

MINUTES of a MEETING of the COUNCIL of  
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
in Glenhurst Hotel, SCONE at 3 p.m. on  
Friday, 27th July, 1990.

PRESENT:

Messrs. J.P. Deuchar, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, D.H. Lindsay, I. Melrose, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur, J.M. Swinton and A.S. Whitehead, with R.D. Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The President, Mr. J.R. McArthur, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence received from Messrs. J.E. Cook, A.C. Galbraith, J.B. Hollywood, J.M. Marshall, D. Maxwell, K.A. McKenzie and J.O. Robertson, adding that Mr. Peter Miller's resignation from Council will be formally reported later in today's meeting.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Meeting of Council in Scone on 24th May, 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) Inspections re complaints from England - The Chairman reported that further information to finalise the drafted Notes was still awaited. The matter was again deferred.

(b) Golf Outing - Mr. Blackmore reported that the 1990 Golf Outing had incurred a small financial loss but further Bank Interest during the rest of the year would create a small gain overall.

(c) Criteria for Merchant Licences - The Secretary read out a reply letter received from the PMB. After brief discussion it was accepted that the Board's Licensing Committee exercised an extensive degree of discretion and it was agreed the point raised could not be usefully pursued.

(d) "Varieties" sub-Committee - The Secretary reported receipt of seven replies to date to the enquiry letters sent to ten holders of rights. A further meeting of the sub-Committee to consider all replies together will be required shortly.

H.V.S.  
SCHEME:

Council took note of the Minutes of the first meeting of the Voluntary Higher Quality Seed Scheme sub-Committee in Perth on 18th June, 1990 previously copied to each Member of Council accompanied by a draft reply letter based on the sub-Committee's recommendations. The Chairman explained this procedure had been adopted (following postponement of Council's meeting from 12th July until today) to facilitate meeting DAFS' deadline for responses by 31st July.

Following discussion of some of the points, Council approved the terms of the letter and agreed it be sent as drafted.

56706  
The Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council in Edinburgh on Thursday, 7th June, 1990 (already pre-copied to each Member of Council) were taken as read. As stated therein, the Association's requested amendments of earlier Minutes had not been accepted and the Minutes were sustained as issued. Mr. Bethel/



Bethel had written the Association, however, accepting that an ambiguity had occurred and stressing that no offence had been intended.

Reporting on his meeting with DAFS in Edinburgh on Tuesday, 17th July, 1990 to discuss the Association's response to the future of the SSPDC, the Chairman stated the Association's request for a poll of levy payers was the only such request submitted. It appeared unlikely that the Minister would grant this minority request. If no poll takes place DAFS would support the appointment of an Executive Committee.

In respect of the potatoes book published by SSPDC to coincide with the EARP Conference, those Council Members who had seen it accorded it the highest praise. The Chairman explained its short print run had been quickly exhausted. A reprinting is to be arranged and copies are to be available costing £5 each. He is to recommend further reprinting every other year in future.

B.P.T.C./  
OLD J.C.C./  
S. & S.P.A.C.: Pre-circulated Reports on meetings of the British Potato Trades Consortium and of the (old) Joint Consultative Committee in London on Monday, 11th June, 1990 and on a joint meeting of the Scottish and the Seed Potato Advisory Committees in Edinburgh on Wednesday, 13th June, 1990 were all taken as read and duly noted.

NEW J.C.C.: The Chairman explained that to formulate recommendations for Target Area and Quota for the 1991 crop, the second meeting of the new Joint Consultative Committee had been held in London on Tuesday, 10th July, 1990. Both he and Mr. Doig had been unable to attend and the PMB had agreed that Mr. J.O. Robertson attend instead to represent the Association. Being unable to attend today's meeting, Mr. Robertson had reported verbally to the Secretariat and copies of that report were tabled.

Council noted that Mr. Robertson had declared the Association's preferred Target Area to be 150,000 hectares plus or minus 2%, to include 4,000 hectares for special purposes. Others' preferences ranged from 153,000 to 157,500 hectares. Under pressure for a unanimous recommendation, Mr. Robertson had reluctantly agreed to the Chairman's proposed compromise figure of 154,000 hectares, with 100% Quota.

