

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

Fourth Meeting
held on Wednesday, 6 November 1946 at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTENS (Belgium).

1. Drafting Committee

The CHAIRMAN reminded members that at the close of the last meeting the place and date of meeting of the Drafting Committee had been under discussion. Mr. COLBAN had then asked why importance was attached to close contacts between the Drafting Committee and certain of the specialized agencies and the Secretariat of the Economic and Employment Commission.

Mr. WYNDHAM-WHITE, Executive Secretary, said the work of the Drafting Committee was to embody the proposals of the Preparatory Committee in a form which would take into account the particular responsibilities of the other specialized agencies and the Economic and Employment Commission. An added point in favour of the Drafting Committee meeting in New York would be that he had been informed that the Economic and Employment Commission was expected to meet there in January.

Mr. NATHAN (France) said that the Drafting Committee, if it were to meet in New York, would encounter considerable physical difficulties. The experts from the specialized agencies could equally well arrange to be present elsewhere.

He suggested that the meeting should be held in Paris, where the organization set up for the recent Conference would be available.

Mr. van de KERCHOVE d'HALLEBAST (Belgium) proposed Geneva as a suitable, and logical, site for the meeting of the Drafting Committee.

Mr. JOHNSEN (New Zealand) was also in favour of Geneva as the site of the meeting. He considered that less travel for the Delegates would be entailed if Geneva, which had already been selected for the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee in the spring, was the choice for both meetings.

Mr. NEHRU (India) understood that a Commonwealth Conference was to be held in London in January or February; and the place chosen for the meeting of the Drafting Committee should be such as to allow Delegates to attend both meetings.

Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) said it was quite true that a meeting had been arranged to take place six weeks before the tariff negotiations meeting; he did not think there would be any advantage in linking that project with the Drafting Committee meeting. The work of the Drafting Committee would be limited to "tidying up the work of the Preparatory Committee".

He did not think that too much emphasis should be placed on the point about the specialized agencies. The United Kingdom would send two or three representatives only; and it was hoped that they would work with less haste than the present Committee. If the spring meeting of the Preparatory Committee (which would be primarily concerned with tariff negotiations) and the Drafting Committee were to coincide in April, the work of both meetings would in his view suffer.

Dr. SPEEKENBRINK (Netherlands) said that the presence of technical experts was essential at the meeting of the Drafting Committee, as the speed with which the Preparatory Committee were carrying out their work would necessitate such subsequent revision. Before a final decision was made as to the place of the next meeting, it would be wiser to find out what "loose ends" would require adjustment after their work was over.

Mr. WILCOX (United States) said that disagreement on points of principle must be held over to the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee in the spring for a decision. The Drafting Committee would require technicians; but the latter would not be competent to make decisions. The United States would send two, or at most three, technical experts, who were attending the present meeting in the capacity of advisers; and these Delegates could travel to any destination which might be decided upon.

It was hoped that the meeting of the Drafting Committee would be tranquil; and it was thought that it might run for several weeks. None the less it would be inadvisable to oblige the Secretariat to set up an organization in an entirely new place for what could only be termed a "relatively small show".

The CHAIRMAN asked if any Delegates, in addition to those of France, India and Belgium, opposed New York as a meeting place for the Drafting Committee.

Mr. McKINNON (Canada) was in favour of New York as a meeting place. Previous meetings had been held in Europe; and the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee was scheduled to meet in Geneva.

Mr. NEHRU (India) although not opposed to New York, felt that geographical considerations favoured Europe. He also suggested that the time had come for Eastern countries to reciprocate the hospitality of their European and American hosts at previous Conferences.

Mr. FRESQUET (Cuba) favoured New York as a meeting place, but would welcome the opportunity of extending to the Delegates the hospitality of Havana.

Mr. WYNDHAM-WHITE, Executive Secretary, in reply to a question from Mr. COOMBS concerning the difficulties of organizing the Secretariat for a meeting in any centre other than New York, stated that the difficulties would not be insurmountable; but in New York the Secretariat

would be able to go ahead with their other work including preparations for subsequent meetings in addition to the work for the meeting of the Drafting Committee.

