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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

IC/W/44

22 September 1955

Special Distribution

Intersessional Committee

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TENTH SESSION

Hours of Meetings

(Note by the Executive Secretary)

In making preparations for the Tenth Session - including the engagement of temporary staff for the translation and reproduction of documents - I have encountered, as prior to previous sessions, the problems which arise during sessions in connection with the heavy workload towards the close of each working day. Experience shows that the stenographic and translation staffs, despite the rearrangement of working hours, have more work than they can cope with in the late afternoons.

GATT documents are processed by the United Nations. During some past sessions the stencils of documents to be distributed the following morning could be delivered to the Palais as late as 10 p.m., but for this next session the time-limit has been cut back to 8 p.m. for documents longer than one page. This and the increasing number and size of documents mean that there will be during the Tenth Session an intensified concentration of work after the meetings have closed.

In order to afford more time for the preparation, translation and stencilling of documents in the late afternoons, it would be helpful if the times of meetings were altered so that the afternoon meetings could close earlier than 6 p.m. From the point of view of the secretariat, there would be advantage in having the meetings of the plenaries and working parties from 10 to 12.30 and from 2.30 to 5.00. Usually the opening of meetings is delayed ten or fifteen minutes by late arrivals, but if delegates would co-operate by observing more carefully the times announced for the opening of meetings and if the chairmen of working parties were instructed to open meetings promptly at the appointed hour, the half-hour lost at the end of the afternoon meetings would be recovered.