At their thirteenth session in November 1958 the CONTRACTING PARTIES formulated a co-ordinated programme of action directed towards the further expansion of international trade and they established three committees to carry out the programme. The work of Committee II covered the agricultural policies of Member Governments; in particular it was charged with examining the effects of agricultural protectionist measures on international trade.

Committee II met in March 1959 and again during the fourteenth session in May 1959. It drew up detailed arrangements for consultations with all contracting parties about their agricultural policies. These consultations will be focussed on the effects of agricultural policies on international trade. Each contracting party will consult in its turn and there will be, first, an examination of its general agricultural policy followed by more detailed discussion of its policies in relation to specific commodities. THE CONTRACTING PARTIES have instructed Committee II to conduct the consultations.

On Monday 14 September consultations on the lines described above will be opened with the following countries: United Kingdom, Australia, Union of South Africa, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Switzerland and France. (The consultations will not necessarily take place in the order of the countries listed.) A second group of countries will enter into consultations during the fifteenth session at Tokyo in November 1959.

The chairman of Committee II is Dr. Roberto de Oliveira Campos (Brazil). Dr. Campos was one of the four eminent economists who wrote Trends in International Trade (the Haberler report).

Note: Correspondents interested in further background material are referred to the recent address by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Eric Wyndham White, entitled International Trade: Challenge and Response in which there is a section dealing with agricultural protectionism.