GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The statement by the Chairman of the Contracting Parties, Mr. S. Chr. Sommerfelt, delivered on 12 November, is reproduced in Press Release GATT/1037.

EXPANSION OF TRADE

At the twenty-fourth session, in November 1967, the Contracting Parties adopted and set in motion a co-ordinated Programme of Work under three main headings: industrial products, agriculture and the trade of developing countries. To carry out this Programme they established a Committee on Trade in Industrial Products, and an Agriculture Committee. The Committee on Trade and Development had already been established in 1965.

As regards industrial products the Work Programme called for:

(a) an analysis of the tariff situation as it will be when all Kennedy Round concessions have been fully implemented;

(b) an inventory of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers affecting international trade.

As regards agriculture, the Agriculture Committee was required to explore the opportunities for making progress in the attainment of the objectives of the General Agreement in the agricultural field. It was also agreed that discussions should be immediately undertaken in an urgent case where it was generally recognized that there were widespread difficulties affecting significantly world trade in the product. Subsequently the Working Party on Dairy Products was established.

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As regards the trade of developing countries, the Programme-called for action on a number of fronts, including advance implementation of the Kennedy Round reductions, an examination of problems affecting trade in tropical products, the early removal of import restrictions on industrial products of particular interest to developing countries, trade negotiations between developing countries, preferences by developed countries to developing countries, and consultations on the balance of payments and other trade and development problems of developing countries.

At this session the Contracting Parties based their discussions mainly upon the reports of the three Committees listed above; they also took into account the work of the Special Group on Tropical Products, the Working Party on Dairy Products, and the Trade Negotiations Committee of Developing Countries.

In its report the Committee on Trade and Development proposed that the Contracting Parties urge those governments which had given no indication of their intentions concerning the acceptance of Part IV of the General Agreement to give early consideration to the matter. The Committee, while noting reports on action taken by some developed contracting parties on advance implementation of Kennedy Round concessions on products of export interest to developing countries, urged developed contracting parties to continue to explore the possibility of implementing such concessions individually or jointly on additional items of interest to developing countries immediately and without phasing. The Committee's report also reflected the view that, while various positive measures had indeed been taken by developed contracting parties to implement the provisions of Part IV, much remained to be done urgently, especially in view of the continued deterioration in the trade situation of developing countries vis-à-vis developed countries. It was also pointed out that, while isolated measures taken by individual developed countries to implement the provisions of Part IV were commendable, there was need for a systematic and concerted approach in dealing with the trade problems of developing countries. The Committee suggested that the Contracting Parties, in considering their future work, should make arrangements for a re-examination of the provisions of Part IV with a view to finding more concrete ways of achieving its objectives in a systematic and concerted manner.

The Special Group on Tropical Products had been reactivated under the Programme of Work in 1967 to study inter alia the incidence of internal charges and revenue duties on tropical products and at this session the Chairman of the Group outlined its work to date.

The Trade Negotiations Committee of Developing Countries had carried forward the scheme for negotiations between developing countries. The Chairman of the Committee stated that the main part of the work of the Committee had so far consisted of making arrangements for the exchange of information needed by the participating countries to define areas of interest, and of preparing request lists. The exchange of information and the exploration of the best ways of conducting consultations should be continued and arrangements should be made to enable negotiations to be started at an early date.
The Agriculture Committee had established a programme which could be undertaken in three stages, the Chairman of the Committee stated: (a) preparatory stage consisting of the assembly of documentation; (b) identification of the principal problems; (c) discussion of the means whereby mutually acceptable solutions could be achieved. For practical reasons the Committee had agreed to select certain products to which, in the preparatory stage, the information should relate, namely: dairy products, cereals, beef and veal, other meats and meat products, fruit and vegetables, vegetable oils and oilseeds, tobacco and wine. The Committee had agreed that, with the assembly of the documentation, it had concluded the first and moved into the second stage of its programme.

