Tariff Negotiations

TARIFF NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

Summary Record of the 9th Meeting,

held at Hotel Verdun, Annecy,
on Friday, July 22, 1949, at 10 a.m.

Chairman : Mr. Muller (Chile)

Subjects discussed

4. Contributions of acceding governments to the financing of Secretariat Services for the Contracting Parties. (GATT/TN.1/29)


Mr. CASSIERS (Belgium), Chairman of the Working Party, introducing the report said its contents were quite explicit and would therefore not require summarization. Throughout the meetings held by the Working Party, its members had been conscious of their task of limiting themselves to giving technical advice without committing their governments. The result of their work was a project which would be sent to governments by Unesco. To this project had been added a draft letter which it was recommended the Chairman of the Contracting Parties should send to the Director General of Unesco, together with the project.
Mr. POLITIS (Greece), M. LECUYER (France), Mr. COUILLARD (Canada) and the CHAIRMAN expressed their congratulations to M. Cassiers and to the members of the Working Party for the work they had done.

Mr. BEHRSTOCK (Unesco) wished to express his gratitude to members of the Working Party and to M. Cassiers, perhaps more than any other, for the great work they had done in a period of great stress. It now fell upon Unesco to continue the work which had been initiated in the framework of the General Agreement and to do its utmost to bring the recommendations into force. A great step forward will have been made on the day when these proposals will become operative.

M. CASSIERES thanked the Chairman of the Committee for the work he had done personally. He also wished to express his gratitude to Unesco for having provided this opportunity of collaboration in this important field, and in particular to Mr. Behrstock, whose competence, intelligence and devotion had made possible such a satisfactory agreement.

The Report of the Working Party, and the recommendation that the Chairman of the Contracting Parties send a letter as suggested in the Working Party's draft, was approved.


Mr. KUNLIN (Sweden), Vice-Chairman of the Working Party, presenting the Report, said its recommendations were based on the necessity to speed up the negotiations and bring them to an early end as possible. He explained that the original proposal to incorporate in the Annecy Protocol the schedules of the countries which had completed their negotiations and to carry on the "uncompleted" negotiations between sessions and incorporate them in a special protocol at the Fourth Session, had not been accepted because the accession of the countries concerned would have been too long delayed. The document before the Committee contained a compromise solution which, it was hoped, would allow all schedules to be incorporated in the Annecy Protocol. The date of the 27 August 1949
had been chosen for the end of tariff negotiations and no procedure was provided or would be provided for finalizing any negotiations terminated after that date. Mr. Kumlin thought there was reason for satisfaction in the fact that it had been possible for the negotiations to continue at Annecy.

Mr. SHACKLE (United Kingdom) supported the proposal, which he considered the best that could be done in the circumstances. As a drafting amendment he suggested that the letters (a) and (b) be substituted by (i) and (ii) in the note at the foot of page 1 of the document.

Mr. PHELPS (United States), Mr. RESTREPO (Colombia) and Mr. POLITIS (Greece), also supported the recommendations contained in the report.

Mr. NICOL (New Zealand) approved the recommendations contained in the report, including the point relating to the earliest possible publication of the schedules. He referred, however, to the fact that in the past his government had suffered from incomplete accounts appearing in the press. He therefore suggested that a few days before the publication of the schedules, a cable should be sent to governments so that publication could be made simultaneously.

The CHAIRMAN thought the Executive Secretary could be asked to cable the date when negotiations were about to finish.

Mr. FLETCHER (Australia) was pleased to inform the Committee that, in the light of the strong desire to make known the results of negotiations without delay, the Australian government had reconsidered its attitude and was prepared to agree to the publication of its schedules simultaneously with those of all other Annecy negotiations.

Mr. SHACKLE (United Kingdom) supported Mr. Nidol's proposal, adding that the Executive Secretary would have to make sure that the text of the Protocol and of the lists would have reached governments not present at Annecy before the envisaged date of publication.
3. Letter from observers of El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela

Mr. PHELPS (United States of America) appreciated the extension of interest by countries not participating in the negotiations, but his delegation did not feel it appropriate to make available the preliminary text of schedules, particularly in view of the decision to arrange publication as soon as possible.

Mr. COUILLARD, (Canada), Mr. SHACKLE (United Kingdom), Mr. KUMLIN (Sweden) supported Mr. Phelps.

The CHAIRMAN said that, there being no support for the request of the three governments, it was to be considered as not accepted by the Committee.

4. Contributions of acceding governments to the financing of Secretariat Services for the Contracting Parties.

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY said that a budget had been drawn up at the Second Session of the Contracting Parties for conference and Secretariat expenses in 1949. The bulk of the expenses consisted of preparing and conducting these conferences. The individual contributions had been fixed on the basis of the percentage of each country's trade. The acceding governments had also been invited to contribute, and page 2 of the document showed the application of the same scale to these governments. He wished to add that expenses had been very considerable and had led to a deficit for 1949. He hoped, however, to avoid a deficit by the contributions of acceding governments, and recommended that these contributions be paid before the end of 1949.

Mr. POLITIS (Greece) agreed with the principle that acceding governments should contribute, but said that his task would be considerably facilitated in obtaining a vote on his country's contribution if it could so be arranged that payment should only be made after accession.

The EXECUTIVE SECRETARY found certain difficulties in accepting the point raised by Mr. Politis. It seemed to him that
the question of the contributions of acceding governments was independent of the fact whether they acceded or not. The acceding governments had participated in the negotiations as full members and had thus added to the costs. The consequences of making contributions payable only after accession would be serious in that the risk of a deficit in 1949 would not be avoided.

Mr. POLITIS agreed that the two questions were really independent and he admitted the difficulties involved in his proposal.

The proposal contained in the document was approved and the Chairman expressed the hope that contributions would be sent in promptly by all parties.

The meeting adjourned at 11.20 a.m.