

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION held in the ICE RINK,
GLOVER STREET, PERTH, at 2.30
p.m. on THURSDAY, 11th JANUARY,
1996.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.M. Beattie, J.P. Deuchar, B. Doig, D. Harley, D.H.Lindsay, V. Lumb, J.MacFarlane, J.M. Marshall, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.O. Robertson, D.Y. Stewart, J.M. Swinton and D.W. Veitch, along with Mr. R.D. Hunter, the Secretary.

CHAIRMAN: The Association President, Mr. D.Y. Stewart occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. J.M. Hollywood, I.Melrose, J. Logan Milne and A.B. Pullar.

(1) MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council of 23rd November, 1995 was taken as read, approved and signed.

(2) MATTERS ARISING:

(a) Annual Dinner and Dance: The Secretary reported that 133 people had attended the Association's Annual Dinner and Dance held at Huntingtower Hotel, Perth, on Friday, 8th December, 1995. He stated that as a result of the numbers attending having been less than the budgeted attendance of 150 there had been a deficit of £11.93 for the function. He pointed out, however, that such a nominal deficit could easily be funded from the Dance Reserve Fund. Those who had attended the function considered that 133 was a very comfortable number to be accommodated in the Function Suite at Huntingtower Hotel.

The Secretary reported that the Prize Draw held during the Dance had resulted in £3,191.38 being available to be donated to Charity. The Secretary pointed out that of that sum £2,226.00 had been raised by the auction of potato boxes donated by David Brown & Sons Ltd., Buckhaven, who had requested that the proceeds of the auction be donated to a Cancer Charity. The Secretary stated that he had written to David Brown & Sons Ltd. thanking them for their donation of potato boxes. The meeting also expressed its thanks to Mr. K. McKenzie who had brought Mr. George Brown of David Brown & Sons Ltd. as a guest to the function. The meeting authorised the Office Bearers to make a decision with regard to the Charity or Charities to benefit from the proceeds of the Prize Draw and Auction.

(b) Members' Overseas Study Trip: The Secretary reported that there had been very little response so far regarding Members' interest in a Members' Overseas Study Trip to Cyprus in March, 1996. There was further discussion regarding whether March was the most appropriate time of the year for the Members' Trip. It was considered that the Study Tour might be better supported if it were to commence

during the period of, say, 16th - 20th May, 1996. The Secretary was instructed to send out a further circular to Members to ascertain if such a later date would be better supported.

- (c) Members' Outing to Knockhill Racing Circuit: The Secretary reported that he had had a further meeting with Mr. Deuchar and was now obtaining further information from the Knockhill Racing Circuit with regard to costs.
 - (d) Members Book: The Secretary tabled a sample of the A5 binder to be used for the Members Book and stated that he hoped that the preparation of the Book would be completed in the relatively near future.
 - (e) 1994/95 Association Accounts: It was noted that the Accounts had been approved at the Annual General Meeting of Members held earlier in the day.
 - (f) Annual Subscription for 1995/96: Council noted that its recommendation with regard to the level of subscriptions for the year to 31st October, 1996 had been approved earlier in the day at the Annual General Meeting of Members.
 - (g) Arbitration Rules: The Secretary reported that no response had yet been received from N.A.S.P.M. to the Heads of Agreement for Arbitration Rules sent by him to the Secretary of the N.A.S.P.M. early in December. The Secretary added, however, that he had spoken on the telephone with the Secretary of N.A.S.P.M. who stated that he understood that Mr. Kevin Burke was currently working on the preparation of revised Arbitration Rules.
- (3) BROWN ROT: The Secretary tabled a letter which he had drafted for sending to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and all Scottish Members of Parliament seeking their support for the re-introduction of quarantine controls for seed potatoes being imported into the High Grade Area. The letter was approved subject to various minor alterations. It was agreed that the letter would also be sent to Scottish Members of the European Parliament. Mr. Stewart reported that he had recently been in touch with Mr. Gordon Brown of The Scottish Office who had requested that the issue of the letter be delayed until after a meeting which he was having with the Ministry of Agriculture on Tuesday, 16th January, 1996.
- (4) REVOCATION OF POTATO MARKETING SCHEME: Mr. Stewart reported that there had been no further material developments with regard to the proposals of the Potato Marketing Board for the formation of a Great Britain Potato Organisation as its successor. He added, however, that a further "Way Forward Paper" had been issued by the Board. It was agreed that a copy of that Paper would be circulated to Council Members.

Mr. Stewart reported that he and Mr. Pullar had attended a meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee in Edinburgh on 10th January, 1996 when the terms of a letter sent by this

Association to the Potato Marketing Board had been discussed. Mr. Stewart reported that arising out of that discussion it was the recommendation of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee that this Association would be entitled to put forward names for the appointment of one of the Industry Members to sit on the G.B.P.O. and that seed potatoes should be exempt from the Tonnage Levy. Mr. Stewart added that at the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee it had also been agreed to recommend to the Potato Marketing Board that the composition of the Seed Sectoral Group should be:- two nominees from this Association; two from the National Farmers' Union of Scotland; two from the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants; one from the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales; one from the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council (in the event of its demise one representative of Scottish seed potato exporters); one from The Scottish Office and a Chairman who would be a Member of the G.B.P.O. Mr. Stewart stated that it was also the recommendation of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee that in the event of the Seed Sectoral Group taking over promotional work from S.S.P.D.C. it would be granted a budget of at least, and possibly more, than the funds presently expended by S.S.P.D.C. on promotional work. It had also been recommended that one member of the G.B.P.O. Promotional Staff would be located in Scotland, working mainly on seed potatoes, and financed directly by the G.B.P.O. and not out of the Seed Sectoral Group budget.

