

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE
ASSOCIATION held in THE ICE Rink,
Glover Street, Perth at 2.00 p.m.
on THURSDAY, 12th MARCH, 1998.

PRESENT: Messrs. A.M. Beattie, R.J.S. Doig, D. Harley, V. Lumb, J.R. McArthur, K.A. McKenzie, J.L. Milne, A.B. Pullar, J.O. Robertson, D.Y. Stewart and J.M. Swinton, along with Mr. R.D. Hunter, the Secretary.

CHAIRMAN: The Association President, Mr. A.B. Pullar, occupied the Chair.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs. D.H. Lindsay, J. MacFarlane, I. Melrose and D. Scorgie.

(1) MINUTES: The Minute of Meeting of Council of 29th January, 1998 was taken as read, approved and signed.

(2) MATTERS ARISING:

(a) Subscriptions/Membership: The Secretary reported that he had received letters of resignation from Membership of the Association from Croy Potatoes Ltd., Angus Mathie & Sons and Strathtay Potato Co. The Secretary read to the meeting the letter of resignation received from Strathtay Potato Co. in which they explained that they no longer handle any significant amount of seed potatoes and felt that the Association offers Ware Merchants very little as compared with those in the seed business. There was some sympathy expressed by Council regarding the sentiments expressed by Strathtay Potato Co. but the opinion was voiced that the Association undertook more work on behalf of Ware Growers than was perhaps perceived by the Membership at large. In order to address this perception it was agreed that a Sub-Committee comprising the President, Vice-President and Deputy Vice-President would be constituted with a view to formulating proposals regarding the future activities of the Association designed to ensure that Membership of the Association was seen to be desirable to both Seed and Ware Potato Merchants.

The Secretary reported that following these three resignations Membership of the Association then stood at 79. He added that at the date of the meeting 49 subscriptions for the current year had been received, totalling £9,440.00.

(b) Seed Potato Forum: The Secretary reported again that no further developments had been made with regard to the formation of the proposed Seed Potato Forum.

(c) Arbitration Rules: The Secretary reported that final drafts of Arbitration Rules and Guidance Notes were presently with the NASPM and The National Farmers' Union of Scotland for their comment.

(d) Potato Brown Rot: The Chairman reported that he, along with Messrs. Bob Doig and Vincent Lumb from this Association, and Hugh Edmond and Ms Diana Rees from the BPC had met with six representatives of The Scottish Office on the previous day when one of the items on the Agenda had been this Association's suggestion that all crops of potatoes intended for export should be tested for Brown Rot immediately after harvest. At that meeting The Scottish Office had repeated its unwillingness to accept the Association's proposal, at least in the meantime, but had agreed to review the situation further if the Brown Rot problem appeared in the future to be discouraging importing

countries from purchasing seed potatoes from Scotland.

(e) Fothergills Mail Order Catalogue: The Secretary reported that a response was awaited of any action being taken by The Scottish Office regarding plantlets and plants of non Common Catalogue varieties of potatoes being offered for sale via booklets and catalogues.

(f) Royalties on Home Saved Seed Potatoes: Mr. Beattie reported that a meeting held during the previous week between the National Farmers' Union of England and Wales and the British Society of Plant Breeders had failed to agree an estimate of the tonnage of Home Saved Seed Potatoes actually planted and, as a result, there was still no agreement with regard to prescribing the level of Royalty to be applied in respect of Home Saved Seed Potatoes.

(g) Royal Bank of Scotland Savings Account: The Secretary reported that he had not yet taken steps to close the Association's Royal Bank of Scotland Savings Account.

(h) Exports to P.C.N. Sensitive Countries: The Chairman reported that following the previous day's meeting with The Scottish Office he understood that the Association could expect to receive a favourable letter from The Scottish Office within the next two weeks regarding PCN Testing of Seed Potatoes destined for export.

(i) Export of Seed Potato to Canary Islands: The Chairman reported that this matter had also been discussed during the previous day's meeting with The Scottish Office when The Scottish Office had agreed to investigate what it might do to resolve the problem caused by the rejection by the Ministry of Agriculture in the Canary Islands of containers of Scottish Seed Potatoes due to the symptoms of Spraing. The Chairman added that at the meeting with The Scottish Office the opportunity had also been taken to persuade The Scottish Office to re-consider it's policy with regard to the designation of "restricted areas" in Scotland following incidences of Wart Disease.

(j) Seed Potato Consultative Panel Minutes: The Secretary confirmed that he had received that day from The Scottish Office a copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Seed Potato Consultative Panel held on 21st November, 1997. Copies of these Minutes were handed out to Council Members present at the meeting.

