
At the Committee's last meeting, I defined for the second time the Community's position with regard to the XXIV:6 renegotiations. Today for the third and last time, I must state that this position remains unchanged, and that the contracting parties must expect no further offer within the framework of these renegotiations. This position has just been confirmed by the Council of ministers on 3 May in response to certain pressing interventions and to memoranda sent by certain delegations to the Governments of the States members and to the Commission. This does not prevent us from pursuing the examination of certain technical problems still pending, or the settlement of an important agricultural problem with regard to which discussions have been in progress for several months.

At the same meeting of 3 May, the Council of ministers instructed the Commission to inform the Tariff Negotiations Committee that, conscious of having scrupulously respected its obligations, the Community considered the first stage of negotiations as completed so far as it was concerned.

I accordingly ask the Committee to take note of this statement, the consequence of which is that the delegation of the Commission will no longer pursue renegotiations with the other contracting parties. I would therefore urge the different delegations to make known immediately, or at any rate not later that 10 May, whether they are prepared to sign an agreement finally putting an end to the XXIV:6 renegotiations, on the basis of the offers which have been submitted to them and which go very much farther than the provisions of Article XXVIII paragraph 2 and thus make it possible to maintain the concessions previously granted by the States members at a level no less favourable than that which existed before the formation of the Common Market. Third countries should not attempt to judge our offers by considering one particular product or another in isolation. In the course of the negotiations we admitted that damage to a particular product might result from the application of the common tariff, but we offered compensation on other products, and third countries must be guided by an appreciation of the situation as a whole if they are ready like us to keep to the spirit and the letter of Article XXVIII, paragraph 2 and not to seek unjustified concessions in the XXIV:6 renegotiations. We have honestly recognized that in the case of two countries our offers might be regarded as inadequate. In relation to the others, however, we continue to believe that we have made concessions the value of which should not be called in question.

We cannot oblige third countries to accept our offers; it is for them to make the choice, but we cannot remain in a position of immobility or prolong indefinitely the duration of the renegotiations and as our Chairman stated at an earlier meeting, a time must come when everyone must assume his responsibilities and when the results must be definitely placed on record.

This is what we ask the Committee to do today.

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We urge every country to sign on the basis of our offers, and to do so in the interest of GATT. If we were to find ourselves in a position where a small number of countries, among them some of those which have a large share in world trade, refused to sign the agreement proposed to them, our offers would of course be withdrawn, and the common external tariff would only be consolidated to a small extent. The action which might be taken by the other contracting parties in application of Article XXVIII, paragraph 3, in themselves withdrawing concessions referring more particularly to the products which interest the Community would have the consequence of a very extensive dismantling of the results painfully achieved by GATT at previous tariff conferences.

That is a situation which should be kept in mind by all the contracting parties, and to which we have ourselves given very serious consideration.

Hence if, in order to facilitate the signature of an agreement, certain countries wished to reserve the right to withdraw concessions later, the Community would accept such a procedure in a spirit of conciliation on the understanding that in so doing it would not be acknowledging an unpaid debt since, I repeat, we continue to regard ourselves as creditors vis-a-vis the great majority of the contracting parties.

We could therefore accept certain reservations on condition that they were limited and reasonable, and we are ready to discuss them bilaterally with third countries wishing to proceed in this way; naturally on its side the Community will reserve on the one hand the right to judge whether such reservations, which will have to be clearly defined, can be accepted, and on the other hand the right if necessary to withdraw, also subject to precise definition, part of the offers it has made, in order to maintain the balance.

I should like to repeat once more that this conciliatory attitude on the part of the Community has no other object than to extricate the negotiations from the difficulties which they are encountering, and give evidence of its firm desire not to weaken the authority of the General Agreement, and especially of its wish that the second stage of the Conference should start off on a firm basis in order that this Conference should achieve substantial results.

I now come to the problem which has been engaging our attention for several months, that of the opening of the Dillon negotiations, and I should like on behalf of the Community to propose that 15 May next should be fixed for the opening of the second stage of the Conference.

Having put an end, as I indicated at the beginning of my speech, to the XXIV:6 renegotiations, the Community sees no further obstacle to the opening of the Dillon negotiations, and it is willing to undertake them with all the contracting parties which decide to take part in the second stage of the Conference.

The Community's offers are known; they are dealt with in the decision of the Council of ministers of 12 May 1960, which was immediately communicated to the contracting parties through the Executive Secretariat and recalled in the address made by Mr. Rey at the opening meeting of the Conference.
It proposes to proceed to a linear reduction of 20 per cent if the other industrialized countries are prepared to make an offer having equally favourable consequences in the sphere of international trade. This offer was announced at the time of the submission of the provisional lists of requests of the Community to third countries, and we are still waiting to know the attitude of the other contracting parties towards this offer, which no doubt constitutes the simplest method of making progress in the direction of a lowering of tariffs.

In conclusion I should like to recall the efforts which the Community has made since the beginning of the negotiations. It has contributed in two directions to the settlement of the important questions we have had to discuss:

1. Within the framework of the XXIV:6 renegotiations, we have improved our initial offers, even though we remain convinced that in so doing we were going beyond our obligations. We have today offered to the other contracting parties, even those which are not entirely satisfied, the possibility of bringing to a conclusion the XXIV:6 negotiations.

2. As regards the Dillon negotiations, we have made the generous offer which you are aware of. The Community has assumed all its responsibilities. It is now for the others to assume theirs, with a full knowledge of what is involved.