

MINUTES of a MEETING of COUNCIL of
the SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION in the Ice Rink, PERTH
at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 27th AUGUST,
1992.

PRESENT:

Messrs. A.W. Bayne, G.S. Brass, J.P. Deuchar, A.C. Galbraith, J.B. Hollywood, D.H. Lindsay, J.M. Marshall, D. Maxwell, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson, D.Y. Stewart, Jr., D. Smith and A.S. Whitehead, with R.D. Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

The Vice President, Mr. D. Smith, took the Chair and welcomed those present to the meeting.

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence received from Messrs. J.E. Cook, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, I. Melrose and J.M. Swinton.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting of Council in Perth on 18th June, 1992 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) Press Matters - This matter was deferred pending updating from Mr. Doig.

(b) Potato Regime - No further developments were reported and the matter was continued until the next meeting. Mr. Hunter read a letter from SOAFD and copied to him regarding a review of E.C. Directives on Seed Potato Marketing and on PCN. Council agreed to ask SOAFD for further information.

(c) Maximum Residue Levels - Mr. Hunter reported having prepared a draft Paper which had been copied to Office Bearers for their practical aspects comments. Thereafter he intended to obtain Environmental Health authorities' approval of the Paper prior to its circularisation to Members.

(d) Membership and Subscriptions - Mr. Hunter reported receipt of two requisite written nominations of S.E. Growers Ltd. for Association membership and read out his earlier correspondence with that Company. During discussion, Mr. McKenzie clarified several points raised by Council Members. It was agreed these nominations be accepted, on condition that that Company's use of this Association's copyright Conditions of Purchase and Conditions of Sale be confined to its own trading documentation only and not to extend to their use also by that Company's own individual constituent members.

Mr. Hunter also read out two written nominations of Scottish Farm Produce (Potatoes) Ltd. for Association Membership and his correspondence with that Company regarding its having a permanent trading office in Scotland. Discussion revealed some doubt whether actual manning of and trading from such an office is established. In the absence of a representative of one of the nominating companies, the matter was deferred until Council's next meeting.

Mr./

Mr. Blackmore also reported that two promised nominations of Messrs. Jamieson Bros., Annan for Association Membership had not arrived. Following consideration, Council agreed this firm be admitted into Membership from the date those nominations reach the Secretary.

The Secretary was instructed that both new Members be charged 25% of the lowest tonnage bracket subscription for the remainder of the Association's current financial year.

Mr. Blackmore further reported that Subscriptions as given to Council at the last meeting had not changed. Of the two then unpaid Subscriptions, Messrs. J.M. Menzies, Coldstream, had indicated by telephone their intention not to continue their Membership but had not confirmed this in writing as requested. A response from the other unpaid Member had not been received by telephone as promised.

Council instructed the suspension of both Memberships and withdrawal of their further use of this Association's copyright Conditions of Purchase and Conditions of Sale.

(e) Registration for ware packing - Mr. Hunter reported preparation of a Paper which he proposed to have verified by the Environmental Health Authorities. He explained the Registration requirements are contained in statutory Regulations made under enabling powers in the Food Safety Act 1990. Despite an apparent ambiguity between the Act and the Regulations, it seemed likely that all dressing premises should be registered, the application for which must be made at least 28 days before such premises are so used. Council instructed this matter be progressed with all speed.

(f) Horberry & Baker Press Release - Mr. Hunter read out SOAFD's reply to the Association's enquiry, indicating that no action had been possible but monitoring was continuing.

(g) Inspections of ware crops - Mr. Hunter also read out SOAFD's reply to the Association's enquiry on this further matter, which explained that when documentation of origin of seed planted for a ware crop is in order, inspectorate advice may be given but cannot be enforced. Council agreed with Mr. Galbraith's proposal that ware growers rights in this respect should be explained in the next News Letter.

(h) Joint MSD/SPTA Conference - Mr. McArthur confirmed that this proposed 1992 event had been cancelled but he remained hopeful that with an earlier start to preparations, a conference in 1993 will be successfully arranged. Council recorded its thanks to Mr. McArthur for his efforts in this connection.

(i) P.M.B. Licensing Committee Liaison - Mr. Hunter confirmed that a Report on the meeting held in London on 15th June, 1992 had been copied to each Member of Council as instructed.

(j) Agra Europe - Mr. Blackmore reported that the Association's Group Subscription to "Potato Markets Reports" has been continued with five Members for the year to 30th June, 1993.

(k) Farm Assured Ware - No further developments having been reported, this matter was continued until the next meeting of Council.

S.S.P.D.C.: The Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council in Invergowrie on 4th June, 1992 which had been pre-copied to each member of SPTA Council were taken as read. Today's meeting expressed unanimous concern regarding the misrepresentation of the Association's attitude conveyed by an inaccurate remark made by a member of SSPD Council and recorded in those Minutes.

