

REPORT OF COUNCIL

of

THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION

for the year to 31st October, 1990

to

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

At the start of the year under review there were 98 Members on your Association's Membership Roll. This number was reduced by 6 during the year - one as a result of a merger with another Member, two resigned and three ceased trading. On the other hand, three new Members were enrolled but one of them became ineligible before enrolment was completed. Overall, therefore, total Membership was reduced by 4 to 94 Members on the Roll at 31st October, 1990. Accordingly, the modest but steady decline in Membership over recent years has been continued.

As you will all be aware from the Reports on all Council's meetings circulated to each Member during the year, Council's workload has been as heavy and wide-ranging as ever.

First in summarising the salient points, the then proposed Voluntary Higher Quality Seed Scheme referred to in last year's Council Report requires updating. Following the Open Meeting of DAFS with members, DAFS' response letter (which introduced an amended "Premium Seed Scheme" title and looked to move forward quickly) was circulated to all Members inviting their further comment. The Association's written views were submitted to DAFS on 25th January last. Following the Minister's decision on 2nd March to introduce such a Scheme, DAFS issued details of its administrative proposals on 15th May. Council appointed a sub-Committee to scrutinise these proposals. Having approved the sub-Committee's suggested responses, Council authorised these to be submitted in writing to DAFS and this was done on 30th July last. More than four months later a meeting of the Scottish Working Party with DAFS took place on 10th December, the results of which will be reported to Council later this afternoon.

Early in the year under review, as part of the postponed Ministerial Review, the Association was asked to submit its views on the future of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council. Your Association's response was submitted on 29th March. That response called for a full and wide-ranging debate of the issues involved coupled with an independent poll of all SSPDC Levy payers/

payers to determine the attitude of the Industry regarding the future of the SSPDC. The Ministerial decision that the SSPDC will continue in being without a poll being conducted was announced seven months later. This further disregard of your Association's repeated and persistent calls for a poll has given rise to strong and widely held resentment both within your Council and throughout the Association in general.

Among the changes arising from last year's extension of the Potato Marketing Board's existence, the first meetings of the new and more widely representative Joint Consultative Committee have taken place and have been reported upon with considerable interest. Other changes, in financial and administrative areas instituted by the Board, will take more time to become fully effective and these will be closely monitored to ascertain the level of success achieved by the Board in implementing its optimistically predicted economies in expenditure.

In response to the many and increasingly rapid changes taking place within the potato industry your Council decided that the absence of close relationship with the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants should be rectified. Following informal contacts during the year the Joint Liaison Committee was re-established and a meeting of that Committee took place in Edinburgh on 31st October last. In the same context and following an approach by NASPM, the Development Council arranged for a group visit of about 30 NASPM Members to Scotland last July. Several of our Association's Members received the group for conducted tours of their premises. The group members were reportedly much impressed by what they had seen. Your Association also met the cost of a Dinner for the group in Perth on 28th July.

During the year under review, your Council responded to an approach to set up an Association Scheme to insure Members against losses arising from Credit Risks. However, the response from Members was insufficient to allow acceptable premium rates to be negotiated. Accordingly, the initiative has been abandoned. For these same reasons and lack of "take-up", the Association's Product Liability Scheme lapsed during the year.

Council is most appreciative that the level of "feed-back" from Members is being/



being maintained. A further opportunity to continue this process will be available at the Association's Stand, No. B32 on the West Gallery at the Potato Marketing Board's "Scottish Potato" Event in the Royal Highland Exhibition Hall at Ingliston on Wednesday and Thursday, 6th and 7th February next. A cordial Invitation to visit the Stand is extended to all Association Members. It is also heartening to record that for the first time in five years, Nominations for this year's Elections to Council exceeded the vacancies to be filled and required a postal ballot to be held. Your Association's strength depends entirely upon the participation of ALL Members in its activities and that strength is more necessary now than ever before.