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GATT INTERSESSIONAL COMMITTEE TO MEET ON 14 APRIL 1958

In accordance with the decision taken by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at the Twelfth Session the GATT Intersessional Committee will meet at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday 14 April. The meeting is expected to last about three weeks.

The Intersessional Committee, this year, is composed of the full GATT membership of thirty-seven countries.

The principal item on the agenda will be matters arising from the consideration by the CONTRACTING PARTIES of the Rome Treaty establishing the European Economic Community. In particular the Intersessional Committee will consider the report of the Working Party which was appointed to study the problems which the association of overseas territories with the European Economic Community raises for the trade of other contracting parties.

It is expected that the Intersessional Committee will take up its discussions on Rome Treaty matters during the week beginning 21 April.

Among other questions which will be considered by the Intersessional Committee are the following:

German Import Restrictions. In 1957 the CONTRACTING PARTIES held a series of consultations with a number of countries which maintained import restrictions for the purpose of protecting their foreign exchange reserves. The Federal Republic of Germany took part in these consultations. It was noted that the strong foreign exchange position of the Federal Republic no longer justified the maintenance of restrictions for balance-of-payments reasons under the General Agreement. At the Twelfth Session the delegation of the Federal Republic presented a new liberalization programme which the Federal Government proposed to adopt. There was a preliminary discussion of the proposed German programme during which many delegates expressed the view that the programme was insufficient to meet Germany's obligations under the GATT. These delegates urged the Federal Republic to reconsider its programme. The matter is to be considered further by the Intersessional Committee.

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European Coal and Steel Community. On 10 February 1958 the five-year transitional period of the European Coal and Steel Community was completed. The six countries which comprise the Community (Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Luxemburg, Netherlands and Italy) have the benefit of a waiver from certain GATT obligations which has enabled them to establish step by step a common external customs tariff for coal and steel products and to abolish among themselves customs duties, quota restrictions and other barriers to trade. With the end of the transitional period, the Member States of the Community will submit a report which will be considered by the Intersessional Committee.

Complaints. It was agreed at the Twelfth Session that certain complaints might be taken up by the Intersessional Committee. A complaint by the United Kingdom that Italy discriminates against imported agricultural machinery will be considered, as well as a complaint by Sweden and Denmark arising out of a recent increase in the United States import duty on spring clothes pins.