Customs tariffs

6. The Committee welcomed the fact that during the 1960/61 Tariff Conference concessions had been granted on some 160 tariff items of interest to the less-developed countries. It was felt that the proposed new tariff exercise should provide an opportunity for more far-reaching tariff reductions on products studied by the Committee, especially as the United States Trade Expansion Act of 1962 had recently been passed in a form which granted to the Administration the negotiating powers which it had requested. In substance the Act was as summarized during the May meeting of the Committee by the representative of the United States. The Committee agreed that there was, therefore, no need to add to the comments which it had made in the report on its May meeting (L/1768, paragraph 16) on the draft legislation nor to the considerations which it had wished to place before the Working Party on Procedures for Tariff Reduction to be taken into account in the formulation of those procedures.

7. The Committee welcomed the fact that certain countries, notably Austria and Italy had, since the last meeting of the Committee, made unilateral reductions in tariffs affecting the exports of less-developed countries, and reiterated their belief in the value of such unilateral reductions. The Committee recalled its earlier decision that contracting parties maintaining tariffs on the exports of the less-developed countries should continue to report on any action or plan for the reduction of these tariffs.

8. Members of the Committee considered that further light might be cast on the problem of the reduction of tariffs on the exports of less-developed countries if further studies were undertaken on the existence of differential tariffs on the semi-processed and processed derivatives of the major products of these countries and on the general incidence of import duties on the major manufactured exports of the developing countries in the main markets for these goods, compared with the incidence of duties on more sophisticated manufactured goods primarily traded between the highly-industrialized countries. It was agreed that the secretariat should look into this matter and should report on the feasibility of conducting such studies when the Committee resumed its work during the week beginning 29 October 1962. At the same time the secretariat should also examine the possibility of drawing up a summary table of import duties on a selected number of items, in the first instance on tropical beverages, along the lines of the summary table on quantitative restrictions contained in COM.III/89.

Spec(62)288/Add.1
9. The Committee took note of the contents of paragraph 38 of the report of the Special Group on Trade in Tropical Products (L/1817) in which it was recalled that all ministers had accepted that part of the ministerial Declaration of 30 November 1961 relating to the removal of revenue duties and fiscal charges. The Special Group had expressed the opinion that further studies were not called for and that what was required was the implementation of the relevant part of the Ministerial Declaration and, if more progress in this direction was to be made, further consideration of the matter at ministerial level was necessary.

10. The Committee emphasized the importance that it attached to this problem. Its solution relied on the existence of a will in countries maintaining high revenue duties and internal taxes to make progress towards their removal. It was recognized that the immediate removal of these duties and taxes, might not be possible pending their replacement by alternative revenue collection measures, but it was felt that a declaration of intent by countries not able at this stage to give a more tangible demonstration of their adherence to the decision of ministers would be valuable.

11. The Committee welcomed the announcement by the representative of Finland of a sizeable reduction in the Finnish revenue duty on tea, but expressed concern that there had been no major movement towards the general removal of revenue duties and fiscal charges on major export products of the less-developed countries. The Committee decided that, at its meeting during the week commencing 29 October 1962, it should prepare a statement reporting back to the CONTRACTING PARTIES on this subject. It would also stand ready at that time to receive notification of any action taken by individual contracting parties in this field.

State trading

12. The Committee noted that a number of replies had been received to the supplementary questionnaire on the operation of State monopolies affecting the exports of less-developed countries contained in L/1768. It was agreed that, in order to allow time for the study of information received and for the completion of replies by other contracting parties, the examination of this matter should be taken up again during the week commencing 29 October 1962.

Examination of development plans

13. It was decided that when it met again during the sessional period the Committee would begin an examination of the Second Five-Year Plan of Pakistan.

14. The Committee agreed that the secretariat should continue to keep in touch with the Turkish and other interested governments to arrange for the circulation of any material which had been made available on their current economic plans.
Production and marketing techniques and export promotion

15. The Committee took note of the paper on recent activities of international organizations in relation to production and marketing techniques (COM.III/91) which it was considered would provide useful background information for any future work on this subject in the GATT and which would minimize the danger of duplicating work being carried out by other bodies.

16. The Committee also considered proposals on assistance in the promotion of trade of less-developed countries, contained in COM.III/92, and a proposal by a member of the Committee that an "international trade information centre" should be established by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to collate information from a variety of sources including GATT records.

17. The Committee decided that discussion on these topics should be taken up again at their meeting in the week commencing 29 October 1962 and that the secretariat should prepare a paper setting out details of the proposed "international trade information centre" in collaboration with the delegation concerned. The secretariat was also instructed to report on the implications of this proposal, particularly those relating to finance.