The following communication has been received from the Government of the United Kingdom. A contracting party wishing to request consultations with the United Kingdom under paragraph (b) of the procedures annexed to the Decision of 24 October 1953 (in connexion with items traditionally admitted free of duty from countries of the Commonwealth) should so inform the Executive Secretary not later than 1 July 1956. In the absence of any such request, the Government of the United Kingdom will be free to take the action proposed.

"The Government of the United Kingdom wish to invoke the Decision of 24 October 1953, as amended on 5 March 1955, in order to apply higher most-favoured-nation rates of duty on fruit stocks of Malling varieties and on a group of plants known as Kentia palms without applying a duty on imports from the territories listed in Annex A of the General Agreement.

"In the customs tariff of the United Kingdom the relevant items appear in Part 3 and read: -

Group II (1) (ii) (a) Fruit stocks of Malling varieties. £1 per cwt or 5 per cent whichever is the less.

Group II (1) Exceptions. Trees, shrubs, bushes and plants, not in flower, the following: -

Cocos weddeliania
Kentia Belmoreana (Howea Belmoreana)
Kentia Forsteriana (Howea Forsteriana)
Phoenix Canariensis

10 per cent ad valorem.

The rates of duty on these items, which were originally bound (at 5 and 10 per cent respectively) to Benelux, were renegotiated with Benelux recently.

"The action proposed by the United Kingdom is in accordance with the requirements of the Decision of 24 October 1953 as amended on 6 March 1955. Protective duty has at no time since 1 January 1939 been chargeable in respect of these items when imported from the territories listed in Annex A. A schedule of statistics showing the source of imports of these items was circulated to the contracting parties as SECRET/36/Add.1. From this schedule it can be seen that no contracting party other than Benelux appears to have any interest in the trade and that these items are not imported from countries of the Commonwealth. Since the items concerned have not been imported into the United Kingdom from territories listed in Annex A, increases in the m-f-n rates of duty are not likely to lead to a substantial increase in imports of the items from such territories at the expense of imports from other sources.

"In accordance with the procedures set out in the Decision of 24 October 1953, the Government of the United Kingdom is informing the Governments of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg of its intention to invoke that Decision. I am directed to request that this communication should be regarded as the official notification, required by the terms of the Decision, by the Government of the United Kingdom of their desire to invoke the Decision of 24 October 1953."