

MINUTES of a MEETING of COUNCIL of  
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION  
in the Ice Rink, PERTH at 2 p.m. on  
Thursday, 7th JANUARY, 1993.

---

PRESENT:

Messrs. A.W. Bayne, G.S. Brass, R. Doig, J.G.H. Fenton, J.B. Hollywood, D.H. Lindsay, J.M. Marshall, J.L. Milne, J.R. McArthur, A.B. Pullar, J.O. Robertson and D.Y. Stewart, with R. David Hunter (Secretary) and D. Blackmore (Assistant) in attendance.

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

APOLOGIES:

The Secretary intimated apologies for absence on behalf of Messrs. J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, A.C. Galbraith, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, K.A. McKenzie, J.M. Swinton and A.S. Whitehead.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting of Council in Perth on 10th November, 1992, previously copied to each Member of Council, were taken as read. They were formally approved and signed to this effect by the Chairman.

APPOINTMENT  
OF OFFICE  
BEARERS:

The Chairman reminded Council of the situation created by Mr. Deryk Smith's resignation after only one year of his two-year term of Office as Vice President of the Association. To remedy this, he proposed his own two-year term of Office as President of the Association be extended by one year to 31st October, 1994 and that Messrs. David Stewart and J. Logan Milne be appointed to serve as Vice President and as Deputy Vice President of the Association respectively, until that same date. Mr. Robertson seconded these proposals and after brief discussion, during which all three gentlemen confirmed their acceptance, the proposals were adopted unanimously. The Secretary explained these arrangements were not specifically covered by the Association's Rules, for which reason it was felt expedient to seek ratification of them by the Annual General Meeting of Association Members to be held later in the afternoon.

MATTERS  
ARISING  
FROM THE  
MINUTES:

(a) Press Matters - The Chairman reported briefly on recent Association Press activity regarding a proposed voluntary reduction of 1993 potato plantings. He explained it was decided that individual releases by other organisations would have more impact than a single joint release on this occasion. The Association's Press Agent's Fee and Outlays in this respect, totalling £166.00 had been paid out of the Association's Press Fund and the Press Release arrangements had worked smoothly.

(b) E.C. Potato Regime - The Secretary read out a letter from SOAFD dated 30th November, 1992 enclosing a 16-page copy of outline proposals for an E.C. Potato Regime and inviting prompt initial comments. He also read out the Association's reply letter dated 9th December, 1992.

Council's discussion centred on a perceived threat to continuation of the U.K.'s longstanding planting control and crop buying capability under the Potato Marketing Scheme and administered by the Potato Marketing Board/

Board. During that discussion it was reported that the Minister of Agriculture must give twelve months' notice of any decision to disband the PMB. Several possible courses of Association action were considered but, without the authority of a clearly determined Association view, no progress was made. It was therefore agreed to ballot all Association members in the simplest possible terms for their individual views. Council urged every effort be made to ensure a 100% response in the shortest possible time.

The meeting of Council was then suspended to allow the Annual General Meeting of Association Members to take place. On conclusion of that meeting, Messrs. Ian R. McKenzie (Messrs. McKenzie Bros.) and John Macfarlane (Scott & Newman Ltd.) remained for resumption of the meeting of Council.

(c) Maximum Residue Levels, (d) Registration for Ware Packing, and (e) Inspections of Ware Crops - The Secretary regretted these three matters had still to be finalised before guidance notes can be issued.

(f) Association Year Book - A first meeting of the sub-Committee has still to be arranged. To remedy the vacancy created by Mr. Stewart having replaced Mr. Smith in an "ex officio" capacity, Council appointed Mr. J. Logan Milne as a Member of this sub-Committee.

(g) Conditions of Purchase - This matter was deferred until later in the meeting.

(h) Royal Highland Show - The Secretary read out a letter from the P.M.B. reporting that due to lack of support the Board has decided not to proceed with a Stand at this year's Show.

(i) Brown Rot - The Secretary read out a reply letter received from MAFF. The Chairman reported his understanding that the previous crop of potatoes from the now-infected land had been grown by a former owner four years earlier. In brief discussion Council decided not to ask SOAFD to obtain more information, but to write MAFF again to ascertain the size of the area infected and what eradication measure are to be taken.

(j) Agvet Conference - Mr. McArthur reported he had been unable to make any progress in this matter.

(k) P.M.B. Licences - The Secretary reported various changes notified by the P.M.B., including grant of a Seed Merchant's Licence to Messrs. Robert Watson & Sons, Kingennie. It was agreed a personal approach by Council Members be made to enquire regarding Association membership. It was also decided the matter of Taypack Ltd., Inchture, be left on the table.

RESPONSE  
TO NASPM:

The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants pressing for SPTA's views following the joint meeting held in Edinburgh on 28th October, 1992 to discuss the period allowed for complaints. The Chairman added that although agreement had been reached by that date to extend the ten-day period for skin spot, gangrene and dry rot to fourteen days, NASPM had pressed hard for agreement to its further proposal for a period of fourteen days for all complaints except frost damage.