The Working Party on Dairy Products had been created to deal with the perturbed situation in international trade in these products, the Chairman of the Working Party stated. Severe disruption of trading conditions had occurred in certain markets as a result of widespread price cutting by various suppliers, generally made possible by export subsidies. Various suggestions for dealing with the problem had been put forward. The suggestions concerned, in particular, a scheme of minimum prices in international trade; channelling of dairy products into food aid for developing countries; and measures to increase consumption in producing countries. The technical work of the Committee could be regarded as completed and the Working Party had agreed that it would reconvene in order to undertake the negotiation of a multilateral arrangement, based on proposals by governments.

For the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products the Chairman reported that the two specific tasks taken up by the Committee had been (a) the drawing up of an inventory of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers which were obstacles to international trade, and (b) the drawing up of an objective analysis of the tariff situation as it will be when all the Kennedy Round concessions have been fully implemented. With regard to the inventory of non-tariff barriers the first step would be to examine all the trade barriers which had been notified. This examination would not be made country-by-country, but by types of barrier. All those barriers would be listed and grouped under a small number of headings. The developing countries, the Chairman said, had expressed much interest in the work of the Committee and would like to see priority given to work on barriers of special interest to their trade; it had been agreed that the Committee should give particular attention to this aspect.

As regards the tariff study, referred to above, after the preparation of the basic documentation required for this analysis, the next step would be for the Committee to decide on the analytical work which it wished to be undertaken.

At the close of the session, on 29 November 1968, the Contracting Parties adopted the following Conclusions concerning the agenda item, Expansion of Trade:

1. The Contracting Parties take note of the continuing growth of international trade and underline the major rôle which GATT has played in the process of trade liberalization over the past twenty-one years and reaffirm their confidence in the General Agreement as the contractual basis for their trading relationships.
2. The Contracting Parties reaffirm their intention fully to implement the results of the Kennedy Round and to pursue rapidly the intensified Programme of Work initiated at the twenty-fourth session designed to make practical progress towards increasingly liberal trade policies and practices including the necessary negotiations at the appropriate stages.  

3. Moreover, in view of the continuing decline in the developing countries' share of international trade and the urgent need for a substantial growth in their export earnings, the Contracting Parties note that there is need to give priority consideration to, and to take immediate steps towards solving, the trade problems of these countries.

4. The Contracting Parties are conscious in the perspective of recent international monetary difficulties of the risks to liberal trading practices that are inherent in the problems confronting certain major trading nations at the present time. The Contracting Parties will keep under review the trade aspects of the temporary measures which the nations concerned have found it necessary to take.

5. The Contracting Parties are unanimous in reaffirming their intention to continue, despite temporary difficulties, to pursue the liberalization and expansion of international trade according to the principles and objectives of the General Agreement.

6. The Contracting Parties request the Council to give appropriate supervision and guidance to the Committee on Trade and Development, the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee in the execution of their co-ordinated Work Programme for the Expansion of International Trade.

7. The Contracting Parties agree that in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the Committee on Trade and Development, the Committee should, where appropriate, initiate consultations in respect of tariff and non-tariff barriers and related problems not elsewhere under examination in the GATT affecting the exports of developing countries, with a view to seeking appropriate solutions for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their twenty-sixth session. The Committee should also follow closely the work in progress in other organs of GATT, such as the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee, and make appropriate suggestions so that, in investigating possible lines of action and seeking solutions, these Committees give early and adequate attention to questions of special concern to developing countries. In this connexion the Contracting Parties note, in relation to the provisions of Part IV, that certain agricultural products are of major export interest to developing countries.

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1 The Government of France reserves its position on the words "including the necessary negotiations at the appropriate stages".
8. The Contracting Parties note that the Committee on Trade and Development intends to carry out a detailed examination of the difficulties encountered in the implementation of Part IV of the General Agreement and to recommend measures for securing more effective and systematic implementation and that for this purpose the Committee would establish appropriate machinery.