Mr. COLBAN (Norway), in reply to a question, was informed that the proposal of New York as a meeting place for the Drafting Committee was the suggestion of the Secretariat.

The CHAIRMAN took a vote and found the following Delegates were in favour of a meeting place in Europe, but were reconciled to the view of the majority that New York should be chosen:

Mr. van de Kerchove d'Hallebast (Belgium)
Mr. Augenthaler (Czechoslovakia)
Mr. Nathan (France)
Mr. Nehru (India)
Mr. Speekenbrink (Netherlands)
Mr. Colban (Norway)

2. Decision on the Date of Meeting of the Drafting Committee

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had proposed the middle of January as the latest date for the meeting of the Drafting Committee.

Mr. NEHRU (India) asked when the Secretariat proposed to publish the report of the Preparatory Committee, and when it would reach India.

Mr. WYNDHAM-WHITE, Executive Secretary, hoped sufficient progress would be made on the report to allow of its presentation to members before the end of the plenary meetings of the Preparatory Committee.

Mr. NEHRU (India) said that the terms of the report, after revision, would not reach India before the middle of December. One month's interval before the meeting of the Drafting Committee would not allow of sufficient study and for the preparation of instructions for the Indian members.

Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon) was more concerned that the work of the Drafting Committee should reach his Government some weeks before the second meeting of the Preparatory Commission in the spring.

Mr. COLBAN (Norway) favoured a compromise. The last week in January would allow sufficient time to instruct their Delegates.

The CHAIRMAN considered general instructions should be adequate, as most countries would be represented on the Drafting Committee by Delegates who were attending the Preparatory Committee.

He suggested Monday, 20 January as the date for the first meeting in New York.

Mr. NEHRU (India) said the date of the meeting was vital to India. His Government had only received the suggested Charter three weeks prior to the opening of the present Conference. They would require one month's study of the Report, and a further twelve days to instruct their Delegates to the Drafting Committee. The date of the meeting on tariff negotiations had not been fixed, and might perhaps need to be deferred.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the work of the Drafting Committee was of relative unimportance compared with the task which lay before the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

Mr. HELMORE (United Kingdom) suggested that the Heads of Delegations should depute a Committee to draw up terms of reference for the Drafting Committee, at its meeting in New York. That would give Delegates an insight into the functions of the Drafting Committee. The terms of reference would help to clarify certain obscurities which had arisen during the morning's discussion.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee to draw up the terms of reference should consist of the Delegates of the United Kingdom, India, the United States of America, Australia and the Netherlands, and that it should complete its work in time for the next meeting of the Heads of Delegations early in the following week.

Mr. McKINNON (Canada) quoted document E/PC/T/DEL/3 to the effect that "Member Governments who desire to be represented on the Drafting Committee should inform the Executive Secretary prior to the conclusion of the present session of the Preparatory Committee" (Page 3, subparagraph (a)). Could it not be assumed that all countries attending the

present session would desire to be represented on the Drafting Committee?

The CHAIRMAN said the suggestion would be recorded.

It was now time, he added, to consider further stages of their work, and in particular the question "What arrangements should be made for the Drafting Committee to report to the Preparatory Committee?" Mr. WILCOX's original suggestion had received general approval, and the work would proceed in the following sequence. The Drafting Committee would meet in New York after the first session of the Preparatory Committee in London was over. Their work would be presented at the second session of the Preparatory Committee in Geneva at the beginning of April 1947.

The second session of the Preparatory Committee would study the report of the Drafting Committee, and would enter into negotiations on tariffs. The outcome of their deliberation would be placed before the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. NEHRU (India) asked if it was intended that seventeen or eighteen countries should take binding decisions at the second session.

Mr. WILCOX (United States) said that only the World Trade Conference could give authority to the Charter for an International Trade Organization - and that only after ratification by the Member Governments concerned.

The CHAIRMAN referred to the suggestion that items 11, 12, 13 and 15 of the Provisional Agenda, should be referred to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee. This was agreed.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.
