

REPORT on THE SCOTTISH POTATO
INDUSTRY MEETING held at PENTLAND
HOUSE, EDINBURGH at 10.00 a.m. on
TUESDAY, 17th MAY, 1994.

PRESENT: S.P.T.A.: Messrs. D. Stewart and R.D. Hunter.
SCOTTISH OFFICE: Messrs. I. Whitelaw and G. Brown, along
with Miss J. Campbell.
N.F.U.S.: Mr. Bill Reid and Miss Caroline Lang.
S.S.P.D.C.: Messrs. J. Stobbo and J. Bethell.
VTSC RAISERS: Messrs. A. Adamson and J. Cruickshanks.
P.M.B.: Mr. H. Edmonds.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Iain Whitelaw chaired the meeting.

SUCCESSOR ARRANGEMENTS TO THE POTATO MARKETING BOARD: Mr. Whitelaw opened the meeting by explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to give to the Scottish Potato Industry an opportunity of voicing its views regarding successor arrangements to the Potato Marketing Board and to assist The Scottish Office in advising the Potato Marketing Board regarding the Scottish Potato Trades requirements with regard to a successor Body to the Potato Marketing Board. Mr. Whitelaw was aware that the Board was about to conduct a Survey and that obviously the results of that Survey would have to be awaited. For the purpose of the present meeting it would have to be assumed without in any way pre-empting the Board's Survey that a successor Body to the P.M.B. would be set up. Mr. Whitelaw explained that for the moment the Minister of Agriculture was not proposing in any way to intervene until the Industry had had an opportunity of expressing its requirements for the future. Mr. Whitelaw reminded those present that S.S.P.D.C. was due to be reviewed in 1995. He suggested accordingly that the present discussion should not consider the question of whether or not S.S.P.D.C. should be retained after 1995. That would be a matter to be determined later.

Mr. Whitelaw confirmed that a Minute had been prepared of the MAFF Potato Conference on 28th April and would be issued in due course.

Mr. Whitelaw stated that he realised that no decisions could be made at the present meeting but that he felt discussion would be helpful.

There then followed detailed discussion. During that discussion it seemed to be the consensus of the meeting that if there is to be a successor Body to the P.M.B. it would likely be a Great Britain Potato Development Council which would include a Seed Division possibly, but not necessarily, restricted to Scotland or the High Grade Seed Area.

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It was pointed out that acceptable representation on the new Body would pose a considerable problem. It was accepted that the Management Team of the new Body should consist of, at the most, say, 15 - 20 members which would make it very difficult for all of the participating sections of the Trade to have a representative on that Body. It was considered one possibility would be to have a Management Committee of, say, 7 along with various satellite bodies on which the various sections of the Industry would be represented.

It was also considered that the collection of Levy from the Potato Industry would also pose a considerable problem. Mr. Cruickshank proposed that the Levy be applied at the "first point of sale". It was, however, the general feeling of the meeting that in most circumstances that would result in the Producer paying the whole of the Levy and finding it very difficult, if not impossible, to pass that Levy on to subsequent purchasers.

Referring to the P.M.B. Survey, Mr. Cruickshank stated that it will be possible for the Board when assessing the results of the Survey to determine the particular wishes of the Scottish Seed Potato Industry.

That terminated the business of the meeting.