- (3) SEED SECTORAL GROUP: The Secretary referred to the Minute of the meeting of the Seed Sectoral Group of the British Potato Council held on 27th January, 1998 which had been circulated to Council Members. Council noted the contents of the Minute.
- (4) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: The Secretary referred to the Minute of Meeting of the British Potato Council held on 10th February, 1998 which had been circulated to Council Members. Members of this Association's Council expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and format of statistics being issued by the British Potato Council. Mr. Stewart, on behalf of BPC, stated that his Council was aware that teething problems had occurred with the issue of these statistics and reported that steps were being taken to remedy these problems. He added, however, that he would welcome the receipt of specific proposals from Association Council members for the improvement of the dissemination of statistics by BPC.
- (4) REVISION OF U.K. SEED POTATO CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES: Council considered the Consultation Paper issued by The Scottish Office regarding proposals for the revision of the U.K. Seed Potato

Classification Schemes which had been circulated to Council Members. The Secretary reported that copies of the Consultation Paper had also been circulated to all Association Members. After a general discussion on the various options contained in the Paper, Council resolved that for the reason that this was a very important issue affecting the Seed Potato Industry in Scotland it warranted a special meeting of Council being convened specifically to discuss the Consultation Document. It was agreed to convene a special meeting of Council of the Association to be held at 2.00 p.m. in the Ice Rink in Perth on Thursday, 2nd April, 1998. The Secretary was instructed to advise Association Members of the arrangements for this special meeting in order that they may let him or any Member of Council have proposals which they wish to be considered.

- (5) SCOTTISH WARE PRODUCTION REGULATIONS: The Secretary referred to a letter received from an Association Member, which had been copied to each Member of Council, requesting the support of the Association to its proposal that there be a relaxation which would permit Scottish Ware Growers to keep twice grown seed for their own use in order to achieve a greater degree of equality with regard to the growing of Ware Potatoes in Scotland as compared with England and Wales. There was a general discussion regarding the proposals contained in the Member's letter. It was agreed that it would not be in the best interests of potato growing in Scotland to introduce the relaxation in the regulations regarding the growing of Ware Potatoes in Scotland as proposed by the Member concerned. It was agreed, however, that steps would be taken to endeavour to persuade the Ministry of Agriculture that Ware growing in England and Wales should be regulated in a similar manner as that presently prescribed in Scotland. The Secretary was instructed to reply to the Member concerned reporting the decision of Council.
- (6) PLANT VARIETIES ACT 1997: Mr. Beattie stated that he had scrutinised the proposed Secondary Legislation under the Plant Varieties Act 1997, a copy of which had been received for the Association's comment from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food. He explained that the proposed Legislation was to be enacted to comply with European Union Legislation and did not contained anything new which had not previously been accepted by the Association. It was agreed by Council that this Association did not have any comments to make regarding the draft Legislation.
- (7) THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY: Messrs. Robertson and McKenzie gave to Council a brief verbal report on the proposals regarding the setting up of The Food Standards Agency. It was their recommendation that the proposals would not have an adverse affect on the Potato Industry in Scotland and that there was, therefore, no need for this Association to comment on the proposals.
- (8) COMPETITION IN THE POTATO MARKET FOLLOWING REVOCATION OF THE POTATO MARKETING SCHEME: The Chairman referred to a letter received from The Scottish Office stating that following the revocation of the Potato Marketing Scheme, it was proposed that potatoes should no longer be exempt from Section 50 of the Fair Trading Act 1973 which gives the Director General of Fair Trading powers to make monopoly references to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission. The Chairman stated that the withdrawal of the exemption would not appear to have any adverse affect on the Potato Industry in Scotland. Council agreed not to raise any

objections to the proposals contained in the letter from The Scottish Office.

- (9) REVISION OF DRAFT PROPOSALS ON MARKETING OF SEED AND THE COMMON CATALOGUE: The Secretary referred to details received from The Scottish Office of the possible revision of the draft Proposal on the Marketing of Seeds and on the Common Catalogue. A copy of the papers was handed to Mr. Beattie with the request that he advise Council regarding any possible response.

- (10) CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary reported that since the last meeting of Council correspondence had been received from The Scottish Office under the following headings:-

Mycotoxins - EC Permitted Levels;

Quantative Declaration of Ingredients : Guidance Notes;

Proposed Amendment of the 1985 Product Liability Directive to Remove Exemption of Primary Agricultural Products and Game;

Food Labelling (Amendment) Regulations 1998 : Consequential Amendments - Jam and similar Products (Scotland) Regulations 1981, Meat Products and Spreadable Fish Products (Scotland) Regulations 1994.

The Secretary reported that a letter had been received from Pesticides Safety Directorate under the heading:- Degradation of Chlorothalonil Residues Prior to Analysis.

The Secretary reported that correspondence had been received from The Patent Office under the following headings:-

Plant Varieties Act 1997 : Draft Statutory Instruments;

Lord Chancellor's Department - Consultation Document on Specialist Jurisdictions : Proposed New Procedures;

Utility Models;

European Commission's proposed Directive on the Legal Protection of Biotechnological Inventions.

- (11) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that there will be a special meeting of Council to be held at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 2nd April, 1998 at Perth Ice Rink. It was further confirmed that the next regular meeting of Council will be held at 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 7th May, 1998 at Perth Ice Rink.

- (12) ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:

(a) Association Secretary: Council invited the Sub-Committee incorporated earlier in the meeting, comprising the President, Vice President, Deputy Vice-President, to prepare proposals with regard to the appointment of an Association Secretary to succeed the present Secretary, Mr. Hunter, following his announced retiral.

(b) Presentation: The Chairman reported that two original framed Water Colours, one by Robert Craig Wallace and the other by Brian Rawling, had been presented to Mr. Hunter to mark his forty years in a secretarial capacity with the Association and it's preceding Bodies. The Chairman added that the Presentation Luncheon held in Huntingtower Hotel, Perth, on 12th February, 1998 had been a very happy occasion and congratulated Mr. James O. Robertson and his Sub-Committee for the arrangements which they had made.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the meeting.

Archibald