

RESTRICTED

GENERAL AGREEMENT  
ON TARIFFS AND  
TRADE

ACCORD GENERAL SUR  
LES TARIFS DOUANIERS  
ET LE COMMERCE

LIMITED B  
GATT/CP.3/14  
21 April 1949

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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Contracting Parties

Third Session

Interim Report of

Working Party 1 On Accession

The Working Party directed its attention in the first instance to the questions raised by the delegate of Australia at the second meeting of the current session of the Contracting Parties regarding the publication, acceptance and putting into effect of the results of the Annecy Tariff Negotiations. The Australian representative, amplifying his explanation of Australian difficulties, reminded the Working Party that this question had been raised by Australia at the second session of the Contracting Parties where it had been left over for consideration at the current session. He explained that before the Australian Government could give effect to any concessions negotiated in Annecy, they would first have to be considered by the Government and subsequently submitted to Parliament. This process would, owing to the imminence of Parliamentary elections in Australia, have to be considerably delayed and it was unlikely that the Australian Government would be in a position to present the matter to the new Parliament before January or February of 1950. This difficulty also affected the publicity to be given to the results of the negotiations insofar as they affected Australia. Australia would not be able to agree to the publication of results before the Australian Government had had time to study them. This would in effect mean delaying any publication of concessions negotiated by Australia until late February of 1950.

The other Members of the Working Party considered it essential that the results of negotiations should be published as soon as possible after their conclusion. The following alternative solutions were discussed as means of meeting the difficulties of Australia:

- 1.- To defer publication of the results of the negotiations until late February 1950.

This solution found no support in the Working Party.

- 2.- That the results of the negotiations should be made public as soon as practicable, (i.e. as soon as the Secretariat can make the necessary administrative arrangements), but withholding the schedule of concessions granted by Australia.

This solution whilst meeting the difficulties of Australia was not supported by other Members of the Working Party. On general political grounds it was considered undesirable, both internationally and internally in particular contracting parties, that part of the negotiations should be treated as secret for such a period as proposed. Such a course was also likely to provoke inquiries regarding the Australian schedule not only of the government of Australia but also of other governments which had participated in the discussions. It was doubtful whether any effective secrecy could be maintained. Moreover, the concessions made by Australia would form part of the general balance of the concessions negotiated between the participating governments and the omission of the Australian schedule from the published results would, therefore, make it difficult for other governments to give a complete report of the negotiations to their Parliaments and peoples.

- 3.- To incorporate the results of the negotiations in two separate Protocols; the first embodying the results of the negotiations, excluding the results of negotiations between Australia and other

countries, to be published as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the Annecy negotiations; the second to be signed and published at a later date containing the results of the negotiations between Australia and other countries. The Australian negotiations would be regarded as incomplete negotiations to be finalized subsequently. This solution would also be satisfactory to Australia but was not supported by other Members of the Working Party for reasons similar to those applicable to alternative 2 above.

As the Working Party was unable to reach any agreement on a solution acceptable to Australia and to the other Members of the Working Party, it was decided, in view of the importance of the matter and its bearing upon Australian participation in the Tariff Negotiations which are now being initiated, to make an Interim Report to the Contracting Parties setting out the various alternatives which had been propounded. The Working Party feels that as soon as the matter has been considered by the Contracting Parties it should be referred also to the Tariff Negotiations Committee in view of the direct interest of the matter and its implications for the acceding governments. In this connection the Working Party has addressed inquiries to each of the acceding governments relating to the date by which they would be prepared (1) to make the results of its negotiations public and (2) to apply them. These inquiries are at present incomplete. As soon as they are completed a report will be made to the Contracting Parties as an appendix to this Interim Report.

