

MINUTES of a MEETING of COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION
in the Ice Rink, PERTH at 11 a.m. on
Friday, 5th MARCH, 1993.

PRESENT: Messrs. G.S. Brass, R. Doig, D.H. Lindsay, J.M. Marshall, D. Maxwell, I. Melrose, K.A. McKenzie, A.B. Pullar, J.O. Robertson, D.Y. Stewart and J.M. Swinton, with R.D. 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. A.W. Bayne, J.E. Cook, J.P. Deuchar, J.G.H. Fenton, A.C. Galbraith, J.B. Hollywood, J. Logan Milne, J.R. McArthur and A.S. Whitehead.

MINUTES: The Minutes of the meeting of Council in Perth on 7th January, 1993, 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 - The Chairman reported that a further Press Release had been issued to re-inforce the earlier call for a voluntary reduction in 1993 plantings. This had prompted a response letter in an English publication to which he had sent a letter in reply. Only one further Press Release on this topic is envisaged.

(b) E.C. Potato Regime - Copies of an Association letter to the Scottish Office Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Sir Hector Munro, were tabled. The letter reported the result of the Ballot of all Association members [69 members (75%) supported retention of existing arrangements, 21 members (22.8%) supported alternative E.C. Regime proposals and 2 members (2.2%) abstained from the Ballot] and also asked the Minister for an early meeting. A copy of that letter was subsequently sent to the Member of Parliament for each of the 72 Scottish constituencies.

Mr. Melrose reported having received and accepted an invitation to give oral evidence to the sub-Committee D (Agriculture and Food) of the European Communities Committee of the House of Lords. During his hour-long questioning on 24th February, 1993 he felt the sub-Committee had been sympathetic and seemed to favour retention of the existing arrangements. He had been followed by Mr. Robin Pooley (Managing Director of producer co-operative Anglian Produce Ltd.) whose evidence had contained some inaccuracies which Mr. Melrose had objected to in a subsequent letter to the sub-Committee. The Chairman thanked Mr. Melrose for his efforts and his report.

Mr. Marshall explained his Company's reasons for its objections to the existing "all-in-one (seed and ware)" Quota arrangements and Mr. McKenzie reminded Council of the current harm that the FMB's activities have caused the industry. Mr. Hunter felt a better course would be to determine a low target acreage initially, which could be increased later if so required.

(c)/

(c) Maximum Residue Levels - Mr. Hunter reported that an information Paper had now been issued to all Association Members.

(d) Registration for Ware packing - Reporting that progress had been made, Mr. Hunter explained that the Advice Paper prepared for members had now been submitted for official approval prior to circularisation.

(e) Inspections of Ware crops - Mr. Hunter also reported that information for members on this matter had been circulated as an Item in the latest News Letter.

(f) Association Year Book - This matter was deferred until the Report on the first meeting of this sub-Committee later in today's Agenda.

(g) Brown Rot - Mr. Hunter confirmed having asked MAFF for further information but regretted this had not yet come to hand. Council agreed a reminder letter should be sent.

(h) High Grade Seed Area - In respect of the successful outcome of negotiations to retain the U.K.'s High Grade Seed Area arrangements, the Chairman reported having congratulated SOAFD staff on behalf of the Association. Council agreed written confirmation need not be sent.

(i) Timetable of Meetings - Mr. Hunter proposed dates for Council's meetings during the remainder of 1993. Following consideration of each of these in turn, the following dates were agreed:- Monday, 26th April; Tuesday, 22nd June; Thursday, 26th August; Thursday, 28th October and Tuesday, 16th November.

(j) Appointment of Office Bearers - Mr. Hunter pointed out that while the appointments made at the last meeting of Council had been submitted to the A.G.M. for ratification, the Minutes of Council's resumed meeting thereafter had omitted to record those appointments had been formally ratified.

S.S.P.D.C.:

Mr. Hunter explained he had yet to receive a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council on 17th December, 1992 which he assumed had been approved at the subsequent meeting on 18th February, 1993.

Reporting on the latter meeting, Mr. Robertson stated that the second draft 5-year plan had not been furthered. Dates for a reduced number of Council meetings in 1993 had been announced. A first draft of the 1992 Annual Accounts had been considered and following discussion, was firmly rejected for poor presentation and was referred back to the Accountants for answers to a number of queries. Good progress was reported in the collection of Levies, of which 85% had been received by the date of that meeting.

SPTA's Council discussion of these and other relevant matters was both thorough and wide ranging. In respect that disquiet was voiced on marketing/promotional developments and in view of the expiry of the current appointments of SSPD Council Members at the end of 1993, it was agreed to seek an informal meeting with SOAFD's Mr. Ian Whitelaw.

RESPONSE/

RESPONSE
TO NASPM:

It was agreed to defer this matter until later in this meeting.

As invited, Mr. Gordon Smillie then joined the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP:

Before re-consideration of earlier non-acceptance of two nominations of Scottish Farm Produce (Potatoes) Ltd. for Association Membership, Mr. Hunter announced receipt of a resignation of membership from Thomas Edwards & Son (Growers) Ltd. reducing the Membership Roll to 91 Members. He also tabled two formal written nominations of Messrs. Robert Watson & Son, Brechin, for Association membership. Following due consideration, these Nominations were accepted, restoring the Membership Roll to 92 Members. It was further agreed that in the absence of any progress, the matter of Taypack ltd., Inchtute, be left on the table.

