

REPORT OF COUNCIL

of

THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION

for the year to 31st October, 1997

TO

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

held in the Ice Rink, Perth

on Thursday, 29th January, 1998

During the year under review seven meetings of Council of the Association were held and a Report on each of these meetings was issued to the Members of the Association.

The Membership of the Association as at 31st October, 1997 was eightytwo which represents a net loss of five Members during the year under review. Two new Memberships were granted but seven Memberships were terminated as a result of cessations of business and resignations. Council continues to be anxious to increase the Membership Roll of the Association and again invites Members to suggest to the Association Secretary or to Members of Council the names of people or companies involved in the Scottish potato trade who they consider might be interested in taking out Membership.

During the year under review representatives of your Association attended meetings with The Scottish Office with particular regard to the setting up of the British Potato Council, Potato Brown Rot, Small Ware and the Classification Scheme for Seed Potatoes both in Scotland and in England and Wales. Association representatives also attended meetings with the National Farmers' Union of Scotland, the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants and other Bodies. It was also represented at meetings of the Potato Marketing Board and the Scottish Seed Potato Development Council both of which Bodies were disbanded during the year under review. The residual funds of these Bodies were transferred to the new British Potato Council which came into operation during the year. Mr. David Stewart, the immediately past President of the Association, was

appointed a member of the new Council as a representative of "The Industry Subsequent to Production". Three Members of this Association's Council were appointed members of the British Potato Council Seed Sectoral Group. Council records its congratulations to these gentlemen on their appointment and wishes them well in their fulfilment of their duties on behalf of the new Council.

Further progress was made in discussions with the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants with regard to the prescribing of common Arbitration Rules to be adopted by both Associations. These discussions are approaching a conclusion and the new Arbitration Rules will be brought into operation during the current year. With a view to establishing a panel of trained and experienced Arbiters a Training Seminar was arranged in conjunction with the N.A.S.P.M. and was held in York in June 1997. It is the intention of Council to arrange a further Training Seminar to be held in Scotland during the current year. Full details of that Seminar will be announced to Members as soon as the arrangements have been finalised. The introduction of the new Arbitration Rules will necessitate amendments to the Conditions of Purchase and Conditions of Sale recommended by the Association. When these amendments are introduced the opportunity is to be taken of incorporating other amendments which Council considers will improve the existing Conditions. Full details of these amendments will be issued to Association Members well in advance of their introduction.

Council supported a proposal received from the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency that a Seed Potato Forum be set up and it will be

nominating a representative to attend an initial planning meeting to establish the terms of reference, etc. of the new Potato Forum. Further developments regarding this matter are awaited from the S.A.S.A.

New Plant Variety legislation was enacted during the year. Your Association was involved in the consultation procedure in advance of the legislation being finalised. As a result of that legislation Royalties can now be charged on Home Saved Seed. Discussions are taking place between the Farmers' Unions and the British Society of Plant Breeders regarding the level of Royalty to be applied in respect of Home Saved Seed Potatoes.

In May of 1997 your Association received from the Cabinet Office a copy of the Report by Professor Philip James with regard to the setting up of a Food Standards Agency. More recently the Government has issued its proposals with regard to the setting up of that Agency. These proposals will be scrutinised by Council.

Mr. Pullar, the Association President, attended a meeting in Edinburgh on 7th October, 1997 arranged by the National Farmers' Union of Scotland which was addressed by Franz Fischler, the E.U. Agriculture Commissioner.

As a result of the demise of the Potato Marketing Board and an unwillingness on the part of the British Potato Council to become involved in a Frost Warning Service for the Seed Potato Industry your Association co-ordinated the setting up of a new Frost Warning Service for the current winter. It is hoped that if a demand for the Service remains your Association will be able to continue to co-ordinate the Frost Warning Service in future years.

As in previous years, the Association organised a Dinner and Dance, Golf Outing and Curling Matches. All of these social occasions were well supported and enjoyed by the participants.