

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

IC/SR.43

17 February 1959

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## Intersessional Committee

### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on  
Wednesday, 11 February 1959, at 2.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Emanuel TREU (Austria)

- Subjects discussed:
1. Request by Australia for Authority to renegotiate an Item in Schedule I
  2. Preparation of Documentation for Committee II

1. Request by Australia for Authority to renegotiate an Item in Schedule I (GATT/AIR/146)

The CHAIRMAN referred to the details of a request by the Government of Australia set out in GATT/AIR/146 for authority, under paragraph 4 of Article XXVIII, to renegotiate the most-favoured-nation and preferential rates of duty for tariff item 105(F)(1) - woollen piece goods - bound in Parts I and II respectively of Schedule I. He pointed out that under the intersessional procedures adopted by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at the Thirteenth Session, the Committee had power to consider such requests and, if deemed appropriate, to grant the requested authority.

The representative of Australia, presenting his Government's request, explained that the concessions in question in Parts I and II of the Australian Schedule were negotiated in 1947 with France and the United Kingdom respectively. In the course of an extensive enquiry into the woollen goods industry the Australian Tariff Board had found that owing to the wording of tariff item 105(F)(1) some difficulties were experienced in determining the tariff classification of certain piece goods of wool or containing wool. With a view to obviating these difficulties the Tariff Board recommended that tariff items 105(F)(1) and 105(F)(2) be amalgamated and that the proposed item be subject to the existing duties under item 105(F)(2). The proposed new duties would result in a small increase in the preferential rate and a decrease in the most-favoured-nation rate, thus reducing the margin of preference. Overall there would be a clear reduction in the duties collected. In view of the fact that the proposed action was designed to rectify certain administrative difficulties in tariff classification and involved a simple adjustment of the bound rates, as distinct from withdrawal and compensation, the Australian Government submitted that "special circumstances" existed in the sense of Article XXVIII:4.

In the light of the situation described by the representative of Australia, the Committee agreed that special circumstances existed in the sense of Article XXVIII:4 and authorized the Government of Australia to enter into renegotiations as requested.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that any contracting party which considered it had a "principal supplying interest" or a "substantial interest", as provided in paragraph 1 of Article XXVIII, should communicate such claim in writing and without delay to the Australian Government, and at the same time inform the Executive Secretary. Any such claim recognized by the Australian Government would be deemed to be a determination by the CONTRACTING PARTIES within the terms of paragraph 1 of Article XXVIII. If no agreement could be reached between the Australian Government and a contracting party claiming interest, the matter might be referred to the Committee.

2. Preparation of Documentation for Committee II

The DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY referred to document COM.II/1 informing contracting parties that, in order to facilitate the work of Committee II at its first meeting on 2 March 1959, the secretariat was preparing draft country papers on national agricultural policies and on non-tariff measures of protection or support deriving from these policies. Drafts had been completed, and sent to the respective governments for revision or approval, for nearly all contracting parties in Europe and North America. To date a revised paper had been received only from the Government of Austria, and, in view of the short time remaining, he urged the contracting parties concerned to submit their revised papers to the secretariat with the least possible delay. For other contracting parties, it was envisaged that the secretariat drafts would be circulated at the opening of the Committee meeting, although in some cases the governments concerned might have an opportunity of revising the drafts beforehand.

The meeting adjourned at 3.20 p.m.