GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE
Fifth Session of the Contracting Parties

1st PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FIFTH SESSION

In accordance with their usual practice the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement have been giving preliminary consideration to a number of important items on their agenda during the first week of their current Session. As will be noticed below, a number of items have been submitted to smaller groups, or working parties. The purpose of establishing a working party is to permit a group of specialists to examine each problem referred to it in greater detail and to report back to the Contracting Parties as a whole. By this means much time is saved; for several working parties can meet simultaneously, while the parent body proceeds with its business.

To obtain background information on the items which follow, correspondents should consult the Informal Guidance, press release Torquay/15.

The following working parties have already been set up and some of them are meeting already:

Agenda item

14 Working Party "A", chairman Mr. C.L. Hewitt, Australia, is examining the notification of existing protective measures under Article XVIII.


28 Working Party "C", chairman Mr. A. Pastoriza, Dominican Republic, is examining the budget for 1951.

22 Working Party "D", chairman Mr. V.A. Clark, Australia, is examining the request of the World Health Organization concerning a draft international agreement covering customs duties and tariffs on insecticides.

17 Working Party "E", chairman Dr. A. Argyropoulos, Greece, is examining the draft legislation prepared by Brazil, as described in press release Torquay/15.

26 Working Party "F", chairman K. G. Cassiers, Belgium, is considering the possible amendment of part of Article XX of the General Agreement to correspond with Article 45 of the Havana Charter.

13 Working Party "G", chairman Dr. G.J.G. Steyn, South Africa, is to consider the United States proposals for minimizing hardships in the administration of import controls.

7 Working Party "H", chairman Dr. J.A. Guerra, Cuba, is instructed to prepare a questionnaire for the review of import restrictions and to undertake other tasks arising out of this agenda item.
In addition to having a preliminary discussion of the above agenda items before setting up the respective working parties, the Contracting Parties have also discussed and in some cases completed their work on a number of other items on the agenda. It has been agreed in principle that the Secretariat shall in future collect information about export restrictions being used by the contracting parties (item 10). On the item (16) covering the Australian Subsidy on Ammonium Sulphate the Contracting Parties have been informed that representatives of Australia and Chile entered into further discussion after the Fourth Session and that an arrangement which is satisfactory to both parties has been reached. The Contracting Parties have taken note of the First Annual Report of the South African - Southern Rhodesian Customs Union, and expressed the hope that in the next report the problem of removing restrictions in the trade between the two countries would be more fully considered (item 23). The Contracting Parties have also agreed not to proceed at present with the proposal (item 25) to include in the General Agreement certain articles of the Havana Charter dealing with Employment and Economic Activity.

Now, at the end of the first week of the Session, the Contracting Parties are beginning their discussions on the items of the agenda which relate to import restrictions (items 7 & 8) and Special Exchange Agreements (item 9).