9. The Contracting Parties agree that the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products and the Agriculture Committee should move rapidly from the stage of study and of identification of problems to that of seeking mutually acceptable solutions. These Committees will report to the Council, before the twenty-sixth session, on the results of their work so as to enable the Contracting Parties to take appropriate decisions. However, it was agreed that such opportunities as might arise for the settlement of particular trade problems in the period prior to the twenty-sixth session should be pursued. In this connexion special attention should be given to arriving at solutions to problems affecting the export trade of developing countries.

10. The Contracting Parties agree that, as soon as the basic documentation for the tariff study becomes available early in 1969, possible lines of action should be actively investigated by the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products, taking into account discussions at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the various opportunities for making progress toward trade liberalization.

11. The basic documentation should also cover, on a priority basis, the following problems of particular interest to developing countries: (a) tariff differentials, (b) specific duties, (c) peak tariffs and (d) tariffs on industrial raw materials, and indicate possible lines of future action in these and other fields.

12. The Contracting Parties agree that, on the basis of the information in the inventory of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers and any information that might be subsequently furnished by contracting parties, the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products, during its examination of those barriers, should explore the possibilities for concrete action in that field, both with regard to reducing or removing such barriers and to developing possible rules of conduct.

13. The secretariat will assist developing countries to prepare notifications of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to their trade in the markets of other contracting parties. The particular problems of these countries will be given special attention in the further action by the contracting parties in this field.

14. The Contracting Parties approve the detailed work programme established by the Agriculture Committee.

15. The Contracting Parties request the Committee to complete rapidly the identification of the problems affecting agricultural trade and production, so that it can proceed with the essential task of seeking mutually acceptable solutions to these problems. In this context, in view of the increasingly difficult problems in agricultural trade and production and the fact that substantial work has already been carried out in GATT on some products such as meat, the Committee should consider, where possible, medium-term solutions which would pave the way for basic long-term solutions and also ease the pressures in the interim.

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16. In addition, the Contracting Parties invite the parties engaged under the procedures adopted at the twenty-fourth session in the search for mutually acceptable solutions to urgent problems affecting particular products to work out such solutions rapidly.

17. The Contracting Parties request the Group on Tropical Products to continue its task of exploring ways and means of resolving problems in the trade in tropical products on a commodity-by-commodity basis, taking into account the work done in other international bodies.

18. The Contracting Parties agree that developed contracting parties should make further efforts to explore, individually and jointly, the possibility of implementing immediately Kennedy Round concessions on additional products of interest to developing countries.

19. The Contracting Parties note the conclusion reached at the second UNCTAD with regard to a general non-discriminatory scheme of preferences in favour of developing countries and affirm their readiness to take appropriate action when the scheme has been negotiated.

20. The Contracting Parties note that multilateral trade arrangements may be concluded among developing countries during 1969 within the framework of the Trade Negotiations Committee of Developing Countries. They recall the conclusions adopted at their twenty-third session that the establishment of preferences among developing countries, appropriately administered and subject to the necessary safeguards, can make an important contribution to the expansion of trade among these countries and to the attainment of the objectives of the General Agreement and intend to look at the results of the current negotiations in a constructive and forward-looking spirit.

21. The Contracting Parties will give appropriate consideration to proposals for measures which could be taken within the framework of GATT aimed at ensuring that the results of negotiations between developing countries bring benefits for the trade of these countries.

22. The Contracting Parties reaffirm their support for the International Trade Centre and urge all contracting parties to continue to make available adequate resources to the Centre for full implementation of its programme of work.

(End of Conclusions)

