GATT STAFF REPRESENTATION

Suppression of the reference to grades in the draft
manning table 1958

The fact that in the proposed manning table for 1958 the grades have been omitted for the first time has led to many inquiries. As a consequence the staff representatives submitted the following Memorandum to the Executive Secretary:

"The fact that in the manning table of budget for 1956 (L/654) the grades of the various staff members are not mentioned, creates a number of problems,

1. If the omission is to be understood that in future the salaries will be fixed yearly and individually, the staff would lose not only the advantages presently provided for in the UN Staff Regulations, mainly the automaticity of steps subject to satisfactory service, but also advantages which may be granted in the future to the UN Staff, such as for example automaticity of promotion into the next grade under certain circumstances.

2. Even if this effect is not intended, the fact that the grades are not disclosed would lead to the impossibility of publishing vacancy notices since these must include the grade of the post. This would not only preclude all competition for such posts, but also the possibility of present GATT staff members applying for a higher post.

3. A system of secrecy would also be against the idea we have often expressed, that in the interests of the morale of the staff, decisions taken by the Administration should, to the greatest extent possible, be known to the staff.

To be able to reply to the various questions we have been asked by staff members, who also feel that such an innovation might lead to a system contrary to the philosophy of public services followed by the United Nations (see A/C.5/L.393/1956) we should be very glad if we could discuss with you how the fears which have been expressed could be met without impairing the objectives possibly intended by the non-publication of grading."
In the discussion with the Executive Secretary following the transmission of the Memorandum the Executive Secretary made the following statement for the information of the staff:

"The decision to discontinue the publication of grades should certainly not be taken as an indication of the intention of the administration to abolish the use of the granding system which will be continued in the future, based upon United Nations regulations including those relating to promotion. The only object of this decision is to enable the administration to describe officials of the secretariat in terms of the functions and duties which are performed, and to avoid misleading comparisons with other organizations of greater size, which are unrealistic and inaccurate."

Maureen Wilson  
F.K. Liebich