

CONTRACTING PARTIES

Fourth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations,
Geneva on Thursday, 23 February,
1950 at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Hon. L. Dana WILGRESS (Canada)

Subjects discussed:

1. Election of Chairman.
2. Election of Vice-Chairman.
3. Approval of the Agenda of the Fourth Session (GATT/CP⁴/1/Rev. 1.)
4. Request of the Federal Government of Germany to send Observers to the present Session. (GATT/TN2/4/Add.2)
5. Communication of the Agenda to the Press.

1. Election of Chairman.

The Executive Secretary, in the Chair, proposed that the Contracting Parties, in accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Suetens (Belgium), seconded by Mr. Lecuyer (France) proposed Mr. L. Dana Wilgress (Canada), who was declared elected unanimously.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

Mr. Wilgress took the Chair and called for nominations for the Vice-Chairmanship.

Mr. Grady (U.S.A.), supported by Mr. Holmes (U.K.) and Mr. Walker (Australia), proposed Mr. Max Suetens (Belgium), who was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.

3. Approval of the Agenda of the Fourth Session
(GATT/CP 4/1/Rev.1.)

The Chairman suggested that the items appearing on the provisional agenda be taken and approved one by one and, items 1 and 2 having already been approved, to start from item No. 3.

The Contracting Parties approved for inclusion in the Agenda items 3 to 17, inclusive.

Mr. Benes (Czechoslovakia), supported by Mr. Walker (Australia) said he was not opposed to the inclusion of items 18 and 19, calling for a review of the application of certain quantitative restrictions on imports and exports, but asked for further information.

The Chairman informed the Contracting Parties that documents on the two items would be distributed on the following morning, and the inclusion of items 18 and 19 was then approved provisionally, subject to reconsideration after documents had been examined by the Contracting Parties.

Item 20 was adopted provisionally after Mr. Holmes (U.K.) had asked for the circulation of further information which was promised by Mr. Grady (U.S.A.)

Items 21 to 24 inclusive were approved.

The Chairman declared all items of the provisional Agenda approved with the exception of items 18, 19 and 20, the inclusion of which had only been provisionally approved, subject to reexamination at the following meeting.

It was decided to make some rearrangement in the order of the items on the Agenda. Item 20 would follow item 11 with which it was closely connected; items 18 and 19 would follow item 20. Items 8 and 13, which involved time-consuming discussions and the setting up of working parties, would be placed between items 3 and 4.

The Agenda as a whole, subject to final approval of items 18, 19 and 20 was approved.

4. Request of the Federal Government of Germany to send Observers to the present Session. (GATT/TN2/4/Add.2)

The Chairman said that the presence of observers at the meetings of the Contracting Parties was generally governed by Articles 8 and 9 of the Rules of Procedure. The Governments which participated in the Annecy negotiations, and were not yet Contracting Parties, fell under Rule 8 and he wished at this point to express the hope in the name of all present Contracting Parties that the Observers from these Governments would feel free to take an active part in all discussions and deliberations of the present session, although they would not yet be entitled to vote.

No Rule of Procedure clearly covered the case of the Government of the Federal Republic of Western Germany, which had accepted the invitation to participate in the 1950 Tariff Negotiations and the Contracting Parties should

therefore take a decision on the application of the Federal Republic to send Observers to the Fourth Session.

Mr. Benes (Czechoslovakia) wished to protest against any decision being taken to allow the Government of Western Germany to send observers because he could not recognise such persons as representing the German State.

Mr. Grady (U.S.A.) proposed that observers from the Federal Republic of Western Germany be invited to attend the Fourth Session with the same rights as those enjoyed by observers admitted under Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure.

Mr. Walker (Australia) asked whether the invitation would be extended to the Federal Republic through the Allied High Commission.

The Chairman replied that the invitation to participate in the 1950 Tariff Negotiations was sent to the Allied High Commission for forwarding to the Government of Western Germany and the affirmative reply was received from the Allied High Commission. There was now a request from the Allied High Commission for permission to be granted to the Government of Western Germany to send observers.

Mr. Holmes (U.K.), pointing out that when the Rules of Procedure were drawn up it was impossible to foresee every contingency, considered it reasonable and useful for parties to the forthcoming Tariff Negotiations to attend the session, and acquaint themselves with the work of the Contracting Parties.

There being no support for the Czechoslovak objection, the Contracting Parties decided to reply to the Allied High Commission that the application of Western Germany to send observers to the Fourth Session to participate in the discussions, without vote, had been accepted.

5. Communication of the Agenda to the Press.

On the proposal of the Chairman that the items of the Agenda be communicated to the press, Mr. Holmes (U.K.) suggested that, if the communication included any comments on the various items, the draft should be submitted to the Contracting Parties for approval.

The Chairman informed Mr. Holmes that he was following past practice in accordance with Rule 38 of the Rules of Procedure which prescribes approval by the Chairman of communications to the press. Complying, however, with Mr. Holmes' request, a draft press release would be distributed to Representatives for approval.

The meeting adjourned at 4.40 p.m.