

MINUTE of MEETING between  
representatives of S.P.T.A. and  
S.N.F.U. in EDINBURGH on 12th  
AUGUST, 1993.

PRESENT: S.P.T.A. Messrs. Doig, Hollywood, McArthur, Stewart and Hunter.

S.N.F.U. Messrs. Bill Reid, S. Moles and Ms. Lang.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bill Reid of the Farmers' Union chaired the meeting.

Mr. Reid commenced the meeting by explaining that his Union, in conjunction with the English Farmers' Union and the P.M.B., were working together at preparing a Paper on the future of the Potato Scheme. He added that his Union was now hopeful that the existing Potato Scheme may now be retained. Mr. Doig stated that S.P.T.A. were in favour of retaining the P.M.B. but only on the basis that the existing Scheme continues in being.

INTERVENTION: Mr. Reid stated that the English Union may not be in favour of Intervention but the Scottish Union was in favour provided that it was "meaningful" (i.e. the Board's buying price must be realistic). Mr. McArthur stated that if the price is not to be meaningful then the levy must be substantially reduced.

Mr. Reid reported that it was being suggested that there might be introduced a leeway which would permit a 5% underplant without any future penalty. Mr. McArthur stated that there may be some advantage in reverting to the previous procedure of Growers being required to state, prior to planting, their "planting intentions".

OVER PLANT LEVY. Mr. Reid stated that the English Union felt that trade was being restrained by the excessively high excess levy.

QUOTA: Mr. Doig stated that S.P.T.A. objects to the present procedure whereby quota can only be owned by the occupiers of land. He added that it was the opinion of S.P.T.A. that all levy payers should be allowed to hold quota.

POTATO REGIME: Ms. Lang stated that the present regime was now "on hold". She added that it will be early next year before the result of the consultative process is known.

FUTURE OF P.M.B.: There was general discussion regarding the future of the P.M.B. and the possibility of it being replaced with a Potato Authority for Scotland. It was agreed that in discussions regarding the future of the Potato Industry seed should be kept separate from ware.

Mr. Doig suggested that as a means of saving P.M.B. expenses the existing licensing of Potato Merchants should be abolished. He added that in his opinion the licensing of Merchants was now superfluous.

The possibility of setting up a new body similar to Home Grown Cereals Authority was discussed.

Mr./

Mr. McArthur suggested that consideration should be given to combining S.S.P.D.C., D.A.F.S. and P.M.B. There was general discussion regarding the merits of privatisation of the Inspection Scheme.

DE-REGULATION OF P.M.B.: Mr. Reid explained that consideration was being given to raising the minimum acreages which required to be registered with the P.M.B. He explained that at present 50% of Growers grow less than two hectares. The meeting agreed that it would be useful to raise the minimum acreage but not beyond one hectare.

J.C.C.'S ROLE: Mr. Doig suggested that all sections of the industry should pay a levy to the P.M.B. not just the Growers. He added that this would have a beneficial effect on the attitude of the non-growing members of the J.C.C. (e.g. Processors).

SMALL WARE TRADE: There was general discussion regarding the damage which the small ware trade was doing to the image of Scottish seed potatoes. Mr. Moles suggested that if small ware trade is not controlled the High Grade Area could be jeopardised. In discussion it was accepted that the controlling of the trade in small ware was extremely difficult to achieve and that it could be best achieved by the Controllers exercising the control of ware production of their varieties. During discussion Mr. Reid stated that his Union believed that the Controllers were asking too high a price for seed of the controlled varieties in England which was encouraging the trade in small ware. Messrs. Doig and McArthur defended the position of the Controllers.

GENERAL: It was agreed that the meeting had resulted in useful discussion and that meetings between S.P.T.A. and the Scottish Farmers' Union should take place on a regular basis. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at Ingleston, Edinburgh, at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 23rd November, 1993.

This terminated the business of the meeting.