In respect of Scottish Farm Produce (Potatoes) Ltd., it was first debated whether re-consideration was constitutional and had been administratively correctly announced. Accepted to be affirmative on both points, Mr. Smillie then replied to the Chair by explaining the reasons for his Company's nomination of this new Member. He related the extent of the nominee's involvement in the Scottish industry and exports from it and outlined his own Company's many years of satisfactory business experience in trading with the nominee.

As representative of the other nominating Company, Mr. Pullar supported Mr. Smillie's information and expressed his own Company's confidence in the nominee's business dealings and reliability. Council's extensive discussion of these various points did not produce a unified decision but did agree with a suggestion that if the nominated Company implemented its offered change of name, fresh nominations could be submitted to Council for consideration. The Secretariat was instructed to convey this suggestion to the nominated company.

In respect of Membership Subscriptions Mr. Blackmore reported that including 1 resignation and 7 changes of tonnage brackets, 65 payments (70.5%) had been received to date totalling £8,445, compared with an estimated £8,358. The 27 subscriptions remaining to be received are estimated to total a further £3,899.

"CONDITIONS"
sub-
COMMITTEE:

A Report on a meeting of this sub-Committee in Perth on 3rd February, 1993 which had been pre-copied to each Member of Council was taken as read. Mr. Hunter reported that since that meeting he had re-revised the Conditions of Sale and the Conditions of Purchase and copied these to each sub-Committee member. Further copies were tabled for Council's use today.

Mr. Hunter explained that Council must decided whether the Association is to adopt the sub-Committee's recommendation to accept NASPM's proposed extension of the complaints period from three days to fourteen days not only for skin spot, gangrene and dry rot (as already agreed) but to all other complaints except short weight and frost. He gave a detailed clause-by-clause explanation of the amendments required to implement the changes into the Conditions.

Council/

Council formally approved the principle of these changes and instructed copies of the proposed amended Conditions be forwarded to NFUS and NASPM for their views. In view of the substantial concessions these contained it was agreed to ask NASPM to make minor changes to their Conditions to achieve uniformity. It was further agreed to circularise notice of these impending changes to all Association members.

J.C.C.: In the absence of a Report on the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee in London on 8th February, 1993 this matter was deferred until the next meeting of Council.

ENTERTAINMENTS COMMITTEE: Council noted the content of a pre-circulated Report on a meeting of the Entertainments Committee in Perth on 22nd February, 1993 which was taken as read. Mr. Blackmore provided further updating details obtained since that date.

YEAR BOOK sub-COMMITTEE: A report on the first meeting of the Year Book sub-Committee in Perth on 22nd February, 1993 (copies of which had been pre-circulated) to each Member of Council) was taken as read. Mr. Hunter reported that the printing quotation he had been instructed to obtain amounted to £1,730.00 but that Mr. Blackmore had indicated that comparable printing (although on non-glossy paper) had cost £725.00 in March, 1992. A further early meeting of the sub-Committee was intended.

S.S.P.E.: As Convenor of the Scotch Seed Potato Exhibitors' Organising Committee, Mr. Smillie reported that support for the Group's Stand at the annual Royal Smithfield Show had deteriorated rapidly. From 18 members in 1990 and 10 members in 1991, only 8 members participated in 1992. With only 5 potential members remaining for 1993 and S.S.P.D.C.'s decision to withdraw from costs-sharing arrangements, it had been decided that participation in the 1993 Royal Smithfield Show cannot be undertaken.

This has precipitated the Group's winding up and disposal of the cash in hand, now reduced to £777.75. In this latter respect he proposed that an ex gratia payment of £500.00 be made to the Stand Attendant on the occasion of his Retirement and that the balance remaining thereafter be made over to the SPTA for Press and/or Public Relations purposes. Mr. Doig seconded this proposal which, with Council's strong support, was formally adopted.

A.O.C.B.: (a) Banking Arrangements - Mr. Hunter explained that among changes arising from his forthcoming retirement from his Legal Partnership, the Association's current banking arrangements cannot continue to operate.

To replace them he proposed that three new "Cashflow" Accounts be opened with Clydesdale Bank plc. All three Accounts to be in name of the Scottish Potato Trade Association, but designated General Account, Press Fund and Entertainments Fund respectively. Each Account will be under the control of the current President, Vice President and Secretary of the Association or their successors in office. The Bank will be requested to honour to the debit of these Accounts all Cheques, Orders or Withdrawals signed by any one of the above-named authorised Officers, even although by so doing overdrafts on the said Accounts may be created or increased from time to time.

Council/

Council formally accepted these proposed arrangements and terms and resolved to authorise their implementation.

(b) Date of next meeting - Council confirmed its earlier agreement to hold its next meeting at 2 p.m. on Monday, 26th April, 1993 and the Secretariat was instructed to make the necessary arrangements with the Ice Rink, Perth as usual.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "T. J. ...", is written across the middle of the page.