsay, J.R. McArthur, J.L. Milne, J.O. Robertson and J.M. Swinton.

COUNCIL
PRIVACY:

Mr. Galbraith reported that on the morning after Council's last meeting he had been telephoned by a Member of SSPDC staff and taken to task for allegedly uncomplimentary remarks he had made about SSPDC during the previous day's SPTA Council meeting. He felt such lack of privacy in Council's discussions would inhibit Members' future contributions and be seriously counter-productive. The Secretary pointed out that preparation of Minutes and circularisation of Reports of Council meetings, although not verbatim, precluded complete privacy for Council's deliberations, but he agreed that any disclosure of the nature experienced by Mr. Galbraith was a matter of concern. Mr. Blackmore also reported the content of a telephone conversation with Mr. Cook regarding other indiscretions by SSPDC staff. Council expressed sympathy for Mr. Galbraith's position and agreed that exercise of common sense by all concerned should avoid any recurrence. Mr. Hollywood also announced his election to Council of NASPM and enquired if this affected his membership of SPTA Council. The Secretary stated Mr. Hollywood's disclosure was quite correct and his position was not contrary to SPTA's Constitution and Rules. In reply to the Chair Council Members offered no further comment.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Meeting of Council in Scone on 16th March, 1990 (previously copied to each Member of Council) were taken as read. They were formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

MATTERS
ARISING:

(a) S.S.P.D.C. Minutes - retraction - The Secretary reminded Members of the content of a comment regarding the Smithfield Show Stand minuted during the SSPDC Council meeting on 21st December, 1989 to which SPTA Council had objected. The Chairman reported that Mr. McArthur had intimated SPTA's objections strongly but, since the comment had been accurately minuted, a retraction seemed unlikely. The SSPDC meeting on 27th April had also been cancelled. Council agreed the Secretariat should write to SSPDC formally to record the Association's objection.

(b) J.C.C. and S.P.C.P. Reports - Mr. Blackmore reported having copied Reports on the Joint Consultative Committee and the Seed Potato Consultative Panel meetings (on 5th February and 12th March, 1990 respectively) to each Member of Council as instructed.

(c)/

(c) Letter re future of S.S.P.D.C. - Mr. Hunter read out a letter dated 29th March, 1990 to DAFS setting out the Association's views on the future of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council after January, 1991. Mr. McKenzie reported that S.E. Growers Ltd.'s Minutes record 98% of their members are in favour of continuation of SSPDC after January, 1991.

(d) Golf Outing - Mr. Miller reported a finalised total of 35 bookings had been received and felt this continuing lack of support would cast doubt on repeating the event in future. In brief discussion of various factors thought to be involved it was agreed that a general malaise within the trade also accounted for falling support for the Association's annual Dinner/Dance and its annual Curling Match.

(e) (i) Credit Risk Insurance - Mr. Hunter reported on the meeting he had had with representatives of the Credit Insurance Association Ltd. on 17th April, 1990 and sought Council's further instructions. In a full discussion it was felt Council had a duty to investigate this approach further on behalf of Members. The Secretariat was instructed to invite that Association's representatives to address the next meeting of Council, to be followed by questions and answers.

(ii) Product Liability Insurance - Mr. Hunter also reported receipt of a letter from the Association's Brokers (Willis Wrightson) explaining they had found an insurer (Excess) prepared to underwrite a replacement Scheme and quoting their premium rates and comparisons with GAFLAC rates. Overall, these new rates averaged 20% higher than the previous Scheme. Having regard to the previous Scheme's low uptake, Council instructed that the Brokers be asked to contact the previous participants direct.

(f) Investment Change - Mr. Blackmore explained that due to a two point fall in the price, the purchase of £1,050 10 1/4% Exchequer Stock 1995 recommended by the Stockbrokers early in March had been increased to £1,100 of Stock on 20th April, 1990 at a total cost of £1,013.19. The proceeds from the repayment of the Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Stock (£1,000) was received on 30th April, 1990. This change had increased the Investment Income from this source by £41.75 (59%) in a full year and would provide a tax-free appreciation of £115 over the five years to maturity of the new Stock bought.

(g) Revised Arbitrations Guidance Notes - Mr. Blackmore also reported that a copy of the revised Notes had been sent to each Member of the Association as instructed.

(h) Inspections re Complaints from England - In the event that the further information awaited was still not to hand, this matter was again deferred.

(i) Deputy Vice President - The Chairman reported that no progress had been made in filling this vacancy in the Association's Office Bearers. After brief inconclusive discussion Council agreed the matter be deferred to urgent review again in six months time.

(j)/

(j) Membership - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of two written nominations proposing Stewart Whitehead (Potatoes) Ltd., Ladybank, be admitted to Membership of the Association. Following due consideration Council accepted these proposals, enrolling this Company with effect from today's date thereby increasing the Membership Roll to 97 Members. Council also accepted Mr. Hunter's professional opinion that Mr. Whitehead's position as an elected Member of Council was unaffected by the changes that had taken place.