IMPORT RESTRICTIONS APPLIED CONTRARY TO GATT AND NOT COVERED BY WAIVERS

Eight years ago, on 16 November 1960, the Contracting Parties adopted procedures for dealing with import restrictions which are maintained by contracting parties inconsistently with the provisions of the General Agreement and without having obtained authorization from the Contracting Parties. Under these procedures contracting parties are expected to keep the Director-General informed of all such restrictions. At each session of the Contracting Parties since 1960 the Contracting Parties have discussed the continuing existence of illegal restrictions and have considered what action could be taken to ensure their removal. At the last session it was agreed that governments should
prepare to deal definitively with this problem at this twenty-fifth session. To this end the Government of New Zealand had submitted a proposal which, in essence, would oblige contracting parties to remove their restrictions or to request waivers to authorize their maintenance and would provide a framework which would make it necessary for contracting parties maintaining such restrictions to justify their positions in regular consultations on a multilateral basis, in the way in which countries invoking Article XII are obliged to do. In the course of the discussion there was general agreement concerning the inequity and anomaly involved in treating countries which apply quantitative restrictions without justification within the GATT more tolerantly than those whose restrictions are consistent with GATT's rules. The importance of a new and concrete initiative in the area of removal of quantitative restrictions was also recognized. In particular, some delegations noted that adoption of a procedure for dealing definitively with residual restrictions could offer significant help in warding off pressures for new protectionist measures.

It was generally recognized that the ultimate aim is the removal of restrictions. Some countries saw in the hard core nature of the restrictions a reason for dealing with them through existing machinery of the main committees of GATT.

Certain other countries favoured the use of existing machinery, as it would enable the agricultural problem to be dealt with as a whole within the Agriculture Committee, referring other restrictions either to the Committee on Trade in Industrial Products or to the Committee on Trade and Development.

The examination of the problem that arises under this item of the agenda was not completed and the Contracting Parties decided to remit the question to the Council which would examine it further and report to the twenty-sixth session.

UNITED KINGDOM IMPORT DEPOSITS

On 25 November the United Kingdom representative informed the Contracting Parties of measures, announced in the United Kingdom Parliament on 22 November, with the object of accelerating progress in bringing the United Kingdom balance of payments into surplus, particularly in view of the international events of that week. The measures included an import deposit scheme, about which the United Kingdom representative provided the main lines. The Contracting Parties decided to set up a working party, with the following terms of reference: "to examine the Import Deposit Scheme introduced by the United Kingdom and its implications; to present a first report to the Council by 21 January 1969, and to continue to be available for consultation as necessary".

FRENCH MEASURES

On 28 November the representative of France described the measures which the French Government had instituted, with the objective of defending the national currency, ensuring a return to equilibrium and the maintenance of economic
expansion. At the suggestion of the Chairman it was decided that the statement by the representative of France would be submitted to the Working Party on French Trade Measures, which had been established in July 1968, for its consideration.

THE IMPACT OF COMMODITY PROBLEMS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

"As at previous sessions, the secretariat provided documentation as a background for the consideration of this question, focussing attention on the most recent developments in trade in respect of certain commodity sectors, notably temperate agricultural products, tropical products and also certain raw materials and non-ferrous metals. There was a brief discussion.

DISPOSAL OF COMMODITY SURPLUSES

Based upon two Resolutions adopted in 1955, the Contracting Parties have reviewed annually the experience of governments relating to the disposal of commodity surpluses and the liquidation of strategic stocks. Countries which have been engaged in surplus disposals or the liquidation of stocks are asked to submit reports and at this session reports were submitted by Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Contracting Parties also discussed a proposal by the Director-General which would have the effect of strengthening and enlarging the present procedures for notification by governments of action taken in this field. It was decided to refer this and related matters to the Agriculture Committee.

TRADE IN COTTON TEXTILES

The Director-General as Chairman of the Cotton Textiles Committee presented the sixth annual review of the Cotton Textiles Arrangement. He stated that some improvements had been introduced in the administration of the Arrangement as a result of the liberalization effected by certain importing countries in connexion with its extension. He referred, however, to the dissatisfaction of some developing producing countries regarding the operation of the Arrangement, in particular with the fragmentation of import quotas granted by importing countries. He also stated that, in connexion with measures of adjustment for the cotton textile industries notified by the importing countries, it was felt by some countries that this material should be supplemented and that there should be a more comprehensive discussion of this topic at the next review of the operation of the Arrangement, in 1969. At that time discussion would have to be initiated regarding the future of the Arrangement. The secretariat would therefore make a study of the adjustment measures taken by the countries which are parties to the Arrangement.