During the subsequent discussion, Mr. Robertson related the steps taken to endeavour to have the matter corrected at the next meeting of SSPD Council on 15th July, 1992. In the event that these efforts had not been successful, the Secretary was instructed to write to the SSPDC with an extract from the relative Minutes of SPTA Council's meeting on 30th April, 1992 to be incorporated verbatim into the Minutes of the next SSPD Council meeting. It was also decided to send a copy of that letter to Mr. Whitelaw at SOAFD.

J.C.C.: The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held in London on 30th June, 1992 (which had been pre-copied to each Member of Council) were taken as read. From his attendance there Mr. McArthur confirmed that an eventual compromise 1993 Target Area recommendation of 155,500 ha. (including 5,500 ha. of Special Grants, of which 4,300 ha. would be for processing and 1,200 ha. for prepacking and for exports) was reached. This left SPTA isolated, with no other option than to record its dissent from this recommendation. Compared with current trading conditions, stemming from this year's Target Area of 154,000 ha., Mr. McArthur felt that prospects for next year's trading would be even worse.

During ensuing discussion the view was expressed that the Association should publicise its misgivings of the ineffectiveness of the PMB on ware matters and the SSPDC on seed matters. It was recognised that any such publicity must include positive and constructive alternative proposals and the Chairman asked Members to let the Secretariat have their suggestions in this respect before the next Council meeting.

ENTERTAINMENTS COMMITTEE: Council took note of the pre-copied Report on the meeting of the Entertainments Committee in Perth on 31st July, 1992 on which Mr. Hunter provided brief updating comment.

"CONDITIONS" sub-COMMITTEE: Mr. Hunter reported that revised and amended Conditions of Sale had been scrutinised by the "Conditions" sub-Committee held earlier in the day and had been recommended to Council for adoption by the Association. He explained the principal changes extended the period for complaints in respect of skin spot, gangrene and dry rot from ten to fourteen days; omitted reference to transport by rail; incorporate provision for recovery of goods if bankruptcy or receivership of the Buyer occur; alteration of "certified" to "classified" throughout and omission of all reference to "uncertified seed".

He also explained that the approval and adoption of these revised and amended Conditions of Sale would clear the way for a corresponding revision and amendment of the Conditions of Purchase, thereafter leading to a direct meeting with NFUS to seek their approval of the revised Conditions of Purchase.

Mr./

Mr. Hunter next read out a letter from NASPM proposing an all-parties meeting in Edinburgh on 28th October, 1992 with extension of the complaints period from ten to fourteen days as the sole Item on the Agenda. Council agreed with the sub-Committee's view that such a meeting is now unnecessary and instructed the Secretary to reply to NASPM's letter explaining accordingly. It was further agreed the aim should be to complete revision of the Conditions of Sale and the Conditions of Purchase in good time for them to be operative for Season 1993-94. Accordingly, Council formally adopted the revised and amended Conditions of Sale. It was also agreed to delegate power to the sub-Committee to negotiate with NFUS on Council's behalf in respect of revision of the Conditions of Purchase.

ASSOCIATION
YEAR BOOK:

During Council's consideration of the possibility of preparing an Association Year Book, several options were discussed. From his own experience, Mr. Hollywood pointed out that an annually produced format would be less costly at the outset, but annual revision and re-printing would be more expensive in the longer term. On the other hand, while initially more expensive, a loose-leaf format would be much cheaper to update each year. Inclusion of official information, advertising, etc. was also suggested. Council agreed that a sub-Committee be formed to investigate and to make recommendations. Together with Messrs. R. Doig, D. Smith (both ex officio), Messrs. D. Stewart, J.R. McArthur and J.M. Marshall were duly appointed for this purpose.

ANNUAL
ELECTIONS
TO COUNCIL:

Mr. Hunter reported that the eight members elected to serve on Council from 1st November, 1989 and thus normally due to retire on 31st October, 1992 were Messrs. R. Doig, A.C. Galbraith, J.B. Hollywood, D.H. Lindsay, J.M. Marshall, K.A. McKenzie, I. Melrose and D.Y. Stewart, Jnr. He also pointed out that in terms of the Association's Constitution and Rules, retirement of the President (Mr. Doig) "shall be delayed until the end of his term of office". This left seven retirements, whereas the Rules also stipulate that "six Council Members shall retire annually by rotation but shall be eligible for re-election". Council agreed to draw lots to resolve the matter, as a result of which Mr. Stewart's retiral was deferred. The Secretariat was instructed to proceed with the usual elections arrangements.

A.O.C.B.:

(a) S.O.A.F.D letters - (i) Council considered a pre-copied letter asking for the Association's views on Register identification of post-harvest tested crops. It was agreed unanimously that such crops should not be distinctively identified in the Register but, to avoid delayed publication of the Register, should be issued as an addendum to it, headed simply "The following crops were omitted from the Register". (ii) Council accepted that a further pre-copied letter notifying proposed increased in 1992/93 labelling costs represented a virtual 'fait accompli' situation. It was agreed to seek an assurance that any future increases will not exceed the rate of inflation and the Secretary was instructed to convey these views in replies to both letters accordingly.

(b) Date of next meeting - Following brief discussion Council decided to hold its next meeting in the Ice Rink, Perth at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, 13th October, 1992 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements accordingly.

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

