SUMMARY RECORD OF THE NINTH MEETING

Held at the Marine Spa, Torquay, England, on Wednesday, 8 November, 1950, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Hon. L. D. WILGRESS (Canada)

Subjects discussed:


   Mr. DI NOLA (Italy) wished to support the proposal which, he said, would serve a useful purpose in reducing uncertainty and arbitrariness in licensing of imports and exports. He could accept the proposal in more or less the same terms in which it had been formulated, but his delegation might raise some minor points in the discussion in the Working Party; certain amendments to the text would be necessary in order to allow for emergency action to cope with unexpected monetary changes.

   Mr. MELANDER (Norway) supported the proposal, and mentioned certain points which would, in his opinion, require amendment. He agreed with the recommendation that import licences should carry with them an assurance that foreign exchange would be available, but in the case of "clearing" agreements, this was not always possible, because a reduction of exports, due to seasonal or other causes, might unbalance the account, and exchange for imports would not be available until the trend had been reversed. Secondly, the period of thirty days allowed in paragraph 2 appeared too long. Thirdly, as a reasonable share for newcomers he did not think that all countries would agree to as much as 20%; the practice in his country was to allow 10%. He suggested that the whole proposal could adequately be disposed of without referring it to a Working Party; the Secretariat might prepare a new draft and circulate it to governments for comments.

   Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan) expressed his appreciation of the initiative of the United States Delegation, but in view of the fact that the paper was only circulated at the middle of last month, he had not yet received instructions, and asked for deferment of the discussion.

   The CHAIRMAN replied that whether a Working Party was set up or not, delegates would have time to submit their comments.

   Mr. MACFARLANE (Southern Rhodesia) considered the proposal of the greatest interest, and did not agree with the representative of Norway that they could dispense with a Working Party. He regretted the paper had been circulated so late that his delegation had not seen it before leaving their country. As to the final outcome of their discussion, he felt that it should take the form of a recommendation to all contracting parties to follow the methods indicated.
Mr. LECKIE (United Kingdom) welcomed the proposal which was, in general, acceptable to his delegation. He considered that the contracting parties should be exhorted to adopt certain standard practices, on the details of which they would have some comments to make. In his opinion, the proposal went too far in certain directions, and not far enough in others.

Mr. ARGYROPOULOS (Greece) supported the proposal, and suggested that a certain degree of latitude should be left to contracting parties to adapt their policies to changing circumstances.

Mr. TONKIN (Australia) agreed with the principles of the proposal. With regard to paragraph 1, he said that in his country foreign exchange was granted automatically with the licence, but that this could not be taken to signify an unqualified commitment that it would be available at any future date. He found himself at variance with the representative of Norway, in that he considered the thirty-days' grace in paragraph 2 too restrictive rather than too liberal.

Mr. REIFMAN (Canada) agreed with the proposal, and said he would submit his comments on matters of detail to the Working Party, which, he felt sure, would have to be set up. It was clear that the result of their deliberations could only take the form of recommendations.

Mr. SCHMITT (New Zealand) considered that a discussion of the matter among experts would, in itself, be useful as providing an opportunity for a profitable exchange of views. As to the form of their conclusions, he thought they might follow the example of the Working Party on Quantitative Restrictions at the Fourth Session, which recommended that certain practices be followed.

Mr. BROWN (United States) said he was gratified at the reception of their proposal which had been put forward as a basis for discussion. He agreed with the view that they should aim at a recommendation to contracting parties to follow certain standard practices.

The CHAIRMAN said the proposal had met with a favourable reception. It did not appear, however, that the Norwegian suggestion of dispensing with a Working Party had found support. He pointed out that there remained for consideration the proposal of the Delegation of Czechoslovakia to amend the paper before them to include export licences and controls.

Mr. BROWN (United States) informed the meeting that he had no objection to the adoption of the Czechoslovak amendments to the United States paper.

The amendments to document GATT/CP. 5/8, proposed by the Delegation of Czechoslovakia at the previous meeting, were adopted.

Dr. VAZNA (Czechoslovakia) thanked the representative of the United States.

The Contracting Parties agreed to set up a Working Party composed of representatives of the following delegations:
under the Chairmanship of Dr. Steyn (South Africa) to study, in the light
of the discussion in the Contracting Parties, the proposals made by the
United States under item 13 of the Agenda and to submit revised proposals
for the approval of the Contracting Parties.

2. The Continuation of the Trade News Bulletin (GATT/CP. 5/14)

The CHAIRMAN referred to the note by the Executive Secretary,
which recalled that at the Fourth Session the Contracting Parties had
approved the temporary publication of the Trade News Bulletin, and had
agreed to re-examine the matter at the Fifth Session.

A discussion followed in which representatives of Austria,
Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, India, New Zealand, Norway,
Pakistan, Southern Rhodesia, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom and the
United States of America supported the continuation of the Bulletin.

Dr. VAN BLANKENSTEIN (Netherlands) did not share the opinion
of other speakers with regard to the usefulness of the Bulletin. The
Secretariat had to rely on unofficial as well as official sources, but
even some of the information taken from official sources referred to measures
of countries other than the one which published it. Departments of his
Government relied on the work of their information service, and could
count not only on official sources but also on reports from their own
representatives abroad.

Other delegations found that the Bulletin served a useful
purpose in extricating from a great mass of miscellaneous published material,
and placing in focus, current events relating to the application of the
Agreement.

The representatives of smaller countries, which could not count
on highly developed information services, found great help in the
Secretariat's compilation and classification.

Several delegates suggested that the contracting parties arrange
for regular transmission to the Secretariat of notices of new measures. A
suggestion was also made that Governments, when notifying measures, might
usefully add, if and when they thought it appropriate, a short commentary.
There was general agreement that the Secretariat had wisely avoided editorial
comment.

M. LECUYER (France) proposed that a French edition be provided.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.