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The representative of the European Communities reported that, since 1 July 1968, the customs union had been fully achieved and had become effective with respect to industrial products, one year and a half ahead of the schedule established by the Rome Treaty. With respect to agricultural products, the free movement of which is being introduced at a different pace, the time schedule provided for in the Treaty had been observed. For the industrial sector as a whole, considered separately, the average rate of protection, as at 1 July 1968, was approximately 10 per cent. Having achieved its customs union, the Community must now consolidate it by completing the harmonization of customs legislation, eliminating technical obstacles to trade, and progressively eliminating tax frontiers. The time had come to recognize that within the meaning of Article XXIV of the General Agreement the customs union of the Six had been achieved. The representative of the Community emphasized once again that despite the decline in the relative share of third countries in the trade of GATT member countries, Community trade with other countries had benefited very substantially from internal expansion, as might be seen from growth rates recorded since 1958: 90 per cent on the import side, and 100 per cent on the export side. The Community's trade deficit in its exchanges with developing countries had been growing over the past few years and had passed the $3,000 million mark. The Community views this as a healthy trend and is encouraging it in various ways.

The representative of the Communities said that, with respect to the Yaoundé Convention, the EEC had reached a stage for stock-taking and reflection. The Association had now ten years experience behind it. The Yaoundé Convention is due to expire on 31 May 1969 and negotiations for its renewal must be commenced before the expiry date. The Association's trading system, he said, includes a set of reciprocal obligations intended to secure trade expansion. However, results so far in this respect had fallen short of the hopes and expectations of the Associated States. This trading system had not enabled them to increase their share in the Community market, but it had nevertheless enabled them to retain that share.

In the discussion that followed concern was expressed regarding both the Community's agricultural policy and the spread of preferential trading arrangements, including "reverse preferences". Some representatives felt that the completion of the Common External Tariff for industrial products did not relieve the Community from the responsibility of reporting annually. It was agreed that the Council could look into this matter.
European Free Trade Area - Stockholm Convention and the Association Agreement with Finland

The representative of the European Free Trade Association reported on the developments since the previous year. He emphasized that the creation of the Free Trade Area had stimulated trade both between member States of EFTA and with third countries. From 1959 to 1967 internal EFTA trade had increased by 132 per cent, while EFTA imports from outside the Area had increased by 65 per cent. EFTA trade in 1967 also had shown a large surplus in favour of developing countries. It had been $1,185 million in 1967 compared with $600 million in 1959.

Latin American Free Trade Association

The contracting parties belonging to the Latin American Free Trade Association submitted a report on recent developments in the Common Market.

Arab Common Market

The United Arab Republic submitted a report, prepared by the Council of Arab Economic Unity, on progress achieved in the Arab Common Market.

Central African Economic and Customs Union

The representatives of Gabon and Cameroon made statements concerning developments in the Central African Economic and Customs Union.

New Zealand/Australia Free Trade Area

The representative of New Zealand presented the second annual report on the operation of the New Zealand/Australia Free Trade Area and commented upon the statistics of trade between the two countries.

United Kingdom/Ireland Free Trade Area

The representative of Ireland presented the report on the United Kingdom/Ireland Free Trade Area and said that the development of the Free Trade Area was proceeding in accordance with the Agreement. Total trade between the two countries had grown since the Agreement entered into force; in value terms, the increases recorded were 12 per cent in the first year and 15 per cent in the second year. Both countries had recorded substantial increases in imports from other countries in the period under review.

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Caribbean Free Trade Agreement

Several contracting parties have entered into an Agreement to establish a Caribbean Free Trade Association, namely Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago; the Associated States of the West Indies, for whose commercial policy the United Kingdom is responsible, are also included in the group. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago presented a report on behalf of the member States and the Contracting Parties decided to set up a working party to examine the Agreement.