- (5) S.S.P.D.C.: Council noted that a new Chairman and seven new Members had been appointed to the seventeen strong Scottish Seed Potato Development Council by the Scottish Secretary, Mr. Michael Forsyth for the two year period to 31st December, 1997. The new Chairman is Loudon P. Hamilton who replaces Mr. Stobo. Two new Members with special marketing knowledge are Mr. Ian Bell (United Biscuits) and Mr. Alastair Roy (Gordon & Innes). The new Producer Members are Mr. Harry Milne and Mr. Andrew Steel and this Association's new Members are Mr. David Stewart and Mr. Mike Beattie. Mr. David Stark of the T.G.W.U. is to represent employees' interests. The re-appointed Members are:- Independent - Mr. Donald Macrae; Producers - Messrs. Alastair Strachan, Michael Salvesson, Robert Niven and A. Bain; S.P.T.A. - Messrs. D. Peebles, J. Robertson, I. Melrose and J. Hollywood.

Mr. Robertson gave a brief verbal Report on the meeting of S.S.P.D.C. held on 19th December, 1995.

- (6) SCOTTISH SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL: Mr. Stewart gave a brief verbal Report on the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Consultative Panel held in Edinburgh on 24th November, 1995. The Secretary stated that the official Minute of that Meeting had not yet been issued by The Scottish Office. It was agreed that the Secretary would circulate a copy of that Minute to Members of Council when it was received.
- (7) SEED POTATO ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Mr. Stewart confirmed that he had attended the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee held in Edinburgh on 10th January, 1996. He stated that the business of the meeting had been confined to discussion

concerning the G.B.P.O. and Seed Sectoral Group regarding which he had already reported earlier on the Agenda.

- (8) MEETING WITH N.F.U.S.: Mr. Stewart reported that the scheduled meeting with the National Farmers' Union of Scotland due to be held on 10th January, 1996 had been postponed for the reason that there had been very little developments since the previous meeting with the Union. He stated, however, that there had been an informal discussion with the Scottish Farmers' Union following the meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee when it had emerged that following the sale by the Potato Marketing Board of Sutton Bridge there will be some residual funds of the Board which will require to be allocated. Mr. Stewart stated that three methods of allocation had been identified, namely:-

- (i) The residual funds be made over to the G.B.P.O. He explained that if this course of action were to be adopted and the G.B.P.O. were to be subsequently wound up the funds would not then be available to be paid over to Registered Producers but would have to be devoted to the general benefit of the Potato Trade.
- (ii) The residual funds be made over to Registered Producers.
- (iii) The residual funds be put into a Trust to be distributed for the benefit of the Potato Industry with power to make over the funds to Registered Producers at a later date.

After discussion it was agreed to recommend that the residual funds be made over to the new G.B.P.O. on the basis that the total funds would be devoted exclusively to subsidising Levies during the first three years of the G.B.P.O.

- (9) CORRESPONDENCE:

(a) Prior Options Review of Scottish Agricultural Research Establishments - The Secretary referred to a letter, dated 11th December, 1995, received from The Scottish Office inviting comments regarding an Option Review being carried out in respect of certain Public Sector Research Establishments, including the Scottish Crop Research Institute, the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute and the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency. The Secretary was instructed to respond to the letter supporting the continuation of the existing work of the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency.

(b) Other Correspondence. The Secretary reported that since the previous meeting of Council letters had also been received under the following headings:-

From The Scottish Office - European Commission Proposal for a Regulation to set limits for Nitrate in Lettuce and Spinach.

From the Patent Office - Grounds for Revocation of European Patents.

The Secretary confirmed that copies of any of these letters would be made available to Association Members on request.

- (10) TIMETABLE FOR 1996 MEETINGS: The following dates for meetings of Council in 1996 were approved:-

Thursday, 29th February, at 2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 16th April, at 2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 18th June, at 2.00 p.m.

Thursday, 22nd August, at 2.00 p.m.

Thursday, 24th October, at 2.00 p.m.

Thursday, 21st November, at 2.00 p.m.

- (11) INVESTMENTS: The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Greig Middleton & Co.Ltd., Stockbrokers, stating that they do not see any reason at the present time to recommend any changes in the Association's investment portfolio.

- (12) FAST TRACTORS: The Secretary reported that it had been brought to his attention by a Member of the Association that the Department of Transport is conducting a review of the exemptions from the Plating and Testing and the Operator Licensing Regimes for heavy goods vehicles with particular reference to Fast Tractors. The Secretary stated that although the consultation period had now expired he was awaiting a copy of the Consultation document from the Department of Transport. He added that he had already received from the National Farmers' Union of Scotland a copy of their response to the Consultation document. It was agreed to consider this matter further once all of the information was available.

- (13) SEED POTATO LABELS: At the suggestion of Mr. MacFarlane the Secretary was instructed to propose to The Scottish Office that the system of dating seed potato labels should be altered. It was considered that it would be more cost effective and make more practical sense for the labels to state two months, (i.e. the month in which the label is issued and the following month) rather than the date of issue as at present and that the labels be valid throughout the stated two months rather than for 28 days from the date of issue as at present.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the Secretary mentioned in the text above. The signature is written in a cursive style and spans across the width of the page.