Council's ensuing discussion revealed unanimous dismay over such a high figure. This was agreed to be an insufficient continuation of the downward trend of many years past, which itself reflected consistently increasing crop yields. The current Season's prospects of surplus also indicated larger stocks overhanging the start of the 1991 Season. A Target Area of 154,000 hectares with 100% Quota for 1991 Season, therefore, was seen as producing a further and very considerable surplus. In turn, this will pose a major threat to the Board's crop support resources, especially when the former governmental share of that support is markedly reduced.

It was decided, therefore, to seek Mr. Robertson's advice whether these views should be conveyed in writing to the Chairman of the new J.C.C. requesting they be brought to the attention of the Board and the Ministers before Target Area and Quota for 1991 Season are finally determined.

The/



N.A.S.P.M.: The Chairman reported that during informal meetings between the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants and the Scottish Potato Trade Association there had been unanimous agreement that both Organisations must talk together and often. Council endorsed this view and agreed the Joint Liaison Committee be re-activated, the Secretariat writing a suitable letter to NASPM and inviting items for the Agenda and suitable dates for the next meeting in Scotland.

Discussion of NASPM's recent tour visit to Scotland reported to Council's last meeting disclosed that the majority of the visitors had been unaware of the extent of the changes that have taken place here. It was agreed that the visits had been highly educative and augured better future understanding. The concluding Dinner for the party was also reported to have been a success and as already agreed the Secretariat was instructed to settle the Account when received.

C.I.A. LTD.: Reviewing Council's meeting with the Credit Insurance Association Ltd. immediately preceding Council's own meeting today, it was agreed this had provided a useful exchange of views. It was also felt this would be a worthwhile service to Members and the Secretariat was instructed to include an explanatory Item in the next News Letter, inviting interested Members to contact the Company direct.

MEMBERSHIP: (a) Council - The Secretary read out a letter from Mr. Peter Miller dated 14th June, 1990 explaining that Messrs. P.L. Fordyce would cease trading on 30th June, 1990 and regretfully tendering his resignation from Council. Mr. Hunter also read out a reply letter which had been sent and Council affirmed its support for the content thereof.

(b) Association - Explaining that deletion of Messrs. P.L. Fordyce reduced the Association's Roll to 96 Members, the Secretary also reported receipt of two formal written Nominations of Hunter Produce Ltd., Kirriemuir for Membership of the Association. After due consideration Council accepted these Nominations with effect from today's date, thereby restoring the total Roll to 97 Members.

The Secretary also reported amendments to the Merchants List notified by the PMB. In brief discussion it was expected that grant of a Licence to Early Growers Ltd. would be notified shortly.

A.O.C.B.: (a) Labelling Chemical Treatment - The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from a Member urging Council to ask DAFS to include chemical treatment information on official labels. The letter enclosed four official labels showing this is now done in England, Northern Ireland and Holland. Council's discussion recalled the same request a year ago had been rejected by DAFS. Accepting that the enclosed labels were contrary to DAFS views, Council nevertheless felt that while the proposal could be beneficial in some instances, it would be likely to be unduly restrictive overall in practice and it was decided not to pursue the matter.

(b)/

(b) "Catch Grade" for 1990 Crop - The Secretary reported receipt of representations from a Member regarding a proposed "catch grade" for the current crop. The Member believed that during a meeting with DAFS, the Association's representative had rejected the proposal without first consulting grower-Members concerned.

The Chairman explained that to the best of his knowledge no such meeting had taken place. Mr. McEwan (DAFS) had telephoned him urgently mid-morning on Thursday, 12th July to report the proposal. Mr. McEwan stated he had already spoken to a number of other people, none of whom supported it. The Chairman's own personal view was against an official "catch grade". Had he been asked to give the Association's view he would not have replied without first seeking Members' views. In any case, time was not provided to do so because, by mid-afternoon that same day, DAFS had announced that the proposal had been abandoned.

During Council's discussion of the "catch grade" matter, there was no support for the proposal. Mr. Deuchar regarded it as more important to urge most thorough investigation of the source of the cause of this particular problem in this particular year. It was agreed this would be raised at the next Scottish Working Party meeting with DAFS.

(c) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to hold its next meeting in the Glenhurst Hotel, Scone at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 6th September, 1990 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual necessary arrangements.

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