Council's/

Council's discussion was both thorough and prolonged. It was felt by some Members of Council to be an integral part of improving its image for the seed potato industry to be seen to be caring for and listening to its customers. Other views were equally firmly expressed in favour of retaining the longstanding three-day period for all complaints except skin spot, gangrene and dry rot, principally to encourage prompt inspection on arrival but also to maintain the benefit of NFUS approval of the Conditions of Purchase.

Despite some pressure to decide the matter at this meeting of Council, the Chairman felt further careful thought to be warranted, possibly to include further re-consideration by the "Conditions" sub-Committee and an informal approach to NFUS. Council accepted this course and agreed the matter be placed on the Agenda for a decision at its next meeting.

S.S.P.D.C.:

The Minutes of a meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council in Perth on 27th and 28th October, 1992 (which had been copied to each member of SPTA Council) were taken as read. Mr. Robertson reported that the subsequent SSPDC meeting, scheduled for 18th November, 1992, had been cancelled and the next meeting on 17th December, 1992 had been poorly attended. From that meeting he explained the SSPDC's 5-year plan had been suspended pending clarification of the PMB's future and other business had included the High Grade Region, the E.C. Potato Regime, Quota Leasing and the SSPDC's Budget. He also reported that Algeria is believed to be buying seed this year. In respect of correction of SSPDC's misleading reference to SPTA's Minutes, he explained this had been dealt with at the July, not the August, meeting of SSPDC. SPTA Council felt this "correction" had been less than satisfactory but decided the matter should not be pursued. Among replies to SPTA Council Members' questions, Mr. Robertson also explained that dealings in Russia and Ukraine appear to be centralising.

S.P.A.C.:

The Chairman reported and commented briefly on a meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee which he had attended in London on 2nd December, 1992. In the ensuing discussion and in reply to a question submitted on behalf of Mr. Cook, it was explained that the crop buying trigger mechanism depends on the number of transactions recorded in two consecutive weeks. In the event of an insufficient number of transactions in the second week, the trigger mechanism cannot operate. No explanation was offered for inclusion of controlled varieties in support buying.

S.O.A.F.D.:

The Secretary read out a letter from Mr. Gordon Brown of the Scottish Office Agriculture and Fisheries Department summarising the outcome of a meeting in Edinburgh on 14th December, 1992 to review the issue of the Department's crop statistics. It had been agreed that in future, for the sake of accuracy, interim crops-entered statistics will no longer be issued. The more reliable provisional statistics will continue to be issued, with a mid-July target date. Final statistics of crops classified will continue to be issued in late September each year. Possible alternative printing options are being examined to prevent delayed issue of the Crops Register.

The Secretary also reported receipt of a copy of a SOAFD letter to the E.C. Commission and all 11 Member States setting out "the case for the defence" of High Grade Regions.

A.O.C.B./

A.O.C.B.:

(a) Association's Annual Dinner and Dance - The Secretary reported that this year's Function had been attended by 105 people, compared with 154 the previous year. It was generally agreed to have been a successful event. The Raffle had raised the sum of £1,020.00 for Cancer Research, compared with £1,050.00 the year before.

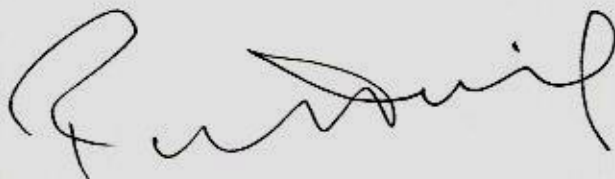
(b) Calendar of Council Meetings - The Secretary explained that until SSPDC's calendar is determined in mid-February, his own draft calendar will not be finalised. Council agreed this matter be deferred until its next meeting.

(c) Correspondence - The Secretary read out a letter from Scottish Farm Produce (Potatoes) Ltd. expressing displeasure at Council's earlier rejection of formal proposals for that company to become a Member of the Association. He also read out a letter from one of the two Members who had proposed that Company for Association Membership, requesting that Council re-consider its decision not to grant Membership. After brief discussion it was agreed this matter be placed on the Agenda for Council's next meeting and the Secretariat was instructed to ensure that a representative from each proposing Member be present at that meeting.

The Secretary also read out a letter from a Member urging that the Association take action in respect of current extremely low potato prices and the insecurity surrounding the future of the PMB. Council agreed these topics formed the basis of the ballot of all Association Members instructed earlier in this meeting and the Secretariat undertook to reply to this letter.

(d) Date of next meeting - After brief discussion and taking account of the fixture for the second leg of the Association's annual Curling Match, Council agreed to hold its next meeting in the Ice Rink, Perth at 11 a.m. on Friday, 5th March, 1993 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements.

The meeting thereupon concluded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Smith', is written across the bottom of the page.