

MINUTES of a MEETING of COUNCIL of THE  
SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION in  
the Ice Rink, PERTH at 2 p.m. on  
Wednesday, 3rd JULY, 1991.

PRESENT:

Messrs. G.S. Brass, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, J.B. Hollywood, D.H. Lindsay, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, W. Nicoll, J.O. Robertson, D. Smith and A.S. Whitehead with R.D. Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance. Also present by Invitation were Messrs. A. Anderson, D. Peebles and M. Robertson.

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

APOLOGIES:

Mr. Hunter intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, A.C. Galbraith, J.M. Marshall, J.L. Milne, D.Y. Stewart, Jnr. and J.M. Swinton.

S.S.P.D.C.:

The Chairman explained that in view of the pronounced concern expressed in respect of recent Scottish Seed Potato Development Council matters, those Association-nominated Members of the Development Council who are not also elected Members of the Association's Council (along with Mr. M. Robertson, a co-opted Member of the Development Council whose Company is an Association Member) had been invited to attend today's meeting in a Consultative/Advisory capacity. Mr. G. Smillie regretted he was unable to attend. The Chairman proposed this Item on today's Agenda be taken first, before all other business and the meeting agreed.

The ensuing discussions was very thorough and comprehensive. It identified the principal concerns to be (a) omissions from and inaccuracies in the Minutes of the Development Council's most recent meeting (on 13th June, 1991) relating to the proposed secondment of SSPDC staff and S.E. Growers Ltd. and F.E.P. sarl.; (b) that secondment itself and continuation of support for S.E. Growers Ltd.; and (c) the effects of this support on other Development Council activities. The SSPDC Members present agreed that the Development Council itself must rectify those Minutes.

The discussion also revealed widespread opposition to the proposed secondment of SSPDC staff and strong support for total separation of S.E. Growers Ltd. from SSPDC as soon as practically possible. It was agreed this will have to be effected by the Development Council itself making the necessary decisions, issuing the resultant instructions and ensuring they are implemented.

It was felt the SSPDC's development and promotional work should be increased and concerns were also voiced regarding aspects of SSPDC's latest Annual Account and SSPDC's compliance with its statutory powers. In conclusion it was decided to convey the Association's principal concerns in writing to SSPDC, inviting that Council's response.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting of Council in Perth on 25th April, 1991 previously copied to each Member of Council were taken as read. They were duly approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

(a)/

MATTERS  
ARISING:

(a) Council Membership - Mr. Hunter reported that Beeson Group Ltd. and Hollywood Potatoes Ltd. had merged on 1st July, 1991. In respect of the Association's Rule 11, it was pointed out that Mr. J.E. Cook is also a Director of Scott Country Potatoes Ltd. and it was agreed that no change in normal retirements by rotation is required.

(b) Council/Membership Liaison - Mr. Blackmore reported that full details are still being finalised in readiness for individual notification to each Association Member.

(c) Agra-Europe - Mr. Blackmore reported that he had been able to finalise the list of initial subscribers to the Association's Group Scheme for this publication only this morning. In reply Council authorised settlement of the total payment due from Association funds, pending early recovery from the Members concerned.

(d) Press matters - The Chairman reported that Mr. Colin Ley had rendered valuable support to the Association in respect of recent Virus and label fraud allegations and close contact with him is being maintained.

(e) Membership and Subscriptions - Mr. Blackmore reported that Mr. Graham Reid, Airdrie, had telephoned to retract his resignation from Membership submitted in January, 1991 and has since paid his full Subscription for the current year. Council authorised his restoration to Membership, thereby increasing the total Roll to 91 Members.

(f) Meeting with P.M.B. Licensing Committee - The Chairman reported briefly on the meeting he had attended in London on 29th April, 1991. Mr. Blackmore was instructed to ask for a copy of the PMB's own Report on that meeting and to copy it to each Member of Council.

(g) Entertainments Committee - Mr. Blackmore reported that the Annual Golf Outing, at Ladybank this year, had been successful in the general view of the participants. Proposals for a Clay Pigeon Shoot had not elicited a single reply from Association Members. Ten Members had indicated interest in a possible Outing to Knockhill Motor Racing Centre. Council agreed a further meeting of this Committee should now take place.

(h) Virus complaints - The Chairman gave a brief updating report on developments since the Association's correspondence with N.I.A.B. In view of the extreme sensitivity of this topic, Council agreed with the Chairman's proposal to defer the matter pending the issue of a full report by SOAFD expected shortly.

J.C.C.:

Council noted the content of pre-circulated copies of the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held in London on 9th May, 1991. Following his own further brief comment, the Chairman sought Council's view on Target Area and Quota for the 1992 Crop, in readiness for formulation of recommendations by the next meeting of the JCC in London on 16th July, 1991. In discussion it was agreed a Target Area of 150,000 ha. should be aimed at, with an absolute maximum of 152,000 ha., prior consultation for support for this position from NFUS representatives being regarded as most desirable.

The/

S.O.A.F.D.:

The Chairman explained that the principal purpose of a meeting he had attended with the Scottish Office Agriculture and Fisheries Department in Edinburgh on 21st May, 1991 had been to update the position in the Department's investigations into the virus allegations. This had been followed by the Minister's Press Statement at the Royal Highland Show, all of which had already been briefly reported earlier today. Mr. Blackmore added that the Department had informed him that the meeting had also taken the opportunity to deal with Items deferred from the Seed Potato Consultative Panel meeting on 25th February, 1991.

S.P.A.C.:

Council also noted the content of pre-circulated copies of the P.M.B.'s draft Minutes of a meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee in Edinburgh on 12th June, 1991. While much of this meeting had been devoted to 1990 Crop matters, updating information on virus allegations (as already reported earlier in today's meeting) had been provided.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) Date of next meeting - Council agreed to meet again at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th September, 1991 as scheduled. It was also decided that the meeting will take place in the Ice Rink, Perth once again and the Secretariat was instructed to make the usual arrangements.

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

*R. M. Cuthbert*