The Close of the Torquay Conference


1. The Tariff Negotiations Working Party reviewed the position of the negotiations still in progress and, on the basis of estimates submitted by the delegations as to the time required for their completion, decided to recommend to the Tariff Negotiations Committee 31st March 1951 as the final date for the conclusion of bilateral negotiations. Any negotiations not completed by that date should be considered as "unfinished" and not be included in the Torquay Protocol.

No further delays should be granted under any circumstances.

The Working Party recommends 21 April 1951 for the signature of the Final Act and of the Declaration on the Continued Application of the Schedules to the General Agreement, and for the signature of the Decisions under Article XXIII and of the Torquay Protocol by those governments who are in a position to sign these instruments at the close of the Torquay Conference.

2. In order to enable countries or governments which intend to sign the Torquay Protocol on 21 April or soon thereafter, to give suitable notice of the tariff changes before they enter into force, the Working Party recommends to the Tariff Negotiations Committee that paragraph 3 (a) of the Torquay Protocol be amended so as to fix the date on which the Protocol will enter into force on the 30th day following the day upon which the Protocol shall have been signed, or on the 46th day following the date of the said Protocol, whichever is the later.

3. As regards publication of the results of the tariff negotiations, the Working Party agreed that the schedules should remain secret until 9 May. As from that date any participating government so desiring may publish its own schedule together with information regarding concessions obtained from other countries. The full text of the Torquay Protocol and annexes would be made public by the Secretariat on 12 May 1951.

4. Acting in its capacity as steering committee of the negotiations, the Tariff Negotiations Working Party decided that 14 April 1951 should be the very latest date for the submission to the Secretariat of the final corrected and approved text of each country's consolidated schedule of concessions for insertion in the signature text.

In view of the fact that considerable strain would be put on the physical and mechanical resources of the Secretariat if a number of voluminous schedules is presented at the last moment, the Working Party urges all delegations to prepare their consolidated list as soon as their bilateral negotiations are completed, and have it circulated for purposes of checking, bearing in mind that a time limit of four days must be given to other delegations for their examination and that the final text should be in the hands of the Secretariat not later than 14 April.