TRADE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN INDIA, UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC AND YUGOSLAVIA

In December 1967 India, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia signed a Trade Expansion and Economic Co-operation Agreement and submitted the text to the Contracting Parties. A working party was set up by the Council to examine the Agreement and it submitted its report in September. The Contracting Parties adopted the report and also a Decision stating the desire of the signatory States to consult with any contracting party which, inter alia, considered that the Agreement impaired its benefits under the General Agreement. Under the terms of the Agreement the three countries undertake to facilitate accession to the Agreement upon request by any developing country.

BORDER TAX ADJUSTMENTS

In March 1968 the Council appointed a working party to examine various problems arising in connexion with tax adjustments at the frontier to compensate for internal taxes. At this session there was a short discussion based on an interim report from the working party, during which the United States representative urged the working party to proceed expeditiously towards mutually acceptable solutions. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany reported on the measures taken very recently by his Government.

ANTI-DUMPING PRACTICES

The Agreement on Implementation of Article VI, incorporating an Anti-Dumping Code, which was one of the legal instruments drawn up in the Kennedy Round, entered into force on 1 July 1968. The parties to the Agreement requested the Contracting Parties to establish a Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices (as stipulated in the Agreement). After the Contracting Parties had decided to set up the Committee it held its first meeting during the session. The Committee is composed of the seventeen parties to the Agreement.
IMPLEMENTATION OF POLAND'S ACCESION PROTOCOL

Under the terms of the Protocol of Accession of Poland the Contracting Parties and the Government of Poland are required to conduct an annual consultation on the development of trade. Prior to the session a working party had conducted the first consultation. Its report was adopted by the Contracting Parties. During the discussion the representative of Poland referred to discriminatory import restrictions maintained by some countries and stated that Poland seeks multilateral trading relations and wishes to make progress in this direction. Some delegations expressed the view that Poland should furnish more complete information on the import possibilities, for future consultations.

APPLICATION OF ARTICLE XXXV TO JAPAN

The representative of Japan stated that the situation regarding the application of Article XXXV to Japan had not greatly improved since the last session. About thirty countries continue to invoke this Article against Japan, thus withholding the obligation to give GATT treatment to Japan. He therefore asked the governments concerned to disinvolve this Article as early as possible.

REPORTS UNDER WAIVERS

Australia Preferences

In March 1966 the Contracting Parties granted Australia a waiver to permit the Australian Government to accord preferential treatment to certain goods of less-developed countries under certain terms and conditions. Under the terms of the waiver, the Contracting Parties agreed to review annually the operation of the waiver and Australia is required to report annually on action taken by it under the terms of the waiver. Referring to its second annual report the representative of Australia stated that the total value of quotas available had increased from $13.3 million per annum in the first year to approximately $26.6 million now. Relative to 1966/67, preferential imports from developing countries showed an increase of over 150 per cent in 1967/68. Although the system had only been in operation since mid-1966, it was now firmly established and functioning successfully.

Ceylon/Duty Increases

In January 1967 Ceylon was granted a waiver permitting the maintenance of certain import duties at levels above those bound in the Ceylon Schedule. The waiver will expire on 31 December 1968 and Ceylon requested an extension of the time-limit and also an extension of the commodities covered by the waiver. The Contracting Parties extended the waiver for two years and also decided to grant the additional coverage requested.
Italy/Libya

For many years, under the terms of a waiver granted to Italy, Libya has enjoyed preferential advantages for certain products in the Italian market. The waiver was due to expire at the end of 1969. At this session the observer from Libya agreed to the discontinuation of special treatment of Libyan products in the Italian market, as from 1 January 1969, that is one year before the waiver expires. The waiver therefore ceases to apply.

Malawi Schedule

By a Decision of 20 November 1967 Malawi was authorized to undertake renegotiations of its GATT Schedule. These negotiations, which were to be completed by the end of 1968, require further time. The waiver was therefore extended to 30 June 1969.

Chile Schedule

By a Decision of 30 December 1966 Chile was authorized to apply rates of duty in its new customs tariff without prior completion of negotiations, for which the time-limit was the end of this session. Since some negotiations are not yet completed, the waiver was extended to 30 June 1969.

