The following is the text of a Decision submitted by the Special Sub-Group on Seasonal Obligations and Problems and adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES on 22 December 1954.

SEASONAL WAIVER OF CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

CONSIDERING

(a) that in the period beginning 25 December 1954 and ending 2 January 1955 many contracting parties will be confronted by special circumstances which would place additional strain on their balances of payments, so as to create in the case of some contracting parties a serious threat to their monetary reserves, owing to temporary excessive demands for food and drink, and also for various other purchases involved in mutually advantageous exchanges normally undertaken during the period under consideration,

(b) that sympathetic consideration is even more appropriate at this time than in circumstances to which the CONTRACTING PARTIES normally address their attention,

DECIDE as follows:

(a) contracting parties which normally maintain restrictions on their consumption of the items mentioned in the preamble hereto shall, without prejudice to the restoration of such restrictions to a normal level as from 2 January 1955, relax such restrictions to a degree consistent with due prudence and the capacity of consumption of each contracting party,

(b) in this connection, and for the period in question, no attention need be paid to the findings of the International Monetary Fund nor to the consistency or otherwise of the measures proposed with relevant articles of the Agreement of the IMF,

(c) contracting parties may exceed the limits suggested in paragraph (b) in accordance with any regional arrangements, having due regard to the importance of attaining a high level of general conviviality on as broad a basis as possible,

(d) contracting parties shall, however, in taking any of the measures referred to above, refrain from any action calculated to delay the return of their representatives to Geneva on 4 January in order to resume the Review of the General Agreement.

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EXPRESS the hope that representatives as a result of the measures indicated in the above Decision will spend a Happy Christmas and return in a mood to ensure the speedy conclusion of the Review.

NOTES

1. The delegate of the United States reserved his position in the absence of instructions, and with the vague feeling that this Decision involves an extension of the scope of the General Agreement which might give rise to serious difficulties for the United States administration.

2. The delegate of Brazil reserved his position on paragraph (d). His feeling was that since that paragraph referred to a New Year and not merely to a continuation of the old year, the Review should contemplate a new Agreement and not merely a revision of the old Agreement. This had been his understanding of the position from the beginning in any case.

3. Representatives of the Fund reserved the position of the International Monetary Fund on paragraph (b) as they have not yet been able to work out how this fits in with Article XV. The Leader of the Fund mission has returned to Washington and it is understood that the matter will be considered by the Executive Board on 25 December.