At the last meeting of the Contracting Parties, the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Ludwig Imhoff, speaking as an observer, said that the new German tariff would be completed in mid-May and would be submitted as a whole to the contracting parties with which Germany intends to negotiate at Torquay. He said that his government had heard rumours that other participating countries had the intention of raising their tariffs in advance of the negotiations. The Federal Government, he said, wished to make a reserve that if other governments increased their tariffs in advance, Western Germany would have to follow suit. He was not able to supply the name of any particular country, he added.

It was agreed to revert to the German statement after 20 March, by which date it is expected that all contracting parties and acceding governments participating in the Torquay negotiations will have completed the list of countries with which they intend to negotiate.

Later the Contracting Parties completed their discussion of the problem facing countries with low tariffs, which was initiated by the delegate of the Netherlands on 6 March and was described in release GATT No. 12. It was generally agreed that the problem is a real one but that no useful purpose would be served in setting up a Working Party to examine it. The guiding principle in the conduct of tariff negotiations, the Chairman said, was already laid down in the Havana Charter's rules for tariff negotiations, namely "the binding against increase of low duties or of duty free treatment shall in principle be recognized as a concession equivalent in value to the substantial reduction of high duties or the elimination of tariff preferences."

For the Netherlands, Mr. H. van Blankenstein agreed that to compare levels of tariffs was difficult. He accepted the principle of the Havana Charter, as stated by the Chairman.

The Contracting Parties will meet again when reports from working parties are ready for consideration.