Brazil Schedule

A waiver was granted to Brazil in February 1967 permitting the application of rates of duty of the new customs tariff, pending completion of renegotiations, the time-limit for which was the end of this session. Brazil requested an extension of the time-limit to 30 March 1969 and this was granted.

United States/Agricultural Import Restrictions

In accordance with the terms of the waiver granted to the United States in March 1955, the United States submitted its annual report on the restrictions maintained on imports of certain agricultural products. Introducing the report the representative of the United States said it included a brief review of the present situation and description of steps taken in the United States to solve the problem of agricultural surpluses. In 1968, temporary import quotas were imposed on evaporated and condensed milk and cream in June, and on certain cheeses in September. Many representatives expressed their concern at these new import restrictions on dairy products. The report was examined by a Working Party. In its report to the Contracting Parties the Working Party expressed its concern with the maintenance of such a broad and open ended waiver and regretted that the United States Government had found it necessary to maintain and expand import restrictions under the waiver. Members of the Working Party expressed serious concern in particular that the United States had found it necessary to further intensify import restrictions on certain dairy products in 1968. Members of the Working Party felt that import quotas had been fixed at unreasonably low levels, in relation to total domestic production and consumption of the United States.
CONSULAR FORMALITIES

For many years the Contracting Parties have urged governments which require consular formalities in connexion with importation to abolish such practices. At this session reports were received from some of the eight contracting parties still retaining such practices. Since the information on the formalities was incomplete, it was decided to ask the Council to examine the matter in a more substantial manner before the next session.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMMES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Contracting Parties took note of a report on the Fellowship Programme and Technical Assistance. These comprise (a) two courses on commercial policy held in Geneva each year (b) courses, jointly sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and GATT, on foreign trade and commercial policy, held in Africa, usually twice a year, and (c) assistance to developing countries in connexion with commercial policy problems. A mission visited Caracas, to offer advice upon the orientation of Venezuela's commercial policy. There were consultations with the Economic Commission for Latin America on matters related to the evolution of regional economic integration in that area. Co-operation was afforded to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in launching a training course for government officials on tariffs and trade negotiations.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE UNCTAD/GATT

Under the arrangements agreed upon in November 1967 the International Trade Centre has operated since the beginning of 1968 as a joint UNCTAD/GATT body. Consequently a Joint Advisory Group was formed to review the work programme of the Centre and to recommend a programme for 1969. The Contracting Parties approved the Advisory Group's report and took steps to provide the necessary budget allocation for 1969.

MEMBERSHIP

Tunisia and United Arab Republic. The arrangements for the provisional accession of Tunisia and the United Arab Republic will expire on 31 December 1968. During the current year it has not been practicable to proceed with negotiations for full accession and the two Governments, therefore, requested extensions of the existing arrangements. The Contracting Parties took the necessary steps to extend the provisional accession arrangements to the end of 1969, in both cases.

Colombia. The representative of Colombia, which has observer status, informed the Contracting Parties of the desire of his Government to adhere to the General Agreement. It was agreed that the application, when received, would be referred to the Council.

Romania. The Contracting Parties took note of a report from the Council concerning the application of Romania for accession to the General Agreement, and noted that the Council had established a working party to examine it.
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the close of the session the following officers were elected, to hold office until the end of the twenty-sixth session:

Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES
H.E. Mr. Sule D. Kolo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the International Organizations in Geneva

Vice-Chairmen of the CONTRACTING PARTIES
H.E. Mrs. Ana M. Zaefferer de Goyeneche, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the International Organizations in Geneva

H.E. Mr. Yoshihiro Nakayama, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva

Mr. M.H. van Wijk, Director, Directorate General of Foreign Economic Relations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Chairman of the Council of Representatives
H.E. Mr. Erik Thrane, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the Office of the United Nations at Geneva

Chairman of the Committee on Trade and Development
H.E. Mr. T. Swaminathan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Belgium and to the European Communities, Ambassador for Economic Affairs and Permanent Representative to GATT and UNCTAD

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