

INTERIM COMMISSION : INTERNATIONAL TRADE ORGANIZATION  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Remarks of Ambassador Dana Wilgress, Chairman of the ICITO  
Executive Committee, at the Opening Session, August 25th,  
1948.

The following are extracts from the remarks of Ambassador Wilgress:

"We are meeting together to pass another milestone on the long road towards the establishment of an International Trade Organization. We have climbed up successfully the steepest and most arduous part of that road. Now, with a Charter for the future organization marking the summit of the pass, we have to plod along the more level path on the plateau leading to the holding of the first annual Conference of the Organization. Our task is to do everything possible to prepare for the holding of that Conference so that the Organization when it is set up can commence to function smoothly and efficiently.

"That our task is less arduous than the tasks which confronted the Preparatory Committee and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment at Havana is evidenced by the fact that the Interim Commission, composed of more than fifty countries, has delegated all of its functions to an Executive Composed of only eighteen countries. That fact, however, also makes clear the responsibility that devolves upon us. We must justify the confidence that has been placed in us by over fifty nations. We must do our job well.

"Our task has been facilitated greatly by the excellent preparations for this session that have been made by the Executive Secretary. Mr. Wyndham White was faced with a most difficult problem. He had to wind up the Havana Conference, move from Havana to Lake Success, gather together the essential nucleus of a staff, get them to work on preparing comprehensive papers on each of the items of the agenda, arrange for their translation and distribution, and finally to transfer himself and all his staff from Lake Success to Geneva.

"Our agenda may be divided roughly into two parts. The first comprises those items which arise out of the resolution adopted at the Havana Conference for the constitution of the Interim Commission and are designed to prepare the ground for the holding of the first annual Conference of the International Trade Organization. The second part includes those items which arise out of resolutions adopted or action taken at the Havana Conference and are referred to in paragraph 2 (g) of the resolution constituting the Interim Commission. These are: (1) the establishment of authentic texts of the Havana Charter in the Chinese, Russian and Spanish languages; (2) the Relation of the ITO with the International Court of Justice; (3) Economic Development and Reconstruction; and (4) Consultation with the Government of Switzerland regarding the Report of Sub-Committee G of the Third Committee of the Havana Conference. Special attention will have to be given to these problems at this session of the Executive Committee.

"The Executive Secretary has proposed that, after discussion in full meeting of the Executive Committee, the various questions on our agenda which cannot be disposed of in full meeting should be referred to sub-committees. He has proposed the setting up of four such sub-committees - one on Administrative Questions; one on the International Court of Justice; one on Economic Development and Reconstruction, and one on Technical Questions. Besides, it would appear to me to be necessary for us to constitute a committee on credentials and also a panel of experts who would go over the authentic text of the Charter in the Spanish language.

"I believe that all the questions on our agenda can be referred, when such a course is necessary, to one or other of these subsidiary bodies. The Swiss problem, for instance, could be referred to the Sub-Committee on Technical Questions, and the first task of that sub-committee would be to determine the procedure for consultation with the Swiss Government in the light of the discussions which will take place on this question of procedure in the full meeting of the Executive Committee. The questions that relate to preparations for the holding of the first annual Conference of the I.T.O. could be referred to the Sub-Committee on Administrative Questions, except that the question of the relation of the I.T.O. with the International Monetary Fund could perhaps more appropriately be dealt with by the Sub-Committee on Technical Questions.

"Finally, Gentlemen, I wish to express my pleasure at once again having the privilege of presiding over meetings of the Executive Committee and enjoying the benefit of your co-operation in furthering the cause we all have at heart. The seed represented by the original proposals for an International Trade Organization has shown great vitality and has germinated a tender sprout. That tender sprout has been entrusted to your care and I am sure you will all do your best to see that it grows to maturity and eventually blossoms forth as a fully-established International Trade Organization. "

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