Mr. Hunter further reported receipt of PMB notification of applications for a seed merchant's licence by R.S. Miller, t/a. John Callum, Throsk, by Stirling and for a ware merchant's licence by Girvan Early Growers Ltd., c/o. SAOS Ltd., Edinburgh. Discussion disclosed no objections to either application. It was also understood that when granted a licence the Early Growers would seek Association Membership. After consideration of a further relevant point raised, the Secretariat was instructed to write to the PMB requesting details of the criteria requiring to be met for a Merchant's Licence.

V.H.Q.S.S.: Council considered DAFS' proposals for implementation of the Voluntary Higher Quality Seed Scheme which had been pre-copied to each Member of Council. Mr. Bayne pointed out that whereas at the Open Meeting with DAFS in Scone on 1st December, 1989 their Mr. Robb had stated DAFS was principally interested in harvest dates, the proposals now show both harvest dates and burn-down dates are to be pre-determined. Mr. Blackmore pointed out that the proposals were now misleadingly re-titled "The Premium Seed Scheme" and contained only one single mention of the Voluntary nature of the Scheme. Mr. McKenzie felt the proposals should be referred back to the sub-Committee for subsequent discussion with DAFS. It was alternatively suggested the proposals be copied to each Association Member, inviting "feed-back" comment to any Council Member in readiness for a special Council meeting to finalise the Association's reponse.

Mr. Hollywood urged removal of emotion from the discussion, acceptance of a scheme as "fait accompli" and concentration of efforts on negotiating adjustments. In further discussion it was decided that the sub-Committee be enlarged to include Messrs. J.B. Hollywood and J.M. Marshall and it was agreed to refer the proposals to the sub-Committee for full consideration and report back to the next meeting of Council, when the Association's response to the proposals would be finalised.

S.S.P.D.C.: Council noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council in Edinburgh on 23rd March, 1990 which had been pre-copied to each Member of Council. It was reported that the following meeting due to be held on 27th April, 1990 had been cancelled to provide for the Chief Executive's visit to Poland at that time.

W.P.I.A.C.: Council also took note of the pre-copied PMB Report on the meeting of the Ware Potato Imports Advisory Committee held in London on 20th March, 1990. The Association's representative, Mr. D.H. Lindsay, had attended the meeting but was unable to be present today to add further comment to the Report the content of which, Council agreed, was entirely historical.

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S.A.C./
S.P.A.C.:

The Secretariat explained that the Scottish Advisory Committee and the Seed Potato Advisory Committee were now combined and a joint meeting had been held in Edinburgh on 29th March, 1990. No Report on that meeting had come to hand.

NEW J.C.C.:

Mr. Hunter read out a PMB News Release reporting the first meeting of the new Joint Consultative Committee held in London on 8th May, 1990. Pending Parliamentary approval of the Board's proposed amendments to the Potato Marketing Scheme, the new JCC is to operate in an advisory capacity. Principally introductory and educative in nature the meeting confirmed Sir Michael Franklin as its independent Chairman, reviewed its terms of reference and the statistics and information needed to advise Government on target area and quota percentage for the 1991 Crop.

SUB-
COMMITTEES:

Council took note of the Minutes of a joint meeting of the Varieties sub-Committee and the Conditions sub-Committee held in Perth on 5th April, 1990 which had been pre-copied to each Member of Council and Mr. Blackmore reported briefly on a further meeting which had taken place on 18th May, 1990. Subsequent discussion and exchange of views on the matters involved proved useful in readiness for a third meeting still to be arranged.

N.A.S.P.M.:

Mr. Hunter sought instructions regarding the projected informal meeting with the President of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants during the Royal Highland Show. Council agreed that subject to Mr. McArthur's approval, the Secretary should write to the NASPM President to enquire whether an informal meeting between the Presidents and Vice Presidents of NASPM and SPTA at Ingliston on Thursday, 21st June, 1990 would be conveniently suitable.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) NASPM Visit - Mr. Hunter read out a letter from SSPDC notifying a small tour of Scotland by 30 NASPM Members between 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 25th July and 2.30 p.m. on Friday, 27th July, 1990. The letter sought three or four host Members for visits to growing crops, storage facilities, grading equipment and new varieties breeding programmes. In the ensuing discussion, Caithness Potatoes Ltd., Dalgety Produce Scotland and Robertson of Perth Ltd. offered to act as hosts. It was also felt Cullen Allen Scotland Ltd. and PBI Fenton may wish to do likewise. The Secretariat was instructed to contact the latter two Members before telephoning to arrange SSPDC contact accepting Members direct to co-ordinate a suitable itinerary. Council also agreed the Association should offer to share hospitality and/or dinner costs in Perth on 28th July.

(b) Date of next meeting - In the event that Monday, 9th July is a holiday in Perth, Council decided instead to meet again in the Glenhurst Hotel, Scone at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 12th July, 1990 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual arrangements.

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

